

Swami Yatiswarananda

**READINGS
ON
THE GOSPEL OF SRI
RAMAKRISHNA**

Volume I (Madras 1911)

Volume II (Madras 1922)

Wiesbaden, Germany
April 26, 1934 through January 9, 1935

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Dear Friends,

Further to Swami Yatiswarananda's READINGS on SWAMI BRAHMANANDA'S SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS, and the READINGS on the VEDANTASARA, the NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS, the DRG-DRSYA VIVEKA and the BHAGAVAD-GITA, we are happy to share with you Swami Yatiswarananda's *READINGS ON THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOL. I & II*, the notes of class-talks delivered at Wiesbaden, Germany, to an intimate group of European students, from April 25, 1934 through January 9, 1935.

Our search in Germany for Readings generated between 1933-1938 had already revealed a German translation of the *Gospel Readings*, and we were lucky to find a copy of the English original during our 1993 search at Sri Ramakrishna Math, Bangalore, India.

Along with the original carbon copies of class-notes, there was also a slightly edited version with topic-titles, compiled by Mr. Wolfram K. Koch (Swami Yatiswarananda's host at Wiesbaden) apparently intended for eventual publication, which we have verified and supplemented for the present publication. In view of its historical interest, we give Mr. Koch's Introduction to the Gospel Readings, just after this Publisher's Note. It is due to Mr. Koch's painstaking labour that these notes were manually taken down, decoded, verified, and hard copies made for circulation among the members of the Wiesbaden Group.

Vedanta students, of course, already know of *MEDITATION AND SPIRITUAL LIFE*, the extensive selection of Swami Yatiswarananda's writings and talks. The present READINGS on the GOSPEL, naturally, duplicate ideas in the aforementioned book. However, repetition is welcome to the earnest seeker, and it will be especially interesting for Europeans to identify with the actual format of how Vedanta was pioneered in the Europe of 60 years ago!

Romain Rolland mentions Swami Yatiswarananda in his diary under date of May 1st, 1935, when the Swami visited Rolland in Switzerland together with Paul Geheeb. The Swami had already been moving — since November 1933—mainly in Germany and Switzerland [Wiesbaden, Geneva, Lausanne, Zurich, Campfer, St.Moritz, etc.], and occasionally also to the Hague and Poland. He also visited France several times between 1933 and 1938, and represented the Order at the 1936 Ramakrishna Centenary celebrations at the Sorbonne, in Paris.

The Readings on the *Gospel* is the fifth of a series of specific books studied 'live', and in a particular order, with the European students (whose minds were practically virginal as regards the practical applica-

tions of Vedanta), in order to generate a *corpus* of material to support them—and, why not, even future generations of students—in their spiritual struggle.

It is indeed a great good fortune that these READINGS can be consulted by us today. We are sure you will find them both inspiring, and challenging, like the other Readings generated during the Swami's pre-World War II period in Europe, which are particularly addressed to the Western student,—who often has a hard time to acquire a correct perspective about what true spiritual life is all about, and then struggle to live as a spiritual athlete amidst a spiritual wilderness, mostly with little or no support from any Centre.

Daily study of the various Readings, daily study and reflection on particular scriptural passages, such as later published in *THE DIVINE LIFE*, etc., is repeatedly recommended by the Swami, just to provide the necessary daily support. And the Readings are pretty well self-contained, with plenty of essential quotations from scripture and classic manuals, etc., which renders them exceedingly lively.

The Gospel *Volumes I & II* (originally published in English from Madras in 1911 and 1922) are those that preceded the full translation of the original Bengali, published by Swami Nikhilananda from New York, in 1942. *Volume II* is out of print, but some Centres may have copies in their libraries, which one could photocopy. As for *Volume I* (M.'s original English) it was reprinted in 1978, and rightly so, for it is indeed 'doctrinally important', as Swami Tapasyananda writes in his introduction, and it has a charm of its own, just like *Volume II*.

Those who may like to parallelly study the Gospel sections will find page-references leading them to the editions presently in print—in the *Contents*, in the *Headers* to each day's Readings and in the *Topics in Volume I* listed in the Appendix A. There is also an *Alphabetical Index of Topics* in the present Readings, and a *Gospel History*. Paragraph numbering is known to be occasionally erratic..

In these Gospel Readings in particular, prophetic reference is made again and again to the impending catastrophe of World War II, then just 5 years away. This was in the context of the way to combat the severe spiritual obstacles of "righteous" indignation, hatred, dislike and aversion, towards brutality and other uncivilized happenings in the then environment—not much different from today's, though in a different form!

PUBLISHER

INTRODUCTION

by Wolfram H. Koch

[to Swami Yatiswarananda's Readings on the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Vol.I & II (English Editions) delivered at Wiesbaden, Germany, in 1934]

It is a unique background against which it was Swami Yatiswarananda's destiny to bring for the first time the message of Sri Ramakrishna to the Europe of 1933.

That it was just to Germany of all countries that it was brought, where the chaos following the first World War had grown to its climax, is by no means astonishing. For there, naturally, the yearning for spiritual liberation too had become most poignant.

Such an elemental upsurge towards spiritual evolution, as it will happen now and then on a larger scale in human history, could not but bring about tangible results.

Germany, after the catastrophe of the War (World War I) and the general outer and inner breakdown, was being torn asunder by a dozen or more ideologies, which, each in its own way fought for priority in people's minds. Old values had proved to be worthless and newly invented ones grew exuberantly out of the accumulated mud.

It is where the downward pressure is the greatest that the liberating reaction will one day become the most powerful.

Looking back on those years, the comparison with what is happening today (1953) irrepressibly imposes itself on the minds of our generation, and we shall possibly not be too far wrong by expecting that in some not too distant future it may again be in Germany where a new centre of spiritual realization will be established.

Like today, those who could not reconcile themselves with the general course things were taking and who had cultivated a subtler sense of understanding, felt intuitively that all that presented itself to the demoralized, post-inflation society of that time did not bear the mark of permanence and liberation which they sought.

The result was, that the louder the voices in the streets claiming some vague 'freedom of the senses', the more silent became those whose longing went rather in the direction of a 'freedom from the senses' and of religious realization.

Their number increased steadily and their hankering found expression when and whenever they met. Those chosen few of a country in dissolution contacted one another more or less secretly in many differ-

ent places, but it was the privilege of a small and quite heterogeneous group of ardent students of Truth living in Wiesbaden, the lovely garden-town in the middle of the Taunus-hills, overlooking the Rhine,¹ to receive in their midst the first messenger of the Vedantic Truth as it was taught by Sri Ramakrishna to modern mankind.

Nowadays, the complete *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, rendered into English prose from the Bengali original text,² is being read and commented upon in innumerable lectures, readings and classes in and outside the Vedanta Centres of the Ramakrishna Order all over the world.

Those first talks in Wiesbaden however, given to a handful of people ready to receive spiritual instruction, will for ever retain the fragrance and the subtle spiritual charm of those unique *early days* when Swami Yatiswarananda for the first time, in the intimacy of an old-fashioned drawing-room, began to speak of the Master's teachings. None of those present there could then guess that out of this modest beginning the large centres in London and Paris would come to grow.

It was the rare good fortune of Mr. Wolfram H. Koch—the Wiesbaden scholar, now well known by his contributions to the readers of periodicals like *Prabuddha Bharata* and *Vedanta for the West*—to have become, almost twenty years ago now, the mouthpiece of this group of friends.

At the same time, favoured by outward circumstances, he could give special stress to the fervent request he had decided to place before the head of the Ramakrishna Math in India, asking him to send out a member of the Order who would be willing to give them spiritual instruction and guidance.

The request fell on fruitful soil and Swami Yatiswarananda, then already one of the most advanced members of the Order, was entrusted with the task of bringing spiritual light into a country in darkness, lacerated as it was by a host of destructive forces.

We know through Swami Yatiswarananda's own mouth that it was with a heavy heart that he stepped on board the boat that was to take him to Europe one afternoon in October 1933. He did not yet see his way quite clearly then, nor was he too optimistic as to the result of the work he was about to undertake.

Early next morning however, when he awoke in his cabin, surrounded by the infinite expanse of skies and water, the awareness of

1 25Km south-west from Frankfurt, across the Rhine from Mainz.

2 By Swami Nikhilananda, first published in 1942.

such a blissful Divine Presence came over him that all his doubts were swept away and he understood that his work would be blessed. It was.

In the meantime, the Wiesbaden group of his aspirant devotees anxiously looked forward to their guru's arrival. The house in which he was to live had been made ready to receive him, and all possible arrangements were made to make him feel comfortable.³

When finally he arrived on November 8, 1933, all the impatient Westerners immediately started bombarding him with questions concerning their personal problems and difficulties.

The Swami's reaction was quite different from that they had expected it to be, and some amusing reminiscences with respect to it are still current among the members of that first group: for the Swami observed an unbreakable silence! To all their repeated questions of 'what to do?', for a long time his sole advice would be: 'What to do? Pray to the Lord'.

This answer, even now after twenty years, has remained proverbial among those to whom it was given and it is still being quoted whenever the opportunity arises, accompanied by that little wistful smile with which we pathetically try to hide our nostalgia for happy times, irrevocably lost in the mist of the past.

When that past however was still a living present, Swami's students during the first days or weeks often looked helplessly at each other, wondering whether they would ever receive another answer from their teacher as far as spiritual matters were concerned. It became a puzzle to all those who had expected him to start instructing, training and initiating them right away and to question them in his turn concerning all those personal items which they considered necessary for him to know.

His, however, was another method.

Time is an important factor, he once remarked, we must wait patiently till he sees his way clearly by the grace of the Lord.

So, quietly he waited and thereby taught his devotees their first lesson: patience.

Willingly and good-naturedly they surrendered to his will, feeling not only the power of one whom one of his brother Swamis in the West used to call a 'spiritual giant'; they also were strongly aware of his benevolent and loving interest in each of them and of the bond which had already been established between guru and disciples.

3 The building was destroyed by Allied bombing during World War II.

Some of them may have suspected that in the meantime their Swami was contacting the souls and minds of those who had come within the circle of his service, using other means for coming to know more about them.

Till one day, in that same old-fashioned drawing-room, seated round the middle table, he threw open the gates and the waters of spiritual knowledge were allowed to flow.

Then, finally, in that same old-fashioned drawing-room, seated round the middle table, he acquainted them with Swami Brahmananda's—his guru's—*Spiritual Teachings*

The present material is the Swami's comments on the fifth in the series of books he read with that first group of Vedanta students and followers of the Great Master in Europe, to whom he had been found willing to bring the message of Sri Ramakrishna.

He had first introduced his German students into the basic concepts of spiritual practice by reading with them and bringing near to them the *Spiritual Teachings* of his own Guru, Swami Brahmananda, who, next to the world-famous Swami Vivekananda, was the closest to the Master among His direct disciples.⁴

After that he studied with them the profound *Vedantasara* as a means of conveying to their Western mind the spirit of the Vedanta in its purest and most impersonal aspect. Then followed the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

Only after this, Swami Yatiswarananda decides to acquaint them with the person of Sri Ramakrishna himself, well realizing that for these Europeans to whom Indian life and the soul of the Hindu people are as yet unknown, the figure of this 'Guru Maharaj', this 'King of Teachers' can only be at all properly understood if at least they have been able to assimilate and, if possible to identify themselves with the contents of the foregoing Readings.

Famous authors of the Occident have written about the unique personality and the life of Sri Ramakrishna and names like Romain Rolland and others are closely connected with him through their works. Still, it is none of these well-known books the Swami chooses although the authors succeeded in identifying themselves to a great extent with their subject. They clearly felt that the influence of this God-man on the spiritual life not only of his own generation but on

4 The first class-notes, beginning from November 21, 1933, were entitled *READINGS ON THE SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS OF SWAMI BRAHMANANDA*.

many more to come would bring about unforeseen transformations in peoples' minds.

Since then we have indeed witnessed the expansion of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna all over the world; we have followed the increasing hold which his teachings have got—even on modern society.

It was by the Master's greatest disciple, Swami Vivekananda, that they were brought to the United States of America and it is from there that they became world-known.

As we know, it was Swami Yatiswarananda's task to carry the newly lighted torch of ancient Indian Wisdom to an old sophisticated Europe, tired of age-old religious controversies and bloodshed in the name of God.

To those who are still devoted to the Church and the denomination into which they were born, Sri Ramakrishna, having realized God along the path of Christianity himself—as well as along other religions as a matter of fact—gives them the assurance which the Seers of old also experienced for themselves, namely that the Truth—or God—is One, no matter which are the names by which man prays and calls to Him. All inspired religions are necessarily as many paths leading to the ultimate realization of God... Who dares attempt to confine Him within the walls of one or the other religious organization? Who has the courage to maintain that the Infinite Spirit, the essence of all manifestation and the soul of all souls could ever be the exclusive privilege of one group?

The Rishis who lived in India fifteen thousand years ago had an insight into human—and divine—nature which modern scientific genius is only just on the way of approaching.

This Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality has been passed on from century to century to our own generation through the mouth of those very few who, by lifelong practice and identification, have 'seen God' and have 'realized the Truth'.

And this is where the ray of new light falls in for all those who want more than the often degenerated religious organizations of these days are able to give them; whose longing for a higher and more spiritual life with a positive outlook has been frustrated with all the results thereof: Sri Ramakrishna shows them the way out of sterile dogmatisms and dry theory into living practice and personal experience.

He lived the divine life for everybody to see who had eyes to do so. He gave the most efficient practical instructions in the simplest of ways to those to whom the abstract philosophical aspect was not ade-

quate, while he would lead others who could follow him, into the thin atmosphere of the highest mountaintops of the Self.

The man of action as well as the devotee, the philosopher as well as the psychologist and the scientist are shown the way fit for them and which can take them out of all human limitation and to final liberation.

Sir Ramakrishna has laid bare again the old forgotten path of the Spirit. He has cleared away the jungle and the dust of centuries making the way free and easy for us all to follow.

Swami Yatiswarananda, his spiritual son, continues the work of the Master. He too clears away a great deal of parasitic growth from the tree of these human minds who have entrusted their spiritual welfare to his guidance, surrendering to him for training and help. He too cleans, shows and leads the way for the benefit of those who have been so fortunate as to come within the circle of his service.

Now, in order to bring the figure of Sri Ramakrishna nearer to his students, Swami Yatiswarananda does not refer to the famous Western authors who made the Master the central figure of their well-known books. No, the source of information he chooses is first hand: the diary-notes written in Bengali by 'M', a direct and much beloved disciple of the great Teacher himself; two small volumes, rendered into English, the first by the 'M' himself.⁵ They were greatly abridged, it is true, but none the less valuable for that.⁶

The *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, published by Swami Nikhilananda from New York in 1942, makes the whole of these precious documents of a saintly life so near to us in time, accessible to the greater public. Still, the original two volumes in English have undoubtedly a charm of their own and must have well conveyed the subtle spirituality of the Master's presence to the Swami's first European followers.

Wolfram H. Koch

1953

5 The *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Vol.I*, published 1911 is presently available from Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras under the title of *The Condensed Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. The *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Vol.II*, translator not mentioned, published from Madras in 1922 and 1928 is out of print.

6 Elsewhere, in Mr. Koch's description of the opening chapter of the Gospel, we learn that **'in his youth Swami Yatiswarananda had known M. intimately and had even had the privilege of assisting him, by taking dictation of Gospel'**.

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Swami Yatiswarananda
in Central Europe 1933-1940

Swami Yatiswarananda (1889-1966), a senior monk and former Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order and Mission, was a well-known spiritual figure in the Neo-Vedanta Movement. He joined the Order in 1911. Beside seven years of pioneering work in spreading Vedanta in Europe and ten years of teaching Vedanta in USA (1933–50) — he was editor of *Prabuddha Bharata* at Mayavati (1921–24), then he served as President of the Ramakrishna: Bombay Ashrama (1924-26), Madras Math (1926–33) and Bangalore Ashrama (1951–66). An initiated disciple of Swami Brahmananda (the great direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna), he was widely respected for his high spiritual attainments, Yogic insight and mature wisdom. He advocated and lived a well-harmonized spiritual life with meditation as the keynote and love and service as the main melody.

(From the back cover of *MEDITATION & SPIRITUAL LIFE*)

1. READINGS
ON THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOL.I
(English Edition. Madras, 1911)
By Swami Yatiswarananda

I:01 -- Wiesbaden, Apl 26, 1934 -- (Vol.I 1-23)[CG 1-16]¹

Image Worship

“When should I attend to my morning, noon and evening service? The sun is shining in the sky of my heart. It does not rise. It does not set.”—(Upanishads)

I:01.01 When the necessary mental purification has been attained by the aspirant, rituals are no longer of any use.

I:01.02 There are people who renounce rituals before they are sufficiently developed. This is very wrong, just as renouncing image-worship before having outgrown it, is very wrong and very harmful.

I:03.02 Never decry people who worship images. There is a great truth in image-worship, and the Protestants are quite wrong in denying it. They do not know anything of spiritual traditions and spiritual life. There is not only subjective but also objective manifestation in the holy image. This, too, is the idea standing at the back of the Roman Catholic forms of worship, however distorted they may have become in course of time.

I:01.02a For most of us, worship of some image, physical or mental, is absolutely necessary if we really wish to grow, and not merely to theorize. The idea of the formless etc., may appeal to our sophisticated intellects, but we cannot worship God ‘in spirit and in truth’ at our present stage of spiritual development. So if we go and try to do it in spite of our inability, we obstruct our growth and will never be able to advance.

I:01.02b All our ideas are so hazy and indefinite. What do we actually mean by worshipping the Divine ‘in spirit and in truth’? Just some hazy, vague, indefinite feeling, while the puppets and dolls of phenomenal life attract our whole attention, because they at least are

1. Respectively, pages of Volume I, and its 1978 re-publication as *The Condensed Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* [CG].

not hazy and indefinite, but awaken some very definite reaction in our mind. All these grandiloquent talks do not mean anything at all if we go and analyze them mercilessly and dispassionately. Nothing but vagueness and intellectual gymnastics!

I:03.09 Discrimination can only come when the brain is clear, when the mind is calm and dispassionate and able to think dispassionately.

I:02 -- Wiesbaden, Apl 27, 1934 -- (Vol.I 24-46)[CG 17-32]

Helping others

I:02.02 The Lord lives in the temple of the human body. So let us first come to know Him. We should first ourselves come to know the Lord and be able to solve our own problems, and then help others. By our very being we can help others silently, by radiating Truth, without their being aware of it. But without having obtained anything ourselves, it is quite absurd to think or talk about helping others.

I:02.03 We all want to be teachers, instead of undergoing a strict course of Sadhana, trying to become efficient and pure instruments of the Lord. That is the whole trouble. First try to attain Him, and then let Him do with you what He wishes to do. Give up the idea of helping others for the time being.

I:03 -- Wiesbaden, Apl 28, 1934 -- (Vol.I 47-51)[CG 47-36]

Inner and outer solitude

I:03.03 Holy company is always very helpful in spiritual life, just as worldly company is very harmful.

I:03.04 The real solitude is mental. Outside solitude helps only in creating mental solitude in the beginner. If we are not able to have inner solitude, we are not very much benefited by outward solitude.

“What is solitude? Real solitude consists in realizing the one without a second who is within.” —(Upanishads)

I:03.06 In the first stage of Sadhana one cannot do without strict regularity in Japam, meditation and solitude. We must be alone, at least during a certain time of the day. This is very, very essential. Every day try to have a dip into this eternal inner ocean of bliss and plenitude and freedom. The whole life then becomes worth living. Just as sleep is essential for the health of this body, this inner soli-

tude is necessary for the health of the soul. Meditation means coming in touch with the Cosmic Power knowingly, consciously, purposefully, and real meditation always replenishes the body and the soul.

I:03.07 Disconnect yourselves from your environment. Unless you put up the hedge, you can never grow. The beginner cannot grow without a hedge. There are always hurricanes and cyclones; and there are goats who come and eat the tender plants. The aspirant should always rise to higher planes of thought. Lower planes are real to us, but they are not safe for us. We should make it a point never to dwell on one of the lower planes. If we do, we are bound to have nasty falls and may ruin our whole spiritual life for good. We must protect ourselves from outside dangers. We must know how to strike root in the soil of reality and dive deep into the very depth of our own soul.

I:03.08 This fencing-in may be a temporary glass-case existence, and you may not like the idea, because you do not understand, but it is necessary for all who really want to advance. We must first develop strength, and later we can stand heat and cold, hurricanes and cyclones, and goats, without being affected.

Who are our relations

I:03.10 Very often those we call dear and near ones, are perfect strangers and very harmful to us. They live on one thought-plane, we on another. Live in your own house, independently. Live as a stranger with your so-called near and dear ones.

I:03.11 Devotees and spiritual aspirants are our very own, because this Divine connection with others is more permanent and even more intense than any earthly connection. It is the only connection that counts.

I:03.12 We are all living like guests in a guest-house. You must get rid of the idea of ownership and bring in the idea of trusteeship. You must never raise any emotional claim on others. They are not your property, and you in your essence have nothing whatever to do with any of them.

No aversion, no criticism

I:03.12a Do not entertain aversion for anybody. Aversion gives rise to anger. Do not get upset by either censure or praise. What do they mean? Do not cling to other dolls and puppets. Learn to be impersonal and yet sympathetic. Never seek fault in the other person or

group, when you yourselves are so full of faults and insufficiency. Do not allow hatred to rise in your heart.

I:03.12b Seeing the Atman in all beings is very important. As long as you cherish any form of aversion or hatred in your heart, you cannot have anything to do with God. You are an atheist and nothing but that, whatever you may pretend to be and to believe, and to whatever institutional religion you may happen to belong outwardly. Do not seek to injure anybody. Never censure anybody. The phenomenal world is constituted of good and evil. You cannot change that in any way. There will never be any change on this plane. But he who clings to hatred, aversion and fear, cannot reach God, but becomes more and more the slave of his uncontrolled emotions. As I told you many times, there is no such thing as 'righteous' anger and 'righteous' aversion. And all those who cherish it, are just as bad and impure as their supposed opponents or evil-doers.

Prepare to become an instrument

I:03.13 Meditation is like churning. Churn your mind calmly and separate the butter from the milk. Just as butter pervades milk, Brahman pervades everything. Just as by churning, people separate butter from milk, meditation separates the Real from the unreal.

“Like butter hidden in milk, the Pure Consciousness resides in every being. That ought to be constantly churned by the churning-rod of the mind.” —(Amritabindu Up. 19-20)—

“As the oil in the sesamum-seed, the butter in the curd, water in the flowing waves, and fire in the Shami wood, so is the Atman in one’s self, to be discovered by one who searches for it through truth and austere practice.” —(Brahmopanisad)—

“Seeing the Atman in all beings, and all beings in the Atman, one attains the highest Brahman, not by any other means.” —(Kaivalya Up.)—

I:03.14 The Upanishads always take illustrations from life. Once butter is produced, it no longer gets mixed up with the water in which you place it to keep it cool.

I:03.15 Once you have developed real purity and non-attachment, you no longer get mixed up with the world; the world no longer acts on your mind and your body. And then alone you can talk about helping others. The blind person who only knows certain fine theories

can never help another blind person, however grandiloquent the words he uses may be.

I:03.16 You should all, one day, become workers, and this means making your bodies and minds fit for the Divine and for the expression of the Divine Will. So this is your duty, and this alone. Leave all other thoughts aside and steadily perform your Sadhana with ever-growing intensity.

The Lord, if He finds you really sincere and worthy, will one day make you His instrument. Purity is the watch-word for you all, purity that has become unshakeable, that is beyond anything worldlings can even imagine. So much grace is showered on you, but you must be steady and sincere to the backbone, and know how to profit by it.

I:04 -- Wiesbaden, Apl 29, 1934 -- (Vol.I 52-53)[CG 36-37]

The blending of male and female in Sri Ramakrishna

I:04.01 A lady devotee says with reference to Sri Ramakrishna:

“In Sri Ramakrishna’s character we used to notice the tenderness of a woman, and a wonderful way of entering into our sentiments and the ways of our mother. We seldom looked upon him as a member of the male sex, considered him as one of us and did not feel the least constrained before him. The Master used to say to us, ‘Why do you feel shy? As long as one cherishes in one’s heart shame, hatred and fear, one can never realize God. We are all the same, and you feel shy because of the beard, isn’t it?’— Nowadays we hear the Master will not allow any woman to approach him. When we hear these words, we laugh and think we are not yet dead! What a great love he used to bear to us!”

I:04.02 Sri Ramakrishna used to advise the lady-devotees to renounce lust and wealth, and warned them again and again to beware of the snares of men.

I:04.03 For a long time Sri Ramakrishna practiced disciplines as a hand-maiden of the Divine Mother, and this made him forget that he belonged to the male sex. Patañjali tells us in his *YogaSutras* [YS.35] that when one’s mind is free from hatred and aversion, human beings, even animals, forget their hatred in one’s presence. And this is true not only in the case of feelings of hatred, but also of lust and all similar passions.

I:04.08 Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great Bengali actor and dramatist, noticing the wonderful blending of male and female in Sri Ramakrishna one day asked, "Sir, are you a man or a woman?" Sri Ramakrishna replied "*I do not know.*"

I:04.09 You see, he renounced woman in all forms of earthly relations but he honoured woman as the Divine Mother and accepted her as spiritual guide in the Brahmani. The Brahmani was his first guru. In Sri Ramakrishna's mind there never rose the thought that he was a man and another person a woman. He had the same attitude towards men and women, but he could not bear the presence of worldly people, neither men nor women.

I:04.10 Clear, merciless self-analysis without any romance is necessary, as ***we always transfer the love for the SELF to the body or to the mind or to both.*** Sri Ramakrishna wants us to see ourselves and others as souls, and to the extent in which we do this, we are true to Him.

I:04.11 To the extent in which we are able to approach Sri Ramakrishna's ideal, to that extent we make our own heaven.

Control, sublimation, transmutation

I:04.13 When he who later was to be Swami Turiyananda, came to the Master, he was a tremendous hater of women. He was a strict Brahmacharin, and had always observed the strictest chastity. So the Master asked him, "*How do you look upon woman?*" Swami Turiyananda promptly replied, "Sir, I feel as if a tigress were going to devour me. I hate them all." Then Sri Ramakrishna said, "*My boy, you cannot go beyond their clutches by hating them.*"

I:04.14 Control is the first step, sublimation the second and final one. We can only think of *others* as Divine, to the extent in which we think of ourselves as Divine. When we think of ourselves as lust-bound, hatred-bound, as animals and weaklings, then we can only look upon others as animals too. This is the great point to note in spiritual life. There are some people who without themselves rising to a higher plane, want to have higher ideals. This is quite impossible, except by entertaining empty, shallow theories.

I:04.15 As long as we ourselves remain on the lower plane, the brain remains clouded. Then the sense-objects really possess a cer-

tain charm. But when we rise to the higher plane, the same objects look quite different and have no attraction whatsoever for us.

I:04.16 Rise to the plane of the Spirit. See body and mind only as something ensnaring the Spirit.

The spinal column, a spiritual barometer

I:04.17 ***Whenever you find the mind dwelling in lower regions, make it rise. This is a secret most people do not know.***

I:04.12 The spinal column is, as it were, a kind of spiritual barometer. We should never allow the energy to remain in one of the lower centres and always force it to flow upwards. This is very hard in the case of the beginner, but there is no other solution if you really want any *ultimate* solution. This alone can save us, for as long as the energy is allowed to dwell in the lower centres, the question of true Brahmacharya, continence, does not even arise. No one can remain pure and at the same time allow his energy to remain down there.

Romantic love

I:04.20 We speak of love and become very eloquent about love, but this beautiful romantic love evaporates in a few days or months or years, or it suddenly shifts its centre and is gone, leaving nothing but misery and anguish. Have relations through the Divine only, and not in any other way. Life is not a cinema-show, nor is it a romantic novel.

Purity, preparatory factor

I:04.21 When we find great purity in anyone, we should know at once this is the approach of dawn, and that in his case the sun will rise soon. Purity is the condition of all forms of spiritual life, but it is more than the constrained purity of the moralist.

I:04.22 When the emperor intends to visit some subject, he sends his train and his furniture in advance. So purity comes as the emperor's messenger, before he himself visits the aspirant and gives him illumination.

I:04.23 You see, spiritual life has many phases and an endless variety of experiences. It is a real life of adventure and heroism and beauty, and whoever wants these, should follow it steadily without looking back and without caring either for life or death.

There is such peace and bliss in store for you all, if you would but follow the path conscientiously without wavering.

1:05 -- Wiesbaden, Apl 30, 1934 -- (Vol.I 53-56)[CG 37-39]

Be careful with whom you associate

1:05.01 The aspirant cannot mix with everybody indiscriminately, but there should never be condemnation.

1:05.02 Unless we are able to transform others by our soul-force, it is not at all safe to associate with others. Their manifestations are not safe for us, although there is God in them too. Never think you have become saints and can associate with anybody you please. You have not become Christs. A Buddha, a Christ, a Ramakrishna, can go to a sinner, be in the company of a sinner and help, but just go and see what happens in your case! Your soul-force is not developed enough to enable you to help such people. So what you should do, is to help yourself, to perform your Sadhana steadily and intensely, to devote more and more time to your Japam and meditation and study, day by day. Then one day, you will be able to help, but you cannot help others before having solved your own problems first, for good.

Good and bad tendencies

1:05.04 We have all got in us good and bad tendencies. And the bad ones are first of all to be thrown out. "But God has given us all these desires!" True, quite true, but God has also given man the desire for self-mastery, for control. Sand and sugar have become mixed. If you do not separate them, if you do not want to listen to advice, please go and reap the consequences.

Harmony between intellect, feeling and will

1:05.05 Truth, experienced Truth, not mere theoretical truth, transforms us completely. It transforms us the moment we really respond through intellect, feeling and will. The whole being of man should respond to the ideal. In spiritual life, the one great task is to make intellect, feeling and will work harmoniously for the higher ideal.

1:05.06 To the extent in which the ideal pervades our entire being in its threefold aspect, we succeed in spiritual life.

1:05.07 If your entire being does not respond to a thing, take time to bring about the necessary harmony between intellect, feeling and will.

1:05.08 We should have more of knowledge, know how to sublimate our feelings, and possess a strong will. This is spiritual life in a nutshell.

I:05.09 And herein lies the absolute necessity of regular Japam and meditation. Make the *whole* mind flow along a certain definite channel. Through steady practice comes the habit of working in harmony. Without following a strict course of Sadhana nothing can ever be achieved. The mind and the body must be curbed and made to obey.

I:05.11 Our task now is to stop taking in fresh impressions, and to remove those that we already have. This is very, very important.

I:06 -- Wiesbaden, May 1, 1934 -- (Vol.I 57-62)[CG 39-43]

Is our society civilized?

I:06.01 Really civilized society gives, even to the weak person, an opportunity to evolve. It never oppresses the weak person, but tries to assist him. No society that does not do this can ever be called civilized.

I:06.02 Might is not right, brutality is not manliness in a civilized society. It is the very sign of a terrible lack of culture to make might right, and such a society is uncivilized, it is a society of savages.

I:06.03 The uncivilized savage man can do little harm, but the uncivilized "civilized man" can do any amount of harm. He becomes a demon in every respect.

I:06.04 You see, here in Europe, will has grown, intellect has grown, but not the heart. The heart has not become pure and expanded. The heart has become crippled. It is stunted, has become perverted and an instrument of hatred. We need more of brain of the right sort and more of heart.

I:06.05 A savage is infinitely more harmless than this kind of so-called civilization. You see, it is this:— When the savage learns organization and gets all possible technical means, he becomes most degenerate and dangerous. And the Asuras, the demons, the mighty Asuras, are much more powerful than the gods.

How to help society

I:06.06 If anyone can ever help society, it is only those that get out of it for good; those who get out of the whole whirlpool, and go and help individuals. Everything else is just wishful thinking.

I:06.09 If we want to be of some slight service to these herds, we ourselves must first completely rid ourselves of this herd-instinct.

What little knowledge and spirituality we possess, we should always try to share with others.

I:06.10 If you really feel and realize that this society is demoniacal, the society of brutes and savages, go and change your own nature. Then at least, there will be one savage less. Show that you at least can conquer the savage in you and bring about a change. It is very grand to help others, but the blind cannot help the blind. He should help himself first.

I:06.11 The world is bad, no doubt. Awful things are happening every day. Quite true. But then, what are you? You can only change the world, if such a thing can be said at all, to the extent in which you bring about a change in your own person: for then at least that part of the world which is you has become better and more reasonable. But we always want grand tasks, become saviours of others, but not saviours of ourselves. How childish all this is! The baby posing as a hero!

Therefore, our task is to learn how to remain *in* the world, but not *of* the world. The worldling cannot advance and cannot become a civilized human being!

I:07 -- Wiesbaden, May 2, 1934 -- (Vol.I 63-74)[CG 44-52]

How to get rid of worldliness

I:07.01 Once they get into the net, the silly fish generally try to entangle themselves all the more. Very few get out of the net again.

I:07.02 The worldly man leading an impure life and tied to 'Woman and Gold' has lost all capacity to think of God or to pursue any definite course of Sadhana.

I:07.03 Very often people talk of things that do good neither to themselves nor to anybody else. You should rather observe silence in such cases. There is no sense in unnecessary worldly conversation.

I:07.04 Most people who read books do not even know how to sit perfectly quiet. Or people go in for some quite unnecessary activity. They cannot sit quiet. They must be busy with random activity, like mad monkeys. This is most ridiculous.

I:07.08 In some cases it is very effective to go on ridiculing the world in order to create a terrible disgust for everything worldly and all worldly relationships. Disgust should be created in beginners,

though, later on, this complex is dissolved after the dawn of illumination.

I:07.09 What are we, physically speaking, but heaps of nauseating worms and filth and dirt? Even if you try hard, you cannot keep your body clean for an hour even. And mentally, what filth and dirt and meanness! It is really nothing to make a song about if we look at our ordinary selves in a very dispassionate way.

Beware of brooding at time of meditation and Japam

I:07.05 We must have perfect faith in Japam, perfect faith in the purifying name of the Lord, perfect faith that we, by repeating it steadily and intensely, become purer and purer.

I:07.06 It is very dangerous to brood over the past and past actions with any intensity at the time of meditation and Japam.

I:08 -- Wiesbaden, May 3, 1934 -- (Vol.I 74-84)[CG 52-59]

Who is qualified for spiritual life?

I:06.10 Spiritual life does not mean that one would be awfully soft and tender. Do not become like puffed rice soaked in curds. But those who really know how to bite, should never go farther than hissing. Sentimentality and romance has nothing to do with love, and brutality has nothing whatever to do with manliness or heroism. Neither the sentimentalist nor the brute can ever rise to true manhood. You must learn to be as hard as a diamond and as soft and tender as the tenderest flower. It all depends on the case. So here, too, great discrimination and dispassionateness are absolutely necessary.

I:08.01 Whether the strength is manifest or not, it must always be there. The weakling has no place in spiritual life, neither has the lustful person. One who sincerely follows the spiritual path must have the capacity for sustained, unwavering effort, and tremendous will-power; he must not be soft or sentimental and romantic and sloppy. Tearful, mawkishly sentimental people will never be able to advance.

I:08.02 Swami Vivekananda does not want a colourless, jelly-fishy, indefinite wobbly mass of flesh and bones at all. He needs the heroic soul, the man who is a real dare-devil and cannot be curbed by sickly emotions and animal impulses, the real man who will risk anything for the sake of attaining his ideal.

Spiritual life: a glorious adventure

I:08.04 Spiritual life is such a great adventure. There is no end to spiritual experience and we feel that life is really worth living. We are no longer slaves. We truly enjoy life if we lead an out-and-out spiritual life and rise above all our petty impulses and desires and hopes. This is the only way to attain full manhood and full satisfaction in life. But the worldlings cannot even imagine such a state of freedom and bliss. They just go on groveling in the mire and think they are enjoying themselves mightily.

I:08.05 Try to follow the examples of the Great Ones. It is so elevating even to think of the lives they led. What does petty, puny little man matter after all, when we see the glory of the Divine manifesting itself through such mighty instruments? What do life and death matter? What do all our little, petty miserable attachments, likes and dislikes matter? They are shadows, standing between ourselves and the bliss that is ours if we but follow the right path and are determined to achieve something in this very life. Go on steadily with your practices: then you are sure to receive His Grace. There is no doubt.

I:09 -- Wiesbaden, May 4, 1934 -- (Vol.I 85-93)[CG 59-65]

Lower and higher learning

“Learning is of two kinds, the lower and the higher. The lower is the knowledge of the different scriptures: the highest knowledge is that by which the imperishable Self is known.”
—(Mundaka Up. 1.1.4-6)

I:09.01 The lower knowledge has its value to the extent in which it sharpens the intellect and develops our power of understanding and discrimination.

I:09.02 Real knowledge, however, is not something created by work, by effort of any kind: it is inherent, innate.

I:09.02a Discussion has its use, but only before Self-realization and as a help to real understanding. Sometimes our discussions become so very discursive that they draw us away from Reality and become an obstruction.

Vedanta means Realization

I:09.02b *‘Found your discrimination and your thoughts on Vedanta until you fall asleep or until you die.’* This is the gist of a fa-

mous saying. We should so live that we create the proper instrument for the highest perceptions, that we become purer and purer mentally and physically, that our mirror can one day reflect the whole glory of Brahman without stains and dust. You must always remember Vedanta does not mean simply empty philosophical theorizing. It always means realization, and the practical way to realization. Vedanta without practice and without realization becomes valueless. Intellectual gymnastics may be very good to sharpen the intellect, all the intellectual faculties, but the goal is something quite different. It is not hair-splitting and then finding that, after all, the hair we have been so busy splitting was not the hair we really wanted to split! This happens in the cases of many grandiloquent intellectualists, you see. It is so ludicrous. Realization, the actual direct perception of Truth, is something very, very different from that.

No sense in wailing

I:09.03 Why complain? We go and eat the fruits of the forbidden tree, lose all intuitive faculties, and then we are where we are. It is silly to complain about evil and badness etc., as long as we ourselves do not really change our ways. How can we see things as they are, if we just wallow in the mire of lust and violent likes and dislikes, and wear glasses coloured with heaps of dirt and filth, physical and mental? There is no sense in wailing continually, "Oh, how bad the world is! How bad men are! How criminal this is!" No. It is bad, no doubt, but then, rather see that you transform your own lives and become a blessing, and let the world go on merrily with its bad ways and all its follies. What has that got to do with you?

I:09.04 Take the case of fire. It burns no end of dirt and filth and rubbish; it takes no end of shapes—the shapes of all the things it burns, good and bad. But it is never contaminated thereby. It is free. It always remains the pure uncontaminated flame.

One thing is certain: no one who cherishes hatred and dislike and aversion and attachment in his heart will ever be able to see things and connections as they are, neither will he be able to make any progress in spiritual life. First these obstructions must be removed. But who is willing to do that?

We feel so proud of our righteous anger, of all our aversions, so strong; and yet only babies act as we do. This is not the way to attain the goal.

No power in circumstances

I:09.05 The light of the sun falls on everybody alike without ever taking the limitations of the different things it falls on. The all-pervading ether or air or whatever you wish to call it, takes the shape of this room, the shape of different jars, the shape of different persons, carries the different smells along, good and bad, but it is neither limited nor contaminated by them in its real substance. There is badness, evil, dirt, in the world, but why should you be contaminated? If you are, it is your own fault. If you feel affected, it is your fault, not the fault of other persons, not the fault of circumstances. It is just your own evil desire, your own attachment, your own weakness. So, go and change that, and everything will be changed for you. Destroy your own miserable clinging to the unrealities of life, to the dolls and puppets and limitations of life, and Reality will come, will be unveiled. It is so silly to go on complaining endlessly about things and people instead of rising to another plane yourselves!

I:10 -- Wiesbaden, May 5, 1934 -- (Nothing read today)

Callousness is not non-attachment

I:10.01 You should be non-attached, but you should not become callous to the suffering and misery of others, naturally. Callousness is not non-attachment, but selfishness, clinging to one's own dear ego. Try to render help only to the extent in which you already have the power. Otherwise pray to your Ishtam for those who need assistance and ask Him to come to their help. If you do this sincerely and intensely, He will do what is best for them. You see, you cannot help others efficiently if you cannot help yourselves. If a boat capsizes and you and your companions fall into the river, you may be able to save one of them, but not ten. If you try to save them all, all will be drowned, including yourself.

How to deal with the poison of the world

I:10.02 So, gauge your own strength first, dispassionately, using all your discrimination. Then try to help others if the opportunity arises. Even with your vibrations, with your will-power you can do something for them, to the extent in which these are in tune with the Will of the Divine, or of the Ishtam.

I:10.03 Shiva drank the poison so that the whole world might be saved. But one must first have the capacity to assimilate the poison

without being poisoned oneself. One must first attain to Shiva's tremendous purity and non-attachment. Better begin with small doses! To the extent in which your own system becomes pure and immune, greater and greater doses of poison can be assimilated without danger. The more you feel for others, the more you wish to help them, the more you should become non-attached and be drawn towards your Ishtam, towards the Lord, and the purer you should become. Pray to the Divine for yourself as well as for others and scold Him, tell Him, *"Why are you so perverse? Why are you putting so many obstructions in our way? Why are you just blinding yourself? This is your creation. See your own light!"*

We must work out our karma

I:10.04 Above all, increase your intensity, your firm determination to achieve something. Rather die than give up. During your Sadhana, many reverses will come, many setbacks, due to all sorts of things and currents. But just manfully hold on to the chain that is going to take you to the goal. Then you are safe whatever happens. But never let go, never give in. This is the secret of achievement.

I:10.05 Do not think that henceforth everything will be smooth sailing. It will not. Your Karma must be worked out, and this means suffering and pain for everybody. But the true aspirant is glad when they come to him, for this always means that just so much of his bad Karma is annihilated. Learn to be real children of Sri Ramakrishna, no matter what happens, and pray to Him to give you unwavering faith in yourselves and in the Divine. Make the Lord your all in all.² Then nothing else matters any more. Then you are safe at all times, wherever you are, whatever you have to pass through. Be pure, one-pointed, determined, and you are sure to attain the goal.

I:11 -- Wiesbaden, May 6, 1934 -- (Vol.I 94-96)[CG 65-67]

He alone knows Brahman who becomes Brahman

"Those who give up this supremely purifying thought of Brahman, live in vain and are on the same level with beasts.

2. Reference to the hymn 'Thou art my All in All, O Lord!' quoted in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* p.207 (full edition), which is one the Swami recommended learning by heart for use at prayer, prior to meditation etc. (Publisher)

“Blessed indeed are those virtuous persons who at first have this consciousness of Brahman and then develop it more and more. They are respected everywhere.” —(Aparokshanubhuti 130-131)

I:11.01 Truth that was reflected on the clear mirror of the mind, remains as ever in its own glory when the mirror of the mind is broken. The highest experience in spiritual life is when the mental state has completely stopped, when the bubble has become one with the ocean. ‘One who has become Brahman, he alone can know Brahman.’

“That mental state, illumined by the reflection of Pure Consciousness, makes the Supreme Brahman, unknown but identical with the individual self, its object and destroys the ignorance pertaining to Brahman. Then, just as a cloth is burnt when the threads composing it are burnt, so all the effects of ignorance are destroyed when their cause, viz., ignorance, is destroyed. Hence the mental state of absolute Oneness, which forms part of those effects, is also destroyed.

As the light of a lamp cannot illumine the lustre of the sun, but is overpowered by it, so Consciousness reflected in that state of the mind is unable to illumine the Supreme Brahman, self-effulgent and identical with the individual self, and is overpowered by it. And on the destruction of this state of absolute Oneness with which that Consciousness is associated, there remains only the Supreme Brahman, identical with the individual self, just as the image of a face in a looking-glass is resolved into the face itself, when the looking-glass is removed.”

—(Vedantasara 4.172-173)—

Passages for meditation

“In me, the boundless ocean, the ark of the universe moves hither and thither impelled by the wind of its own nature. I am not impatient. (7.1)

“In me, the limitless ocean, let the wave of the world rise or vanish of itself. I neither increase nor decrease thereby. (7.2)

“In me, the boundless ocean, is the imagination of the universe. I am highly tranquil and formless. In this alone do I abide. (7.3)

“The self is not the object nor is the object in That which is in-

finite and stainless. Thus It is free from attachment and desire and tranquil. In this alone do I abide. (7.4)

“Oh, I am really Consciousness itself. The world is like a juggler’s show. So how and where can there be any thought of rejection or acceptance in me?” (7.5)

—(Ashtavakra Samhita)—

I:11.02 These are wonderful passages for meditation, and you should all think of them deeply and repeatedly. ***It is very good to read such passages day by day after your practices and to meditate on them and their real meaning.***

Two kinds of Samadhi

Absorption (Samadhi) is of two kinds, viz. that attended with self-consciousness, and that without it.

Absorption with self-consciousness (Savikalpa Samadhi) is that in which the mental state, taking the form of Brahman, the One, without the merging of the distinction of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge.

In that state the knowledge of the Absolute manifests itself in spite of the consciousness of the relative, as when we know a clay elephant etc., the knowledge of the clay is also present.

Thus it has been said: “I am that Brahman, the Intelligence absolute, formless like ether, Supreme, eternally luminous, birthless, the one without a second, immutable, unattached, all-pervading, ever free.”

—(Upadesha Sahasri)—

Absorption without self-consciousness (Nirvikalpa Samadhi) is the total mergence in Brahman, the One without a second, of the mental state which has assumed IT’s form, the distinction of knower, knowledge and the object of knowledge being in this case obliterated. —(Vedantasara 5.193)—

Then, just as when salt has been dissolved in water it is no longer perceived separately, and the water alone remains, similarly, the mental state that has assumed the form of Brahman, the One without a second, is no longer perceived, and only the SELF remains. —(Vedantasara 5.198)—

Importance of ethical culture

I:11.03 As long as there is impurity, the impurity is to be re-

moved. As long as you have got individuality, purify your individuality. Vedanta and the highest morals must always go together, but morals are never an end in themselves. They are a means and nothing but a means to the end. We have to pass through awful darkness for a very long time, and unless there be this hedge of strict ethical culture and Brahmacharya, it is not possible for a soul to grow.

I:11.04 It is really extremely ridiculous when people speak of the highest Vedanta and do not stress ethics and a pure life. People who do not stress ethical culture and discipline, should never speak about Vedanta. They are most dangerous. No Vedantic doctrine and teaching can even be understood by the impure human mind tied to 'Woman and Gold'. Such people are all false and no Vedantins at all. Vedanta and lust and gold can never go together.

I:11.05 The horse wants to take us wherever it pleases. It is to be curbed and broken in and then to be taken along the right path with a tremendous effort of the will. Hold tight the reins! The horse is ever ready to create trouble.

I:12 -- Wiesbaden, May 7, 1934 -- (Vol.I 96-101)[CG 67-70]

Good and evil: are they real?

I:12.01 In the domain of relativity there are gradations. Now, in our present state of ignorance, both good and evil are real to us. So the bad is to be avoided and the good to be taken up. From the standpoint of the man of vision everything is unreal.

I:12.02 We on the plane of ignorance, steeped in ignorance as we are, bound by all sorts of childish whims and desires and passions, must always be on our guard. To the man of vision to whom the Atman is the only Reality, and by whom It is experienced as such at all times, the world is neither good nor bad. Even if we question the reality of things, it helps us to a certain extent. This whole identification with what is not really real must be constantly undermined, and finally shattered for ever.

I:12.03 Unless our attitude changes, unless all our reactions, ideas and feelings are completely overhauled and changed, unless our vision of life changes, it is impossible for us to transform ourselves completely and make any substantial progress.

I:12.05 The bad is as real as the good, to us, while we are on the plane of ignorance and are instruments of ignorance, but to the per-

fectured soul both are equally unreal and unsubstantial. You see, it is this: the good can never be real and the evil unreal. This is absurd, though some persons would like it to be so. Such people are out-and-out pleasure-seekers and slaves to their own craving for the pleasant. They are fools, not wise men.

How to awaken from this world-dream

“Atman (the seer) in Itself is alone permanent, the seen is opposed to it (i.e., transient)—such a settled conviction is truly known as discrimination.” —(Aparokshanubhuti 5)—

I:12.06 The world is constantly changing and as such no permanent peace or blessedness can be had in it. The first dawn of discrimination brings us the recognition that this world is changing, unstable, unreliable in every respect. And to the extent in which we are able to break down our ego and our attachment, this whole world-dream gradually vanishes. First we see only shadows, then even these shadows and their phantom-like play stops.

I:12.07 Truth transcends all knowledge, but Truth can be directly experienced once the instrument of perception is created.

I:12.08 It is very difficult for us to think that what we call our personality is also quite unreal. Only when we blast our personality, do we become one with the Absolute and gain freedom.

I:12.09 In order to develop a spirit of non-attachment, it is very helpful to look upon the objects of the world as constantly changing. What is finite, cannot give us infinite peace and security. What is evanescent, cannot bring us any permanence.

I:12.10 To the extent in which we develop a spirit of renunciation, it will be possible for us to understand Vedanta more and more. Vedanta cannot be properly understood by an impure mind.

I:12.11 We should never think that God has given us perfect senses, and that what we perceive with the senses is real and reliable, and other things are unreal. Your radio-set receives endless electrical waves, but your senses cannot receive them in any conscious way before they have been transformed by your radio.

I:12.12 Only when we have got the powerful instrument needed, can we see. Things that we cannot perceive with our gross mind, we can perceive with our purified mind.

I:12.13 The scientist needs his telescope and microscope for

some of his most important discoveries. Without these he cannot see. So without a perfected and purified instrument, we cannot see really.

I:12.14 The senses are deluding us, and the senses have only got their limited, distorted and distorting vision.

I:12.15 The spiritual man, having more powerful instruments, is able to perceive, see, feel more than others, and all this in a less and less distorted way.

I:12.16 The whole trouble is the preparation of the instrument takes such a long time, but when it is ready, you see everything at a glance.

I:12.18 So we must have infinite singleness of mind, infinite determination, infinite patience. Let us go on and on just preparing the instrument with all possible care, the mental instrument more than anything else. This means time and great perseverance, unwavering conviction that the way we are shown can take us to the goal if we only apply ourselves to it with our whole heart, will and intellect.

I:12.19 What the Great Ones have realized, can be verified by every one of us. And the means of realization lies within us always. The man of realization becomes so as the result of having verified these truths himself. Mere faith will not do, but revelation never fails. If it is a direct revelation, it always reveals Truth, and the Truth is always the same to all, if it is the Truth.

I:12.20 To everyone who follows the right process, the vision will be the same,—but all conditions must have been fulfilled in such a case. The right methods must have been applied.

I:13 -- Wiesbaden, May 8, 1934 -- (Vol.I 102-107)[CG 71-74]

Brahman, the eternal witness

I:13.01 Evolution always means that that which is simple becomes complex, that which is homogeneous becomes heterogeneous.

I:13.02 Within the domain of relativity we find this diversity everywhere. The clay elephant is very, very different from the clay mouse. The ripple is quite different from the wave. The wave is different from the ocean, and even the ocean is different from the waer-substance. The bubble can never be Ishwara, as a bubble, but the real substance of the bubble is Brahman and can realize its being

Brahman. Manifestations are different. Substance is one. As long as we go on stressing manifestations, clinging to a particular form—mental or physical—in ourselves and in others, realization of Brahman is quite impossible; real growth is impossible. Brahman is the uncaused cause of all things, when seen from our side, while we are still enveloped in ignorance. On attaining illumination, we realize that It has never been the cause of anything at all.

I:13.03 That by which the mind is able to think, how to think of That? That by which everything is known, how to know That? With the help of the sun we see everything, but the sun does not stand in need of any other light.

I:13.04 We are so caught up in the net of the changing things that we are not able to perceive that which stands as the Eternal Witness and exists under all circumstances. Without that Consciousness it is not possible for us even to feel that we are. Even the ocean cannot exist if there is no water-substance.

I:13.05 Materially, our bodies are small whirlpools in an ocean of matter. Our small minds whirlpools in an ocean of mind. Our little limited souls whirlpools in the Cosmic Soul. But all this still belongs to the phenomenal. It is not the one and only Reality of Brahman.

*“Brahman, being self-luminous, does not depend on the individual Consciousness for Its illumination.” (Pañcadasi 7.92)
—(Vedantasara 4.176)—*

I:13.06 The Absolute, Brahman is realized when the individual ceases to be. It is not possible for the poor salt-doll to gauge the depth of the ocean. It cannot retain its doll-individuality and at the same time be one with the ocean.

Do not cling to the form

I:13.08 It should be the attempt of the devotee to try to think in terms of at least the Cosmic, of which everything here is a manifestation.

I:13.09 To us, the form appears to be the only reality. So we cling to the form, want to appropriate the form of some other person, his physical or mental form or both, and then we come to grief again and again. What is the poor puppet without the person who really pulls the strings and makes it move? A poor, lifeless, ridiculous thing, scarcely worth to be looked at. But who cares for him who moves it? The form is but a shadow and without light no shadow would even be

possible. And our trouble is we care not for the light, but get tremendously attached to the helpless little shadow.

“Bondage consists only in desire, and its destruction is said to be liberation. By non-attachment to the world alone is attained constant joy of the realization (of the Self).”

—(Ashtavakra Samhita 10.4)—

Who is willing to follow Sri Ramakrishna’s teachings?

I:13.07 The infinite grandeur of Sri Ramakrishna’s teachings is that he shows us how to realize all this step by step, how to approach the goal safely and efficiently. But who wants to follow him? Who really does and acts up to what he is being told by his teacher? Who performs his Japam and meditation, all his practices steadily, energetically, intensely, day by day, so that they can bear fruit? Who is willing to renounce his silly likes and dislikes, personal clinging, personal claims on others, hatred and aversion? No one wants to do it, but then they all come and complain, “Oh, I have not attained anything in spite of my efforts!” What efforts? It is not so easy as all that!

Necessity of Sadhana to purify the mental instrument

I:13.11 After having studied the scriptures, a strict regular and prolonged course of Sadhana is absolutely necessary. Without daily intense spiritual practice the question of realizing anything would not even arise. Now there should be serious attempt at realization. Drop all half-heartedness.

I:13.16 You should all study these things again and again, ponder over them, think of them, make them your very own, and always try to find out the deeper meanings that may still be hidden from you. If you do, you will see what a mine of wealth they are going to yield, what a great help and what staunch reliable friends they are.

I:13.17 The greater the purification of our mental instrument, the purer our life and our will, the better we come to understand the words of the Great Ones, their real meaning, all their implications; and the greater does our longing grow to attain something ourselves, to change our life, to transform the base ore of our ordinary life into the pure gold of Divine realization.

“After realization, humility and other attributes which are steps to the attainment of knowledge, as also such virtues as non-injury etc., persist like so many ornaments.

Thus it has been said, 'Such qualities as non-violence etc., come spontaneously to a man who has got Self-knowledge. They have not to be sought after.' (Naishkarmya-siddhi 4.69)"
(Vedantasara 6.224–225)—

I:13.18 Let us be up and doing before this instrument of ours becomes too weak and too decrepit for our own salvation and for the welfare of others. There is no end of bliss in store, for all who sincerely and one-pointedly aspire after Truth, but first, all the obstacles must be removed with great determination. Think of the tremendous determination of the Buddha, that night when he sat down under the Bodhi-tree! This should be your attitude, too:

"Let my body fall, let my body perish, let it die in the attempt, but let me not give it up before I have reached the goal."

Only to those who have this sort of doggedness will realization come. Not to the laggards and half-hearted beggars who always want something from phenomenal life. This path is not for them.

I:14 -- Wiesbaden, May 9, 1934 -- (Nothing Read)

What is the subtle body?

I:14.01 The subtle body is the SELF, from the Atman.

The subtle bodies are what are known as the Linga Shariras having seventeen parts.

The component parts (of the Linga Sharira) are the five organs of perception, the intellect, the mind, the five organs of action and the five vital forces.

The five organs of perception are the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose.

—(Vedantasara 2.61-63)—

Intellect (Buddhi) is that modification of the internal instrument (Antahkarana) which determines.

The mind (Manas) is that modification of the internal instrument which considers the pros and cons of a subject (Sankalpa and Vikalpa).

—(Vedantasara 2.65-66)—

Memory (Chitta) is that modification of the inner organ

(antahkarana-vritti) which remembers.

Egoism (Ahamkara) is that modification of the inner-organ which is characterized by Self-consciousness.

—(Vedantasara 2.68-69)—

The organs of action are the organs of speech, the hands, the feet and the organs of evacuation and generation.

—(Vedantasara 2.75)—

As long as desire which is the abode of the state of indiscrimination continues, there will verily be the sense of attachment and aversion, which is the branch and sprout of the (tree of) Samsara.

—(Ashtavakra Samhita 16.7)—

Thus, through ignorance arises in the Atman the delusion of the body, which, again, through Self-realization, disappears in the supreme Atman. —(Aparokshanubhuti 87)—

I:14.03 Sankaracharya says: “*That which is a power dwelling in this physical ear, of which this physical ear is like an abode, is a special power for receiving sounds.*”

I:14.04 You see, for everything, the vibrations are there, even if you, owing to your faulty senses, do not perceive them. Think of your radio set or even of the telephone. Your ears cannot hear that kind of vibrations, yet they are there, and once they come to the right instrument, they are transformed, so that you can perceive them. So for the beginner everything is a question of creating the right instrument for receiving the subtler vibrations of life. Behind everything there stands a very, very subtle power, giving it life. So you should all seek to heighten your sensibility, to become very sensitive in a higher sense.

I:14.05 The Vedantic teacher goes much further than the physiologist. He says, there is something, a vital energy that makes even the brain-centre alive. The physiologist sees the material centres, as it were, but not that which makes them work, which gives them life, which makes them fit for their work.

I:14.06 This is the case with reference to all organs. There always is the subtle energy—this subtle power, the subtle sense of the ear, the subtle sense of the eye, etc.,—that is always quite different from the gross physical instrument.

I:14.07 The organs of action have also some very subtle power at their back, and the ‘organs of action’ spoken of in the Scriptures are always the subtle ones, not their gross physical manifestations.

This should never be misunderstood when reading such passages in the *Vedantasara* etc. Western scholars very often do not grasp this fully and distort the real meaning of such passages.

I:14.09 There is a subtle power that is connected with the subtle body, that manifests itself through the gross organ. And there is a subtle body. I can feel all the different sheaths quite distinctly.

I:14.10 To the soul, the Jiva, even all these organs are *outer* organs, because it has to work with all these material instruments of the body. If a thing is subtle, this does not mean that it is not material. There is subtle matter and all things mental are nothing but matter, too.

I:14.13 The Antahkarana (the 'inner organ') consists of Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara.³

I:14.14 It is all one synthetic energy, though it is given various names according to its various functions. Just as the same electric energy can be modified into light, heat etc., etc. It is one thing modifying itself into many things. The oneness of the energy should never be overlooked by the student.

The Self is distinct from the subtle body

I:14.15 The SELF is something distinct from the subtle body, but it has become 'associated' with it. Until the highest knowledge dawns on one, this complex—the 'association'⁴ of the soul with the subtle body etc., will never break up.

I:14.16 According to this analysis, the ego is a modification of the inner organ. The modification rises, and then we identify ourselves with it.

I:14.17 The part of your mind that watches another part of your mind, gets, to a greater extent, the reflection of the Self. But all this is within the domain of the mind. It is not realization at all. But as a means, you must increase this faculty of the mind, this faculty of the 'Witness' standing aloof and watching all the bubbles and waves and ripples of thought and impulses rising in the lake of the mind. This is one of the principal paths leading to control. Learn to be wide-awake, always. Learn to discover every desire, every impulse, every thought, the very moment it begins to rise as a tiny, scarcely perceptible

3. Cf. *Vedantasara* 65-66 and 68-69 and note on p.49 of 1949 ed. (Adv. Ashrama).

4. Sam-yoga.

bubble, and then prick it at once. This is a very troublesome affair for most beginners. We are neither asleep nor awake. We are so dull and so impervious to higher vibrations, that it requires a lot of energy and determination to become really wide-awake and to be up and doing.

I:15 -- Wiesbaden, May 19, 1934 -- (Vol.I 107-110)[CG 74-77]

Development of the intuitive faculty

I:15.01 The purified ego is like a very bright mirror. Its reflection is very bright, but it is, after all, nothing but a reflection.

I:15.02 What is wanted is the development of the intuitive faculty that makes one realize the presence of the Divine in a direct way. Even in the path of out-and-out Jñana, what reveals the Truth is not reasoning and ratiocination at all, but direct intuitive vision.

I:15.03 When the salt-doll ceases to be, it becomes one with the ocean. When the individual gives up all the limiting adjuncts [*upadhis*] he becomes one with the Absolute. The Absolute cannot be known, but one can become one with IT.

I:15.04 So the knower has to transcend his mind and become one with the Absolute. The mind must be blasted, destroyed. Everything must first be thrown off.

I:15.05 The man of realization feels ITS working in all states of consciousness. His knowledge never leaves him. He has no decision to make, because for him there is no choice between two or more ways, but only one way. Everything else becomes like shadows. He is the Eternal Witness of all things.

I:15.06 It is the self-luminous Principle that does not stand in need of any other thing to illumine It.

I:15.07 The highest physical and mental purity is necessary if one wishes to attain It, and not merely that:— one must also transcend the purified mind in order to be one with the Impersonal Principle. The purified mind becomes an instrument for the realization of the manifestations of the Personal God as spiritual forms.

I:15.08 A new body, a new instrument of spiritual vision is formed in the course of one's spiritual practice, and without this new body, no perception of the Truth is possible. Sadhana is absolutely necessary, and strict regular Sadhana at that. The body, the mind that is fit for spiritual vision must first be created, and this is the sense

and meaning and importance of Sadhana. This new instrument is quite different from the ordinary body, the ordinary mind.

I:15.09 The body, the senses, the vital energies, the mind,—are all to be polarized in a certain definite way.

The Personal and the Impersonal God

I:15.10 There are manifestations of the Personal God, and these manifestations are a great help on our path. Their help is very important for every aspirant, but, **always remember that the Formless is at the back of the form**, that without the Formless the form could not even manifest itself. The Personal God is not separate from the Impersonal, but another aspect of the same Being.

“The manifestation of the Personal God is often a spiritual form which is seen only by the purified human soul. In other words, these forms are realized by the organs of spiritual vision, belonging to that spiritual body which is derived from the Lord. Not every one, but only the perfect man can see these Divine Forms through the grace of my MOTHER.”—(Sri Ramakrishna)

“At times, when the conviction, ‘I am the body’, clings to me, I worship Thee as the One undivided God; then I look upon myself as a part of Thee—a fragment, as it were, of Divinity! At other times, I meditate upon Thee as my Divine Master, and think of myself as Thy servant. When, however, I am blessed, O Rama, with knowledge of God the Absolute, I see, I realize that I am THOU and THOU art me!”—(Hanuman)—

“The wise should always think with great care of the invisible, the visible and everything else, as his own Self which is consciousness itself.

Having reduced the visible to the invisible, the wise should think of the universe as one with Brahman. Thus alone will he abide in eternal felicity with the mind full of consciousness and bliss.”—(Aparokshanubhuti 141-142)—

I:15.10a This state is always a heightening of consciousness, not a falling down to the subliminal level, which is very bad and very dangerous. It is not an unconscious state, but a *superconscious* state. It is quite different from unconsciousness.

I:15.11 The spiritual aspirant should always see that in all his moods, he is able to establish some connection or other with the

Lord. He should never feel cut off from Him. The contact must always be kept up.

I:15.12 In every state of consciousness, attempts should be made to stay in tune with God in some form or other. This is very, very important.

I:16 -- Wiesbaden, May 11, 1934 -- (Vol.I 111-114)[CG 77-80]

The way to the Impersonal lies through the Personal

I:16.01 The way to the Impersonal is always through the Personal. We cannot go to the terrace all of a sudden. No one can see the Father who has not seen the Son. However greatly the Absolute may appeal to us, to our intellect, the Absolute cannot be reached by mere intellectual speculation.

I:16.02 The trouble is that we go on thinking that we are the garment, the vesture, the shell, in which we happen to be clothed. To what nation, race, caste, class, colour, does the SELF belong? We cannot progress as long as we go on identifying ourselves with any of these. So all these conceptions must be steadily undermined through intense spiritual practice if we ever want to reach the goal.

“The Vedas do not cleanse him who is wanting in good conduct.”—(Brahma Sutras)—

The main condition for realization is purity

I:16.02a Those who do not perform their practices regularly and intensely will not achieve anything. They will just remain where they are, perhaps gain a certain widening of outlook, intellectually, not as the effect of any glimpse or realization. But that is all. They will just remain atheists. Realization in any form cannot be had without paying the full price.

I:16.04 Purity is very necessary, and what real purity means, you cannot even imagine in your present state. It is much more than a little physical and a little mental purity, much more than avoiding the grossest forms of impurity and curbing the grossest physical and mental desires. The task is very very great.

I:16.05 Only when the ego is removed, our sense of *unity* is realized. And without attaining unity, the goal is not attained.

I:16.06 Our whole individuality must be purified. Now, it is most impure, coloured as it is by no end of physical and mental desires,

passions, instincts etc. To the purified ego (mind) the Lord reveals Himself in a flash. So what stands between us and realization is just that impurity. Nothing else. If we were pure, realization would reveal itself in a moment. Never blame anybody else, never blame circumstances, but go and blame yourselves. The fault is yours and yours alone.

I:16.08 Peace can be had only by refusing to become identified with any of the limiting adjuncts. There are friends and friends. You should make the SELF your friend and give up all false friends, however pleasant they are. The false friend always helps you in clinging to false conceptions, to false personalities, and above all to himself. This is one of the greatest obstructions we create for ourselves and it must be removed.

There should be no clinging, no aversion, no likes and dislikes, but a dispassionate aloofness, which does not exclude love in its widest sense, uncaused love radiating everywhere without ever raising any personal end, no personal object in view.

I:16:07 ***The conception of God with attributes but without form corresponds to the ocean. God with attributes and with form is the mighty wave. And we are the bubbles.***

I:17 -- Wiesbaden, May 12, 1934 -- (Vol.I 114-117)[CG 79-81]

More experience — less talk

I:17.06 Put greater stress on your experience than on your talks, that is the central idea. Without spiritual experience no one has really gained anything. Frothy, high-sounding talks do not mean anything, do not make a person spiritual at all. These can be had without purity; spiritual experience never. But we are so beggarly, generally, that we are content with the ***mental form of enjoyment*** such talks give us; but it is after all just enjoyment, and nothing but that. You have heard so much, you know so much, theoretically. Now go, perform your practices with great intensity and realize for yourselves what you have heard. Otherwise it has all been just a waste of time, and our time might have been better employed.

All those who are sincere, can attain something, get at least a glimpse, but only if they stick to their path whatever happens, and go through their daily practices with great conscientiousness and perseverance. Not otherwise.

“An indescribable state is attained by the sage whose mind has melted away and who is free from the display of the mind, and from delusion, dream and dullness.” —(Ashtavakra Samhita 17.20)

I:18 -- Wiesbaden, May 13, 1934 -- (No passages read)

Jñana means direct perception of Truth

I:18.01 In the *Kena Upanishad*, we read:

“Brahman is truly comprehended by him who knows It as incomprehensible. He knows It not, who thinks It is comprehended by him. It is unknown to those who know and known to those who do not know.” —(Kena Up. 2.3)—

“If a man knows It here, then there is truth: if he does not know This here, then there is the great destruction for him. The wise having realized that Atman in all beings, and departing from this world, become immortal.” —(Kena Up. 2.5)—

I:18.02 This means that we have to transcend our mind, our empirical, intellectual knowing, before we can realize It. Jñana is not intellectual knowledge. It has nothing to do with superfine intellectual systems and theories, but real Jñana means **direct perception of Truth, Self-realization**, and can only be attained after a long and strenuous process of physical and mental purification. So many people talk glibly about the ‘Absolute’, about ‘Oneness’ etc., etc., but what does it mean after all? What do these wonderful ‘Jñanis’ know? Nothing. It is just empty, grand-sounding talk. That is all. The out-and-out dualist who has realized something is more than those wonderful ‘Jñanis’ who look down upon the dualists and their God.

“He has gained the fruit of Knowledge as well as of the practice of Yoga, who, contented and with purified senses, ever enjoys being alone.” —(Ashtavakra Samhita 17.1)—

I:18.03 This is the test for the true Jñani, you see. And the *Ashtavakra Samhita* goes on to say:

5. Comment: A man of Self-knowledge has his mind completely purged of all delusion, inertia, etc., that obstruct the vision of the Reality. In such a state of the mind all its functions, Vrittis, cease to operate and it is as good as destroyed. Then the final realization **bursts forth** of which no description is ever possible. [*Ashtavakra Samhita* trans. by Swami Nityaswarupananda p.143, Advaita Ashrama, 2nd edition 1953].

“Oh, the knower of Truth is never miserable in this world, for the whole universe is filled by himself alone.

No sense-objects ever please him who delights in Self even as the leaves of the Neem tree do not please an elephant who delights in the Sallaki leaves.”

—(Ashtavakra Samhita 17.2-3)—

I:18.04 In a way, spiritual life means breaking down the false personality and asserting the true personality.

I:18.05 ***If this personality is false, why not remember this all the time?*** Why not follow a determined course and realize the Truth?

How to purify the physical, mental & causal body

I:18.06 Our whole trouble is that our physical body and our mental body are not properly prepared, and then nothing can be achieved. So in the life of every aspirant there is a long period of preparation, which sometimes lasts many, many years.

I:18.07 First the *physical body* must be purified. Then the *mental body* and finally the *causal body* too, which is the most difficult task of all.

I:18.08 It is quite easy to avoid impure physical contact with others and to maintain the surface-purity of the body, but it is very difficult to purify the whole organism. The deeper you go, the greater the trouble. The whole nervous system, all the nerve-currents should be so adjusted that it helps us in our spiritual striving. All the organs, even our breath, are to be so directed that they help us in our spiritual practice. A sort of ‘polarization’ is to be brought about. And then comes the purification of the subtle body through purer, holier thought.

I:18.09 You should all see that no further energy is allowed to go to the senses than that which is absolutely necessary for keeping the body in good health. All the remaining energy must be directed into different channels away from the organs of sense and expression through the senses.

I:18.10 After that, the intellect must be purified, and the will must be directed along higher channels, and all our feelings must be sublimated.

I:18.11 Manas, Buddhi, Chitta, as well as our ego, must be purified.

I:18.14 Instead of having intensity, determination, doggedness

of obstinacy along the wrong lines, for the wrong things, have them along the right lines for the right things. And for that, better, more dispassionate judgment, and better, more definite knowledge is necessary.

I:18.15 The task in higher Vedanta is not merely the purification of all these three bodies, but the destruction of them all. But the purification comes first. Before we bombard or blast this personality, the encrustations must be made as thin as possible.

Procedure for Meditation

I:18.16 Procedure for meditation:

- *Just after sitting for meditation, first of all feel the centre of consciousness intensely, the centre where you meditate; and think your self to be a Divine Spark, which goes to the lowest centre, the Muladhara, and from there rises again to Sahasrara. In this, the physical body is forgotten, only the spark remains. There should be no idea of the physical body at all. Try to divest yourself of all limiting adjuncts. Think of the Infinite Divine Effulgence that fills this centre of consciousness, that fills all centres, that fills the whole universe.*

[This is a very effective form of practice and meditation.]

- *As we rise higher and higher from the Muladhara centre, we take all the thoughts belonging to that particular centre with us and merge them in the Infinite Light.*

- *We should think that our gross, subtle and also our causal body with all its differentiations, limitations etc., is merged in the Infinite Light.*

- *And then, finally, let the spark also get merged in that Infinite Effulgence. Remain in that state if you can, thinking of the infinite ocean of light: Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. If you can remain in that state, that will be real Vedantic meditation.*

- *Think, as a training for your mind, that your personality, your dear ones, your whole property, the whole world gets lost and dissolved. Try to merge everything, every thought which rises up in your mind, into the Infinite Light.*

[Truth is not effulgence, not physical light, but you must have that idea, lest your mind becomes a perfect blank, which is very, very dangerous for the beginner.]

- *And then have intense Japam, just to help your meditation.*
- *Create, as it were, a luminous body, a holy spark, and then dissolve them in the ocean, personal-impersonal.*

I:18.25 **Have this procedure as an important part of your daily meditation** and, after some practice, you will find it takes just two minutes, not more. Your will-power is to be developed. We must proceed step by step. No high-flying theories without practice and realization. We are not out for intellectual enjoyment, which is but sense-enjoyment after all.

I:18.26 In the course of your meditation, thoughts of others will come. Then think of them also as luminous and merge them in the ocean. This **merging** is a very important factor.

I:18.27 Every day before Japam or before meditation, make the mind pass through this procedure. If anything rises in the mind, make it melt, dissolve it, merge it.

I:18.29 This process helps us in coming into touch with the Immanent aspect of Vedanta.

I:18.28 Say to all these things, pure and impure, pleasant and unpleasant: *“Get merged in the ocean and be at rest! Or, meditate like me, but do not trouble me further!”*

I:18.30 Sometimes in our thoughts we quarrel with people. Better tell them, *“Get merged!”*, and tell every one of them, *“Realize your true nature!”*

I:18.31 Sometimes some prayer also helps:

“The face of Truth lies hidden under thy gold orb. That do thou open, O Sun, that I, who am devoted to the Truth alone, may see It.”—(Isha Upanishad 15)—

I:18.32 You want to see the real Truth at the back of things and not get blinded by the splendour of Its reflections.

“O Thou, the lonely courser of heaven, the supporter and controller of all, O son of Prajapati, O sun, contract Thy rays, withdraw Thy light; may I behold now through Thy grace Thy most blessed form; I am indeed HE, that Purusha—who dwells there. Now, let my breath go unto the all-pervading, immortal Prana, and let this body too, be reduced to ashes. Remember my past deeds, O mind, remember!”—(Isha Upanishad 17)—

I:18.33 False light, as it were, covers the surface of the true light. The light of the sun prevents us from seeing the truth. Everywhere the false light, the false glamour, attracts us, and we forget even to think of the truth that is *behind* all this deceptive glamour.

Always have the centre of your consciousness fixed

I:18.34 You should always, under any circumstances, have the centre of your consciousness fixed. When a trouble arises, go there. When temptation in any form approaches you, go there. When any evil impulse wants to take shape, go there. When you get kicks and blows from the outside world, go there. Keep it fixed at all times. Make it your very home. ***Without this shifting of the centre of consciousness, it is an impossible task to gain control.*** And you cannot efficiently shift your centre of consciousness and keep it fixed, nor can you change the nerve-currents and make them flow along higher channels, unless you perform your practices steadily for a long time.

I:18.35 Sometimes, owing to our old habits, the centre of our consciousness goes down even if we try to raise it, and then, at once, all kinds of thoughts peculiar to that centre begin to bubble up. ***Always think of yourself as a soul, not as a thinking entity or a body.***

I:18.36 Effective thought-currents must always be raised to counter, and break down the false thought-currents that perpetuate our false sense of personality and our clinging to it.

Post-meditation procedure

I:18.37 And, after meditation, have some set prayers that must be repeated every day. Along with these prayers also, repeat some of the fine stanzas of Sankaracharya. When repeating Sankara's passages, when saying, "*I am not the body*" etc., etc., think intensely, "*This body is not myself*" etc., etc. The thought must have great intensity behind it.

I:18.40 All this is a combination of the negative and the positive methods of spiritual practice. Deny the body and all that, and assert the existence of the SELF, but assert it intensely, vigorously, with your whole being. However, under no circumstances should there be any blank in the mind. The ***mind should never be allowed to become a blank***, not even for a short time.

I:18.41 For many beginners, this brings about a headache. Some even get completely unsettled for a time. But then there are so

many other things that bring us headaches. Why not have this for a change, for something that is good.

The whole course of life has to be changed

I:18.42 Our nearest and dearest we have made strangers. SHE who is our very dearest has become a perfect stranger to us. But we cling instead to all sorts of miserable little puppets, to all sorts of flimsy trashy shows that won't bring peace.

I:18.43 The whole course of our life has to be changed. We must undo what we have done. We have, as it were, thrown our friend out, and then allowed our enemies to come in and live with us. So there should be counter-actions and counter-thoughts, to undo our former bad actions and bad binding thoughts. This should be done intensely and at all times, not only during our practices.

I:18.45 The task is a long and difficult one and requires grand heroism and perseverance. Spiritual life is not a bed of roses, but real up-hill work.

I:19 -- Wiesbaden, May 14, 1934 -- (Vol.I 117-126)[CG 81-87]

The 'seed' of Japam

I:19.09 A seed always appears to be very simple, even the seed of a mighty tree. But if we water it, nurture it, look after it properly, give it plenty of sun, it becomes a mighty tree some day. It is likewise with the repetition of the Lord's name, with Japam, which seems such an absurd, such a simple practice to us. Japam is like so many seeds of a mighty tree. The sound-symbol takes us to the Divine. Word and thought are inseparably connected, so is thought and substance. So the sound takes us to the thought, and the thought to the Reality.

Consciousness is an end in itself

I:19.10 Consciousness is the goal, and consciousness is an end in itself. Our present conscious range has become very narrow. It has no depth. It is like a sheet of paper. So we should increase our awareness, our sensibility. We should become really conscious. The higher state of consciousness must be brought down into everyday life. We must be able to maintain at least a little of it at all times, not only during our practices. And with steady daily practice this can be done. Then we are comparatively safe. Not before.

I:20 -- Wiesbaden, May 15, 1934 -- (Vol.I 126-138)[CG 87-96]

The awakened Kundalini Shakti

I:20.01 Some forms of Tantrika worship are very psychological and a great help in our Sadhana. Pranayama can be a very efficient means to remove lesser and bigger sins. And the aspirant feels that he has got a new personality, purified of all its dross and alloy. The called-up Kundalini-fire burns up the old, impure personality and brings a new spiritual awareness. In all cases, what comes up again is a new personality that comes from the light. Our task now is to break the false personality. It is bent on dogging us, but it can be burnt completely. It can be killed through the fire of knowledge or the all-devouring fire of the awakened Kundalini Shakti. But the process is very dangerous, and should not be attempted by those not leading a perfectly pure life, sexually and mentally. If the Kundalini falls down again, the nerves are shattered or it may even mean the lunatic asylum for life.

Why most people do not improve in spiritual life

I:20.05 Most people do not improve in spiritual life, because the old self is not resolutely thrown overboard. You cannot go on clinging to the old self and its associations and yet progress. There must be a tremendous desire to overhaul everything, to lay new foundations if necessary. The wrong foundations are to be dug up, completely, mercilessly. Throw away everything that is old and wrong. New wine should be put into new bottles. The old bottles will always keep something of the old smell.

I:20.05a Do it manfully. Bless the pain if it brings pain. Without this uprooting, however painful it may be, you cannot advance along the right lines. You cannot recover without a strong curative crisis. You should not commit fresh evil and fresh impure actions, and should forget all the old things, all old associations, all past impressions, uproot them and burn them. Let the past, good or bad, pure and impure, be forgotten, dissolved, completely effaced. The mind is the cause of our freedom, and the mind is the cause of our bondage, and finally the mind has to be transcended for good.

I:20.04 There must be relentless training of the will, sublimation of all our feelings, and enlightenment of the intellect. All this is a slow and troublesome process in the case of most people. But what we all have to do with great energy is to put our shoulder to the wheel.

Dynamic faith and realization

I:20.03 Even the out-and-out Jñani must have tremendous faith in the holy symbol and in the path that he follows. Burning faith should lead one to realization. Faith must have a dynamic aspect. Dynamic faith transforms because it is based on Truth.

I:20.06 Faith is to be verified through realization. Most of us do not feel the necessity of realization or do not think realization is possible. We wait patiently for some hazy hereafter. This form of religion is no good. What is the use of dreaming of something I cannot realize here and now? Here in this very life? Wishful thinking will not lead us anywhere. Such 'faith' is not really dynamic, but a dope.

I:20.07 We should try to see some tangible result as early as possible, not only at some vague future time in this life. We have to be free, as soon, as early as possible. There must be a tremendous irresistible intensity in our soul.

I:20.08 Realize the marvellous intensity of Ramprasad's songs. How his soul longs for the MOTHER, clings to the MOTHER, is filled by the thought of the MOTHER. Ramprasad was one of our Bengali poets. He lived in the middle of the 18th century. Sri Ramakrishna loved his songs and used to sing many of them to his disciples and to the devotees visiting him. They are so full of intense spiritual longing, so full of dedication and unflinching devotion. If only we possessed the tenth part of his yearning, everything would soon be all right for us.

I:21 -- Wiesbaden, May 16, 1934 -- (Vol.I 138-147)[CG 96-102]

Free yourselves from hatred and dislike

I:21.01 It is one of the conditions of effective Sadhana to be as straightforward as possible. One should be free from all crookedness and all vindictiveness and hatred. The bent iron is to be straightened. All feelings of dislike in whatever form they may make their appearance are to be subdued and dissolved. We may salute a bad manifestation from a safe distance, but we should never feel any hatred or dislike for it. Hatred and dislike are no solution at all. They are simply the reverse of attachment and desire. You will never be able to progress as long as you cherish any negative feelings with reference to anything.

I:22 -- Wiesbaden, May 17, 1934 -- (Vol.I 147-155)[CG 102-108]

Bhakti-Yoga specially adapted to our present age

I:22.03 If love of God is intensified, love of the world becomes attenuated, less and less strong, until it disappears completely. Bhakti Yoga is a very natural process. There is far less strain in it than in the other Yogas, and it is specially adapted to our present age.

I:22.04 The worldly-minded householder has no means of salvation. Salvation is not yet for him. He will have to pass through more incarnations, until he reaches the stage when he can begin to make some headway towards the goal. The worldly man has no place in spiritual life, neither can he really enjoy life. He has no real experience of true bliss. He is full of all sorts of anxieties, awfully anxious about many things, always running wildly after the enjoyments of life, and never really enjoying life. You cannot enjoy life, realize the bliss of life, if there is still attachment in you, if you still feel aversion and hatred and attraction and are a slave to all your bodily and mental impulses, good and bad, rising from the subconscious. No man who has entangled himself in the world, in the snares of lust and greed and power, will ever be able to live, to find fulfilment. He is always running after some will-o'-the-wisp, after the mirage that can never quench his thirst. But then, this can only be known by the man of realization, who has come to know what life really is, who has attained to Bliss.

All this is a product of Maya—and Maya Herself is unreal

I:22.05 If you address Maya as Mother, she at once becomes disarmed, and cannot look upon you except as a child.

I:22.10 Before true discrimination is born in us, we should always think that God alone is real. And this is not just thinking of the 'horns of a hare' or of the 'son of a barren woman'. It is thinking of something that *is*. "*If the hare has got horns, then this world is real*" say the Upanishads.

I:22.11 All this is a product of Maya, and Maya Herself is unreal. Therefore one should not entertain any fear, and one should always think of Brahman, think that one is no other than Brahman. Even the mind with which one fears, ceases to be, is blasted.

I:22.02 When we speak of the Immanent, we do not stress the form-aspect, but the Atman-aspect, the one at the back of the many.

“Meditate that you are no other than the SAT-CHIT-ANANDA, and that this world does not exist.”—(Upanishads)—

I:22.12 This is the reality of the world:

“The son of a childless woman having had a bath in the waters of a mirage, carrying in his hand a bow made of the horns of a hare, putting on a garland made of the flowers hanging in the sky!”

I:22.13 All these ‘bats of unreality’ are to be driven away, first of all. In you there are many nooks and corners, and bats are always very fond of corners and darkness. The eleven bats are the ten senses and the mind. These eleven bats are making this temple of ours always dirty, full of foul smell. And the temple must be thoroughly cleansed, rubbed and scrubbed again and again.

I:25 -- Wiesbaden, May 28, 1934 -- (Vol.I 151-153)[CG 108-110]

Daily self-examination

I:23.01 The knowledge we possess is really not ours. If we have any spiritual knowledge, we have to share it with others. This is a duty. We are only trustees. No knowledge ever belongs to us.

I:23.06 Every day there should be strict self-examination: What thoughts have been cropping up, what impulses did I feel? etc., etc. This is an important part of our Sadhana. This brings greater and greater awareness and ever-growing dispassion. It teaches us effectively to stand aside as the ‘witness’, witnessing everything, but never identifying ourselves with any of them. This attitude should be strengthened more and more by all aspirants. *“I am the Witness”, “All this does not really touch me, concern me.” “I do not identify myself with all this in any way.”*

I:24 -- Wiesbaden, May 29, 1934 -- (Vol.I 159-167)[CG 111-116]

Self-effort

I:24.01 Unless we energetically try to help ourselves, unless there is intense self-effort and striving, even Incarnations are of no use.

“One has all the advantages, the Lord is pleased; one has the company of holy men, but the mind revolts. Nothing can be done.”—(Swami Brahmananda)

“The worms that are born in filth and live in filth will die if they are put in syrup.”—(Sri Ramakrishna)

I:24.02 That is the greatest trouble with us. We have all the advantages, but we do not profit by them, because our clinging is so very great. Shut up in this filthy prison-house, you want to stay there. You do not want to move on, you do not really want to get free. There are prisoners who never care to get out. They love their prison and would long for their prison if someone took them out! For them the time has not yet come.

I:24.03 Our mind and body are the pillow-cases. We are the pillows. If we think like that repeatedly and intensely, we are saved from a lot of trouble. The body is like a suit. There is so much false identification with the pillow-case that we completely forget that we are the pillows. One should live in the world as if one were dead. See that you get this attitude. But it is not an attitude of lethargy or indifference at all. It is opening ourselves to the influence of the higher vibrations, consciously, and then no longer caring for the lower vibrations of this world-play.

Live in the world as if you were dead

I:24.04 So, while living we should think we are dead. Hear everything, see everything, but do not react! This is the great rule for every aspirant. So many rivers and streams and streamlets and brooks enter the ocean, but the ocean does not react. They do not affect it at all.

I:24.05 There is good and bad on this plane of relativity. But what of it? There is the good wave and the bad wave, but as long as we remain on the plane of the wave, our problem is not solved.

“The world will be troubling you. Hear everything, bear everything, but stay quiet like a dumb man.”

I:24.07 There is a wonderful story of the Buddha that shows us the right way of not reacting. Once, when he was begging for food, the Buddha came to the house of a wealthy Brahmin. The Brahmin gave him a good scolding and said, “Get away beggar!” Then the Buddha quietly said, “My friend, if you give something to another, suppose he does not accept your gift, with whom does it then re-

main?" The Brahmin replied, "Naturally with the giver." "Then, my friend, I do not accept your scolding. Let it be yours!"

I:24.08 But great care should always be taken not to be callous, not to be indifferent. Neither callous, nor over-sensitive; neither the madly scratching monkey, nor dead to all sensibility. How to be alive and yet dead, that is the task.

Minimize mental tension

I:24.09 Let every prick, every blow, every kick we get, force us towards the Divine, and remind us of the unreality of the world. Thereby all our disappointments, all our miseries become blessings. If we have any burden, bring in the Divine current and ventilate the whole atmosphere. It is good sometimes to let out the gas when a large quantity of poisonous gas has been accumulated, but let even that be only towards the Divine. You can scold Him as your friend, your play-fellow, your comrade, if you want to. He is so near if you really know how to get into touch with Him. And He is not at all offended if you speak freely to Him. You see, one great and very important task in spiritual life is to minimize the mental tension. To that extent, we grow.

I:25 -- Wiesbaden, May 30, 1934 -- (Vol.I 167-172)[CG 116-119]

Dealing with absentmindedness at time of meditation

I:25.01 In spiritual life, we should try to remove all encrustations, as much as possible. But instead of doing that, of applying ourselves whole-heartedly to that task, we go on strengthening these very encrustations. Absent-mindedness at the time of meditation and Japam is one of the surest means of strengthening the encrustations. When we find the mind is getting more and more Tamasic or awfully Rajasic, awfully restless, we should get up, and then, after a time, sit down again for meditation. Meditation must be done in an efficient way if it is to have any effect.

I:25.02 There should be a level below which the mind should never be allowed to fall. Our task is to maintain a good mood as long as possible. Our task is not to react to the pricks and blows and kicks we may be getting from outside. Our task is not to feel offended, not to feel elated. Whatever the outside world may do to us, whether it praises us or blames us, this should not have any effect, any influence on our mood. We are not the outside world, and nothing in the

outside world can ever affect our essential nature. Waves upon waves rolling on eternally, shadows following shadows, but no substance—that is the phenomenal world. In it we can never find satisfaction or security. So why should we feel affected if we know its nature? If we know that nothing can ever be expected of it, why should we feel depressed?

I:25.03 The Shanta-Bhava is to be maintained as much as possible, the serene, peaceful, unaffected attitude that cannot be unsettled by anything. To the extent in which we are able to cultivate the Sattvika mood during Japam and meditation, we are able to retain something of it at other times also.

I:25.06 Sankara says, *“I am neither a human being, neither a god, nor a subhuman being, nor a man or a woman. I am the SELF.”* This should be driven deeply into our subconscious day by day. It should be made living.

I:25.07 Our troubles are due to the fact that we are not able to go on with our spiritual practice:— not doing it regularly, at fixed hours, well and intensely. Without this we cannot make headway in spiritual life. And just a few minutes of half-hearted superficial practice will not achieve much.

I:25.09 When you sit for meditation, think intensely that your whole body is being burnt away, that only the ashes are left, that the mind dissolves itself completely, and that an effulgent Divine spark, a mighty flame of fire is all that is left. This is very effective.

Get at the real foundations of your being

I:25.11 The ‘pillow-case’ has been thinking that it is the pillow for a long time, and then all of a sudden it finds out that it is not: this is a most painful affair for most people. Some cannot stand it and have nervous or mental break-downs.

I:25.12 You see, ever since your childhood you have been told that you are so-and-so, that you belong to such and such a family, that you are a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, that you belong to such and such a race, to such and such a nation, and thus you have been piling up endless false limiting adjuncts [*upadhis*] taking wrong ideas, wrong conceptions from outside, strengthening the encrustations of illusion. And this has brought about your present state. Now you must begin to undo everything and to get at the real foundations of your being. And that is a hard uphill job for all.

I:25.13 To the extent in which we give up this inordinate clinging to this petty mortal existence we rise above death and reach a plane of consciousness where death is not.

I:25.14 To the thoughtful man who takes a view of the world as it is—i.e., as good and evil—the only way out is to reach the transcendental plane of consciousness. On the ordinary plane of consciousness no problem can ever be satisfactorily solved. Wishful thinking does not bring us nearer to the solution of the problems of life.

Vedanta is not pessimistic

I:25.15 The true synthetic attitude is merciless, refuses to be deluded by the empty show of shadows, stands neither for optimism nor for pessimism, does not cover filth and dirt with silk and paint and fragrant flowers, wants to see things as they are. Everything else is just cowardly escape, and the escape-mentality will not get us anywhere.

I:25.17 We should know the true nature of the world. We should know it to be unreal, transient, fleeting, and seek the Real amidst this unreality. It can always be found. Light has got mixed up with darkness, but the light is still there.

I:25.17a It is true, the light is there for all eyes, but all eyes are not made in such a way that they can see the light in all its splendour. So we have to go from truth to higher truths, and few are those who can take up the pursuit of the Absolute from the very beginning of their Sadhana; though they can have the *ideal* of the Absolute as *background*.

I:25.18 The Vedantin does not become pessimistic, because if he says that this world is unreal, he affirms at the same time that Brahman is real and sees It shining through everything that is unreal, sees the light shining even through the shadow. It is absurd to call Vedanta pessimistic. Once a person finds a pearl of great value or a diamond, he no longer cares for trashy glass-beads. The person who has attained Self-realization, no longer finds any attraction for the glamour of the phenomenal world. But this is not pessimism. It is not nihilism, but a very positive attitude and a very positive experience.

Many westerners wholly misunderstand and misinterpret this point in Vedanta. It is not pessimism if the lower is renounced for the higher, and the higher is something very positive in true Vedanta. True, the world and all our relationships in the world are unreal, but

then Brahman is real, more real than anything else— more real than any of our relationships and thoughts—and, unchanging.

I:26 -- Wiesbaden, May 31, 1934 -- (Vol.I 172-177)[CG 119-123]

The attitude of the 'witness'

I:26.01 Creation and destruction—all these only mean changes of state. There is no such thing as annihilation. Destruction is going back to the cause.

I:26.02 We should always take the attitude of the dispassionate witness. We should just watch the fun of this mad world, rolling head-long towards destruction. There is good and bad, and there is a state where all relative good and relative bad is transcended.

I:27.06 The 'witness'-aspect is the central theme in spiritual life. Who can really, fully enjoy the play, the drama? Not the actors, but those who witness the play. It is most important for you to have the attitude of the 'witness' in some form or other. All feelings of identification must be undermined, and finally dissolved for ever. You find the wonderful description and analysis of all this in the *Drg-Dr̥sya-Viveka* and the *Vedantasara*: separating the seer from the seen, the subject, the real subject, from the object, that is the task in all forms of truly spiritual life.

I:28.01 Cling with great patience and imperturbable doggedness to your ideal. The ideal of Ramprasad's song (Vol.I p.182 [CG127]) is the ideal of utter detachment, the ideal of the witness standing aside and watching the mind and all its thoughts without any identification. This is so important: never to identify yourselves with what is non-self, with what is the seen, the object. Always try to separate the seen from the seer. Analyze mercilessly. Never allow yourselves to become muddled.

I:27 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 1, 1934 -- (Vol.I 177-182)[CG 123-127]

The sinner-attitude is horrible

"He who thinks he is free, becomes free; he who thinks he is bound, becomes bound." —(*Upanishads*)

I:27.02 Always think with great intensity that you are pure and not impure. The whole attitude has to be changed: all our ways of thinking, our thoughts have to be overhauled. There should not be

any scope for vanity. But some think they are inferior and then become inferior. What we want is an inner strength that stands neither for haughtiness nor for weakness.

I:27.03 To the extent in which we are ethically pure, we feel this strength, not otherwise. To the extent in which we are impure, make the lower self strong, we become weak. There must be that inner grit, that quiet dignity, before which people will think three times before they deal with you or think of taking advantage of you.

I:27.04 The sinner-attitude is horrible. It is weakening. It brings about sin. Swami Vivekananda used to say, "*Can dirt ever be washed off by dirt?*" By thinking of sin, you can never get rid of sin, but, by thinking just of the *opposite idea*, you can rid yourselves of all the dross and alloy that is hampering your progress. There should be no sinner-attitude in you.

I:27.05 The devotee should always think while repeating the Holy Name or the Holy Mantra that he is being purified by it. Even mechanical Japam is not bad if there is a chance that some day we may rise from the subconscious to the conscious plane. But if we remain silly parrots, there is no chance at all.

I:26.06 There should be no fear of God, but a great intimacy. Fear and respect should have no place in the life of the true Bhakta at all. I do not fear a person who is very, very dear to me. I do not fear those I really love. Fear is a very low stage of religious development.

Pray to the Lord, "*You have endowed us with such a bad, dirty mind that can only send out dirty thoughts and dirty vibrations, so please bring about a change. It is your duty to bring about such a change. Take back, take all your evil. I do not want all your bad manifestations!*"

I:26.05 The true devotee sees that everything is the working of MOTHER: "*MOTHER, take away all your evil. Let us have real good, and good alone.*"

I:28 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 2, 1934 -- (Vol.I 182-186)[CG 127-130]

Thought control

I:28.02 Subconscious or half-awake thinking is very, very harmful. Be wide-awake, control all your thoughts, not only during Japam and meditation. The whole trouble with us is that we are so little wide-awake, that there is so much uncontrolled, random thinking. Al-

ways be wide-awake and fully aware of everything, increase your awareness as much as possible. Be always watchful, always on the alert even before falling asleep. There should be no drowsiness, no half-conscious thinking at all. Minimize all subconscious thinking. Subconscious thinking, impulsive thinking, is most dangerous for all aspirants.

I:28.04 Small things put together make up life, you see. So every single thought has its importance. It is either harmful or beneficial, even if we scarcely realize that when thinking of it.

I:28.05 If you sit reading something and you find your mind wandering, drag it back and do your reading, whatever it be, as consciously as possible.

I:28.06 On waking up, you should see that you at once become fully conscious, too. With steady, intense training the mind may be so concentrated that the upper and the lower currents become uniform.

I:28.07 The very same mind that thinks of useless things in a useless half-conscious manner, should be made to think of useful things in a fully conscious manner. Thus only can it be made to move along higher channels. This alertness is a very essential factor in all spiritual training. It develops will-power and determination and ventilates the stuffy nooks and corners of our mind, cleanses them thoroughly, brings about a new freshness and elasticity which are very necessary if we want to progress.

I:28.08 The greatest spiritual practice is to watch all the movements, all the different tendencies of the mind without any trace of identification—cutting oneself away from one's own mind, seeing it as something separate, something strange, something that cannot affect us. This will reveal to you the necessity of overhauling your whole mental structure.

Solitude, outer and mental

I:28.09 Outward solitude is good to the extent in which it induces mental solitude and mental calmness. If it does not induce mental solitude, it is of no value whatever. Always consciously raise a protective wall with your own thoughts and see that you remain unhurt. In the case of all beginners there must be this strong hedge, this strong protective wall. Otherwise they cannot grow.

I:28.11 Solitude is the best remedy, because the desires are in the mind, and if we give play to the desires, the whole mischief is

done. Therefore, first solitude. Tackle the mind in solitude without outward stimuli. Tackle all the snakes of the mind: lust, greed, anger, jealousy, envy, hatred, haughtiness, vanity etc. Then, after having conquered them, come back, and all these things will no longer tempt you. But you must first withdraw your mind from all things that tempt you. Without this, no progress is possible.

I:28.12 If you bathe an elephant he will get dirty again in no time, but if you tie him to a post in his stable after having bathed him, he remains clean. So you should consciously tie your mind to the post of non-attachment, of dispassion, of purity.

Aspiration for something higher

I:28.13 There must be deep dissatisfaction with ordinary life, and a longing for something higher and freer. As long as we are not dissatisfied with our life, the question of spiritual life does not arise at all. **Never dilute spiritual life.** If you do, you get the 'Sunday-religion' of the Christians, but that is not what we want and strive to attain.

I:28.14 When one is in the right mood, one may have the objects of temptation before one and find them all distasteful. All this means a struggle of at least three or four years of preparation, but for most people more than that. There is in everyone a sense of yearning, but if it is directed towards human beings, it becomes physical love (even if it is physical love in a very subtle sense) that brings reaction and never quenches the thirst; but if it is consciously and intensely directed towards the Divine, it brings peace, an expansion of consciousness, a wider awareness and blessedness, and quenches the thirst for ever.

I:29 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 30, 1934 -- (Vol.I 186-195)[CG 130-136]

Do not court work, but render service

I:29.01 Whenever any opportunity for service arises, we should take it up, and that ungrudgingly; otherwise the soul shrinks. Do not court work, but render service if there is any occasion. **We grow through giving**, not through receiving. The receiver must be a giver, the giver also a receiver.

Never allow yourselves to become beggarly. Be detached, but fully sympathetic. Help wherever you can. But without attachment, realizing that you are but the instrument.

I:29.02 Sometimes we think that if we try to help others spiritually, that would be posing as a Guru. This is not true if there is no feeling of vanity or superiority in us. It is **service, sharing** with others what little we have got. It is service, and we are never allowed to shrink from such service when the opportunity or need of rendering it arises.

I:30 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 4, 1934 -- (Vol.I 195-211)[CG 136-147]

Do not court work, but render service (Ctd)

I:30.01 Such is our perverse nature that we go on multiplying work until it absorbs all our attention and energy. We should not multiply duties. We must have leisure. We should not run after work. We should always find time for our practice and our devotion.

I:30.02 But there are some people who are ready to save the world without even knowing how to save themselves. Without solving your own problem you cannot solve that of the world. This is the trouble with most fanatical reformers. They do not really know anything themselves and yet they want to reform others.

The world is the body of God, God is its soul. (Ramanuja)

I:30.03 Even the Bhakta never says that the world is real in a primary sense. It is real, it is wholly dependent on God. Even the Bhakta wants to transcend the world and reach God.

I:30.06 In order to follow the spiritual path, we must draw the mind from the things of the world although they still tempt us. We should know that all this illusive reality draws away our soul from God, drags us into all sorts of blind alleys and by-paths that do not lead anywhere. We have to practice physical and mental self-control. To the extent in which we advance, we begin to doubt the reality of the world. We begin to have glimpses of its unreality. After realization, all this becomes unreal. No reality is left so far as the phenomenon goes. **This is not a theory, but an experience.**

I:31 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 5, 1934 -- (Vol.I 211-221)[CG 147-154]

Sadhana and its reactions

I:31.01 We should never in any way brood over our past actions, good or bad. All our energy should be given to the proper directions

of our thoughts and nerve-currents. To all of us these reactions come, physical and mental, and along with our spiritual practice we must increase our capacity to bear these reactions. Many people break down under these reactions. Many become completely unsettled for a time. Many become worse than they were before taking up the practice. If you want to shift the centre of your consciousness from the lower to the higher centres, you have to pass through periods of unsettlement. While people are leading a worldly life, they do not become really aware of all these phases, but spiritual practice, if properly performed, always stirs up different subconscious currents, and this again means unsettlement. Very often, in such cases, there is no strength left, sometimes there even comes a long period of mental disturbance and vacillation, of moral instability. But as soon as one really succeeds in fixing one's centre, one comes to have much greater strength than before. During such a period of his Sadhana, an aspirant should be treated very kindly and with great understanding, because the unsettlement is not his fault, if one can say so, but the consequence of his practices. There should be real understanding on our part, not condemnation. It is a period of transition, which if properly used leads to greater strength and greater stability. We have to be kind-hearted to aspirants passing through these periods of unsettlement. We have to help them, not to judge them. After they have passed through these periods, they stand as men among men.

These periods will come to all of us, only at different times. And this is lucky, because then some of us can always help the others. Many aspirants get terrified thinking that spiritual life, if it brings such serious unsettlement, is very harmful and dangerous. It is dangerous, no doubt. Hence it is very, very necessary to increase the mental and physical stamina of the aspirant, as much as possible. An aspirant cannot be allowed to move in any company he likes, in the company of those who do not lead perfectly pure lives sexually. He is still in his spiritual childhood and adolescence, so he cannot take the risks a grown-up can take without any real danger. Do not think you belong to the grown-ups already. You do not. Do not feel too sure of yourselves!

1:31.02 The first period of Sadhana, when one has to stand all these tremendous reactions, is a period of trial. One must have patience and dogged perseverance, then better days will come. Tremendous mental energy is to be kept under control, otherwise we do

not get the power to move. Even if we have a strong body and a strong mind, there comes a period for all when we feel terribly unsettled and nervous. First there is the period of strenuous fighting, then the period of less strenuous fighting, and then the period of poise, of balance, of inner harmony.

I:31.03 All the lower and higher laws of nature are to be surmounted, if you want to make any spiritual progress. Swami Brahmananda used to say: *“Do not be in a sort of fit!”* We are so restless. We want to attain realization by violence. But realization is not a question of muscles. Sometimes we become awfully greedy. All this idea of bringing about realization by sheer force is nothing but greediness. If we are able to put up with reaction, let us walk as fast as we can, by all means, after having made the body and mind strong.

Even very strong-willed and strong-nerved people have to pass through this stage. Physical reaction affects the mind and mental reaction affects the body. But you cannot avoid these strong reactions during the period of your Sadhana. If there is no reaction at all, neither physical nor mental, this just shows the quality of your practices, that there is something wrong with your meditation, Japam etc., etc. It means they are in-effective, that you do not perform them properly.

I:31.04 Our life should always be a natural life, but natural life means a life in tune with the higher vibrations, not with our lower, animal nature. It is just the opposite from what the worldly-minded understand by this term.

I:31.05 When the Lord Himself has taken charge of a devotee, He makes him pass through all these trials. Sometimes against your will you shall have to pass through these tremendous struggles. **He will force you**, whether you like it or not!

“If the Lord wants to kill, none can save; if the Lord wants to save, none can kill.” —(Adage)

I:31.06 All of you, some time or other, shall have to pass through these reactions. So be wide-awake when they come. The form of the reaction may be different, but the reactions cannot be avoided if you really perform your practices. Stand as the witness and do not get panicky when they come, and always try to help the fellow-aspirant who is passing through the period of unsettlement. Always be kind and considerate to him.

I:32 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 6, 1934 -- (Vol.I - nothing read)

All can get a glimpse at least

I:32.01 If we are true to our higher nature, we can achieve something in this life.—All can get a glimpse at least. Never lose courage.

I:33 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 7, 1934 -- (Vol.I 222-224)[CG 155-156]

When we feel pleasure and pain

I:33.01 When we feel pain, and pleasure even, we should say, “Yes, my mind and my body are feeling these, but my SELF cannot be touched by them, my SELF cannot be imprisoned by them.” **Always, at all times, assert the glory, the freedom of your soul.**

I:34 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 8, 1934 -- (Vol.I 224-235)[CG 156-163]

When we feel miserable

I:34.02 When we feel miserable, the whole mind is upset. But, when the men of realization feel miserable, they just stand as the witness. That is why they can at once give a different turn to their minds.

I:34.03 The heart of a true saint is harder than the hardest diamond and softer than the softest flower.

“He who forgetting the God who resides in his own heart, tries to find God in the outside world, is trying to run after a piece of broken glass, leaving the jewel that is in his hand.” —(Adage)

I:34.06 Our sense of feeling the Indwelling Spirit in our own heart is to be strengthened. Let all our thoughts and feelings be directed towards this Divine Consciousness that is within us. Become fully aware of It! In the outside world there is so much of misery, so much of frustration, so much distress and pain! All this can never be changed. Cling to the Lord all the more and develop a spirit of genuine self-surrender to Him alone. This is the only way to peace and blessedness. It is not an escape, but an actual heightening of all your faculties of perception and feeling. It is a reality. All these outside troubles you are constantly complaining about, all this tension in the world that is bound to lead up to a catastrophe on the phenomenal plane which no one will be able to avert, should force us towards God. Let all our miseries and our troubles and disappointments con-

stantly remind us of the constant changes in the world. There is nothing in this world that will prove true to you in the end. Clinging to our false self we want peace and security. Then quite naturally all these troubles arise. Let us not expect any pleasure from the world. God is the only source of strength to us. Let His will be done. Let us become united with Him.

“He who knows the Atman abiding in his own self is not touched by the Gunas of Prakriti, though he abides in it; and he really abides in Me.” —(Srimad Bhagavatam)

I:34.07 The true devotee, the Bhakta, should be made of very heroic fibre. Only when the devotee is able to maintain an unchanging faith in the Divine amidst all his miseries and frustrations, he passes the test. Whoever cannot do this is not yet meant for the path.

“Nobody should ever enter into friendship with the changeful air, trusting it...” (Adage)

I:34.09 Devotion and worldly happiness may not go together. Never think that the devotee is better off than other people as far as his worldly prospects go.

I:34.10 Any worldly desire and God can never remain together. Just as light and darkness cannot be in the same spot at the same time.

I:35 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 9, 1934 -- (Vol.I 235-242)[CG 163-169]

In dealing with others

I:35.01 Have feelings and sentiments as much as you like, but keep them under pressure, control them, never express them on the physical plane. Show your kindness through your conduct, but always in a very reserved way. Never become familiar with anybody. Be dignified and aloof, always. To the extent in which we are able to introduce a higher element more and more, our love becomes more and more detached, more and more impersonal. This is the only possible way of transmuting our feelings and no longer loving mere bodies, mere minds, mere personalities.

I:35.02 If we are in the company of unholy persons we ‘inhale’ some of their unholy thoughts, as it were. Their vibrations always affect us. There is something in the touch, in the company.

I:35.03 As you grow in purity, you cannot but be more sensitive

to outside things as well as to your own mind. So circumspection and great prudence are very necessary.

I am not saying all this about association with others, and saying it again and again, repeating it out of mere perversity or out of a wish to tyrannize. I have trained many young monks very successfully, and I know the dangers and pitfalls of spiritual life by experience. So you can believe me when I am telling you all this.

Especially those like you here, who get more or less the training of a monk, should be very, very careful regarding the people they allow themselves to meet and to mix with.

“Association, when formed through ignorance with the wicked leads to Samsara, but, when formed with the righteous, may tend towards the severance of all attachments.”

—(Srimad Bhagavatam)—

I:36 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 10, 1934 -- (Vol.I 242-250)[CG 169-174]

Straightforwardness is required

I:36.01 It is a very rare thing to have a free and open mind, to have a guileless mind free from likes and dislikes. The Master always used to appreciate an outspoken nature, frankness, guilelessness. Very often He used to say, *“Those whose words flow like water, and those who are reserved, and those who put on long veils are not to be relied upon.”*

I:36.02 The bonds of the heart are to be cut, all crookedness is to be straightened out, and the extent in which this has been done, is the test of our spiritual progress—whether we are becoming more and more straightforward and frank. Sincerity is the one thing needed, and when there is real sincerity in the heart, it always finds its expression in straight-forwardness, in straightforward conduct and perfect guilelessness. When we have to deal with such a person, we know where he stands, and where we stand.

I:36.03 This is one of the conditions for spiritual growth: to be as straightforward and free from all crookedness as possible. The bent iron is to be straightened.

Overactivity, an obstacle in spiritual life

I:36.05 Again and again we come across the tendency in people

to multiply work, especially in the West with its restlessness and aimless passion. It is one of the greatest obstacles on the spiritual path.

I:32.03 Sri Ramakrishna always used to discourage the tendency in certain people to increase work, to increase their duties. It is an abnormal unbalanced mentality. It just shows restlessness and an attempt at escape. It is nothing praise-worthy. No human being can achieve anything without leisure well-used. Most over-active people lack balance, have an abnormal unsettled psychology. The activity of the monkey intoxicated by alcohol and stung by a scorpion is nothing wonderful, and the activity of these people is just the same sort of half-mad random activity, activity for activity's sake. Then they come and complain, "Where is the time to do practice? If I only had time?" etc., etc. Fools. Restlessness is just as bad as lethargy. Passion is just as bad as dullness. So activity of this kind is nothing to make a song about. And duty in such cases is just an excuse. Very often duty is self-created as an excuse for one's restlessness and lack of balance. We want to run away from ourselves and go on multiplying duties so that we can have a comfortable excuse for ourselves and for others. Real duty is something different. Out-and-out social functions are everywhere for worldly-minded people. There is a lot of impurity in them. Never create such unnecessary work that does neither good to yourselves or to others.

I:41.06 Those who have to struggle hard for their animal existence find it very hard to turn to the Divine. Those who can do so in spite of this struggle are very rare.

I:37 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 11, 1934 -- (Vol.I 250-254)[CG 174-177]

Right activity is part of spiritual practice

I:37.01. Never create such unnecessary work that does no good to yourselves or to others. Everyone needs leisure well employed. Always try to do the Lord's work through prayers, through Japam, through meditation and deep studies and other forms of spiritual practice. Try to have as much time as possible for these. Work should be perfectly unattached and should be looked upon as a means, not as an end.

I:38 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 12, 1934 -- (Vol.I 254-273)[CG 177-190]

Act as instrument

I:38.01 The instrument also acts, and we should have the idea that we are instruments in the hands of the Lord while we act. Then the whole attitude would change, and then our work, too, becomes part of spiritual practices, of service unto the Lord. Work is always to be directed towards the Lord. This must be our conscious attitude whatever work we may happen to do. Thereby certain kinds of work will have to be eliminated.

“That person is really dead, though breathing alive, whose activity in this world does not tend towards Dharma and thereby to renunciation and to the hallowed feet of the Divine (Hari).”
—(Srimad Bhagavatam)—

I:39 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 13, 1934 -- (Vol.I 273-274)[CG 190-190]

Develop your individuality and transcend it

I:39.01 A new sense must be developed, a new power of seeing must come. Intellect must become purified-intellect; feeling must become purified-feeling; will must become purified-will. And then we have to go beyond them, transcend them, and reach the Turiya-state. When That which is indicated by saying, *“Not this, not this”* is realized, then all intellect, feeling and will are transcended.

I:39.02 Impure intellect, impure will and impure feeling take us down and down, and steadily go on increasing our slavery. The purified intellect, purified will and purified feeling take us up, almost to the terrace itself.

I:39.03 Real Jñana, real knowledge is the direct perception of Truth. It has nothing to do with intellectual knowledge and cannot be attained before the intellect is transcended.

I:39.04 The individual must be able to move in any way he or she pleases. We should not be a slave or a creature of circumstances, nor of moods. Real individuality means this. The trouble with most people is that they are just like wobbly jelly-fish without any individuality at all. You have to develop your individuality, just to break it up, and to attain to your real individuality, that is not individual, but Cosmic.

I:39.07 Clinging to the lower self in any form is irreligion. Giving

it up is religion. The principle test of spiritual life is selflessness, non-identification. Wherever there is clinging to our personality, there is no religion.

I:39.08 We must be very strong and retain our higher individuality but at the same time we have to put down, to eliminate, the lower individuality. Later, even good is to be transcended.

Creativeness

I:39.09 There can never be any spiritual life without intensive thinking. There must be liveliness, creativeness. Dullness and inertia are the greatest dangers on the spiritual path. The aspirant must develop his intellect and will. Instinctive life is very dangerous. We should never allow ourselves to be driven by our impulses. There must be regular, intense drill of the mind. Thinking random thoughts won't do. The mind must be made to undergo strict discipline if it is to be made fit for higher thinking. What we think we should also feel, and then act up to it.

I:40 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 14, 1934 -- (Vol.I 274-279)[CG 190-194]

Creativeness (Ctd)

I:40.01 The Bhakta does not want to sit quiet, but he wants to devote as much time as possible to meditation, Japam, prayer etc. He needs leisure for these. But he is intensely active, active on the thought-plane, not on the physical plane.

I:40.02 Regular studies form a very important item of our spiritual discipline. We must select passages and study them day by day and then think deeply over their meaning. The purer our intellect becomes through ethical culture, the better we shall be able to understand the deeper meaning of such passages. And it is very important for us to dwell on such holy thoughts and truths, to occupy our mind with them, because if the mind does not think higher thoughts, it will naturally think lower thoughts and go down and down to one of the lower instinctive centres of consciousness. This is very harmful.

I:40.03 Creative we must be, and if we are not creative on a higher plane, we become creative on a lower, physical plane, on the plane of the senses and create something awful, hideous. But creativeness there should be, always.

I:41 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 15, 1934 -- (279-287) [CG 194-200]

The time-factor

I:41.02 The time factor is always to be considered. **No one can profit by all these instructions unless his time has really come.** We take medicine but the disease is not cured at once. There may be periods of adverse Karma, and before this adverse Karma is exhausted, we shall not be able to profit by the instructions we get.

I:41.03 It always takes time for the mind to have a new adjustment. We should not be unnecessarily impatient or unnecessarily depressed. You see, the tree first has blossoms. Then appear small, tiny unripe fruits which cannot be eaten. Then these fruits begin to grow and develop. And then you can eat them, not before. The medicine may begin to take effect, but we do not see any manifestation in the outside world, at least not yet. We cannot judge what is taking place in our subconscious.

I:41.04 Some people take the medicine in a good mood, but then they vomit it out again. Nothing can be done in their case. Their time has not yet come, though there may be some real effect later on when the period of adverse Karma is over.

I:41.05 If the system of the patient cannot assimilate the medicine, then *“neither the teacher, nor the teacher’s father can do anything”*, as we say. Spiritual life is all a question of making our body and our mind fit, all a control of the body and of the mind in order to make us fit for the assimilation of the ideal, but this assimilation takes time. Do not get impatient, do not brood, do not get depressed. Wait. Proceed doggedly with your spiritual practice, day by day, at fixed hours. The process is very slow, so very slow that we cannot watch our progress from day to day, but something is taking place inside slowly, imperceptibly, in all.

Contemplation is inactivity in appearance only

I:41.07 If a man does nothing outwardly, if he appears to be an idler judged from the worldly standpoint, and is despised by the worldly-minded for his apparent uselessness and inactivity, he is doing a very great service to the world, a greater service than can ever be done by the over-active, greedy, restless worldly person. Everyone should have his hour of leisure for the developing of the higher life in him. Modern notions are so crude. The infra-red and the

ultra-violet rays are there, though we do not see them, and they have a very great effect. The vibrations of the spiritual man are terribly intense, though outwardly there is no gross manifestation of them.

“Those who, with devotion but without any desire for consequences, contemplate Thee, in whom the world is woven and who art in the form of both the cause, the effect and still different from them. Those who are thus of ripe Yoga and have controlled their breath, senses and the mind, and thereby secured Thy grace, do not suffer discomfiture from any cause.”

—(Srimad Bhagavatam)—

Dangers for the aspirant

I:41.08 There are certain aspirants who make some progress during a certain time, especially in the beginning, and then they become dull. All progress stops. There is no liveliness, no higher thinking, no intensity in them. This state is very dangerous, and often such aspirants fall down and become much worse than they were before taking to spiritual life.

We must train the intellect. Spiritual life without developing the intellect and purifying the feeling is not possible. It can never be. So we should see that we have our daily readings after our practices and then think about what we have read, deeply and steadily. Our practices alone without reading and without developing the intellect will not do, because, after all, our practices are such a very small thing, and we give them the name of ‘meditation’ only out of courtesy. They are all broken, half-hearted, disjointed attempts, very different from real meditation. And as we cannot have any real meditation in our present state, we must have our daily readings, our daily studies, and develop our intellect along positive lines, because this will lead us to real meditation. If I cannot think deeply on a problem or a subject, if I cannot sit down quietly and think quietly, reflectively, deeply, I can never have any real meditation. There must be intensive higher thinking. Without whole-hearted, one-pointed striving, nothing can be achieved in spiritual life. But mostly we are too dull to do this.

I:41.09 We must be very careful about what impressions we allow our mind to take in. Very often, in unguarded moments, out of a lack of sensitiveness we take in some impressions which the spiritual aspirant ought to avoid. And this impression comes up later on and becomes a source of great trouble to us. We must rid ourselves of all

the old filth and not take in any new filth, and in order to do this, we must develop a certain amount of true sensitiveness, not the pathological kind. We must be aware of the approaching danger, the approaching unclean impression, and then do everything to avoid it. Many troubles arise out of this lack of sensitiveness, because we do not realize what we are doing or what we are allowing our mind to do and to dwell on. We are half-asleep. We are not fully conscious beings at all. Without getting the right, healthy kind of sensitiveness, nothing can be done in spiritual life. We must be fully conscious, wide-awake, fully aware of all the movements of our mind, full of liveliness in spiritual life, if we really want to make any progress. If we are not, we are just impulse-driven slaves even if we are quite unconscious of this fact. We do not see how our impulses, clean and dirty, arise and come to the surface of our mind; we do not know how to guide them, how to control them, how to reject those we do not want, effectively and decisively. We do not keep our mind busy with serious studies and higher thoughts, we do not make it creative and intense, but we go and have useless gossip, useless sight-seeing, useless driving about for hours, always stuffing the mind with useless or even harmful things. This is not the way to make progress.

I:41.10 The trouble is that many people always talk of their troubles but never care to follow any method by which they can get rid of them. If we do not develop our intellect, feeling and will harmoniously, we cannot achieve much. But mostly we try to avoid the strain of higher thinking, the strain of creating new channels of thought, and become dull, instinctive, impulse-driven, and then no spiritual life is possible.

About sight-seeing

“Without drinking the water that is in your own hand, you want the water that is in the cloud.”

“Without caring for the cooked food that is near you, you go about like a beggar, begging for food.”

I:41.01 I have nothing against sight-seeing as such, but let us associate the sight-seeing with the Divine and profit by it. Sight-seeing as a means to give some distraction to our mind should not be encouraged at all. Such a kind of sight-seeing is just restlessness, an attempt at escape, a running away from ourselves. It does not lead anywhere and is even harmful.

Before reforming the world, reform yourself

I:41.11a Never try to solve the problems of the world or of society before being able to solve your own individual problem, before freeing yourself from all the instinctive trammels that bind your every thought and deed. No one who cannot reform himself, will ever be able to reform others. It is so pleasant and so easy to think about beautiful reforms and so difficult to bring about a real change in oneself first. We have no use for all such wonderful reformers at all. How can anybody who has not studied deeply the laws and the nature of his own being, bring about a change for the better in the world? But that is what many are trying to do, and then instead of creating a beautiful statue of a god, they just create a hideous monkey! That is all.

I:42 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 16, 1934 -- (Vol.I 287-290)[CG 200-202]

Strive for unity with the Divine

“Therefore, O Uddhava, cease to experience the sense-objects through the outgoing organs. Look upon the delusion of plurality as caused by the non-perception of the Atman.”

—(Sri Krishna & Uddhava)—

“O Lord, as long as a man may continue to see this body and others as different from Atman—a notion which has its strength in Thy Maya appearing as Indriyas and their objects—this Samsara may not cease to be, though baseless, and it will continue to bring hosts of miseries, as consequences of action.

O God, even Rishis fall into Samsara who, here, regardless of devotion to Thee, have by day their senses and organs wholly occupied and tossed about in seeking after worldly objects, and who by night immersed in sleep are every moment disturbed by thoughts of their fancied objects, and whose labours to attain their objects are thwarted by Providence.”

—(Srimad Bhagavatam)—

I:42.01 The Bhakta’s ego is connected with the Divine; our ego is separated from the Divine. We think we are free, but our freedom is more or less the freedom of the animal. Sri Ramakrishna feels free because of his unity with the Divine.

I:42.02 We must meditate in the space of infinite consciousness

of which our own point of consciousness is only a point.⁶ In order to get to the terrace, a narrow staircase is enough, but the terrace itself is very vast.

I:42.03 We should always, consciously, expand our consciousness, to come in touch with the vaster consciousness in which we are included.

I:42.04 Retaining the purified individuality, we become conscious of the Whole as well as of all others that have a place in this Whole.

However, we presently have too much body-consciousness—impulse-driven and impulse-bound. Minimize your body-consciousness first of all. This can only be done through leading a perfectly clean life and through raising the centre of one's consciousness and making the energy flow through higher channels.

Depend on the Lord but stand as erect as possible

I:42.05 Once upon a time there was a very clever scholar famous for his scholarship. One day, his wife had to go out to do some shopping while the lentils were boiling on the hearth. So she asked her husband to look after the lentils until she returned. After a time, the lentils began to boil over. Then the scholar went and prayed to God, "O Lord, stop the lentils boiling over, please. Help me, O Lord." Naturally, this did not help matters very much. When the wife returned and saw what had happened, she asked her husband what he had done. "My dear", he replied, "as soon as the lentils began to boil over, I prayed to the Lord for help."—"Prayed?" answered the wife. "You fool. Why didn't you just pour a little cold water into the pot?" This very often happens in our case, too. Never blame others, and never blame the Lord for your own foolishness and lack of insight.

I:42.06 Depend on the Lord, but stand as erect as possible. If He wants, there will arise wonderful opportunities for you all, if you are sincere and really dedicate your life to Him alone. He created different situations, forcing you into them even against your wish. When the Lord makes a plan, and you really become one of His agents, you feel that a certain thing is going to take place and that you are going to be an instrument. But then, we should work consciously, and not only live on our instincts as we do when we are on the animal plane.

6. See figure and note on page 100.

There is no freedom on the animal plane. There is no freedom while we are content to remain in our half-conscious state.

Study your mind!

I:42.08 In most cases, our personality is a chaotic mass of half-conscious or unconscious impulses. First of all, we must rid ourselves of all likes and dislikes brought about by unconscious impulse and prejudice. Only thus can we acquire an individuality that can be joined to the universal.

There is nothing grand in having strong irrational feelings bubbling up from the unconscious. Passionateness is not the sign of manhood at all. Hatred and dislike are nothing but weakness and self-excuse.

The fun is we live on impulses and say we are free. Where is all this wonderful freedom of the modern man or woman? A passion-ridden slave calling himself free!. What fun!

I:42.09 Most of us are like awful poisonous whirlpools, full of complexes and venom. Break up these complexes, first of all, be one with the current, and your whole life would be full of blessing for yourselves and for others. The task is not an easy one. It requires real heroism and tremendous steadiness.

Nature of habit

I:42.17 Habit is formed through practice. Habit can be changed because habit never is an essential part of our being, but only our **second nature**. Habit has been created through wrong thinking or through lack of consciousness, through our not being fully awake. Harmful habits can never be formed in the fully conscious man or woman. It may be difficult for us now to change our habits, but it has to be done, and it can be done if we are really sincere and do not shrink from sustained self-effort.

I:42.14 Habit lies in the body, the mind and nerves. Now change the attitude, change the habit. Rise above all the likes and dislikes that bubble up from the subconscious layers of your minds. The emotions must be completely purified and made healthy. There should be no sickly, romantic sentimentality and there should be no form of aversion.

I:42.16 Hatred and lust are the two great obstacles on the way of the spiritual aspirant, and hatred—any form of aversion or dislike—is

just as bad and impure as lust. So we need not feel proud of our hatred, our dislikes etc.

I:43 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 21, 1934 -- (Continuation of previous)

How to bring about a change of habit

I:43.01 The method to change our second nature is to raise very intense counter-currents of thought. Then after a lapse of time, the whole life will begin to be transformed. All our reactions will change.

I:43.02 As a result of past thinking along certain lines we have brought about some physiological changes and mental changes. So now, this body and this mind have to be re-formed, formed anew.

I:43.03 All the harm, all the injury that has been done to the body and to the mind has to be repaired.

I:43.04 Progress will be quick to the extent in which we are able to bring about these necessary changes rapidly and effectively.

I:43.05 The nature of the mind is to think. It is for you to choose whether you want to think along right lines or wrong lines. By yielding to your passions and impulses and cravings, you lose this freedom of choice and in the end are forced to assert your lower tendencies. This is very dangerous. In very bad cases, no change can be brought about at this time. In spiritual life, the slave must first be able to give up his slave-nature. Old people cannot change as a rule. So it is very important for young people to change their habits in time. The young alone can really achieve something.

I:43.06 The first task is to have external control. After that, bring about a mental change, a change in your thought-world. Then slowly, the difficulty vanishes. It is very hard to change the second nature, but all habits can be changed, as I said, because no habit ever forms part of our essential nature.

I:43.08 Feelings, will, intellect, understanding, must be stimulated vigorously, again and again, then there will be physiological changes also and corresponding physiological action.

I:43.09 Only thus can the required physical and psychical changes be brought about. These changes are real. The whole nerve-current is changed and made to flow along different channels and through different centres, upwards. It is not just imagination. A new kind of polarization takes place in the body and in the mind of

the aspirant. There is nothing occult about all this. It is real training, the creating of the new necessary instrument which naturally requires a certain technique and perseverance. That is why you will not be able to advance unless you perform your practices intensively and doggedly for a long time to come. The practices, the regularity of your Sadhana are most important, but here in the West, the whole tradition has been lost. So people do not know what to do, and we see the effects of this deplorable state all round us. Everywhere on the benches in this town I see old people sitting there aimlessly, just waiting for death. There is nothing left in their lives but this aimless waiting and their impulse-driven and impulse-fettered impure thoughts, vitiating the atmosphere. They have become less conscious instead of more conscious. I feel such a pity for them. You should see that you have attained something, at least a glimpse of the Reality, before you grow old. Even old age with all its infirmities becomes a pleasure then, because the spirit is never affected by the defects of old age.

I:44 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 22, 1934 -- (Vol.I 290-295)[CG 202-206]

Transformation and true freedom

I:44.01 Unless feeling transforms a man altogether and makes him live a better life, feeling has no spiritual value. Unless knowledge transforms a man altogether, knowledge has no spiritual value. Unless work transforms a man and changes his life, work has no spiritual value at all.

I:44.02 Any form of Sadhana must bring about a complete transformation of the life of a person, a complete transformation of ourselves in all our aspects. It must bring about a new attitude towards everything, towards all problems, all questions of life, and make us stop all unconscious thinking and acting and transform us into wide-awake, living, fully-conscious individuals. Everything else only stands in the way of our spiritual evolution. And the real importance of Sadhana is this transforming power of the spiritual practices, when they are performed regularly, doggedly, intensively, for a long period of time, day by day, without any break.

I:44.03 If our subconscious is not dissolved, real progress is not possible. No end of bubbles continually rise from the depths of the subconscious and make us do things we should not do, think thoughts that should not be thought, keep us in a state of perfect slavery. We have not yet become responsible beings at all.

I:44.04 We live on impulses and think impulse-driven and impulse-rooted thoughts, and, guided as we are by impulses and animal reactions, we still believe that such a state is freedom!

I:44.05 Vedanta always puts great stress on consciousness, purified consciousness, consciousness that has really become conscious in ourselves.

I:44.06 There must be a thorough, merciless, dispassionate, overhauling of all our conceptions of freedom. Licence has nothing to do with freedom. Sex-indulgence has nothing to do with freedom or true manhood. A person is a slave to his senses and thinks that he is free, that he is a man. That is the fun! When a helpless slave believes he is free and behaves in a slavish manner, there is no hope for him. Freedom is very different from all this.

I:44.07 No one is free who has not developed his higher faculties and become master of his subconscious. ***We cannot just act as if the subconscious did not exist!***

I:44.08 The way to freedom lies not in becoming helpless and being guided by desires and passions, by all sorts of animal cravings, by likes and dislikes, but by consciously controlling all desires and passions, all feelings of attraction and aversion, and remaining wide-awake at all times. If we do not do this, no amount of reading will be of any avail.

I:44.09 Most people are scared away if you speak to them of continence, of the idea of control, but real freedom can only be had through control. Our life is very often not a life of control, but a subconscious life. We resent anything that forces us to rise above this subconscious sort of mentality. To think that it is freedom to lead a subconscious life is absurd. Can anything be more awful than this? If you dispassionately look around you, you see the effects everywhere. Yet people feel proud of all the progress that is being made. When we do not know how to make use of our freedom, our freedom lapses into licence, and licence always is the sign of a slave.

I:44.10 Ordinarily we are creatures of the impulses and tendencies that rise from the subconscious to the conscious plane, and the task of spiritual life is to rise above all nature's laws, to rise to the transcendental plane, where alone we can enjoy freedom. As we rise from the lower laws to the higher laws of nature, we get more and more glimpses of true freedom.

I:45 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 23, 1934 -- (Vol.I 295-300)[CG 206-209]

Prayer, Renunciation. Expansion

I:45.03 Renunciation is the very foundation of spiritual life. Devotion, Bhakti, always implies control, renunciation, not yielding to the senses and their different impulses.

I:45.04 That is what we find in Christ, in Buddha, in Sri Ramakrishna etc. They all express the highest ideas in simple and clear words. And their words have direct appeal, because they are words of free men, of beings who have really attained freedom and become real men.

I:45.06 Non-attachment is not merely negative. Non-attachment means distaste for the world and love for the Divine.

I:45.08 As a result of spiritual practice and meditation, one comes to be more and more God-intoxicated.

I:45.09 Expansion of consciousness and expansion of heart is the mark of true spirituality. If the heart is not expanded, if consciousness is still the consciousness of the body-bound, mind-bound person, the man has not grown spiritually. If there are still likes and dislikes, if he is still swayed by attractions and aversions, the man has not attained any spiritual vision. This expansion of the heart does not mean emotionalism or sentimentalism at all. It is just the opposite of these for they are based on attachment, on feelings of likes and dislikes and only enslave a person all the more. Real feeling, higher emotion is very, very different from these.

I:46 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 25, 1934 -- (Vol.I 301-305)[CG 210-213]

The time-factor

I:46.01 Unless the right time arrives for a person, spiritual instruction will be of no avail. The time-factor is very important. We can appreciate food only when we have an appetite. Unless there is real soul-hunger, spiritual instruction is of no use. It may even be harmful.

Curing this world-fever

I:46.03 People who have had enjoyment are later on in danger of a terrific on-rush of the old impure ideas and experiences. The moment they stir the subconscious mind, all their impure impressions begin to bubble up and try to sweep them off their feet. So they must

be very much on their guard and increase their power of resistance. If they have not learnt how to control themselves and their impulses, this terrific on-rush of the old ideas and thoughts and experiences will overpower them completely. They will not be able to stand it and fall off, and, in many cases become worse, morally, than they were before. We have seen many cases like that.

Our world-fever may be likened to malarial fever. The best preventive measure is to sleep under mosquito nets. It is very bad to have world-fever. There must be preventive measures, protection against being injected by worldly mosquitoes, and then take the right medicine. It takes time. The disease cannot be cured all at once. The reaction would be too strong. In the process of the cure, the disease will be at its highest. And the patient must be able to stand all that. Awful reactions will come, physical and mental, all the old tendencies, all the old cravings and ideas. Then, after that, the fever begins to go down. You should never get unnerved if the old tendencies assert themselves all of a sudden and attack you most fiercely. Take steps to strengthen and calm the mind and still the passions. Unless an amount of dispassion has been born in ourselves, we can never even take to spiritual life. When worldliness is very strong, we can never think of the Divine. Attachment has to be lessened. Now is the right time to give Vedantic injections, mercilessly.

“By him who has no likes and dislikes, and who regards everything equally and is filled with intense devotion to the Lord, the Divine attainment is realized.” —(Srimad Bhagavatam)

I:46.04 Especially when they are in a state of depression, people tend to give up all spiritual practice instead of vigorously increasing it. If they do, they are gone, spiritually. They cannot avoid a nasty fall from which they may not even be able to recover. So, giving up one's spiritual practice at such time is very bad and very dangerous. Cling to it all the more. Try to make it more intense, more effective.

I:46.05 Spiritual life can be cultivated. Time may be hastened. Spiritual hunger can be stimulated, and thereby the necessary time can be shortened. But you have to pass through all the states and through all the reactions and painful mental transformations, though you can pass through them very quickly instead of taking a very long time.

I:46.06 Never think you can avoid the reactions. And if there are

no reactions at all, something is wrong with your practices. No one can avoid them, although they may be different in everybody.

I:47.06 To the extent in which one tries to be really one's own self, one becomes more and more free from covetousness, hypocrisy, lust etc. Sincerity and simplicity are the test for all aspirants.

I:47 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 26, 1934 -- (Vol.I 305-312)[CG 213-217]

Helping others

I:47.03 Never think you are helping somebody, never get it into your head that you can help others spiritually. The Lord alone does this through His instruments, but never the individual. The idea of helping others is a very wrong notion.

Spiritual life is not identical with happiness

I:47.04 The clearing of our doubts always means a very special grace of the Divine. Without this grace, no doubts can or will be cleared.

I:47.05 We want to enjoy the happiness of meditation, but unless we train ourselves strenuously for years and years together, we cannot have it. There is no kind of bargaining in spiritual life. And spiritual life does not mean that henceforth the spiritual aspirant is going to be happy. In many cases he will suffer more than ever before in his life. All his Karma, as it were, becomes condensed into the period of one life. So the suffering is going to become all more acute and painful.

"When the mind, like a flame, is withdrawn from the objects of senses and thereby becomes free from all attachments and attains Nirvana, i.e., becomes one with Brahman, the Purusha or Jiva in this state, released from the force of the Gunas, realizes the SELF immediately [without anything as a medium, without the distinction of the seer and the seen]."

—(Srimad Bhagavatam)

I:48 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 27, 1934 -- (Vol.I 312-318)[CG 217-222]

Some are born with favourable impressions

I:48.01 Some are born with dispassion and renunciation. It is not necessary for all to pass through the bitterness of life and to experience its vanities and disillusionments.

1:49 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 29, 1934 -- (Vol.I 319-327)[CG 223-228]

Always blame yourselves only, and beware...

1:49.03 We cannot be *taught* evil. Evil is in our very nature. All the bad tendencies are within us. Somebody else may come in touch with us just to awaken them. Never believe you are beyond that state. Any day, such a person may turn up and awaken everything that is bad in you. If one be perfectly pure one can never be made impure, naturally, by others. So always throw the blame on yourselves, and not on the other person that happens to awaken the bad tendencies. It is just a sign that you have not yet attained the state of perfect purity.

1:49.06 Spiritual life is a life of tremendous struggle for the beginner. Ceaseless struggle going on uninterruptedly for years and years. And in the case of the celibate type, the mental side should be stressed more than anything. It is not only a question of perfect bodily purity, but also of perfect mental purity. We should attain such a state that even the most impure people can no longer affect us in any way or reawaken any form of sex-consciousness in us. Naturally, in the beginning the aspirant should with the greatest care avoid all persons who do not lead perfectly pure lives or who tend to awaken any form of desire in him. You have no idea how careful every sincere aspirant must be in this; otherwise there is little chance of progress. I have trained so many young monks that I know these things by experience, from my own experience and from that of others. Never believe yourselves safe, as long as you have not conquered even the slightest ripples of sex-consciousness.

1:49.07 This is the reason why Sri Ramakrishna used to warn people against 'Woman (Man) and Gold', again and again. He knew the tremendous part they play in drawing men and women, away from the higher path and in tying them down to this phenomenal life, for ever ruining their chances of anything higher and truer. Never think you have all become so many Shivas or so many Parvatis, Ramakrishnas or Holy Mothers! Do not go too near the fire.

1:50 -- Wiesbaden, Jne 30, 1934 -- (Vol.I 327)[CG 228]

Never think yourselves safe

1:50.01 Those who lead a sense-life, and those who lead a pure life belong to two different classes altogether. They have nothing in

common. No person who is not prepared to give up sense-life and to strive for purity, can ever attain anything in spiritual life. Not that you should ever hate people leading a sense-life, but you should always salute them from a safe distance and never associate with them. Specially during the early period of one's spiritual life, one should be very careful as to associating with other people. But that is not done out of hatred. Hatred has no place in spiritual life. Those whom we avoid must also be looked upon as manifestations of God, but it is not safe for us to associate with all indiscriminately, specially at the beginning of our spiritual striving. When we come in touch with people of questionable character and morals, we should so guard ourselves that they cannot in any way touch us or affect us. Indifference is like a shield, but for some people this shield is so thin, for some it does not exist at all, and they are all bound to slip their foot sooner or later, whatever they may think. So all people cannot have the same degree of indifference in spite of their sincerity. Many lack the necessary discrimination. There are some aspirants whom I do not even allow to go out for a walk in the evening, although they are very, very sincere.

“The world is by nature blind to what is good; it is full of desires and only works towards worldly objects. Ignorant men hating one another for a little of pleasure do not see the source of endless misery.” —(Srimad Bhagavatam)

I:50.02 There are some very, very sincere people who are so susceptible to other people and to other peoples' influence that they need to be protected for a long time. They must have a strong 'hedge' around them. None is safe for many, many years. Unless we ourselves have realized God, we are never safe. Old impressions may assert themselves, when the time becomes ripe for them, or they may be called up by outside impressions which we in our carelessness allow ourselves to take in. Unless this whole world-dream has completely passed, one is not safe and one should never imagine oneself to be safe. The evil thought that is awakened by somebody else is equally bad. In the course of our spiritual life there comes a time, for everyone, when all the dirt, all the filth, everything comes up and has to be annihilated on the conscious plane. It is like so many films being continually 'developed', as it were.

A comprehensible idea of evil (by Sankaracharya)

I:50.03 Sankaracharya explains, in his *Vivekachudamani* (Verse 75, quoted in I:50.06, below), that:

- The *deer* is charmed by music and its love for music is the cause of its death.
- Wild *elephants* are allured and caught by tame she-elephants. Men-forms are attracted by women-forms, women-forms by men-forms, and then their whole further spiritual development comes to an end.
- The *moths* are attracted by the bright light of the flame. The flame maddens them, and they are killed.
- All these creatures rush towards destruction through their delusion or desire.
- Every day many *fishes* are caught by the sight or smell of the bait. They swallow it and die.
- Even in the case of the *bee* you find there are flowers that use the desire of the bee for honey in order to kill it and devour it. So the honey becomes the cause of the bee's death. The flower just closes, and the bee cannot escape.
- But what of *man*? Sankara says, these five creatures die because of the enjoyment of a particular sense. Man who tries to enjoy the sense-objects with all his five senses, would not he come to destruction?

I:50.04 So the influence is not of one kind only. If any one of these ideas is raised or wakened in us by the contact with others, there is danger. We should avoid the company of all those who throw the mind out of balance through lust, through hatred, through aversion, through anger, through jealousy, through greed, through any form of attachment.

I:50.05 The greatest thing in spiritual life is 'witnessing'—in a perfectly aloof, detached way—the working of the mind in response to the influence of others or through some thought springing up within.

I:50.06 Thus, in his *Vivekachudamani*, Sankaracharya warns:

“Those fools who are tied to these sense-objects by the stout cord of attachment, so very difficult to snap, come and depart, up and down, carried amain by the powerful emissary of one's own actions. (75)

The deer, the elephant, the moth, the fish and the black-bee—these five have died being tied to one or other of the

five senses, viz., sound etc., through their own attachment. What then is in store for man who is attached to all these five! (76)

Sense-objects are more virulent in their evil effects than the poison of the cobra even. Poison kills one who takes it, but those others kill one who even looks at them through the eyes. (77)

He who is free from the terrible fetters of the hankering for the sense-objects, so very difficult to get rid of, is alone fit for Liberation, and none else,—even though he be versed in all the six Shastras.” (78) —(Vivekachudamani)—

The power of Maya in the form of Woman (Bhagavatam)

“One ought not to associate oneself with those unrighteous men who have no control over their senses and, full of ignorance, regard the limited body as the self, and who are pitiable as being under the power of women like the deer and other animals with which women play.”

“Neither delusion nor bondage could beset man with the same intensity, through other associations as through association with women and with those who are attached to them.”

“Observe the power of Maya in the form of the woman who by a mere motion of her brows treads under foot those who are victorious over all the cardinal points.”

“One having obtained the benefit of self-realization through My worship, and desirous to attain to the highest step in Yoga, ought never to form attachment to women; for the wise say, they form the entrance to hell.”

“The Maya which is created by the Lord and which slowly approaches in the form of a woman should be regarded by the devotee as his Death, even like a deep well covered with grass.”

“Similarly a woman seeking illumination should regard as her Death the Maya that comes in the form of a man whom she foolishly takes to be her husband, for she is really a Jiva who on account of this association with women in a previous life has attained a feminine form that bestows on her wealth, children and a home. (i.e., leads to their possession)”

—(Srimad Bhagavatam)—

Shield yourselves

I:50.07 Sometimes the influence awakens our desire for name and fame, for honour, for lust, for greed, for possession etc. And especially when we come in touch with those objects that affect us, we should be on our guard, we should become all the more alert. Learn to be fully conscious at all times.

I:50.08 You must learn to shield yourselves mentally, to ***rise to the higher centre of consciousness***. Do not only create a sort of indifference remaining all the while on the lower plane! Never express the feeling outwardly. While preventing the outward manifestation, allow that feeling to remain on the thought-plane, and try to break it up:— analyze it, make it fully conscious, and then break it up.

I:50.09 Sometimes it takes days, months, years and years, to rid oneself completely of an impression. It has become so very strong. Sometimes it asserts itself in the mind in connection with some association, while you had been thinking that you had completely forgotten it.

I:50.10 Different people are differently susceptible to all these evil influences. I had to study all these different types, so that I might be of some service to them.

I:50.11 The general method is:— we should remain protected and at the same time increase our powers, mental and moral. Then comes a time when we remain perfectly unaffected, when we can meet even our worst enemies face to face without flinching, and deal them a deadly blow.

I:50.11a Try to reach a state where you can no longer be affected, but, never believe you have reached it already and are out of danger. There are many evil desires lurking in the dark corners of your mind, and before they are brought to light and eradicated, not one of you is safe.

I:50.11b Sri Ramakrishna has no place for the impure, the coward and the attached. He could not even stand the presence of such people. And no one is going to be a true devotee and child of his unless he renounces all these and really and truly tries to live the life. You do not yet know the great importance of all this.

I:51 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 1, 1934 -- (Vol.I 327-335)[CG 228-233]

Freedom, and the whirlpools of our complexes

I:51.01 Our human personality is so full of complexes, and we waste so much time in whirling round and round without ever moving forwards, which is the first thing necessary in spiritual life. There should always be the desire to move onward.

For years and years we go on whirling round and round helplessly swayed by our complexes and yet we dare to speak of being free men and women! Where is this much-vaunted freedom, I wonder? What sense is there in talking about freedom if one does not even realize what freedom means? No man knows anything about freedom who is still swayed by his passions and desires, his likes and dislikes, his whims and fancies, who still feels aversion, who still reacts to the influence of others, who cannot even control his thoughts. It is surprising how glibly people talk about freedom without knowing what freedom is. As long as the slave believes himself to be the master, there can never be any real progress.

I:51.02 The energy that a whirlpool wastes in whirling round and round in a single day would take it round the earth. The same energy we waste in whirling round and round, refusing to change for the better, refusing to become conscious, refusing to become free. Spiritual life means breaking all these whirlpools in our soul. And of everything we see, we take readings according to our complexes: our complex of lust, of fear, of jealousy, of hatred, of aversion, of attachment etc.

I:51.03 Complexes may be likened to mines that lie deep under water. They form a great menace. The more worldly we become, the more we give mental and physical expression to our desires and lusts, the more complexes we form and the stronger does their hold grow on us. The current of the Divine is strong, but it cannot do anything as long as the whirlpool is still there. If you watch a river you can see it. There you have both the current and the whirlpool, but the current, however strong it may be, cannot efface the whirlpool that is created by an obstruction under the surface of the water. So the whirlpools of our complexes are formed by obstructions, and unless they be removed, the current cannot help us.

I:51.04 Even the worldly man can change if he is ready to give up his worldliness and all the complexes he has formed. Otherwise

never. It is not a question of mere lukewarm piety or devotion, but of actual intense daily practice and firm resolution. Ordinary half-hearted devotion won't do. What people generally do is they just anchor the boat and want it to move. In all our minds there are very deep-rooted impressions [*samskaras*] and these must be completely effaced. You must be ready to give up your false personality, false identification. They give us a false and distorted outlook.

Freedom from self-love and self-justification

I:51.05 Theoretically all can be changed, but, in practice, most people refuse to change. They cling to their pet desires and identify them with life. They gleefully hug their likes and dislikes, are proud of them, and make them their all in all.

I:51.06 The worldly man who is willing to overhaul his whole mental structure and foundations, can be changed, can become spiritual in spite of his past. If we are fully prepared to lay a new foundation we can become spiritual, otherwise we grow worse as the years go on. In the end, our complexes become so strong, and we are so helplessly under their sway, that we can scarcely be considered 'normal'.

I:51.07 It is terrible weakness to cling to one's own personality. The weaker the person, the greater the tendency to cling to his lower self. We are not able to change because of this self-love of our lower self. Unless we become merciless critics of ourselves, we can never progress.

I:51.08 We always resent being corrected by others. There is always an amount of self-justification in ourselves. But it is necessary for us to be open to Truth. Sometimes Truth will break our heart, but then will come a new awakening. The electric current that brings shocks, brings light also. If you want the light, be prepared for the shock also!

Devahuti's prayer (from the Bhagavatam)

"O Perfect One! I am quite sick of gratifying the wicked senses. It is because of seeking to gratify them, O Lord, that I have fallen into blinding darkness." (3.25.7)

"At the end of many lives, I have now, by Thy grace secured in Thee an excellent eye to enable me to see through this thick, impassable veil of darkness." (3.25.8)

“Thou art indeed the Lord, the most ancient and glorious Supreme Being, the Ruler of all purushas, and like the sun Thou hast risen as an eye to the world blinded by ignorance.” (3.25.9)

“Now, O Lord, be Thou pleased to dispel my great delusion—consisting in a strong attachment to this body and its belongings, with notions like ‘I’, ‘Mine’, and so on—which has been inspired by Thyself.” (3.25.10)

—(Srimad Bhagavatam)—

Spiritual life without strict Sadhana is impossible

I:51.12 If we are not prepared to find time for our daily spiritual practices, we cannot change, never. Then we should be sincere and give up all attempts at spiritual life. Spiritual life without strict Sadhana is an impossibility. The Protestant section of Christianity seems never to have realized this at all.

I:51.13 You absolutely must minimize all your unnecessary activities, mental and physical, and make more time for your spiritual practices. With a few minutes random meditation each day, nothing can be achieved. By dropping all unnecessary work and unnecessary occupations we have to create the necessary time for ourselves, and this time is to be utilized for spiritual practices only. Time is to be saved as much as possible, and we should never spend too much physical energy in unnecessary occupations either.

We bother so much about outward cleanliness, but what about the inner cleanliness that is to be created?

I:51.14 Again and again Sri Ramakrishna is stressing the aspect of renunciation.

“If you want to get at the lower pot, you must first remove the pot that is standing on top of it. You must renounce the world.”

This the Master once said, to Swamiji [Swami Vivekananda].

I:51.16 You cannot have both the enjoyment of the world in its material aspect and Self-realization. Never delude yourselves on that point. *“Where Rama is, there Kama cannot be. Where Kama is, there Rama cannot be”*, says an old proverb. Lust of the world in all its forms and God never go together. You have to give up one of them.

I:51.17 You should all intensify your daily practices. You should make more time for them. There is too much of useless talk, too much of useless physical waste of energy, too much mental restless-

ness. Whirlpools everywhere. Break the whirlpools if you want to find the right mood for intense spiritual practices

I:52 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 2, 1934 -- (Vol.I 336-338)[CG 234-236]

Dirt can be got rid of

I:52.01 If a certain number of conditions are fulfilled, then only your cloth will become clean.

I:52.02 Some human beings do not recognize dirt as dirt.

I:52.03 It is not bad to have dirt in the beginning, but it is very bad to remain dirty.

I:52.04 If I have become dirty for some reason or other, I must strive to become clean again. The sincere man, however bad and dirty he may be, has got a place in spiritual life and has got a chance of progressing along the right lines, provided he really wants to purge himself of all evil and filth. Others have not.

Fear and sin are very low sentiments

I:52.06 Fear is all right for a beginner, because ordinarily, we do not want to be good out of goodness, but out of fear. We need the rod that makes us move, that chastises us. Fear has a place, sense of sin has place, but only at a certain stage in the life of the beginner, not eternally. Fear and sin are very low, and the more advanced student has nothing to do with them.

I:52.07 You see, **where love is, fear cannot be**. And as long as there is fear, real love for the Lord has not yet dawned in a heart. I want to sacrifice everything to my Beloved, my Lord, to my Master, but not out of fear, but out of love, out of a feeling of complete surrender and complete service to him. He is my all in all, none else, and because I love him more than anything else in the whole world, I serve him, I follow his commands, to please him, not out of fear or in order to gain some profit now or hereafter. No, in real love, there is no fear and respect, but only intimacy, comradeship, affection.

I:52.08 Why go and drag the world with you constantly and be all the more miserable and bound and full of no end of anxieties? Think of the Lord, of your Friend, and be happy, Be free, be cheerful and free from all worry. He is greater than anything you can imagine. He is the fulfillment of all friendship, of all love, of all longing for comradeship, and once you have got Him, there is no want whatever in

your life, no matter what its circumstances may appear to be. Without Him, there can never be any peace or quiet or plenitude of life for any human being, but only the ever-recurrent attachment to other human dolls and the ever-recurrent frustration and disappointment and separation through death. Never delude yourselves on that count, for here, all delusion means misery, terrible misery sooner or later, and always nothing but misery and loneliness.

I:52:09 If you are sincere and follow the instructions, you too, will realize the Lord one day. And Sri Ramakrishna can always be trusted. He is always willing to come to your aid if you are perfectly sincere, perfectly pure and filled with a true longing for renunciation.

I:53 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 3, 1934 -- (Vol.I 338-345)[CG 236-240]

Never take the world-phantom too seriously

I:53.01 Although the world is a wilderness, that is no reason why you should succumb to it, why you should lose your way completely. The world can never be changed, and we have to make our choice. Either follow the spiritual life or follow the world, but spiritual life can never be made comfortable or a worldly success in any way.

Manliness is needed, whether we are men or women, real undauntedness and firm determination is needed.

I:53.02 Sometimes much of our energy is lost through fear. We should not be too bold and think we are too secure, but the person who is always afraid of falling down is sure to fall; the person who is over-confident is sure to slip. Follow the golden mean.

I:53.03 The general rule for meditation is one should never travel the path alone, unaided; one should, if possible, be in the company of people who are following the same path. This is very helpful.

I:53.04 The difficulty in spiritual life is that each case is to be dealt with separately. There may be some common points, but there are also so many different points in everyone. Mass-production and any form of standardization is not possible in spiritual life. That is why institutional religion in its rigid form produces so few spiritual people. If you force a person to go against the law of his own evolution or growth, you simply stunt his spiritual instincts. He will never be able to advance.

I:53.05 As we go up higher and higher, there is always the great danger that we slip our foot and fall over the precipice. But that is no reason for being continually afraid of slipping our foot and dying or at least seriously coming to grief. Spiritual life is an adventure and requires great heroism, if a person *really* wishes to succeed and to reach the goal. It is not a dangerless path that can be comfortably trodden by all and sundry without great risk.

Never take the world-phantom too seriously. Do not cling to all the shadowy dolls and puppets you happen to meet. Stay in your own centre of consciousness.

I:53.06 Trust in God and faith in ourselves is necessary for every devotee. These are the two greatest props in spiritual life.

I:53.07 Knowledge and activity must go hand in hand. Otherwise work brings about restlessness and distraction.

I:53.08 We must be realistic and idealistic at the same time. Ours should be creative idealism, which is something quite different from sentimental emotionalism.

I:53.09 Sri Ramakrishna's Bhakti does not mean that Bhakti is opposed to Jñana, both are to be blended.

Wash off old dirt as well as daily sin

I:53.10 The human personality is a blend of good and bad impressions. You should make the good ones grow, but at the same time neutralize and counteract the evil ones. Only thus can your tendencies be purified and slowly become great helpers in building up your spiritual personality.

I:53.11 Simply washing off the daily sin is not enough, because through ages and ages you have allowed yourselves to accumulate all kinds of filth and rubbish and dirt. So some of this old dirt must be washed off too. You should all try to devote some time to really intense spiritual practice every day. Without that, the dirt cannot be removed from all the dark corners of your mind, and then nothing will be of any avail. Every impure thought of lust or hatred or greed must disappear even in the dream-state, every impulse of aversion or hatred or possession must die away, before you will really be able to approach the goal. Daily sin is but the poisonous flower of the age-old roots of evil we have cherished and watered through life after life.

I:54 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 4, 1934 -- (Vol.I 345-348)[CG 240-242]

The milk of Divine Love streams from God Incarnate

I:54.01 We want milk from the cow, not kicks; but the same cow that gives milk, gives kicks too.

I:54.02 In a general way God is everywhere, but His greatest manifestation is in the Incarnation, and we need the Incarnation to come in touch with God. First we must come in touch with the Incarnation, then only can God be known. None can come to the Father except through the Son.

The relation between mind and soul

I:54.03 In the course of our self-purification, there comes a time when mind disappears altogether. Soul alone exists. ***There comes a time when the soul reveals itself in all its glory, without mind.*** The pure mind becomes the pure soul.

I:54.04 That which makes the intellect an instrument, this very moment, here, while we are having our reading, that which makes this intellect work and directs it, is the soul, is other than the intellect.

I:54.05 The 'sense of existence' is ultimately not a product of the mind, but beyond the mind.

I:54.06 This self-conscious Principle stands as the foundation of all experience. It is given to very few to see the soul without reflection. At the back of all our experiences there is the existence of the soul. In all experiences there is something other than the mind, and in the pure mind there is always the reflection of the soul. The purified mind and the purified intellect become the reflectors of the glory of the soul.

I:54.07 The Atman, from one standpoint, cannot be known, from another It is known, from a third It is something more than merely known, because It is a conscious Principle that does not depend on anything else for Its realization.

I:54.08 In the process of purification, you find that mind disappears. First the dross will be less and less, and then comes a time when the mind disappears altogether. First do away with all impure thoughts, have only pure thoughts, then ***mind disappears of itself, and the soul is revealed.*** This disappearance or annihilation of mind is not an unconscious, an inert, a lifeless state, but a state of the intensest vibration and illumination, but 'mindless'.

“First of all you give up the world with the help of the mind, and then, finally, you give up the mind also.”—(Upanishads)—

I:54.09 This is the final elimination of all *upadhis*, all limiting adjuncts. You make your face clean with the help of the mirror that shows you the dirt, and then you throw away the mirror, too.

I:54.10 The Highest Truth is that where all argument, all reasoning, stops.

I:54.11 The mind wants to reach the Truth, but it has to be disappointed, because it is unable to reach the Truth. The mind has no luminosity of its own; its luminosity is a borrowed luminosity, and so cannot illumine that through which its own limited luminosity has come into being. (The moon cannot illumine the sun.)

I:54.12 ***Even a little glimpse of the soul in the purified mind convinces us once for all that the soul is infinitely more real and lovable than the mind.*** This is something to be experienced. The soul is the very bedrock of all experience.

I:54.13 If on purified mind there falls a reflection of the Infinite, we can get a ***glimpse*** of It, though this does not yet mean Its realization.

Develop proper imagination for meditation on SELF

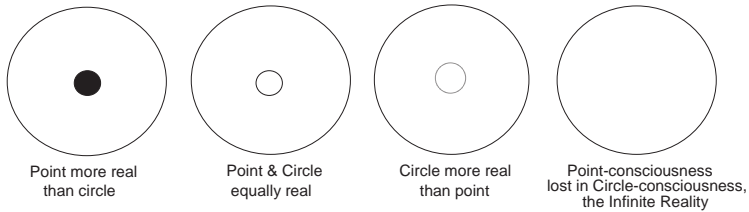
I:54.14 Without meditation there is no possibility of cleansing the instrument, and the beginner should develop the faculty of imagination by imagining something that is true, not something that is untrue, such as the son of a barren woman or a sky-flower. Imaginations, if intensified, slowly lead the aspirant to the direct perception of the Reality.

I:54.15 Think of the SELF that is in the sun, in the moon, in the stars, in all the world-systems, in all the planets, that pervades the entire universe:— the SELF that fills all, that is near at hand and far, that stands at the back of body, senses, mind, that is all one, ever indivisible. Think such thoughts intensely again and again during the day and while falling asleep. Make them vivid, vibrant, alive. Let them possess you.

I:54.16 The point longing to realize its point-nature finds that it is the circle and that its point-nature is something imaginary. [See *figures, and footnote below.*]

I:54.18 Most of us have no consciousness of consciousness.

Phases in meditation and realization



Their consciousness is so vague, diffused, that they are not even conscious of being conscious. All the rays must first be focussed on one point. Ordinarily, as I said, our consciousness is so diffused, going outward through all the senses, continually being distracted, now by this, now by that, but not conscious of its own consciousness. In focussing the rays of our consciousness we begin to feel it. In focussing the rays of the sun, we feel its tremendous heat.

1:54.19 So, first try to stop the diffusion of consciousness more and more at all times, and then, from the highly concentrated point of consciousness pass on to the whole, wide, vast circle of consciousness.⁷

“In whatever you perceive, you alone appear. Do bracelets, armlets and anklets appear different from gold?

Completely give up such distinction as ‘I am He’ and ‘I am not this’. Consider all as the Self and be desireless and happy.

It is verily through your ignorance that the universe exists. In reality you alone are. There is no Jiva or Ishwara other than you.

One who knows for certain that this universe is but an illusion and a nothing, becomes desireless and pure intelligence, and finds peace as if nothing exists.

In the ocean of the world One only was, is and will be. You have neither bondage nor liberation. Live contented and happy.”

—(Ashtavakra Samhita 15.14-18)—

7. Reference to phases 4-7 of the chart published in *MEDITATION & SPIRITUAL LIFE* at the end of the chapter entitled ‘Spiritual Unfoldment’, followed by a very instructive Editor’s Note. During his meditation, the sadhaka, starting from his present sense of reality, begins by sensing that he is a ‘point’ that is a part of the Infinite, the circle; this, if done persistently and undistractedly, for a long time, undermines the reality of the point, until, in the end, the point-consciousness disappears, and the circle-consciousness alone stands revealed as the only reality. [Publisher]

I:54.20 If we really, intensely go on trying, day by day, some day a higher mood will come over us and then we get a **glimpse**, and the impression of even a very tiny glimpse never leaves one again, whatever happens. It is like the very first intimation of homecoming after years and years of lonely exile.

I:54.21 Worldly life, which can never make you happy with all its frustrations and miseries and thwarted hopes, may try to dog you again, but even the remembrance of that glimpse will save you and drive you on. It has become a living part of your own being, and no-one can ever again get rid of it. It is our true nature, asserting itself for the first time, our first nature which can never be given up.

I:54.22 Now, owing to our present impurities, the reflection in us does not reveal the direction from which the light is really coming. This is what muddles everything up.

I:54.24 Vedanta says: **Follow the path, have the experience yourself, verify it again and again; take no one on trust.**

Create the instrument and then realize the Truth yourselves. Take no creed, no teachings, no Holy Scripture on trust, but only as sign-posts to help you to your own realization of Truth.

I:54.25 Our great sage Sankaracharya says somewhere: *“Everybody feels he is, never that he is not or that he has ceased to be.”*

I:54.26 The principle of verification is the greatest thing in Vedanta.

I:54.27 To the extent in which you yourselves will be able to raise your centre of consciousness, higher and higher, you will get at least a glimpse of the Infinite.

I:54.29 The mind must move. Movement is its very nature. If you consciously and deliberately stop its downward course to the lower, physical body-centres, it must move upwards. But if you stop its downward course and at the same time make it consciously move upwards, *with an effort of the will*, the process is much swifter.

“The wise should always think with great care of the invisible, the visible and everything else, as his own SELF, which is consciousness itself.

Having reduced the visible to the invisible, the wise should think of the universe as one with Brahman. Thus alone will he abide in eternal felicity with the mind full of consciousness and bliss.”—(Aparokshanubhuti 141-142)

I:55 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 5, 1934 -- (Vol.I 349-359)[CG 243-250]

Sri Ramakrishna's warning regarding certain persons

I:55.01 Sri Ramakrishna warned people against the following persons:

- 1. The person whose words flow like water.
- 2. The man, the doors of whose heart are closed; even if a diver takes a dip in his heart he would not fathom it.
- 3. The devotee with the Tulsi leaf stuck over his ear to show his devotion outwardly.
- 4. The woman who wears a thick veil so that people might know that she is a very chaste lady, which she is not.

Such people are very dangerous. They are just like a poisonous water reservoir, where you may get typhoid if you bathe in it.

Mother's play

I:55.03 Whatever the Mother does, everything is the manifestation of Her sport, Her Lila, Her joy. Sometimes the devotee says, "Mad Woman, what are you doing?", when he sees Her prancing about in one of Her strangest pranks, frolicking madly with pain and pleasure and human hearts. Sometimes we do not find any rhyme or reason in the whole cosmic process, but this whole cosmic process in its madness, its cruelty, its pain and pleasure, is but the manifestation of the mad frolicking spirit of Mother, of the joy She has in Her play, and we should become Her playmates, consciously and willingly. We, too, should enjoy Her play and take it as play, as actors performing a part, but knowing that they really have nothing to do with it, and that it is all for the sake of the mighty fun of the thing.

I:55.04 All these songs of Sri Ramakrishna⁸—mostly written and composed by Ramprasad and other Bengali Vaishnavas—are the symbolic representations of this cosmic process. The crude mind of the worldly person takes them in a crude way and thus misses their inner meaning. Their symbolism is really marvellous and expresses the Truth in a very striking way—as far as the Truth can ever be expressed in words.

I:55.05 You see, we are all kites Mother is flying in the sky, and

8. In Vol.I Section 11, Chapter 3, p.351-359 [CG245-251].

we are all tied by separate strings so that we cannot get away. But some very clever kites manage to cut the string and fly away, never to return, and then Mother beside herself with joy claps Her hands and is full of joy, though She Herself keeps the kites tied to the string. So what we have got to do is to cut the string that ties us to the phenomenal world and to Mother's play, and then we are free, and Mother rejoices at our freedom. Otherwise the play will go on indefinitely, with all its joys and miseries, fulfilments and frustrations, never to end—an immense round of frolicking seen from the Mother's side, and of immense suffering and bondage seen from ours.

I:55.06 Brushing completely aside your petty individual will, you must joyfully dance Her mad dance. The fun is that when the impulses rise in our mind, we think they rise from ourselves, that they are *our* impulses, that they belong to *our* will! We do not even realize what slaves we are. When we have got to dance, just let us dance with the whole cosmic dance, never believing our role to be the truth, but knowing it is but play and nothing but play, while we are the witnesses and have no identity with it. Even the individual is a manifestation of the Cosmic, but he makes himself so miserable by cutting himself away from the Cosmic Principle, from Mother who leads and creates the dance.

I:55.07 You see, when you boil potatoes, they, too, perform a most ludicrous dance inside the pan, and we are just like these potatoes. If they had thoughts, they, too, would probably imagine that they were dancing out of their own free will, not that they were made to dance. You should try to realize this fully. It helps you greatly in advancing along the right lines.

I:55.08 You get a glimpse of freedom only when you are in perfect tune with the Cosmic. Otherwise, what we ordinarily call our freedom, is the animal freedom, freedom *of* the instincts, not *from* the instincts, nothing but the unconscious manifestation of the cosmic energy. Instead of living an instinctive life, live a conscious life, a life of intelligence. Freedom *of* the instincts is *licence*, not freedom at all. We are creatures of our moods, and the whole world is full of such marvellous 'free' people, and it is getting worse and worse. Wonderful 'free' souls they are! All puppets dangling most ludicrously on the strings of Her play.

I:56.09 In Tantrika Sadhana, Mother in Her personal aspect is

Shakti, the tremendous Primal Energy whose play all this is. In Her Impersonal, Absolute aspect, Mother is Shiva, the great white God of renunciation and meditation, merged in the absolute state. This is a very grand conception and takes the whole cosmic process into consideration.

I:56 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 6, 1934 -- (Vol.I 359-374)[CG 250-261]

The Visisht-advaitic system of Ramanuja

I:56.05 According to the system of Ramanuja, the Visisht-advaitic system, we are parts of God (cf. Christ's metaphor of the vine and the branches), just as this body of ours is the body of our soul, our souls are the body of God,—not in a gross sense, naturally.

- God is the spirit, the soul is the body;
- God is the Whole, the soul is a part;
- God is the Principle, the soul is a mode.

I:56.06 The **immanent aspect** is the culmination of Ramanuja's teaching, and this is what we need as a stepping-stone to the Advaita. The Advaitic system cannot be realized by the average beginner, and we must first realize the immanent Divine, before we are able to proceed to the One without a second.

[*Question*:— This idea does not appeal to me. Then, according to Ramanuja, God would in a way be dependent on ourselves. If I were not there, God would be lacking something, because if but a single part is not there, the Whole can no longer be complete?

Swami Yatiswarananda:— But where can you go, when everything is in God? You cannot go to any place that is *outside* God. You cannot travel by any means that would eventually take you outside God. You always remain within the Whole, so God really speaking is not at all dependent on your existence, although you are a part.]

I:56.07 The realized soul finds that God who is the Soul of his soul, is the Soul of all souls and pervades the whole universe. With a purified mind, we can only understand this much, no further. After that, the mind gets merged, disappears completely, ceases to be.

I:56.02 There is such a thing as the soul's self-consciousness without any instrument, without the aid of any instrument. The Atman is a Self-conscious entity not dependent on either senses or the

mind. The consciousness that comes to us through the mind comes later and is already limited consciousness, a **reflection**, not real consciousness.

I:56.03 The immanent aspect implies that there may be special manifestations.

I:57 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 7, 1934 -- (Vol.I 374-385)[CG 261-269]

Ramanuja's system (ctd)

I:57.01 You should grasp Ramanuja's attitude very clearly. If you do, it becomes a key to the more difficult aspects of Vedanta, and you need it as a stepping-stone to the abstruse truths of the Advaitic system. Never get it into your head that Sri Ramanuja makes God dependent on you, that you could take yourself away from the Whole and by doing so make It incomplete. This is an absurd idea that has nothing to do with Sri Ramanuja. He was not as simple as all that; neither was Christ in His teaching of the vine and the branches. No, Ramanuja's system is really the best for most people. It avoids on the one hand the narrowness of the dualist and the Dvaitic system, and, on the other, the abstruseness of out-and-out Mysore Advaita.

I:58 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 8, 1934 -- (Vol.I 385-393)[CG 269-275]

Intellectualism – morals – spirituality

I:58.02 The average man or woman of modern times is more intellectual than moral or spiritual. Intellectualism without strict ethical culture and spiritual culture is destructive and will bring about chaos in the world. The intellectual man without morals and spirituality is a demon, and the world will have to suffer terribly if no change is brought about soon. The demon has already become very powerful, and when the demon is very powerful, even God must make use of destruction to bring about a better state. Even Sri Krishna, the greatest Incarnation, could not prevent the war of the Pandavas and the battle of Kurukshetra. Whenever evil has become too rampant, God must bring about destruction, so that the forces of evil may become exhausted. There is very little chance of this present-day world of ours escaping destruction.⁹

I:58.03 *"All the knots of the heart are cut asunder, when the*

9. Reference, again, to World War II (just 5 years ahead).—Publisher.

Highest is realized." When very, very many knots are cut, then alone the light falls on the heart and washes away all the dirt that has been allowed to accumulate for life after life.

I:58.04 The chief attributes for the aspirant are: straight for wardness, guilelessness, freedom from covetousness, gross and subtle. In the language of the Western psychoanalyst, this would be freedom from one's complexes—though, certain schools do not as yet recognize that *giving in* to one's animal instincts simply forms *another* kind of complex, that of animality, creating another kind of unbalanced slaves. The Western psychologist will have to find out many things in the future, of which he is still totally ignorant—caught as he is in the net of his own cocksure theories!

Yearn for union with God

I:58.05 Instead of yearning for union and intercourse with human beings and human bodies, let us yearn for union with God. The yearning as such is right and deeply ingrained, but Maya has so much clouded our understanding that we mistake the direction from where the yearning comes and try to unite ourselves to what is transient and limited, instead of to what is unchanging and alone able to fulfill our yearning in every respect. It takes a human being many, many lives, till the dawn of this realization begins to lighten up his heart and to make him change his mistaken ways. Maya loves Her kites too much to give them freedom without tremendous struggle. The strings are not snapped so easily, and snapping one's string in most cases means terrible struggle and pain.

I:58.06 It is a great grace that we are allowed to strive for something higher, that we are here together trying to follow the path, but this grace may be taken away from us any day if we are not fully sincere and straightforward in our striving. So let us make the best use we possibly can of the great chance given to us and not lose it. No one knows when it will be given again. Before accepting an aspirant, Sri Ramakrishna tests him again and again, and we should be able to pass the test, then great things would happen in our life, only there must be intense yearning and steadiness. We must never become lax in our Sadhana and should never allow ourselves to be distracted and diverted by outward things and the glamour of the phenomenal. This is the great danger in the life of almost every aspirant. If he is not on his guard and wide-awake under all circumstances, he may

easily be lured away into by-paths that end in a blind alley. Then he would have missed the chance of his life.

I:59 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 9, 1934 -- (Vol.I 393)[CG 275]

Crookedness does not pay

I:59.01 In no way of life, will you find that crookedness pays in the end. Crookedness is always found out. Modern Western civilization is manufacturing crookedness. Even in the children it is being manufactured. And the manufacturer of crookedness has always to pay for it in the end, and he will have to pay heavily.

I:59.02 Sri Ramakrishna could not bear crooked people. An aspirant who is crooked cannot advance, however profitable he himself believes his attitude in life to be. There is no redeeming feature in crookedness. It is wholly of the world and worldly aspirations, and even there it is found out in the end.

I:59.03 We should be frank, kind, intelligent, straightforward under all circumstances. The crooked person wastes tremendous energy without moving forward, just like the whirlpool in a river.

I:59.04 Sometimes our pet-ideas are more to us than our flesh and blood, although they are all wrong. Never believe the crooked way of acting to be a wise way. The worldly man may think so, but it does not pay.

I:59.05 This is the one thing absolutely needful in all forms of spiritual life:— We must be sincere; our eyes must be open to Truth even if Truth breaks our hearts and those of others. Truth often does.

A group of spiritual aspirants is no mutual admiration club

I:59.06 Truth is so shocking. Real Truth always brings shock and terrible disillusionment. Sometimes we feel shocked, miserable, depressed if someone really tells us the truth, but if there is any goodness in us, we have to acknowledge that what has been said has been right. This (group) should not become a mutual admiration club. The aspirants should tell each other the truth, even if it is unpleasant; they should be out to help each other. A mutual admiration club is of no use in spiritual life.

It is a great misfortune, if in spiritual life people are not trained by elders who have actual experience of Truth. An elder is necessary in spiritual life, for he alone can lead, direct and determine the Sadhana

of the aspirant. So many things have to be imparted in spiritual life. Culture has to be imparted, you see; whereas civilization can be learned or studied from books—spirituality and true spiritual life, never.

I:59.07 When we form an intimate group for sincere spiritual studies we should expect to hear and to be told what is not pleasant. The elder can only direct the aspirants when he is able to tell them many things they do not like. If you want to resent this, of course, you can do whatever you please, but spiritually you can never grow and you had better give up all aspirations for higher life. Without the right attitude you can never learn anything spiritually.

I:59.08 The relations between the spiritual students should be intimate, that between the leader or the teacher and the student should be intimate. The thought must always flow freely from one to the other. Meaningless obstinacy on the one hand, and mere admiration on the other, are both exceedingly bad. If one forms a group, one should listen to what one is being told; if one does not listen, one should go away; one should no longer be present. A group is no club where one can while away one's superfluous time.

I:59.09 If the flood of Truth comes and washes away our wrong notions and wrong relationships with others, this is not a defeat, not a loss, but a victory. But very often the unilluminated soul thinks it a loss.

I:59.10 Never cling to falsehood in the name of Truth, and never justify yourself. Test the Truth like the money-changer tests his money but, after having tested it, accept the Truth, follow the Truth, do not resent It.

Your personality has to be built up

I:59.11 Our progress depends on how we approach the Truth, on how we face the Truth. Sometimes the shock of the Truth may be so great that we feel broken down under it for a while. Stand it, and that will bring you light and new life. It will be very painful, but this pain will bring infinite bliss and happiness. Pray to Him, "*Lord, if the doors of my heart are closed, break them open!*"—. Sometimes we think we lose our personality. No,—our personality is only now being formed. We haven't got one yet!

I:59.12 The human being must rise above his animal consciousness. Often a relentless, complete reshuffling is necessary. This means pain and unsettlement. It is a painful process. What up to now

you had been calling a personality or a person was just an indefinite chaotic mass of impulses and animal cravings. Your real personality is slowly being built up now. This takes years and years of constant pain and struggle.

The lower one is in the scale of evolution, the greater is his self-love. Apply this rule mercilessly to yourself and to others when you want to find where everyone stands. Egolessness and calmness are necessary for one who follows the path of Jñāna and no man or woman who still hugs self-love to his or her bosom can be called a highly evolved being.

I:59.13 Many people think ruthlessness, inconsiderateness, obstinacy, are signs of a strong personality. No, they are not,—they are the unmistakable signs of a weak despicable slave. No one who is really strong is ruthless or ego-centric, for selfishness only belongs to the weak and is the weapon of the weak that cuts both them and others.

I:59.15 Never instruct anyone in the highest truth who is not continent, not controlled. Purity, faith and devotion are necessary. A single one of the different passions is enough to ruin a man, but mostly, a person is dominated by even more than one passion. So you see what a long and troublesome preparation is necessary.

I:59.16 If you want to fill a pot with water you cannot do so if there is even one small hole somewhere. But most of us are pots with many holes. So how can they be filled? First of all, these holes must be stopped. And this means a long time of sincere, steady striving, and strict culture. Our hole may be anger, or lust, or aversion, or jealousy, or desire for name and fame, or attachment to property and our kith and kin,—it may even be the desire to appear better than we really are,—and every one of these is enough to stop our whole progress.

I:59.19 Ethical culture, continence, purity, help us in building up a real character. Character gives one the backbone, the stamina, the strength that alone makes spiritual life possible. Without this, there may be a 'person', a sort of jelly-fish, but never a personality, and never a real human being, but only an intellectual animal.

“The wise should always be one with that silence wherefrom words together with the mind turn back without reaching it, but which is attainable by the Yogins.”—(Aparokshanubhuti 107)

I:59.20 We must develop our will and have straightforwardness.

Only then can we progress. In spiritual life there are so many points to be observed, and every one of them is sufficient to make us stagnate or to cut us off altogether. We should see that we do not miss the great chance given us through Divine Grace. Everything will be of no avail if we do not listen to what is told us and if we do not strive night and day to apply it practically and to perform our spiritual exercises steadily and doggedly for a long time. This is the only way, if we want to succeed.

1:60 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 10, 1934 -- (Vol.I 393)[CG 275-275]

Expect tension at the beginning of Sadhana

1:60.02 Spiritual practice means tremendous nervous tension. There must be tremendous nervous tension but, in the long run, this strengthens your nerves. In gymnastics, too, you get terrible pain, until your muscles are trained, and yet the muscles become stronger and more elastic. Without this pain, there could be no progress.

1:60.03 In the beginning, you must always be in a state of tension, nervous and mental; higher tension, not lower tension which brings about exhaustion. Spiritual life needs energy more than anything else, and the willingness to stand the troubles and the pain and the unsettlement spiritual practice initially brings.

The slave should know his slavery

1:60.01 If you want to be weak, just cherish the thought of lust, hatred, aversion, jealousy, etc., etc. All your energy will be lost and you will become a slave of hatred, of lust, of greed, of jealousy, of covetousness etc., etc.

1:60.04 We should always take care to watch the effects of our thoughts on our mind and on our whole physical system, and then act accordingly.

1:60.06 We want to be driven by our impulses, and yet we think we are free. This is not freedom, but licence, and licence, in whatever form it comes, means slavery. This is a subconscious process. In the case of most of our 'free' people, the stimulus comes, and they simply react to the stimulus. There is nothing free in that. When the stimulus, any stimulus, forces one to react, one is not a free human being. One is a slave. Our impulses drive us, and we pretend we are free. No, we are slaves. When the slave thinks he is free, there is no salvation for him. The slave should know his slavery. Dominated by

our passions, we live a life of impulses, good impulses and bad impulses, no matter which, but the impulse-swayed and impulse-driven man is not a free human being. Desires and freedom cannot go together. I am always amused when I find so many persons talking about their freedom. Where is it? No, in most cases, the slave is proud of his slavery

I:61 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 11, 1934 -- (Vol.I 393-394)[CG 275-275]

Well-performed Japam leads to meditation

I:61.05 We should be perfectly regular in our practices and reading and studies, but at the same time not machine-like.

I:61.06 Some people, lest they become machines, won't observe any regularity in their practices, doing their Japam, their meditation whenever they like, but this is something very dangerous in spiritual life and leads nowhere. ***There must be perfect regularity, a daily fixed routine, which is not to be given up.***

I:61.07 Our tendency is always to be irregular, haphazard; so it is better to stress regularity even in all other matters.

I:61.08 The nerves play such a great part in spiritual life, and in spiritual training.

I:61.10 Regular breathing is always useful. Ordinarily the rule is: Do not allow your breath to become unrhythmic.

I:61.11 Japam, repetition of a Mantram or a Holy Name, will bring about rhythm in the body and in the mind. Never underrate its effect.

I:61.12 All this brings about a change in the mood:— sometimes after a little while, sometimes after a long time. But these practices are always effective in the long run.

You cannot overestimate the importance of well-performed Japam for the beginner. Well-performed Japam slowly leads to real meditation, which cannot be attained without the necessary physical and mental preparation.

I:61.13 Japam especially, more than any other practice, is to be stressed by you all. Try to make it as intense as possible. Try to make it better and better. You cannot imagine its efficiency if properly performed. But done in a happy-go-lucky, haphazard way whenever you like, without strict regularity, it is of no use.

I:62 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 12, 1934 -- (Vol.I 394)[CG 275]

Aspects of the Cosmic

I:62.01 The Cosmic has got different aspects:

- *Physical* aspect: the whole universe;
- *Mental* aspect: the Cosmic Mind—not merely the sum-total of all limited minds, but much more;
- *Spiritual* aspect: the Whole, of which all the souls are modes or parts;
- *Absolute* aspect: where the question of the Whole and the parts can no longer arise, where there is only the One without a second, undivided and indivisible.

I:62.02 Some aspirants do not find it possible to think of the forms, but they see the whole universe.

Dissolve all false ishtams into your Ishtam

I:62.03 How much time we waste in being social! How much time we meditate upon others, we human beings! It is just like meditation, so intense, but calling up false images and false feelings. When we dispassionately look into ourselves, we will see what funny things are happening inside us. If we would only devote all that time to our own Ishtam, instead of busying ourselves with others, what wonderful progress we would make!

This is not the way to progress. We must rise above the little dolls and puppets—the miserable little toys—to the Toy-Maker, to Him who pulls their strings, who makes them dance their chaotic dance,—to the Mother, who holds the strings of the kites She is flying, keeping them tied to her Maya.

I:62.04 Unfortunately, it so happens that we do not have enough love for the Ishtam. We think of human beings, feel attracted by them, lack in love for the Ishtam, and do our Japam in a very lukewarm and haphazard way. If however we make a Holy Personality our Ishtam, then we are saved from thinking of these hundreds and hundreds of false human ishtams that bind us to the phenomenal world and prevent our progress. Without rising above them all, we shall never know what Love and what Freedom is.

I:62.04a Be on your guard, analyze your thoughts mercilessly.

Do not allow the puppet to forge invisible fetters and bind you to itself.

What is the puppet without him who holds the strings, without him who moves it? Where is the importance of the puppet? So, why all this attraction and aversion, why all these likes and dislikes instead of centring all our emotions on our Ishtam? The Ishtam is always there. The Ishtam never leaves you in the lurch, never disappoints you, never brings you misery and frustration, but you must know how to make him your very own, how to be in his company, how to consecrate yourselves to him alone.

I:62.05 So, this is the great point for consideration by us all: If we watch our thoughts during the day, we find hundreds of ishtams instead of our Ishtam occupying our thought-life and our emotional-life. But we must cling to our Ishtam, dissolve all the false ishtams into our Ishtam, merge them. There is no other solution, however painful this may be for the beginner. Always have the undercurrent of your mind connected with your Ishtam, at all times.

I:62.06 Try to replace all other forms that attract you or repel you by His form, then your life will be happy and free from all attachment.

I:62.07 Sometimes if you think of people, you shudder; sometimes you feel hatred; sometimes a feeling of sexual attraction, a feeling of this so-called love. If you consciously and intensely connect all these feelings at once with your Ishtam, you save energy and avoid all these disturbances. When thoughts of other persons come, replace them by the thought of your Ishtam, always replace their forms by the luminous form of your Ishtam. Thus you minimize the waste of energy, and not merely that: this practice has a great spiritual value.

I:62.08 It is because we still have too much body-consciousness that we still think in terms of bodies, of persons. So, whenever you find yourself thinking worthless or even dangerous thoughts about someone—thoughts of attraction or repulsion, not conducive to your spiritual development—replace them at once by the thought of your Ishtam, and think this thought intensely, while doing Japam.

Learn to be detached and aloof

I:62.11 First of all our attitude towards ourselves is wrong. Then our attitude towards all others is wrong, naturally.

I:62.13 Mental purification is a very hard process, and without mental purification no spiritual achievement is possible. If we allow

ourselves to act as bodies, as men or women, we shall never be able to minimize or annihilate our body-consciousness. **Try to eliminate as much as possible unnecessary thinking of others**, no matter whether they attract or repel you. Both attitudes are equally bad from the spiritual standpoint. Learn to be detached and aloof.

Cling to your Ishtam alone

I:62.14 Cling to your Ishtam and drop all ideas of clinging to others. There should never be any attempt at direct connection between different bubbles, different puppets, you see. The indirect connection through the ocean is all right; but that is always there. No bubble should take up direct relations with any other bubble. Otherwise, sooner or later, but unavoidably, there will be misery and bondage and slavery. Therefore the spiritual aspirant should always be on his guard and concentrate all his feeling, thinking and willing on his Ishtam, who is always reliable and can never become a source of bondage.

I:62.15 When your mind has attained a certain amount of purity, you can talk to your Ishtam, get answers from Him, and can always find yourself supported by your Ishtam when you are in need of any support.

I:62.16 The bubble can never really support you. The Ishtam is your friend, your nearest and dearest, and will never betray you. So try to **establish a close connection between yourselves and your Ishtam as soon as possible** by performing your practices steadily and strictly following the instructions you have been given. This is not mere imagination. It is something that is and that can always be relied upon, but you yourself must experience it. Never accept anything without testing it again and again.

The horse can be taken to the well, but it cannot be made to drink if it does not do so itself. You can be given the necessary directions, you can be told what you should do, but then you must doggedly do it yourselves. No other person can do it for you. So do not complain if you do not succeed, but rather see that you fulfill all the preliminary conditions.

I:63 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 13, 1934 -- (Vol.I 394-397)[CG 275-277]

Be prepared to struggle for a long time

I:63.08 The struggle will have to continue for a long time, for

many, many years. After hard struggle and great perseverance we may be granted some respite, but even this does not mean that we should give up all practices. The task of spiritual life is very hard and only one among thousands and thousands reaches the goal. The others just fall down at the wayside. This cannot be helped. We have to leave them there and to walk on. But then no effort is ever lost and their effort, too, is going to bear fruit in some later life. The doer of good never comes to grief, ultimately, though his bad karma may have prevented him from reaching the goal this time.

“(Reality which is) free from birth, and (which is) free from sleep and dream, reveals itself by itself. For, this Dharma (i.e., Atman) is from its very nature ever-luminous.

On account of the mind apprehending single objects, the Bliss (i.e., the real essence of the Self) always remains concealed and misery comes to the surface. Therefore the ever-effulgent Lord (is not realized though taught again and again by scriptures and teachers).”

—(Gaudapada’s Karika 4.1-2)

Straightforwardness, gravity, sympathetic aloofness

I:63.07 Be straightforward in all your dealings. Be straightforward where you should be straightforward. Be grave, be reserved, be aloof in the company of others—this does not mean being haughty. You can be full of sympathy for others in an impersonal way and yet be aloof, reserved, not allowing them to come near you in an inner sense. You should be kindhearted, but not allow others to come near you in a personal sense.

Opening one’s heart—when and to whom

I:63.09 You should not open your heart to all, but you should open it where it should be opened and know when to do it. That means, in the language of the psychoanalyst, ‘being free from complexes’. You can always open your heart to an elder, to one who is already well-established on the path and has experienced its difficulties himself, but you should never open it to worldly people. Turn to your Ishtam when you are in difficulties and when there is no one who is experienced to turn to. Others cannot give you any advice at all. They do not know themselves, so how can they help you? Even if they are well-intentioned, they cannot give you any sound advice as to what you, a spiritual aspirant, should do if you really wish to succeed. An-

other sense is needed for that, which the worldly-minded do not possess. Their mirrors are too dirty to reflect the light or, if they reflect it at all, the picture is so blurred and distorted that only confusion can be the result.

“Thou showest Thyself according to the view of men as they are of straight or crooked thinking, just as a piece of rope appears to those who are thinking of the serpent or of any other like thing.”

“That very Lord Himself is in every thing and He is the very essence of everything that truly exists, the Ruler of all, the cause of all the causes of the Universe, and being the Inner Ruler of all. He is the One indicated by every light afforded by objects. He is the One true Existence conclusively shown by denying every other existence.”

—(Srimad Bhagavatam)—

I:64 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 14, 1934 -- (Vol.I 398-403)[CG 278-282]

The role of mental impressions

I:64.01 In our spiritual life our mind is to be made a blank, in a higher sense. There should not remain any bad impressions. All the bad impressions have to be uprooted and annihilated.

I:64.03 The effects of impressions can never be realized beforehand. Environment plays such an important part, and the impressions unconsciously taken in through a bad environment may hamper a person's progress very much. Impressions may be taken in directly or indirectly, and it is one of the most difficult but most important tasks in spiritual life to efface them completely through our Sadhana.

I:64.04 The more you sincerely try to cleanse your whole mind, the more you will discover what great obstacles impressions are, either direct or indirect ones. There should neither be love nor hatred. The more these impressions are effaced, the more higher impressions come and make things easier for you. Owing to the lack of tradition, people in the West do not realize what an important part impressions play in a person's life. Without effacing the bad ones, you can never progress, no matter what you do.

I:64.05 This impression-aspect of spiritual life should never be lost sight of by the aspirants. Sometimes we are astounded by the

impressions which surface in our minds, impressions we never even suspected having taken in! That is why we should be so guarded and watchful in our association with others.

“When duality appears through ignorance, one sees another, but when everything becomes identified with the Atman, one does not perceive another even in the least.”

—(Aparokshanubhuti 53)—

“Living in the body which is under the sway of the resultant of past actions, the foolish one, on account of work done by the organs becomes bound by identifying himself with them.”

—(Sri Krishna & Uddhava 6.10)—

I:64.07 Do not consider only the gross aspect. There is the subtle aspect too. All impressions are to be effaced, for without that there is no freedom, and the only way to do this is to develop real indifference, or, look on them as very gross manifestations of the Divine. The darkest cloud, you see, is still illumined by the light of the sun. If we see the dark cloud, we see it with the help of the rays of the sun. All the different aspects of Maya cannot exist except in the light of Brahman.

I:64.08 See no mark is left in your mind, but this does not mean that you should become callous. Sometimes heartlessness passes for indifference. Have noble feelings, not because of the personality, but because of the Principle that is always there.

Because the waking state is, to us, the only real state, this whole show of the phenomenon appears real. But as soon as we have a different standard, even our personality is nothing but a long continued dream. The highest Truth will only flash when we look upon all this, even upon our own personaity, as a dream. Very strong injections of Vedanta are necessary. No diluted solution will do to cure our ills!

“If the objects cognized in both the conditions (of dream and of waking) be illusory, who cognizes all these (illusory objects) and who again imagines them?

Atman, the self-luminous, through the power of his own Maya, imagines in himself by himself (all the objects that the subject experiences within or without). He alone is the cognizer of the objects (so created). This is the decision of Vedanta.”

—(Gaudapada Karika 2.11–12)—

I:65 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 16, 1934 -- (Vol.I 404-410)[CG 283-287]

The downward pull in the yet unpurified mind

I:65.05 As I said, all depends on our attitude, the right attitude must be developed. Then everything becomes easy.

I:65.06 It is sometimes very dangerous to raise softer feelings in the mind, unless you already know how to connect these softer feelings only with God. Sometimes, when one's feelings are roused, the mind can be dragged down to one of the lower centres of consciousness, if one is not guarded properly. This is very dangerous for the spiritual aspirant, for then he may slip his foot, and his feelings may be given some physical expression. There is always the downward pull in the not fully purified mind. The tendency of the mind is always towards the lower centres. We receive some stimulus, and only that devotee who holds on to a higher centre of consciousness is safe.

So, make Japam with the name of your Ishtam or the Mantra that is given you. Have self-analysis. Japam is the thing we can do everywhere, under all circumstances, the easiest of practices, and very effective if it is done properly. ***You should try to intensify your Japam, to make it alive.***

I:65.07 The tongue is ever ready to drag us down, the ear is ever ready to drag us down. Sometimes we sense things like pigs, eat like pigs, enjoy touch like pigs. The human being can be so disgusting when you watch him dispassionately in the tram or in the streets. I shall never forget the sight of a man smelling a bunch of Jasmine flowers, whom I saw in a tram in India. What sensuality there was in his way of smelling.

I:65.08 Touch is one of the dangerous ways of dragging the mind down. Through touch, mind comes down too, and, in most cases, it is easier to bring it down through touch than through any other way.

I:65.09 There is touch and touch, seeing and seeing, hearing and hearing, and the aspirant should always know how to discriminate. You can never become pure if you are not guarded in all this or if you think it of no importance. The stimulus must be avoided by the beginner. The feeling, the thought must not be roused. The deed is only the last link, so the other links are more dangerous and should be scrupulously avoided by all sincere aspirants. The trouble is, many aspirants think they have already become saints and then they

go and walk on the ice. No, purity is not so easy as all that. It needs years and years of training to attain real purity, and before having attained it, no one is safe.

I:66 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 17, 1934 -- (Vol.I 410-420)[CG 287-294]

In tune with the Cosmic Heart

I:66.05 Freedom consists in living the life of the Universal, in identifying yourself with the Universal. Then you get a greater feeling, for you are in tune with the Cosmic Heart. You get wonderful sympathy for all, without the slightest tinge of attachment or personal clinging.

I:67 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 18, 1934 -- (Vol.I 420-439)[CG 294-306]

The problem of anger

I:67.01 I find in you so much of that mistaken notion of strength. The really strong person does not know what anger is. He never reacts to anger. He cannot be insulted and never feels insulted. So get that notion of strength out of your head. It is a low thing. And remember, if you do not succeed in overcoming all impulses of anger and all this feeling of being slighted or insulted, you cannot become pure.

I:68 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 19, 1934 -- (Vol.I 439-447)[CG 307-313]

The Divine Incarnation

I:68.01 It is one thing to be all absorbed with one's own experience, and it is something else to share it with all.

I:68.02 The Lord incarnates Himself and enjoys the Divine Glory all the more with His devotees.

I:68.03 Sankara in one of his beautiful hymns says:

"He who has known the highest Truth, He who is the witness of all the different states of consciousness, He who has realized all this, in whatever caste he may be born, He is my Guru.—This is my strong conviction."

I:68.04 Outwardly, the Incarnations appear like us, but they are very, very different from us. A Krishna, a Christ, a Buddha, a Ramakrishna may outwardly appear just like any ordinary man, but he is very, very different. His consciousness is always the Divine Consciousness.

1:68.05 Try to become as pure as possible. Overhaul your whole thought-life. Without this, no substantial progress can be made by anybody. Through Divine Grace, you have been given a marvellous chance. You could get so much if you only wanted to. Without removing the obstructions, we cannot get what we want. So this should be our task. If we only knew what we could get if we just followed the instructions carefully!

**End of Readings On
THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOL.I
(English Edition. Madras, 1911)
by Swami Yatiswarananda**

2. READINGS
ON THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOL.II
(English Edition. Madras, 1922)
by Swami Yatiswarananda

II:01 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 20, 1934 -- (Vol.II 1-4)[NY 112-117]¹⁰

Growing pains

II:01.02 As you grow, you become more and more sensitive, although you get greater power, greater capacity to withstand outer influences. Sometimes the vibrations of other people who do not lead pure lives become unbearable to you and you have to avoid their company—not out of goodness on your part, but in order to avoid the pain they cause you, physical pain.

II:01.03 Those who have got good tendencies should always be on their guard because they have got bad tendencies too, which should be kept at arm's length. If we tumble over a precipice, we must reach the ground. By slipping your foot ever so little, you may go down a long distance and may never be able to recover completely. So much harm is done to our spiritual evolution by our easy-going ways, by taking dangerous things to be harmless, and never even suspecting their bad influence on our subconscious.

II:01.05 Bad desires may still arise in the mind, but do not allow them to affect you. Dissolve them with the help of your Ishtam.

II:01.07 *You may think I have told you all this often during our readings, but if I saw no need to tell it again and again, I should not do it.* You do not realize the harm you are doing to yourselves by being too little careful. Stains and wounds always take time to heal up, and the scar remains.

II:02 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 30, 1934 -- (Vol.II 4-8)[NY 112-117]

Work as an instrument only

II:02.01 Any work that helps us towards the higher evolution is good. Any work that retards it is bad, no matter what it is.

II:02.03 Work as an instrument only. Work as an instrument in

10. Pages of New York *Gospel* (published 1942) are from Mr.Koch's post- World War II compilation.

the hands of the Divine and offer all the fruits of your work to the Divine. Never have any selfish motive in your work. One can actually feel that one is an instrument in the hands of the Cosmic Energy.

II:03 -- Wiesbaden, Jly 31, 1934 -- (Vol.II 8-12)[NY 112-117]

Apply the theories to your life

“If dwelling in this house of filth you do not come to have any spirit of renunciation, there is no hope for you.” —(Upanishads)

“Having (thus) realized the absence of causality as the Ultimate Truth, and also not finding any other cause (for birth), one attains to that (the state of liberation) which is free from grief, desire and fear.” —(Gaudapada Karika 4.78)

II:03.01 Purification of the ego always implies purification of the mind and of the senses.

II:03.02 The whole trouble is to apply these theories to your own life. There must be one-pointedness, a real filtering of ideas. You must have one, not two parallel lines of thought. All your thoughts must be filtered, as it were, and only those that are good for your evolution must be allowed to pass.

II:03.03 We must know how to work out the full sum. Now, 40% of your mind is occupied with something, 60% with something else. This is not the way to advance. Thus you will never attain anything. Never have two equally strong trains of thought. One must overpower the other.

II:03.04 Impulsive life is dangerous, even if the impulses happen to be good ones. If I am guided by my higher impulses, then one day I shall be guided by my lower impulses.

II:03.05 Through sincere, steady, sustained effort, we can draw the mind away from the evil path and make it follow the right path. But sincere striving alone will not do, we must follow the right method. You must take the right sort of food, and this cannot be standardized. There is no work so important as your Sadhana.

II:03.08 After having accumulated heaps and heaps of filth and dirt, why is the mind not pure after removing only a bit of dirt? What a silly question: Cart-loads and cart-loads must be removed before it begins to reflect the truth in a better way. How many days have you practiced that you now expect results? And *how* have you practiced?

For how many lives have you gone on accumulating filth and dirt? Be a little realistic in your thinking. The attainment of purity is not so easy as all that.

II:03.09 How many years of aimless thinking, how many years or days of consistent thinking have there been in your life? How much of random, unconscious thinking and how much of conscious thinking? This subconscious cerebration we have in sleep, we have also in our waking state. It is our greatest enemy. Even now we do a lot of aimless thinking.

We do not want to perform our daily practices regularly, with steadiness. We do not care for our daily studies. We are not careful enough in our associations. So why expect results? Let us rather change our easy-going ways.

II:04 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 1, 1934 -- (Vol.II 13-21)[NY126-130]

The meaning of "I am He"

II:06.02 As long as we cling to our little body, God will only appear to us as having a body. Then there can only be Divine manifestation through human form and human sentiments. In order to realize God we must rise to the Divine plane as the Tantrikas do. If you want to realize God the formless, you must rise above the plane of form. But first everyone must realize the Immanent. No one can come to the Father but through the Son. The Incarnation is necessary for most people.

II:04.01 The Tantrika instruction is: Worship God by rising to the Divine plane. Unless one rises to the Divine plane, one will not be able to worship God.

II:04.03 Even if one does not care for the anthropomorphic form of God, one can meditate on God as light, the light of millions and millions of suns and moons. Then this light merges into the light of consciousness: that is at the back of our own existence, and of our experience of the things in the world that we perceive with the help of the senses.

II:04.04 When the wave loses its form it becomes the ocean, when it retains its wave-form, it does not become the ocean; so, the wave can never become the ocean and at the same time retain its wave-form. "*I am He*" does not mean that the wave as wave, with its wave-form, can become Brahman, the Absolute. Only by dropping

the limitations of name and form can the relative be transcended and true being attained.

II:05 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 2, 1934 -- (Vol.II 21-24)[NY126-130]

Pure company or none

II:05.01 The brain can get very easily muddled in a bad atmosphere, in bad company. Our consciousness then, as it were, becomes hardened.

II:05.02 When we go to a bad place from a pure atmosphere, we feel troubled; but, after some time, when our sensibility has been deadened, we do not feel anything, we begin to lower the ideal and allow ourselves to be in bad company.

II:05.03 If we associate with worldly people, we come to have worldliness quite automatically. We lower the ideal quite naturally, we move away from Truth. We should not hate worldly people, but the tender plant is to be hedged around always. Raise a hedge. There is always the danger of your lowering the ideal by mixing with people who do not lead perfectly pure lives. We should always see that our inner sensibility is not deadened, that our ideal is not lowered.

If you cannot find pure company, remain alone in the company of your Ishtam. He is always there to help you and befriend you. Your Ishtam should be your constant companion and friend. Have him near you, talk to him, ask for his help, ask him to remove the obstructions and dangers threatening your spiritual life. Trust him, cling to him, and renounce attachment to the little dolls and puppets of men and women.

Help to create a good atmosphere

II:05.05 We are always radiating emanations, whether we are silent or speaking. Thoughts, in particular, always affect the atmosphere and influence ourselves and others. Speech is not necessary, and thoughts are even more dangerous than speech. They can poison a place completely.

II:05.06 People who are not of one mind with us will feel very uncomfortable in our presence and try to go away. They feel ill at ease without being in any way treated unkindly by us.

II:05.07 At one time you create the atmosphere, and then you enjoy it at another time when you happen to be in a bad mood. But if

you always go on taking something from the environment without contributing anything, you rob it.

II:06 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 3, 1934 -- (Vol.II 25-38)[NY145-154]

The receiver must always be a giver

II:06.01 The receiver must always be a giver. This also holds good for the spiritual atmosphere there is in a place. If you do not contribute your own share to the atmosphere created in this flat, or this room where we are having our studies, but only go on taking from it, it is mere robbery. In the West, the whole spiritual atmosphere is, as it were, exhausted. Nothing has been contributed. So many cathedrals have been built, so many pictures painted, etc., but no one has again contributed to the spiritual store through his practices. So the store is exhausted, and other powers have gained dominion. The environment should help you. The atmosphere in a room or a flat should help you when you are in a bad mood or in danger of slipping your foot, but then you, too, must consciously contribute something. This is very important. Such a fine atmosphere has been created in this flat through our readings and meditation and studies. See that you keep it up also when I am not here. Do not steal. Be a giver in this also.

Partial visions

II:06.03 All our religious or dogmatic troubles and quarrels are due to our partial visions. We rise to a certain plane only, get our vision from that plane, do not realize that it is only one aspect of the Truth, and then begin to quarrel with others who have a different vision, a partial one, just as ours is. Only by rising to the Absolute can we realize Truth as It is, and then give to each partial vision the place that belongs to it. Partial visions are true on a certain plane, but they are not the whole truth.

II:06.04 Different people having partial visions speak of their visions as the only truth, because they have not known and not experienced other paths. Hence all the terrible bigotry in the religious field. We in India have been more fortunate because our earliest sages realized that '*Truth is one*', but that '*It is called by different names*'. So, as a rule, we had less of dogmatic squabbles and persecution and did not fall into the pitfall of standardizing spiritual life or proclaiming only one Incarnation as the only True One. This narrow-mindedness was the spiritual death of the West.

The blessing of uncertainty

II:06.05 From the spiritual standpoint, it is good to remain amidst great uncertainty. It is good if everything you rely upon is taken from you. It is good if all old valuations and allegiances, everything you believed safe and secure, collapses around you, and you are forced to cling to something that does not depend in any way on the phenomenal world, or on your kith and kin. But this experience is very painful. You see, not one of you here knows what the future is going to bring to you and what it is going to be like. You cannot rely on anything you think safe. So the only thing you can do is to cling to your Ishtam with all your might, to pray to Him to help you and to protect you, to be your only support and guide. And this is good. You will realize the truth of this one day. Pray, *“Show me the light, guide my understanding, be ever at my side.”* Poverty and uncertainty, even misery are not bad, they are to be welcomed, if they make us turn to God, bring to us disgust for the world and infinite love for our Ishtam. For most people they are absolutely necessary, otherwise they will never change their easy-going ways. Amidst all this, perform Japam intensely, with great doggedness.

II:06.06 Sometimes I pray to the Lord to send the devotees misery and trials, to make them suffer, so that they may come to their senses.

“In the household life characterized by deceitful feelings and activities, the person who regards as his high purpose his sons, wife and wealth, is really foolish, and he does not attain the purpose, but only remains wandering through the various courses of worldly life [Samsara].” —(Srimad Bhagavatam)

II:06.07 Since we are going to have unpleasantness anyhow, it is better to have it connected with some higher life. Unpleasantness there will be anywhere. You cannot escape it. In our present state, pain, troubles, misery, suffering, are unavoidable and necessary. Let them be a goad to make us move towards the Lord. Let us make use of them for attaining our goal. We should neither court misery, nor should we court pleasure, but always seek to attain to that which is eternally beyond both and from where both are recognized as belonging to unreality.

Let us make the most use of our time even in the present uncer-

tainty.¹¹ When the powers of evil have become so strong, they must exhaust themselves mutually before better days can dawn. But that is no reason why we should not strive for the higher life, though knowing that the catastrophe cannot be avoided. Let us make the best use of the Divine Grace given us and try to attain something reliable, something that cannot be taken away again by anything, whatever happens. There can never be peace and rest in the phenomenal world, so do not deceive yourselves on that point. The phenomenal world will ever remain what it is. If you take pleasure you must take pain also. If you accept relative good, you must accept relative evil also. If you do not want this, go to another plane where there is neither pleasure nor pain, neither relative good nor relative evil, where all the pairs of opposites are fully transcended.

II:07 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 5, 1934 -- (Vol.II 38-47)[NY145-154]

Raising the whole of the mind

II:07.01 Sri Ramakrishna speaks of the raising of the whole mind. When we speak of our 'centre of consciousness', we only raise a bit of our mind, although even this is not a small thing for the beginner. The real raising is something more. We should always watch the centre of our consciousness, because it is the key to our whole spiritual development. It is most important. ***Without raising his centre of consciousness, no one is able to lead a pure life.*** Even when we dwell on the higher plane we should always be careful not to fall down. There is always the tendency to fall down, unless one is already very firmly established in one of the higher centres.

Teaching others

II:07.02 Teaching may be done as a form of service, not with a feeling of superiority. Never have the attitude of a teacher, but always that of a servant. My teacher, Swami Brahmananda, always felt a great reluctance to teach, but he was always willing to share his spiritual experience with sincere devotees, and this attitude of service he had, made us all follow him. When he scolded us, he did so very quietly, calmly, without any excitement, and then, like good boys, we began doing what he said.

11. The period preceding World War II.—Publisher

II:07.03 Some are bent on teaching others, some are too shy. Both are wrong.

II:07.04 All this is due to false conceptions, manifestations of our ego. Some are afraid of being caught in the net of Maya if they teach others even as a form of service, but this very fear is also a net, wherein they are caught just as nicely. Fear too, belongs to Maya.

Establish a firm relation with your Ishtam

II:07.05 Life does not mean only smiles and joy and pleasure. All have to pass through acute pain, troubles and tribulations, and no one is safe unless he has got a firm hold on the higher life, unless he fully relies and communes with the Divine and cherishes greater love for the Divine than for any of the human puppets and dolls that surround him and try to charm him into being their slave.

Try to establish a very intimate relation with your Ishtam. This is not something imaginary at all. There can be a real relation. You can speak to your Ishtam, and your Ishtam instructs you, once you have established the relation. But this needs tremendous one-pointedness, tremendous sincerity, tremendous purity. Do your Japam intensely, fill your whole being with the Divine vibrations, dwell on the thought of your Ishtam again and again, offer everything to Him and cling to Him alone. Then the result will come of itself, and you will see what bliss it is. He is infinitely merciful wherever He sees real sincerity and real yearning. He always comes to meet us as soon as we have dropped our manifold playthings and want Him alone. As long as the child goes on playing happily with its toys, the mother does not come to it. She knows she is not needed.—But when it cries for her, she comes.

II:08 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 6, 1934 -- (Vol.II 48-60)[NY163-174]

Rush towards God

II:08.01 Oil your own machine, make it run smoothly and do not think so much of oiling the machine of others. Everyone must follow the path himself. Nothing can be done vicariously.

II:08.02 The more we come to know people with all their meanness, their pettiness, their greed, their lust, their crookedness, the more our shallow optimism vanishes, and we run the risk of becoming pessimistic. That is the great danger. But there also comes a time when we come in touch with really good and pure souls. See the dirt, keep it at a safe distance, do not allow yourselves to be affected by

the badness or goodness of people. Follow the path without troubling about the bad sides of others. The many will always continue to wallow in every kind of filth, physical and mental, and rejoice in it.

II:08.03 Sometimes when walking through the streets I feel shocked when I see some people. There is so much lewdness and greed in their faces and even their vibrations hit me when I pass them.

II:08.04 You should try to develop a mood that always forces you to rush towards God.

“Those who always rely on (attach themselves to) separateness can never realize the innate purity of the Self. Therefore those who are drowned in the idea of separateness and who assert separateness of (entities) are called narrow-minded.

They alone are said to be of the highest wisdom who are firm in their conviction of the Self, unborn and ever the same. This, ordinary men cannot understand.”

—(Gaudapada Karika 4.94-95)—

II:08.05 If our central idea is God, we feel everything just forces us to move towards the Lord. The bent of our mind should be: *“All is unreal, God alone is real”*. Let everything always remind you of the unreality of the world. This attitude is very, very necessary if you sincerely want to lead a spiritual life.

“But one who has not mastered his passions, whose intellect—the guide to his sense-organs—is wild, and who is devoid of discrimination and renunciation—such a man taking up the monk’s triple staff for the sake of subsistence, is a destroyer of religion, and cheats the gods, cheats himself, and Me, who reside in his self. With his impurities unconsumed, he is deprived of both this life and the life to come.”—(Sri Krishna & Uddhava 13.40-41)—

II:09 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 7, 1934 -- (Vol.II 60-77)[NY163-174]

Spiritual life is elimination of upadhis

II:09.01 The task of life is to get rid of *upadhis*, the limiting adjuncts, to remove *all* the layers of *upadhis*. Any limiting adjunct is an *upadhi*. Spiritual life is elimination of *upadhis*, physical and mental *upadhis* and *upadhis* connected with the causal (ego). Our task is to

control the senses, body and mind, and, at the same time to raise counter-currents of thought when mental impurity is rising within.

The first task is not to accumulate fresh impurities that come through sense-enjoyment, gross and subtle, and through uncontrolled thinking. But then there are also the old impurities lying hidden within. It is therefore also necessary to purify the thinker himself. Sankara's form of Sadhana, "*We are not body, not the senses, not the mind*" etc., is a great help in this. It is no joke to feel like this. These Vedantic meditations are meant for purifying the ego and making us give up our false identifications and superimpositions.

II:09.03 Since we in our present state cannot help having *upadhis*, let us then have the *upadhis* of a holy man. "I am the child of the Lord." He who intensely and sincerely thinks like this, cannot stoop low.

II:09.04 Associate your ego with the Divine in some form or other. Think you are a part of God, a servant of God, a mode of God. The root-cause of this ego perishes only with the highest spiritual illumination. This is no loss of personality, but realization of one's true personality, assertion of one's true personality.

"Of all blessings here, wisdom is the highest blessing, as it leads to heaven; for he who sails in the raft of wisdom crosses the impassable sea of misery."—(Srimad Bhagavatam)

II:09.05 ***Vedanta is chiefly concerned with raising the centre of consciousness.*** Ordinarily we have no control over the centre of our consciousness. But if you are in a very elevated mood, you find the centre of your consciousness is higher than otherwise. Our conscious and subconscious efforts should always be to remain on the higher plane and not to allow ourselves to be brought down by any stimulus. If we have to live in very bad environments, we should try to live above them. Whenever we remain unaffected, we are on the higher plane of consciousness.

*"How wonderful is Thy love, O Beloved,
and wonderful is its power.
The night of the world seems day to me, Beloved,
and the bright day of the world is my night.
The stranger's land have I made of my hut,
my home is the land of the Stranger.
So I have become a stranger to myself—*

and the Stranger has become I."

—(Chandi-das)—

No false humility

II:09.09 There is very little place for false humility in true spiritual life. Mostly, the so-called humble person is terribly proud of his humility. "Oh, I am so humble!" But if you are proud of being the servant of the Lord, you cannot do anything ignoble, anything impure, because you find it beneath your dignity to give in to your evil tendencies or to associate with low people. The right form of pride is a very great help, and the wrong form of humility makes you commit all sorts of low actions.

II:09.10 In Mahatma Gandhi's case you find right humility. He is always ready to confess the 'Himalayan blunders' he has committed in his search for Truth. In his case it is not the self-complacent humility of the ordinary devotee, but the humility of the man of knowledge who knows the difficulties of the path and the greatness of the task to be achieved.

"O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!"¹²

Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,

Make of us both the same Brahman!

One drop of water is in the sacred Jumna,

And another is foul in the ditch by the roadside,

But when they fall into the Ganges, both alike become holy.

So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!

Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,

Make of us both the same Brahman!

One piece of iron is in the image of the temple,

And another is the knife in the hand of the butcher,

But when they touch the philosopher's stone,

Both alike turn to gold.

So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!

Thy name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,

Make of us both the same Brahman."

—(Sur-das)—

12. The song sung by a Jeypore nautch-girl in reply to Swamiji's refusal of the Rajah of Khetri's invitation to attend an entertainment—which reminded Swamiji that 'all is Brahman'. (*Life of Swami Vivekananda* p.283-4, 4th ed. 1949).

II:10 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 8, 1934 -- (Vol.II 78-89)[NY174-180]

The 'knots' of the heart

II:10.01 Sometimes we think that cunning and deceit are inseparable from intelligence. It is very difficult to be perfectly straightforward and this requires tremendous intelligence. It means great strength and fearlessness.

II:10.02 With the vision of God, the 'knots of the heart' are cut asunder. These knots are: duplicity, attachment, likes and dislikes, lust, hatred etc. But straightforwardness does not mean foolishness. Truthfulness is the greatest spiritual practice in this age.

II:10.03 If you find a spiritual man is awfully selfish, there is something seriously wrong with all his so-called spirituality. Never trust him. Selfishness and spirituality do not go together, just as wherever there is impurity in any form there cannot be spiritual attainment. This is a sure sign, however beautiful the outer appearances may otherwise be. Do not allow yourselves to be deceived on this point.

II:11 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 11, 1934 -- (Vol.II 89)[NY174-180]

The world's only usefulness: as a discipline

II:11.01 To the person who really wants to move along spiritual lines, the world has its use only as a discipline.

II:11.02 We take our false personality to be real, and then there comes misery, again and again. Misery can come only when we take the false to be real, when we cling to what is fleeting, what is transient, what has no ultimate being or reality. Reality is something other than this. Something wholly different. The world has its use for the spiritual aspirant too, but only if he is aware of its true nature and uses everything that meets him as a discipline to help him in freeing himself from all his illusions and false conceptions.

II:12 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 12, 1934 -- (Vol.II 89-91)[NY174-180]

Money

II:12.01 Almost always you find money and low morals go together. The morals of the idle rich are mostly far lower than those of the lowest classes, because they have the means and the leisure to fulfill all their lowest worldly desires and are ever out to invent new

stimuli for their worn-out nerves. That is why in most cases money is a curse and stands in the way of Self-realization. But if it is taken as a kind of trust, if the owner is conscious that he is only the trustee of his possessions, then it can be a help also.

Maya

II:12.02 Unless we try to be perfectly pure, we cannot have the discrimination of which Sri Ramakrishna speaks. A person who lies, who does not lead a sexually pure life, whose impulses are not controlled, cannot have discrimination.

“If I tell lies, if I lead an impure life, physically and mentally, then what does it matter if it is all Maya?” You often hear such words from impure people. But this is a very hypocritical attitude. As long as this wonderful Maya is real to you, and you want to enjoy it, as long as your anger, your likes and dislikes, your aversion, your hatred, your greed, your lying, your lust, is real to you, you cannot talk about its being ‘Maya’. If you knew it to be nothing but Maya, then all these things would have no attraction whatever for you.

II:12.04 If we get a glimpse of the reality beyond Maya, Maya can never again attract us. If we see only Maya without recognizing it to be Maya, Maya attracts and enslaves.

Mental renunciation is a change of attitude

II:12.13 To the extent in which we are drawn towards what is real, all our attachments fall off. To know what is really real is also to know what is unreal.

II:12.14 Discrimination is to be practiced by all, not merely with reference to ‘Woman (Man) and Gold’, but also with reference to your own true Self. A person who identifies himself with the false self, with his man-body or woman-body, with his mind, can never have any real discrimination. Never think of yourselves as a man or woman, as old or young. We are not bodies, not senses, not minds, but spiritual entities. To a certain extent we must be able to realize this even at the beginning.

II:12.14a Learn to face life dispassionately, without identification. Whatever happens, your Self remains always, and no harm can come to your Self. So try to attain Self-realization now, in this very life, then all problems will be solved for you once for all. Without steady practice, without any real consecration to the path, Self-realization cannot be had.

II:12.14b Before Self-realization there will not be any security in your lives. You will go on being tossed about by all sorts of waves and storms, and finally lose all energy for dogged striving. If you want to wait for better times, you might just as well wait for the day when there will be no waves and ripples in the whole ocean. Then spirituality is not for you.

Ideals and ideologies

II:12.14c It is much more important to live one's ideal than to cling to, or support any ideology. Ideologies are dangerous, the ideal that is really lived, is not. Christian ideologies have brought great suffering and ruthlessness to the world during many periods, the Christian ideal truly lived, never. The same holds good in all cases. Ideologies are very cheap things and create the worst types of fanatics, the ideal that is lived is never cheap.

II:12.14d Dogmas, doctrines, arguments, all these belong to the realm of Maya, are in fact Maya. And as long as we go on quarreling about them without first realizing God ourselves, we cannot reach a higher plane of consciousness from where everything falls into its own place quite naturally. The first experience is that you see the Real shining through the unreal, the light through the clouds. The sun is always there, it is always steady, but the clouds come and go. Even the darkest cloud is visible only because of the light.

Detachment

"Knowing for certain that adversity and prosperity come in (their own) time through fate, one is ever contented, has all his senses in control and does not desire or grieve.

Knowing for certain that happiness and misery, birth and death are due to one's fate, one comes to see that it is not possible to accomplish the desired things and thus becomes inactive and is not attached even though engaged in action.

One who has realized that care (alone) breeds misery in this world and nothing else, becomes free from it, and is happy, peaceful and rid of desires everywhere.

13. The mysterious power of Karma.

14. The preceding two verses indicate that suffering comes through Karma and is thus inevitable. If however, we can detach our mind from it when it comes, it will not affect us. By dwelling on it, we intensify it. (Trans. and notes by Swami Nityaswarananda.)

'I am not the body nor is the body mine. I am Intelligence it-self'—one who has realized this for certain, does not remember what he has done or not done as if he has attained the state of Absoluteness.

'It is verily I from Brahma down to the clump of grass,'—one who know this for certain, becomes free from the conflict of thought, pure and peaceful and turns away from what is attained and not attained.

One who knows for certain that this manifold and wonderful universe is nothing, becomes desireless and Pure Intelligence, and finds peace as if nothing exists."

—(Ashtavakra Samhita 11.3-8)—

II:13 -- Wiesbaden, Aug 13, 1934 -- (Vol.II 91-93)[NY174-180]

Balance is to be sought for

II:13.01 One should try to rise: with the help of feelings, beyond feelings; with the help of knowledge, beyond knowledge; with the help of love, beyond love. One is the approach through knowledge and discrimination, the other through feelings and sentiments which are sublimated and transmuted. There should be balance. Each type should have something of the other, though a particular bent may be predominant. The ideal is to have balance as much as possible. Balance between these two, but the truly balanced soul is very rare. There should never be any one-sided development of knowledge at the expense of feelings, and feelings at the expense of knowledge. The world is already full enough of all those one-sided types. The one-sided type is always stunted in it's growth and never attains full manhood.

Absolute–Ishwara–Incarnations–We [All one, as Substance]

- Absolute = Water
- Ishwara = Ocean
- Incarnations = Waves
- We = bubbles

II:13.02 As substance, as water we are all one, but as ocean and waves and bubbles we are different. The water-substance in me and the water-substance in the ocean and in the waves are one, but we, as a tiny bubbles, are never the ocean or the waves. **Here there**

should be no mistake, otherwise there will be no end of misunderstanding of the whole position of Vedanta. The “*I am He*” of Advaita does not mean that I as a tiny bubble am Ishvara or an Incarnation or the Absolute, Brahman. Only when the bubble-form is dropped and the substance stressed and fully realized, does this “*I am He*” become a fact.

II:13.03 Head and heart go together, but when the heart predominates in a certain type, we call it the path of Bhakti, of devotion. When the head predominates, we call it the path of Jñāna, of knowledge and discrimination. Unless some feeling is called up, there can never be any meditation. Meditation without feeling is impossible. The thought of the Infinite fills one’s heart, brings to one a sense of presence, of vastness, which always implies a certain amount of feeling.

II:13.04 Our ideal should be to co-ordinate the intellect, feeling and will, the different faculties of the mind, and to purify them all.

II:13.05 Think that a part of the All-pervading Light takes shape as your Ishtam. After all, it is all one water-substance that has taken all these different forms. Really speaking, there is no such thing as idol-worship.

II:13.06 When you feel the finite consciousness, you feel your finite consciousness as a manifestation of the Infinite. After meditation, you stand as your own witness, as it were. As we approach this Infinite more and more, we begin to set the same value on all these different forms. In a certain mood we can feel the presence of many. And this is not mere imagination, but actual feeling of something that exists. Ordinarily, our centre of consciousness is so fixed on this petty little self of ours that we do not get this vision.

II:13.07 Ordinarily, the ego is the centre of our consciousness, but in the higher mood the Infinite becomes the centre of our consciousness. ‘Cosmocentric’ means ‘*immanent aspect*’.

II:13.08 There is a method, a certain order to be followed. Everything is to be done step by step. People must be taught the technique. We should lead people to themselves and see whether they get drowned or not. They may have some dips, but when they are in danger of getting drowned, we should come to their help. If you get some nice dips, it does not matter, but see that you do not get drowned. Beware!

Systematic concentration

II:13.08a Try to be very steady in your practices and your studies. You do not yet know their effectiveness. Japam seems to you a very simple thing, of no great consequence perhaps, but real Japam, Japam properly performed, is most effective in all cases. Only among thousands of repetitions there may be perhaps just one done properly in your case. That is why you are asked to repeat the name of the Lord or the Mantram so many thousand times. Otherwise just one repetition would be enough.

II:13.15 Meditation is a technique, trying to induce a mood of systematic concentration in a systematic way. It is a method with a long tradition but we must know the method. Ordinarily, people just want stimulants, tea or coffee etc., but the less we depend on any form of stimulant, the better. A reliable self-starter is always better. Most people want to be driven. They become like so many motor-cars out of order! Avoid anything that tends to muddle your brain, even if ever so slightly. That is why all intoxicants are forbidden. You may not be drunk, but your brain is not in a normal condition through the influence of alcohol and other drugs and intoxicants. Never go near them.

II:13.17 It is very difficult to induce the higher mood in ourselves, but we should make the attempt, again and again, in a systematic way, with dogged determination.

“The sage should not be vexed by people nor vex them himself. He should put up with vilifications and never insult anybody. For the sake of the body he should bear enmity to none, as beasts do.” —(Sri Krishna & Uddhava 13.31)

II:13.17a Any spirit of retaliation or vindictiveness is very low and very bad. If others are blind and act in a bad way through their blindness, there is no reason at all why we should do the same.

II:13.11 For a time, it may even appear to you that you have become or are becoming much worse, much dirtier than before. In such a case we should develop the ‘sense of vastness’. The sense of infinity is potential in all of us. This is a step towards Advaita, but theistic.

II:13.13 Where the aspirant’s discrimination stops, there he reaches the Absolute. But he should never stop halfway, *imagining* that he has reached the Absolute.

II:13.14 Forms are real, but real only in a secondary sense, for

the devotee. To the Advaitin they become unreal, some time or other, and are recognized to be no more than empty shadows.

Divine grace

II:13.20 Many people are not able to stand the Divine Grace. Once there was a tiny mouse in the hermitage of a sage. The sage took pity on it and transformed it into a cat. Then some dogs tried to tear the poor cat to pieces, so he made it become a dog. The poor dog was persecuted by a leopard and in great danger of being killed. So the dog was transformed into a tiger. But when he became a tiger, he wanted to kill the sage, so the sage said, "All right, just be the old mouse again."

There are many such cases. Divine grace is showered on them and purifies them to a certain extent, but they become like the mouse-tiger and instead of profiting by it, they become insolent and are thrown down again to their former level. It is a very rare privilege to be allowed to follow the spiritual path and to get instruction through Divine Grace, but then, what happens is this:— when you are given certain advantages, then you do not make the proper use of them. So they are taken away again by the Divine. Later, some day, when a better sense will have dawned, you are going to lament for not having made better use of the rare opportunities given you by the Divine. But then it will be too late. Grace is always taken away if the aspirant does not make use of it in the right way, and it may never be given again.

II:13.21 When you realize this, you will feel very sorry, for you do not understand what a rare privilege is being given you and what wonderful progress you could make if you only knew how to use it.

II:13.22 Everybody should always remember that he should give no reason to the Lord to say, "Just be the old mouse again!" When the Lord gets displeased, He takes away all the advantages, all the opportunities, and then what can you do? Just continue to be a little miserable mouse, a little helpless whirlpool without peace and rest. And then you will not be able to attain the goal and will regret your carelessness and half-hearted ways. But most people will not listen to such a warning until it is too late.

[Last Reading before Ascona, Switzerland]

II:14 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 14, 1934 -- (Vol.II 94-98)[NY182-184]

[First Reading after Ascona (Eranos Meeting) & Poland]¹⁵

Incarnations

II:14.02 The question of the Incarnation has given rise to many bigotted dogmatic and senseless quarrels in religion. In the *Bhagavad Gita* the Lord tells Arjuna that whenever there is a decline of Dharma and a rise of Adharma, He Himself incarnates in order to re-establish Dharma and destroy Adharma. And in one of the Upanishads, Indra, the God, tells his disciple Medhatithi, "With my miraculous powers I again and again assume birth in the world in a thousand different ways, purifying it from all quarters." If we fully realize the implication of such words, there cannot be any quarrel among the followers of different religions, if they are sincere followers of the Lord; the Lord cannot be tied down to just one form, to just one Incarnation, as the fanatic would have it. If anything is blasphemy, this is it.

II:14.03 You can prefer your Ishtam, your Incarnation to any other Incarnation because certain aspects, certain qualities of your Incarnation appeal to you most, but never dare to claim any exclusive rights for your Incarnation. It may be the best for you, but it may be quite wrong for another aspirant. No Incarnation is the greatest, though a particular Incarnation may be the greatest for *you*, and suit *you* more than any other. You cannot limit God to make Him conform to your ideas.

II:14.04 Many think they are going to be Kripa-siddhas¹⁶ and do not struggle. They want to have vicarious atonement. There is indeed such a thing as Divine Grace descending on people all of a sudden, but such cases are rare. So you will have to struggle, however much the idea of being Kripa-siddhas may appeal to you.

Shava-sadhana

II:14.12 Shava-sadhana is a Tantrika practice in which the spiritual aspirant sits on a corpse in the cremation ground and performs his spiritual practices sitting on the corpse. This creates tremendous dispassion and fearlessness.

15. To Locarno, in southern Switzerland for the Eranos Group Meeting, at nearby Ascona (Aug 8-Sept 4), to Vienna (Sept 5-9), to Poland [Cracow, Warsaw etc] (Sept 10- Nov 11), returning to Wiesbaden via Poznan and Breslau. [Publisher]

16. 'Grace-perfected'.

II:14.13 Why not see the world as it is? We love the cradle but we shudder when we think of a corpse. Why? If we accept the cradle, why not accept the corpse, too? Both belong together. As boys, in my childhood, we used to go to the cremation ground for our meditation and Japam, before we joined the Order. Meditation is very effective on the cremation ground. If this is life, why not face it in all its aspects? Why always wish for the pleasant? There is the terrible aspect in God. You cannot have the pleasant God only, even if you want only Him. Christians very primitively think, "Oh, the soul is going to sleep nicely after death till the Day of Judgment." We make fools of ourselves, avoiding to think of what is really taking place: Worms eating a nauseating corpse, horrible decomposition, disgusting to look at. There is nothing nice about the reality. You see, Shava-sadhana may sound horrible to you, because you are all bent on covering the hideous with nice, fragrant flowers and then trying to make yourselves and others believe there is nothing hideous and disgusting about it. Shava-sadhana is just a means to remove this attitude and to learn to open one's eyes to the reality in all its aspects. On the cremation-ground you can learn what real dispassion and fearlessness are, though not every aspirant has to do his Japam and meditation sitting on a corpse. Learn to be realistic. Do not always crave for nice things, but learn to long for Truth and for Liberation from everything phenomenal, from the beautiful as well as from the hideous and disgusting. Then you will be able to make good progress.

"While practicing Samadhi there appear unavoidably many obstacles, such as lack of inquiry, idleness, desire for sense-pleasure, sleep, dullness, distraction, tasting of joy, and the sense of blackness. One desiring the knowledge of Brahman should slowly get rid of such innumerable obstacles."

—(Aparokshanubhuti 127-128)—

II:15 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 15, 1934 -- (Vol.II 98)[NY182-184]

All-round education

II:15.01 Sri Ramakrishna used to say very nicely that we all pass through a life-long education, through various stages, various experiences that build up and model our life. It should always be a march towards the Truth by passing through various stages. It should be an onward march towards liberation, not a move towards bondage and ever-growing slavery of body and mind. We have consciously to build

up our inner life, and this inner life can only be built up through life-long struggles.

II:15.02 Moral education should always form one of the most essential branches of education. It is far more important than mere intellectual drill. Then alone the right course of action becomes possible for the pupil. Intellectual education lacks roots and tends to make a man amoral.

II:15.03 Very little success can be attained in the field of education without first educating the educator. A slave cannot make another man free. The educator should always show the path by example and precept, by his whole mode of life and conduct. You cannot really educate others with theories. You cannot make them develop their full moral and ethical manhood unless you, too, have developed yours. So what we need more than anything else is education of educators. Then alone better forms of education would become possible. How a man who himself has no control—over his impulses, desires, passions and moods—can make another self-controlled, is a riddle! The mere idea is absurd. An uncontrolled person is always most dangerous for himself and for the whole community.

II:15.04 So, education should be a training of individuals to will and to feel rightly and efficiently and to become free from their impulses and desires.

II:15.05 It is quite impossible to formulate a definite system of education before having a definite conception of the being that is to be educated. It is enough for our scheme if we regard the students under our care as separate soul-entities, possessing an inner organ, the mind, with its faculties of intellect, feeling and will, capable of being trained and evolved into efficient instruments of feeling and thought.

II:15.07 Education means an all-round culture, physical, intellectual, moral, artistic and spiritual! And whenever these elements are not present, there is no education, whatever else it may be. Development of the body, control of all sense-impulses, acquirement of knowledge, sublimation of feelings and instincts and sentiments, development of the will along right lines, sense of duty, and also intense soul-culture must be taken into account, an intense soul-culture that removes the darkness and enables us to rise above our false illusory personality. All this implies a balance and harmony between a per-

fectly developed body, mind and soul. Mere intellectual knowledge will only create havoc.

II:15.09 Now we are half asleep and half awake, and our task now is how to become wide awake, fully conscious, how to become free men. By constantly and intensely thinking we are pure by nature, we become pure, but at the same time we must strictly follow the right code of conduct. Thus we free the mind of all its evil propensities.

II:16 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 16, 1934 -- (Vol.II 98)[NY182-184]

Hints for meditation

II:16.03 Those among the aspirants that feel an inner consciousness as they sit down for Japam and meditation, can take it as a rope to hold on to. It can be a great help.

II:16.04 Spiritual experience is something that can be had only by drawing ourselves within and cutting ourselves away from all stimuli. A little attention on the breath is permissible if it takes us deeper and makes us withdraw from outside stimuli.

II:16.05 Sitting posture during Japam and meditation is usual. Squatting is naturally the best posture for those who can learn to do it without feeling any strain. Any posture must be a steady posture. And we should always have two postures which we use only for Japam and meditation so that they become associated with these practices in our mind. Then, during long meditation, we can change from one posture to the other and then come back again to the first when it become painful or begins to cause us any discomfort.

II:16.06 We should pay some attention to posture, otherwise our body will divert our attention from the practices.

II:18.27 The ideal is that the body should not be moved, that it should be held perfectly still and poised. So much of our energy is lost by movements and physical and mental restlessness. We cannot afford to lose that if we wish to be successful in our practices, so we must minimize the waste. We will always find that people who go on moving some limb, are not properly concentrated. The concentrated person is perfectly still, like a statue. It is very bad to move any limb during our practices, except the movement necessary for telling the beads of our Rudraksha-mala while doing Japam.

II:16.07 The body should therefore be in a state of perfect bal-

ance and rest, at least as much as possible. But the beginner will not be able to attain perfect rest for some time. To make the body steady, breath must be perfectly rhythmic. This is the usefulness of Pranayama. In most people, a quiet mood and rhythmic breath go together.

II:16.08 Inhale purity, exhale all impurity, inhale calmness, exhale all restlessness, inhale strength, exhale all weakness, inhale compassion, exhale hatred. Fill yourselves with Divine Energy. Give these suggestions very strongly before your practices. As a result, the body becomes pure, the mind becomes pure, if this positive process is continued steadily, without any break, for some time. Such suggestions are very helpful, they are not just empty imaginations.

There is also a negative process: Draw your mind away from all that disturbs you. Bring your scattered mind back to yourself.

II:18.29 Then comes the question of holding the mind on a particular object.

II:18.30 Sri Ramakrishna used to apply a kind of imagination during the early period of his Sadhana. He said, *"I had tied my mind with a fine silken thread to the feet of my Ishtam"*, or, *"I used to think that I had cleaned my whole mind till no dirt was left. And then I tied my mind to the feet of the Lord"*. If you succeed in giving such suggestions very intensely and vividly to your mind before taking up your practices, it will be a great help.

II:16.09 Spiritual practice is successful only if we have the right spiritual mood. In order to worship the Divine we must rise to the plane of the Divine. We can never worship It from the plane of the phenomenal, from our plane, remaining where we are. In order to understand a Buddha, we ourselves must become a Buddha.

II:16.11 We can also think of ourselves as so many points in an ocean. First of all think we think of ourselves as so many points of dazzling light, and then we melt our bodies, love, hatred, affections, aversions, home, country, friends, relations, everything,—into a vast ocean of brilliant light. This is a very good practice with which to loosen our different attachments and false identifications, if done with intensity and steadiness for a long time day by day. Your whole attitude towards yourselves, people and things becomes different. Your consciousness begins to expand, and slowly new light is thrown on many aspects of life. But even this practice requires great persever-

ance. It is not so easy to bring about the necessary change in the beginner. Sankara has many fine passages for meditation that can be used for this form of practice.

“The liberated one neither abhors the objects of the senses nor craves them. Ever with a detached mind he enjoys the attained as well as the unattained.” —(Ashtavakra Samhita 17.17)—

“All this is Brahman, beginning, ending and continuing in It. One ought to meditate upon It calmly.” —(Chhandogya Upanishad)—

II:17 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 17, 1934 -- (Vol.II 98-104)[NY186-194]

Behave as spiritual entities

II:17.04 The hardest thing is how to sublimate our ideas, never to think of ourselves and others as men or women, never to think of ourselves and others in terms of body, of sex, of age, but only as spiritual entities. This point must be reached by all.

II:17.05 What Sri Ramakrishna says about the attitude men should have towards women, is true with reference to women too. It holds good wherever there is any mutual attraction. When talking to women, Sri Ramakrishna always changed ‘*Woman and Gold*’ into ‘*Man and Gold*’. He always warned women against man. The Master never ever felt any contempt for women or gave them a lower place.

II:17.06 You should frighten people away by stressing morals and purity so much. We want to frighten them away, because all those who are not prepared to pay the full price should stay away and not come here. So these points can never be stressed too much. We do not want others to come. ***In the West you have got the obsession of numbers.*** What we need is not numbers, but aspirants, who are willing to dedicate their all to their path, not superficial parasites who are looking for some dope or other.

II:17.07 People should be very guarded if they sincerely want to lead a spiritual life. If they slip, they fall down to the very bottom, deeper than any worldly person ever would, because of their greater concentration. A strong thought-wall should always protect us from coming into too intimate touch with others. There should always be a kind of mutual respect, a true regard for the soul of the other person.

If we strongly believe and feel that we are spiritual entities, and others also, it is best.

II:17.12 Good knocks are to be given to this body-consciousness of ours. Let us think of ourselves as effulgent sparks dwelling in this body. We are constantly living on false ideas and false ideals. All our misery is due to that. The root-cause of our pain are the false relationships of our life, all this thinking that we are a man or a woman, all this earthly attitude, these earthly relationships of so-called love and friendship which cannot but bring pain because their whole foundation is wrong. No one should ever take up direct relationships with others. The relationship *through* the Divine is always safe. We are always related through the ocean, through the substance, but there should be no such thing as a direct relation with another bubble in the aspirant's life.

II:18 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 19, 1934 -- (Vol.II 104-111)[NY186-194]

OM

II:18.05 The Word is Brahman in its vibration- or sound-aspect. "*Worship this OM as Brahman*" (Upanishads).

II:18.06 In the Gospel of St.John you find a similar idea, where he speaks about the Word, the 'Logos'.¹⁷

II:18.07 Many aspirants cannot have just a sound-symbol without any personality. Others again do not care for any personality, and then this limited sound-symbol takes them to the cosmic sound-symbol. And this is not mere imagination. Through the vibrations and with their help, they get to where all vibration ceases.

II:18.08 OM (AUM): a = the gross; u = the subtle; m = the causal; and 'm' melting away into soundlessness = the Absolute. Or, a = waking state; u = dream state; m = deep sleep; and 'm' melting into soundlessness = turiya, or super-conscious state, beyond all relativity.

When meditating on the symbol OM, you should always think of these (aforementioned) steps. It is a very grand symbol, once it is really understood. In this form of meditation, personality has no place at all. Such aspirants want to reach the Principle without the help of any Divine Personality. There are **many** people who can **intellectually**

17. John 1:1

appreciate this, and do so, **but** when the question of Self-realization comes, **they are not fit to follow this path and must be given a different path altogether, despite the fact that the idea, as such, appeals to them so greatly.** Realization is something wholly different from intellectual appreciation or understanding.

The Divine Personality and the Advaitic background

II:18.08a I am always rather amused to find so many 'Jñānis' among the aspirants. So many care for the Absolute, love the Absolute, do not want the Personality. But what do they attain on the practical side? He who worships the Divine Personality also realizes the All-pervading, Absolute aspect. These are simply two different approaches, but few are those among the aspirants who can, from the very beginning, pass through an out-and-out Advaitic Sadhana. It is not so much a question of what appeals to any one of you intellectually, but of what he can do from the point where he stands now. But with many, I have to wait till they themselves see that they do not make any real progress, because only then are they ready to accept what I might have told them before, but to which they would not have listened. Sometimes it takes many months or even years until a person finds this out and is ready to accept another path on the practical side. The ideal of the Absolute can always be at the back of his mind and remain the goal to be reached, but there must be stepping-stones and working ideals while we are on the way. Without the practical side, there is no sense whatever in our studies.

If it is rightly understood, the Advaita background makes a person tolerant and sympathetic towards other paths. So there should always be this idea even if on the practical side we have to follow quite a different Sadhana for the time being.

II:18.10 When we worship Christ, we come to have Christ-consciousness. When we worship Krishna, we come to have Krishna-consciousness. When we worship Buddha, we come to have Buddha-consciousness. When we worship Sri Ramakrishna, we come to have Ramakrishna-consciousness. And again, this means absolute consciousness, for all the Great Ones had attained the Absolute.

Ordinarily, people want to force some personality on others in their religious life, and thereby they are constantly doing untold harm. If the Christ-personality does not appeal to me, I cannot profit by wor-

shipping Christ, and my whole spiritual life becomes a failure. I must always take the Great One who suits my bent. Any other will be even harmful to my evolution, but I must know that it may be the right one for someone else. The person who should follow Buddha, cannot be made to follow Christ without serious harm being done to his spiritual growth and evolution. And the man who should follow Christ, cannot take up Sri Krishna as his ideal etc. This is very important. The spiritual life of a person who takes up the wrong ideal is sure to be a failure. This, the fanatics who do not even know what Religion is, do not recognize. They are themselves blind, and want to make and keep others blind. All these Great Ones are the expressions of the same Divine Principle, but not every expression may suit my particular bent of mind and make me grow. There is not just one saviour for all. This is a most pernicious idea. So we should each have the Great One that suits us, but at the same time realize that He is not the Greatest of all and not in any way truer than all the others.

II:18.11 ***Advaita Vedanta is far too rich a food for weak stomachs and for weak brains, too.*** The Absolute may appeal to us intellectually, but the out-and-out Advaitic Truth and Advaitic Path may be quite wrong for us and our present evolution. We must have a working ideal first. So, for most people, an Incarnation is absolutely necessary for their development. They can consider it to be a manifestation of the Absolute that appeals to them so strongly. *“No one can come to the Father except through the Son!”*

II:18.12 ***Even the Advaita Vedantin must realize the immanent aspect***—in some form or other—as the way to the Absolute, to Nirguna Brahman, lies through the Immanent. In the West, so many people I meet speak about the Absolute, but do not realize what the Absolute really means. They have become sick of the Personality because the same Personality has been forced on all instead of considering their particular bent, and now it is very difficult to make them realize that they will have to return to the Divine Personality if they really wish to advance.

To some devotees, I can tell this only after a very long time, years sometimes, after they have found out that they cannot attain the Absolute in the way they desired. Then I can really begin to talk to them and to give them instructions about their Sadhana.

Contrary thought-currents

II:18.13 Patañjali says, “*To obstruct thoughts that are dangerous, contrary thoughts are to be brought in.*” (YS 1.33) What should we do if we are angry? Raise a strong contrary current of thought. Sometimes we want to fight the enemy face to face, but that we can do only if we are exceptionally strong. Now we cannot give him a frontal attack—but still, he is to be fought. What shall we do? We must take the help of a friend, and this friend is the good thought. If you take this good thought with you, you can risk to fight the enemy. The best way to control an unpleasant thought is just to raise the opposite thought. This is a rule we should follow under all circumstances. It is not easy!

II:18.14 It may be that at the first attempt we do not succeed, but we should go on struggling. There are very many obstructions to leading a higher life, and they have to be uprooted and annihilated in their gross, subtle and very subtle aspects, before we can really progress to any extent.

Instead of being angry with certain unpleasant manifestations, change your own vibrations and, by doing this, contribute to a better atmosphere, to the creation of a better soil. Wailing about brutality, feeling shocked¹⁸, is no solution if this only wakens in you the same brutality, the same intensity of hatred and aversion and dislike. Learn to be reasonable first of all.

Sexual licence and brutality

II:18.17 In the West, particularly, the moral ideals have been lowered so much and to such an extent that it becomes very difficult for Westerners to live such a life. They meet such tremendous resistance on all sides, because licence has come to be considered a legitimate expression of freedom. It is an expression of slavery and brutishness.

II:18.18 Sexual licence and brutality always go together, and wherever you find the one you find also the other. They are inseparable.

II:18.19 The first steps in the practice of Yoga are the cultivation of chastity and all the other moral virtues—i.e., everything that falls

18. Probable reference repressive actions by the Gestapo, the infamous Nazi Secret Police, with whom the Wiesbaden group too, had a passing brush.—Publisher.

under the head of ethical culture. Yoga without continence becomes highly dangerous and can lead to the lunatic asylum.

II:18.20 Unless we change our ways, there may come a time when it will be too late, even if we want to do so. Divine Grace can be taken away any moment. Unless early in life we give up the bad habit, the bad habit will dominate us to such an extent that we shall no more be able to rid ourselves of it, even if we sincerely wish to.

The story of the blanket

II:18.21 There is a funny story, illustrating this in a symbolic form. Once upon a time, two beggars standing on the bank of a swollen river, saw something floating past which they took to be a fine woolen blanket. So one told the other to jump in and bring it to the bank. He did so, swam to the apparent blanket, but then did not come back. His comrade cried out to him, "What are you doing, you silly fellow! Bring the blanket and be quick about it." But the poor beggar shouted back, "I cannot. The blanket won't let me go!" You see, the apparent blanket was a bear swimming past, and now tightly held the beggar in its jaws.

II:18.22 That is what actually happens many times in our lives, when we have become slaves to certain desires, to a certain code of conduct, to certain prejudices. Then that blanket we have got hold of does not let us swim back to the shore either. If you give in to your lust, your anger, your likes and dislikes, if you do whatever you please and consider this to be freedom, you, too, are fast becoming hopeless slaves. Habit becomes one's second nature, but habit is always formed through practice. With great persistent effort habit can be changed, because habit is never one's first nature. But, the second nature may have become very strong through our carelessness, and then it is a very hard task to change it!

Swami Vivekananda's credo

Swami Vivekananda says:

"We believe in one God, the Father of us all, who is omnipresent, and omnipotent, and who guides and preserves His children with infinite love. We believe in a personal God as the Christians do, but we go further: we believe that we are He! That His personality is manifested in us, that God is in us, and that we are in God. We believe there is a germ of truth in all religions, and the Hindu bows down to them all; for, in this world,

truth is to be found not in subtraction but in addition. We would offer God a bouquet of the most beautiful flowers of all the diverse faiths. We must love God for love's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must do our duty for duty's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must worship the beautiful for beauty's sake, not for the hope of reward. Thus in the purity of our hearts shall we see God. Sacrifices, genuflections, mumblings and mutterings are not religion. They are only good if they stimulate us to the brave performance of beautiful and heroic deeds, and lift our thoughts to the apprehension of the Divine perfection.

What good is it, if we acknowledge in our prayers that God is the Father of us all, and in our daily lives do not treat every man as our brother? Books are only made so that they may point the way to a higher life, but no good results unless the path is trodden with unflinching steps! Every human personality may be compared to a glass globe. There is the same pure white light—an emission of the Divine Being—in the centre of each, but the glass being of different colours and thickness, the rays assume diverse aspects in the transmission. The equality and beauty of each central flame is the same, and the apparent inequality is only in the imperfection of the temporal instrument of its expression. As we rise higher and higher in the scale of being, the medium becomes more and more translucent.”

—Indian Religious Thought—

(Brooklyn, Sunday, December 30, 1894 – CW4)

Shed light instead of criticism

II:18.22a There is too much criticism, too much condemnation of things and others in you.¹⁹ Even if they **are** bad, the attitude is wrong. Negative condemnation is wrong. Negative condemnation does not lead anywhere, but increases the waves of physical and mental brutality sweeping over the world. This does not mean accepting what is evil, but instead of condemning, we should not allow any aversion, any hatred, to enter our hearts, but first of all improve our own reactions, and then through our Sadhana and the greater purity of our vibrations, improve the atmosphere. If we are just as intense in our aversion as the most brutal of those we condemn and feel called upon to criticize mercilessly, we support him by our very vibrations,

19. Reference, once again, to the Nazi regime.—Publisher.

instead of helping him and the world that is suffering under the onrush of such waves of violence. By becoming ourselves more transparent glass-globes, the Divine Light in each of us may shine forth unhindered and sweep away the darkness of ignorance. Instead of criticizing and condemning, we had better employ all that time by performing our own practices intensely, thus increasing their effectiveness. This is a most important factor in our own progress and in bringing about a better state of things.

Whenever you feel inclined to criticize and to condemn, go and sit down quietly and at once begin to do your Japam, offering all your thoughts and your impulses to your Ishtam, to do with them as He likes. This will bring about a wonderful change for the better and much greater reasonableness and detachment.

"This world consists of many types and temperaments. Live with all by Smadhi, Khookagayola²⁹ lives to be like accidental meetings of boats on the river. Be indifferent to whatever good or evil the world may do, you have only to sweep and clean your dwelling place. I have made a search for evil-doers, but I found none. When I looked into myself, I saw none so wicked as myself." —(Tulsidas)

I agree with you so far that faith is a wonderful insight and that it alone can save; but there is the danger in it of breeding fanaticism and barring further progress.

Jñana is all right; but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism. Love is great and noble; but it may die away in meaningless sentimentalism.

*A harmony of all these is the thing required. Ramakrishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between; but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal, we can move on. And if amongst us, each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counteracting, equipoising, adjusting, and fulfilling one another. This would be **harmony** by a number of persons and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds.*

For a religion to be effective, enthusiasm is necessary. At the same time we must try to avoid the danger of multiplying creeds. We avoid that by being a non-sectarian sect, having all

20. Written to a disciple on March 3, 1894, from Chicago. (CW4)

the advantages of a sect and the broadness of a universal religion.

God, though everywhere, can be known to us in and through human character. No character was ever so perfect as Rama-krishna's, and that should be the centre round which we ought to rally, at the same time allowing everybody to regard him in his own light, either as God, saviour, teacher, model, or a great man, just as he pleases.

We preach neither social equality nor inequality, but that every being has the same rights, and insist upon freedom of thought and action in every way.

We reject none, neither theist, nor pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic nor atheist; the only condition of being a disciple is modelling a character at once the broadest and the most intense. Nor do we insist upon particular codes of morality as to conduct, or character, or eating and drinking, except so far as it injures others.

*Whatever retards the onward progress or helps the downward fall is **vice**; whatever helps in coming up and becoming harmonized is **virtue**.*

We leave everybody free to know, select, and follow whatever suits and helps him. Thus, for example, eating meat may help one, eating fruit another. Each is welcome to his own peculiarity, but he has no right to criticize the conduct of others, because that would, if followed by him, injure him, much less to insist that others should follow his way. A wife may help some people in this progress, to others she may be a positive injury. But the unmarried man has no right to say that the married disciple is wrong, much less to force his own ideal of morality upon his brother.

We believe that every being is divine, is God. Every soul is a sun covered over with clouds of ignorance, the difference between soul and soul is owing to the difference in density of these layers of clouds. We believe that this is the conscious or unconscious basis of all religions, and that this is the explanation of the whole history of human progress either in the material, intellectual, or spiritual plane—the same Spirit is manifesting through different planes.

We believe that this is the very essence of the Vedas.

*We believe that it is the duty of every **soul** to treat, think of*

and behave to other **souls** as such, i.e., as **Gods**, and not hate or despise, or vilify, or try to injure them by any manner or means. This is the duty not only of the Sannyasin, but of all men and women.

The soul has neither sex, nor caste, nor imperfection.

We believe that nowhere throughout the Vedas, Darsanas, or Puranas, or Tantras, it is ever said that the soul has any sex, creed, or caste. Therefore we agree with those who say, "What has religion to do with social reforms?" But they must also agree with us when we tell them that religion has no business to formulate social laws and insist on the difference between beings, because its aim and end is to obliterate all such fictions and monstrosities.

If it be pleaded that through this difference we would reach the final equality and unity, we answer that the same religion has said over and over again that mud cannot be washed with mud. As if a man can be moral by being immoral!

Social laws were created by economic conditions under the sanction of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters. But how hypocritically it says, and thereby contradicts itself, "Social reform is not the business of religion.!" True, what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that religion has no right to become a religious law-giver. Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds, and everything would come right.

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.

Therefore the only duty of the teacher in both cases is to remove all obstructions from the way. Hands off! as I always say, and everything will be right. That is, our duty is to clear the way. The Lord does the rest.

Especially, therefore, you must bear in mind that religion has to do only with the soul and has no business to interfere in social matters; you must also bear in mind that this applies completely to the mischief which has already been done. It is as if a man after forcibly taking possession of another's property cries through the nose when that man tries to regain it—and preaches the doctrine of the sanctity of human right!

What business had the priests to interfere (to the misery of millions of human beings) in every social matter?

You speak of the meat-eating Kshatriya. Meat or no meat, it is they who are the fathers of all that is noble and beautiful in Hinduism. Who wrote the Upanishads? Who was Rama? Who was Krishna? Who was Buddha? Who were the Tirthankaras of the Jains? Whenever the Kshatriyas have preached religion, they have given it to everybody, and whenever the Brahmins wrote anything, they would deny all rights to others. Read the Gita and the Sutras of Vyasa, or get somebody to read them to you. In the Gita the way is laid open to all men and women, to all caste and colour, but Vyasa tries to put meanings upon the Vedas to cheat the poor Shudras. Is God a nervous fool like you that the flow of His river of mercy would be dammed up by a piece of meat? If such be He, His value is not a pie!

Hope nothing from me, but I am convinced as I have written to you, and spoken to you, that India is to be saved by the Indians themselves. So you, young men of the motherland, can dozens of you become almost fanatics over this new ideal? Take thought, collect materials, write a sketch of the life of Ramakrishna, studiously avoiding all miracles. The life should be written as an illustration of the doctrines he preached. Only his—do not bring me or any living persons into that. The main aim should be to give to the world what he taught, and the life as illustrating that. I, unworthy though I am, had one commission—to bring out the casket of jewels that was placed in my charge and make it over to you. Why to you? Because the hypocrites, the jealous, the slavish, and the cowardly, those who believe in matter only, can never do anything. Jealousy is the bane of our national character, natural to slaves. Even the Lord with all His power could do nothing on account of this jealousy. Think of me as one who has done all his duty and is now dead and gone. Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders. Think that you, young men of our motherland, are destined to do this. Put yourselves to the task. Lord bless you. Leave me, throw me quite out of sight. Preach the new ideal, the new doctrine, the new life. Preach against nobody, against

21. One paisa—1/16 of a rupee.

no custom. Preach neither for nor against caste or any other social evil. Preach to let "hands off", and everything will come right.

My blessings on you all, my brave, steadfast, and loving souls.

Vivekananda

Here you see the greatness of the man. Swamiji never thought of himself but always of the work of the Master. It is such a dedication that at least some of you here should develop if you wish to become His true children. "*What do I matter, it is all you, all you!*", this should be your attitude. Be steady in your practices, remove all the layers of likes and dislikes, of condemnation of others and be His, wholly His. Then everything will be all right. So much can be gained if you only know how to be steadfast and truly dedicated. Let these ideas throb within you day and night, let them become living, intense, let them come to life in your own life and all its expressions, no matter how small and unimportant they may seem to you.

II:19 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 20, 1934 -- (Vol.II 111-124)[NY194-197]

Only gentlemen and gentlewomen can become Sadhus

II:19.05 Hypocrisy in spiritual life is the greatest danger. The peacock never wants to show its ugly legs. It always shows its feathers. The legs are so ugly and dirty. In spiritual life, inside and outside should become one, whereas we usually lead a double life. In spiritual life, one of the signs of progress is whether one has developed a sense of proportion, knows how to behave differently with different people, avoiding some and allowing others to approach, according to temperament, conduct of life etc. If there are no pure people where we are, then we will have to stay quite alone. This is the only thing we can do. You have no idea how important this point is during your Sadhana.

II:19.07 And there is another very important point. Before you can become a Sadhu, a spiritual man, you must become a gentleman or a gentlewoman in the real sense of the term. Only gentlemen and gentlewomen can become Sadhus. I always tell people again and again: before becoming an aspirant, before even thinking of taking up the spiritual life, see that you become a gentleman or a gentlewoman. And the aspirant is able to be a gentleman or a gentlewoman when he has been established, at least to a great extent, in the pre-

liminary practice leading to a spiritual life. Sometimes we find people behaving in a most undignified, uncultured way. Then they are neither fish nor fowl. The gentleman and the gentlewoman are necessary stages on the path. Necessary for all. All have to pass through these different psychical and even physiological changes. There is a time when the child does not know its real status, and behaves cumbrously. But sometimes people remain cumbrous and undignified all their life, because they are not able to have the right adjustment, the right attitude. All these phases come, every man has been a child, but naturalness and ease in our dealing with others only comes through inner growth, inner freedom, when we have already advanced to some extent, and are no longer swayed by all sorts of desires and impulses.

II:19.11 We should act in such a manner, we should live in such a way that we make no impression at all on others. That they do not see us, as it were. We are able to lead such a life, the only life that is natural, when we are to some extent established in spiritual life. Otherwise there will always be tension, there will be fits, outbursts of anger, etc. We shall be sometimes calm, sometimes terribly turbulent, sometimes in a very bad, irritable mood etc.

II:19.10 It is not enough that strangers know that we are good, but we should also see that those who are near us know us to be good and perfectly controlled. It is very easy to show a smiling face to strangers. We should always value the opinion of those near us more than that of others whom we only see once in a while.

The building up of our life is an obstacle-race

II:19.12 This building up of our life is a very difficult task. Tempests are raging within and without, and you must be able to withstand both. Then only the building up becomes possible. You all will have to pass through very difficult times on the way and some will fall down by the wayside and be left behind. Your troubles will even increase for a time. Everything will become worse, as it were, and even the outer obstacles putting themselves in your way will grow and become harder to conquer.

II:19.13 Sometimes even the body begins to revolt in every possible way. The mind becomes full of tension and revolts. The nerves begin to revolt. Old tendencies, old impurities, old desires, get greater strength and want to find expression on the physical plane. If we want to lead a spiritual life, we shall have to pass through terrible

ordeals, through long periods of serious unsettlement, through terrible struggles with our desires and passions, before they are subdued and know who has become the master. The whole thing is like an obstacle-race. There are no end of obstacles to be overcome, and no respite is given us for a long time. Everyone who intensely and sincerely follows the life will experience this. Great strength and energy are needed. So no one who does not fulfill the conditions of *Yama* and *Niyama* will be able to stick to the path to the end. His energy is too small to enable him to stand the stress and the pressure bearing down upon him from all sides. That is why no aspirant can afford to waste energy unnecessarily through physical and mental channels. The old teachers knew perfectly well why they had to prescribe the disciplines of *Yama* and *Niyama*, why they had to be so strict. If they are not fulfilled, only a nervous breakdown can be the result, a greater weakening of all our powers, a greater slavery. Do not think these are mere theories. We too, have passed through the life, we have experienced it, and we have seen and heard so much from our great teachers. This is not mere book-knowledge found in some musty old volumes of old traditions.

II:19.14 There should be a calm, steady, one-pointed and dogged performance of all the necessary practices coupled with strict fulfilment of ethical culture, and then everything will be well in the end. All those who do not do this will be eliminated, sooner or later; they will never be able to get anywhere near the goal.

II:20 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 21, 1934 -- (Vol.II 125-129)[NY198-200]

Vedantins vs. Naiyayikas

“Those that give up this highest and purest Brahmic consciousness live in vain and, though human, are like beasts.

They that have realized this consciousness and, having realized it, develop it more and more, are the best of men, fortunate and venerable in all the three worlds.

They in whom this consciousness grows and also fructifies, attain identity with the eternal Brahman, and not those others, who merely fight about words.

Those that are clever in their talk of Brahman, but are devoid of this consciousness and are swayed by strong passions, are, indeed, the most ignorant among men, and they again and

again pass through births and deaths.”

—(Sankaracharya)

II:20.01 Mind is the inner instrument, the senses and the body are the outer instruments of the Atman.

II:20.02 The Naiyayikas say: “The soul, as such, is unconscious, distinct from mind and senses. It only becomes conscious when the mind is attached to it”. Vedantins are very much against this idea. They only accept the logic portions of the Nyaya philosophy, but not the others.

With the highest illumination there takes place a separation between the soul and the mind. So with the highest illumination, when there comes this separation, the soul is practically unconscious. *Empirical consciousness* is due to the connection with the mind, but there is a *higher consciousness*, quite different from our conception of empirical consciousness, which the Naiyayikas deny.

II:20.04 There are different thought-planes and if we come in touch with a particular thought-plane, all these spiritual ideas crop up quite naturally. This, however, should always be an intelligent, fully conscious process.

Seeing God in all beings is a great Sadhana

II:20.06 Trying to see God in all beings is a great Sadhana. Lust, anger, greed, aversion, and all these can be controlled by just seeing the Divine. First of all, we take the best manifestations, but some day even the worst ones have to be taken also and the Divine to be seen in them. Otherwise the problem is not solved at all. A cloud sometimes takes a most beautiful form, sometimes a very ugly form, but both are only permutations of water. All permutations of matter, you see. Sometimes a most beautiful, enticing, sometimes a most ugly, hideous, repellent form, but there is really no difference.

It is all Mother's Lila, Mother's play. The one Reality in it is Mother. To the extent in which the mind becomes really pure and strong and dispassionate, we can take this view if we are able to stand aside as the witness without any identification or desire. By giving these auto-suggestions, the truth will be revealed as It is. It may be imagination for the time being, but it is an imagination that is real, no hallucination.

The satisfaction of the enlightened (from Pañcadasi)

“If an enlightened man happens to be in the midst of persons engaged in the performance of works, he must do all actions by his body, speech and mind, so as to be in accord with them. (7.285)

If on the other hand he is in the midst of those wishing to acquire true knowledge, he must condemn all actions and give them up also, to set an example to them and encourage them. (7.286)

It is right for an enlightened man to act in accordance with the ignorant men when he happens to be with them, just as a father acts in accordance with the wishes of his little children. (7.287)

He does not feel angry or sorry when his children abuse him or beat him, but on the other hand he caresses them. (7.288)

When praised or blamed by ignorant men, an enlightened man does neither praise nor blame them in return, but acts in such a way as to awaken a knowledge of the real entity in them. (7.289)

A wise man should adopt that course of action which is likely to help the cognition of Brahman by the ignorant and there is nothing else for him to do. (7.290)

Having done all that has to be done and obtained all that has to be got, he feels satisfied and is always engaged in thinking as follows: (7.291)

‘I am supremely blessed in having a direct knowledge of Brahman and in having brahmic bliss plain to me.’ (7.292)

‘I am supremely blessed, for I do not feel the miseries of worldly affairs and all my ignorance has fled I know not whither.’ (7.293)

‘I am supremely blessed, for I know nothing that remains to be done by me and I have realized all that one can wish for.’ (7.294)

‘I am supremely blessed, as there is no earthly felicity to be compared with my bliss and as nothing is wanting to my bliss.’” (7.295)

Dispassion

II:20.07 There is this whole mental ocean. Different kinds of bubbles rise, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, but all bubbles are but manifestations of this mighty ocean of thought,—just as all beautiful and

ugly forms are but manifestations of this mighty ocean of matter. To the extent in which the mind becomes dispassionate, free from desires and cravings, we are able to stand as the witness and then we see the Truth as it is. The attitude of the 'witness' without any identification is most essential in spiritual life.

II:20.10 Neither be afraid of ugly things, nor care for beautiful things. It is our task to have this balanced mind, unruffled by anything. We want peace. Where is the peace when the ugly thing is able to create pain and the beautiful thing to create pleasure and passion? Then comes disillusionment, breaking of the heart. Wonderful romance!

Control through dissociation

II:20.11 It is good to think intensely that we are standing apart from the body. Leaving your body, just stand apart. Watch it. See what it is doing. Let it be someone else's body. A dispassionate view of perfect non-identification is necessary. This attitude of the 'witness' with reference to our thoughts, feelings, impulses, and ideas is very necessary for all spiritual aspirants. It is the way to the goal.

II:20.12 If we practice this for some time, then even at moments when our mind is very much distracted, part of it just stands aside as the witness and watches its mad ravings. And the part that stands aside, that is calm and dispassionate, then keeps the mad part under its control. When your mind is disturbed, go on quietly doing Japam, repeating the name of the Lord and standing apart from your mind and body. Then at least the part that is doing Japam will not get identified with the disturbed part and will be able to control it.

II:20.13 ***The attitude of the 'witness' is one of the great secrets of success in spiritual life.***

There should be conscious non-identification at all times. See your body standing and lying and walking, watch it. Watch the mad gambollings of your mind, but remain calm and dispassionate. Look at it as something that does not belong to you and that can be easily controlled, for the very moment there is dissociation, control becomes a very easy thing. Never identify yourself with any of the desires of your mind or body. The body or mind may desire this or that, but you are the witness, and there is no need to identify yourself with the wishes of your body, or of your mind. With practice, great progress can be made in this attitude, which again makes our advance

along spiritual lines easier and less susceptible to reverses and falls. ***Our whole trouble is our perfect identification with what we are not.***

“No division in Consciousness is admissible at any time as it is always one and the same. Even the individuality of the Jiva must be known as false, like the delusion of a snake in a rope.”

—(Aparokshanubhuti 143)—

“The false idea of a serpent in a rope is the cause of one’s running away from it. When the false knowledge of its being a serpent is destroyed and a true knowledge of its being only a rope arises, one feels ashamed that one’s fear was groundless.” —(Pañcadasi 7.235)—

II:21 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 22, 1934 -- (Vol.II 130-138)[NY200-210]

The power that lies in Brahmacharya

II:21.01 This is what is gained through practice and ethical culture: that one can never fall into error.

II:21.02 Swamiji [Swami Vivekananda] used to stress the point that tremendous energy comes through the practice of unbroken continence [Brahmacharya] for many years. When one of his devotees once asked him how others could ever come by his marvellous powers, he answered:

“You don’t know? That power may come to all. That power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years with the sole object of realizing God. I have practiced that kind of Brahmacharya myself, and so a screen has been removed, as it were, from my brain. For that reason, I need not anymore think over or prepare myself for any lectures on such a subtle subject as philosophy. Suppose I have to lecture tomorrow; it so happens, all that I shall speak about will pass tonight before my eyes like so many pictures; and the next day I put into words during my lecture all those things that I saw. So you will understand now, that it is not any power exclusively my own. Whoever will practice unbroken Brahmacharya for twelve years, will surely have it. If you do so, you, too, will get it. Our Scriptures do not say that only such and such a person will get it and not others!”

II:21.03 And this is not mere tall talk on the part of Swamiji. Any-

thing can be achieved through real Brahmacharya, physical and mental, if it is strictly observed for a considerable period of time. The incontinent person cannot achieve anything in the spiritual path, nor can his brain ever acquire the fineness of discrimination that is necessary for getting real glimpses of the Truth. If the brain remains very gross, finer vibrations do not touch it, as it were, and it can only judge of gross things and take gross things to be real.

II:21.04 Some people develop a marvellous intelligence through unbroken continence. I myself have had some aspirants among the novices in the Math who were not at all bright when they came, but who developed great intelligence after some time. The stored-up energy creates a finer sensibility in the brain, makes it more receptive, more elastic, allows it to reflect more light.

II:21.05 The state of transcendental morals is to be reached.

Be properly rooted in spiritual consciousness

II:21.06 Spiritual consciousness should be an extension of our individualized consciousness. We must stand firmly on the ground of our own consciousness and then have spiritual consciousness. The point²² must first be a very definite point and then be in tune with the whole circle. Without very definite point-hood, no experience of the circle is possible. Only when I am, God is. I am the spirit free from all troubles. This 'I' is to be strengthened. The other 'I', the limited one, that continually creates troubles is to be eliminated. We must retain our consciousness, but our centre of consciousness must be shifted from the false ego to the true Self. We must always be rooted in our higher consciousness. Sometimes we want to float in the air without being rooted in our own consciousness. There should never be a time when we remain uprooted. Our roots must be struck somewhere. When we remove our roots from the false ground, we must at once take root somewhere else, not allow ourselves to remain uprooted.

II:21.07 Amongst Jñanis usually there is greater balance, fewer periods of crisis, but the devotee, the Bhakta, is in greater danger. As long as there is the very least speck of lust in him, there can be no such thing as love. Of course, the Jñani, too, has his own difficulties.

22. See figures and note on page 100.

Connect your consciousness with Ishtam's consciousness

II:21.08 When the devotees think of their preferred object of meditation and see the form vividly, they must be also able to establish their relationship with it, otherwise they float in the air.

II:21.09 One must be able to connect one's consciousness with the consciousness of the Ishtam, one's object of meditation. If one does not do this, serious troubles may follow, there may be a general unsettlement, and the object of the practice is not attained.

When doing one's Japam or one's spiritual practice there comes tremendous unsettlement, when one is not able to connect one's own consciousness properly with the consciousness of the Ishtam. If you do not have the positive living presence of your Ishtam, you feel you float in the air, and you become uprooted. Your own consciousness loses its basis. There is no doubt at all that you should uproot yourselves from the false ground as swiftly and as decisively as possible. Badly planted plants sometimes appear to be dead for some time. Great stress is to be laid on the positive presence of your Ishtam. Then you also feel an inner peace. The Ishtam is not an imagination. The presence of the Ishtam is something real after you have made the form vivid. This is a very, very important point. If the practice is performed in the right way, you feel infinite strength and calm and stillness, a deep inner sense of peace, the heart feels like a pot that has been filled to the brim, such a feeling of tremendous peace. Nothing can in any way ruffle you.

II:21.10 Many of the present bad effects of your practice come from your making the form of your Ishtam vivid, but then not establishing the necessary relationship, not connecting your own consciousness with the consciousness of your Ishtam.

II:21.11 In spiritual life there always comes such a crisis. It comes to all if they really advance and really do something energetically. No one is spared this unsettlement and this crisis, but then they should ask me what to do and have talks with me on their practices.

II:21.12 If no crisis comes at all, there is something wrong. Then the practices are not effective.

II:21.13 In the path of Jñana, the crises are less virulent. There is more of balance and discrimination, though there too some crises are sure to appear. But always remember, both for the Bhakta and for the Jñani, our spiritual consciousness must under all circumstances

be an extension of our individualized consciousness. As we said, there must be a direct and very intimate connection or relationship between our consciousness and the consciousness of the Ishtam and the Divine.

II:21.14 There is something which, to us, appears as the world, but our reading of this something is not the ultimate reading. As we go on putting on different coloured glasses, this something appears to be different. If you do your visualization properly, the visualization of your Ishtam will teach you great lessons. Visualization has its great use. You will find that through visualization a so-called reality can be produced, and this again will help you in doubting the reality of the world. At the back of the form there is always that which takes form. At the back of the wave there is the water-substance. The bubble should not put so much stress on the bubble-form but on the substance, if it wants to progress. We should never forget the consciousness associated with the form of the Ishtam. If you do, the effects will be very bad, because your own consciousness becomes uprooted, as I said.

II:22 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 23, 1934 -- (Vol.II 138-140)[NY200-210]

True humility. Hatred and 'righteous anger'

II:22.01 Think of the case of Hanuman. He was only a small monkey, but yet what tremendous strength he got through his love and devotion for Rama! It enabled him to cross over to Sri Lanka and to see Sita, while the others could not get there without a bridge. Hanuman's case is this: When the ego is related to the Divine, it gets tremendous strength and energy, tremendous power, but in spite of that it cannot do any harm. It will never make a bad use of this strength, but only use it in furthering righteous causes.

II:22.02 A humble man feeling so proud of his humility! Wonderful! All this marvelous so-called humility is hidden ego, ego hidden under the cover of humility and an outwardly self-effacing life! Real humility is something that comes of tremendous strength. For all aspirants there must be these two characteristics:— tremendous calmness and real humility, not passivity, but they must be people remaining calm in the midst of all difficulties, without hatred, without aversion, without attachment, people who maintain their humility when there are the greatest provocations, who keep themselves away from all forms of hatred, even when there seems to be a cause

for so-called 'righteous anger'—a thing that does not exist. There is no such thing as a righteous anger, there is no such thing as 'righteous hatred'. We have not to hate anything at all.

II:22.03 What generally makes us hate, is something that frustrates our own desires and wishes and hopes. Thus all hatred is always rooted in ego and self-seeking, in whatever form these may appear.

II:22.04 If anyone of you absolutely insists on hating, then let him hate his own hatred. Hatred is only revelling in one's own emotions, enjoying one's emotions, and is very similar to lust.

Karma [work] and knowledge

"Before the dawn of knowledge one has many duties to perform for acquisition of worldly and heavenly pleasure and also with a view to obtaining final emancipation. But after knowledge of Brahman is got there is nothing for him to do as he feels the satisfaction of having done all duties. (7.253)

With the feeling of having done all that has to be done, he unremittently meditates on Brahman and thereby enjoys supreme felicity. (7.254)

An enlightened man will think as follows: 'Miserable and ignorant people engage in worldly concerns with desire for wife, children etc. With what desire should I who am full of bliss engage myself with worldly affairs?' (7.255)

Those who desire pleasures in the other worlds perform ordained work. What is there for me to do seeing that I am one with all that exists?" (7.256)

—(Pañcadasi)—

II:22.05 Sankara says: "Karma cannot achieve the highest Brahma-jñāna." Karma here means work, naturally.

II:22.06 Knowledge *is*, exists, it is not something that can ever be 'created'. Karma [work] just removes ignorance. It does not create light, but removes darkness—only when it is absolutely selfless work that never looks to the fruits. The highest knowledge is never the 'product' of anything. It **dawns** when that which stands in the way of the highest illumination is removed.

"Dissociation from worldly passion is the shield, and knowledge the sword, with which holy men have annihilated the ene-

mies—lust, greed and attachment—having obtained the victory of Lord's devotion.” —(Tulsidas)

Western carelessness in association between sexes

II:22.07 In the West, you are very careless with regard to your associations with the other sex. Swamiji [Swami Vivekananda] once said:

“When I look about me and see what you call gallantry, my soul is filled with disgust. Not until you learn to ignore the question of sex and to meet on a ground of common humanity will your women really develop. Until then they are playthings, nothing more. Your men bow low and offer a chair, but in another breath they offer compliments. They say, ‘Oh, Madam, how beautiful are your eyes!’ What right have they to do this? How dare a man venture so far, and how can your women permit it? Such things develop the less noble side of humanity.

We should not think that we are men and women, but only that we are human beings, born to cherish and to help one another. No sooner are a young man and a young woman left alone than he pays compliments to her, and perhaps before he takes a wife, he has courted 200 women! Bah! If I belonged to the marrying set I could find a woman to love without all that!

When I was in India and saw these things from the outside, I was told that it is all right, it is mere pleasantry, and I believed it. But I have travelled since then, and I know it is not right. It is wrong, only you of the West shut your eyes and call it good. The trouble with the nations of the West is that they are young, foolish, fickle and wealthy. What mischief can come of one of these qualities, but when all three, all four, are combined, beware!”

II:22.10 These words may shock many people, but Swamiji had his eyes wide open and was not prepared to call a festering, nauseating sore a fragrant flower when he saw it. He was fearless in denouncing both the evils of the West and those of India.

II:23 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 24, 1934 -- (Vol.II 140-151)[NY200-210]

The inordinate clinging to life's creation-aspect

II:23.01 Life always means destruction, as well as preservation and creation. They always go together. so why do you shudder at the idea of destruction? There is no sense in clinging to life and yet refus-

ing to accept it in its entirety. Either reject life in all its three aspects and transcend it, or accept them all. Be consistent. There is no sense in crying, "O Lord, how beautiful is thy nose!"—and then shuddering at death and destruction and decay.

II:23.03 We must, above all, know how to die. I find such an inordinate clinging to the cradle, to the aspect of creation, which is senseless.

"O Tulsi, when you were born, others laughed and you cried. Live in such a way that when you die, others will cry and you smile."

II:24 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 25, 1934 -- (Vol.II 152-164)[NY219-211]

Make the mind dwell in its own abode!

II:24.01 The mind must have some stay, and we should see that this stay is within us, not outside. If we do not, our balance may be shattered at any moment. There is a long period of preparation, and especially beginners in spiritual life get tremendous reactions, physical and mental.

"O my mind, dwell in your own abode. Do not go to anybody else's house. In the inner apartments of your own house search for the Truth! It is there."

II:24.03 To make the mind dwell in its own abode, does not mean making one's little ego the centre of one's consciousness, but it means consciously contacting the vaster consciousness within. As long as we do not feel at least a bit of that inner consciousness, we can never be steady in spiritual life. The moment you look within and establish the contact, you are calm and steady whatever happens. And that contact is brought about neither through the intellect nor through the heart, but through something deeper that moves both the intellect and the feelings. And through this intense relationship with God, through this tremendous fire, all passions and desires are burnt away.

*"Standing at the foot, boys,
Looking at the sky,
How can you get up, boys,
If you never try?"*

II:24.04 So you should begin to **move forward**. It is such a splendid adventure, you see!

II:25 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 26, 1934 -- (Vol.II 165-177)[NY230-235]

The hideous world of Maya

II:25.01 We are all mad, raving lunatics, running after the false, identifying ourselves with the false.

II:25.02 If we are not able to see the Divinity in all, we should know that this comes through the impurity of our mind, and we should try to make the mind purer.

II:25.04 The inner thought brings about a change in the body, too. Why be afraid of Divine madness? Mad we are anyhow. Every form of jealousy, of lust, of anger, of hatred, of greed, is madness. So there is really no reason why we should be afraid of getting mad. There is no doubt that Divine madness is better than this dirty kind of worldly madness that possesses us.

II:25.05 Swamiji said:

“This hideous world is Maya. Renounce and be happy. Give up the idea of sex and possessions. There is no other bond. Marriage and sex and money are the only living devils. All earthly love is body, body, body. No sex, no possessions; as these fall off, the eyes open to spiritual vision. The soul regains its infinite power.”

II:25.06 This is perfectly true. With our impure minds we cannot realize Reality as It is. And Swamiji had to tell this to people again and again. *“Where Kama is, there Rama cannot be.”* So, see that you become pure in mind and body. Then everything will be achieved.

II:26 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 28, 1934 -- (Vol.II 178-188)[NY383-390]

Only the hero can stand Truth

II:26.01 We always want to realize our inmost hopes with the help of someone outside, but when the centre of gravity is shifted outside, our whole balance becomes unstable. If you go and ask a person to rely on something outside, even on a good thing, he will go and lean on a bad thing too. A good thing is never very far from a bad thing. First of all we must come back to our little self, and then we can go to the bigger Self.

II:26.06 Spiritual life is like hunger, and until we feel real hunger we do not eat the food that is being offered us.

II:26.07 Once a child said to its mother, "Mother, please, wake me up, when I am hungry!" But the mother answered, "I need not do that. You yourself will wake up when you feel really hungry."

II:26.08 Without the ego, no striving can be done, but then the devotee tries to keep his ego attuned to the Divine.

II:26.09 The sex-aspect plays such an important role in the life of the aspirant, that it should never be awakened, even by seeing a picture. First of all, undermine your body-consciousness, your sex-consciousness by never thinking, "I am a man, a woman etc." And to the extent in which you succeed in doing this, you come to have a new outlook and new reactions.

II:26.10 Initially, this brings about an awful unsettlement in people who have the consciousness that they are men or women, as their consciousness is centred in their bodies. So most people cannot even be told this truth. We must dilute it so strongly that very little of it remains, and what remains must be taken as a working ideal. However, there comes a time when everyone must be told the full truth regarding these matters.

II:26.12 Swamiji, in his *'Song of the Sannyasin'* beautifully says:

*Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down,
Of shining gold, or darker, baser ore;
Love, hate—good, bad—and all the dual throng,
Know, slave is slave, caressed or whipped, not free;
For fetters, though of gold, are not less strong to bind;
Then off with them, Sannyasin bold! Say—*

"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

*They know not truth who dream such vacant dreams
As father, mother, children, wife, and friend.
The sexless Self! whose father He? whose child?
Whose friend, whose foe is He who is but One?
The Self is all in all, none else exists;
And thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say—*

"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

*Where seekest thou? That freedom, friend, this world
Nor that can give. In books and temples vain
Thy search. Thine only is the hand that holds*

*The rope that drags thee on. Then cease lament,
Let go thy hold, Sannyasin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”*

*Truth never comes where lust and fame and greed
Of gain reside. No man who thinks of woman
As his wife can ever perfect be;
Nor he who owns the least of things, nor he
Whom anger chains, can ever pass thro’ Maya’s gates.
So, give these up, Sannyasin bold! Say—
“Om Tat Sat, Om!”*

II:26.13 ***These truths are too much for most people.*** They cannot stand them and become unsettled. So weaker doses must be given them, weaker injections of truth, for a time; but, some day, everyone will have to face up to them and follow their call, no matter whether the heart breaks or not! Only the hero can stand Truth. There is no place for the weakling in real spiritual life. True Religion, real Vedanta is no joke. The whole *Song of the Sannyasin* is full of the inspiration of the highest Truth. It is good to meditate on such passages and to assimilate them, especially for you who are getting the training of a monk and should be even more careful than others. ***I am so glad that I can speak to you all so freely about these matters, that I need not dilute them, but you must be more on your guard than those who are getting less.*** The person undergoing a monk’s training has to avoid greater pitfalls and to overcome greater difficulties and be more careful in all his associations with others. I am so glad we are having such intensive studies and readings and that you are all so willing to accept these ideas. Only you must perform your practices very steadily, without any break for some years, then you will see wonderful results.

II:27 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 29, 1934 -- (Vol.II 188-193)[NY383-390]

The body-worshiper is an idol-worshiper

II:27.01 Sometimes one staircase may be as good as another. But the trouble is that many take the staircase to be all in all, forgetting the terrace. This produces the fossilised dogmatism we find everywhere in institutional religion. The terrace is one, but there may be many staircases leading to it.

II:27.02 The Deity of the ignorant is the image. This is always

so. It makes no difference whether the image is a mental one, or of clay, or of metal, or the body. But body-worship is the worst form of idolatry. Yet so many people feel superior just because they do not worship clay images!

II:27.03 In the very depths of our consciousness we come into touch with the Universal Spirit. It is like this:— there is a limitless mass of water underground, but there are many different wells, although the same water is everywhere. If we consciously dig our own well, the water must flow, because the water is always there. But we cannot make use of the wells of our neighbours. That won't do. Only our own well will help us in realizing the Truth, though others may, at the beginning, serve as signposts.

II:28 -- Wiesbaden, Nov 30, 1934 -- (Vol.II 193-202)[NY390-393]

Look behind the form

II:28.07 The true devotee rises above the manifestation and sees the substance, of which all these are the different manifestations.

II:28.08 As children, we stress form so much, but we should know how to separate the form from the substance. We have not the power to look within and find the substance which lies behind the form. This will only come after many years of steady meditation and Japam and ethical culture.

II:28.09 If we are able to have the right attitude of worship towards one form, we are able to have it towards all forms. This is the great secret.

II:28.10 To the extent in which one is able to see the Divine in all, one becomes more or less established in the spiritual path. The aspirant has to try to remain in the transcendental state and then bring this state down to the phenomenal. This does not mean that we should lose our moral sense in our outward conduct. Everything is one on the plane of the SELF, but on the plane of matter there are differences.

II:28.11 The bubble, in a certain mood, can identify itself with the ocean and even with the water-substance.

II:28.12 You should often ***repeat the following (and other similar passages) to yourselves, and drive them into the subcon-***

scious by constant repetition. They are a great help in annihilating body-consciousness and showing the way to the experience of Truth:

I am neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor ether, nor the organ of sense, nor the combination of all these,—that are transient. I am the Ultimate Truth which alone remains in deep sleep. I am the All-Pervading Self, I am the Self All-Pervading, the One without a second.— (1)

I am beyond caste and rules of caste, society and custom. I am the self-existent reality, beyond concentration, meditation and other practices of Yoga. All illusion of 'I' and 'mine' is rooted in not-self, and is dispelled by knowledge of the Self. I am the Ultimate Truth, the All-Pervading Self, the One without a second.— (2)

For me there are no mother and father, nor gods, nor the worlds; neither scriptures nor sacrifices, nor holy places. Even in deep sleep I ever exist. I am the Ultimate Truth, the All-Pervading Self, the One without a second.— (3)

Doctrines and creeds, rituals and dogmas, I do not need any more. By special realization have I known the real nature that is absolutely pure. I am the Ultimate Truth, the All-Pervading Self, the One without a second.— (4)

There is neither above, nor below, nor inside, nor outside, nor middle, nor across, nor before, nor behind. I am indivisible by nature, and all-pervading like space. I am the Ultimate Truth, the All-Pervading Self, the One without a second.— (5)

I am neither white nor black, neither red nor yellow, neither bent nor stout, neither short nor lean. I am formless, of the nature of self-resplendent consciousness. I am the Ultimate Truth, the All-Pervading Self, the One without a second.— (6)

To me, the Self, there is neither teacher nor scripture, neither pupil nor teaching, neither object nor subject, nor this empirical universe. I am the Absolute Consciousness, the Reality that does not admit of differentiation. I am the Ultimate Truth, the All-Pervading Self, the One without a second.— (7)

To me, the Self, there is neither waking, nor dream, nor deep sleep. I am not conditioned by these three states as these are of the nature of nescience, for I am the fourth state beyond these

three. I am the Ultimate Truth, the All-Pervading Self, the One without a second.— (8)

All this universe, being other than the Self, is unreal; the Self alone is all-pervading. IT constitutes the Reality and is self-existent, independent of everything. I am the Ultimate Truth, the All-Pervading Self, the One without a second.— (9)

It cannot even be said that IT is one. How can there be a second other than THAT? There is neither absoluteness nor non-absoluteness, neither entity nor non-entity. IT is absolutely non-dual in ITS nature. How then can I describe THAT which is the Goal of the highest knowledge?— (10)

—Nirvana-dasakam (Sankaracharya)—

II:28.16 There should be perfect clarity of vision, clarity of thinking. Seeing things dispassionately as they are, things that are real as permanent, things that are unreal as fleeting, and the aspirant must be able to separate one from the other. In the highest transcendental state, which can only be experienced after years and years of unceasing struggle and discipline, the unreal, the fleeting, the phenomenal, vanishes altogether, and only Truth as It is remains.

II:29 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 1, 1934 -- (Vol.II 203)[NY393-399]

Nature of the highest spiritual illumination

II:29.01 The highest spiritual illumination is neither feeling, nor intellect, but something that transcends both, but manifests itself through both. We call it 'heart' or 'head' according to the dominating factor. In some cases, it brings more intellectual illumination than feeling. In others, more feeling than intellectual illumination, but both are always there.

II:30 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 3, 1934 -- (Vol.II 203-205)[NY393-399]

Sensualists gross and refined

II:30.00a All people are either refined sensualists or gross sensualists, but the sensualist, whether gross or refined, has no place at all in spiritual life. The desire for subtle enjoyment I find in many of you is just as bad as the desire for gross enjoyment. Who cares for the Divine? Who is going to take up spiritual life in right earnest? We

cling to our subtle desires and enjoy our clinging and call ourselves 'spiritually-minded people'!

II:30.00b The refined sensualist, priding himself on his refinement, but running after refined and subtle enjoyments and sense-pleasures, must very soon come down to the plane of gross sensual enjoyment and gross sense-pleasure. There is no other go for him, whatever he may think. But then, people will not listen if I tell them the truth.

II:30.00c Whatever I may tell them, people go on clinging to falsehood, to the unreal, to the transient and to their petty likes and dislikes and aversions, so why should they not get nice kicks and troubles and miseries?

II:30.00d Why expect happiness if your whole life becomes one big lie and untruth? We want happiness while we go on clinging to falsehood, to the unreal, with the greatest tenacity and a perfect lack of discrimination, so we deserve kicks and kicks. For many people, kicks are the only means to make them proceed, to make life intolerable for them.

II:30.00e If suffering and misery and pain increase, a larger number of people will be drawn away from the material things and towards the Divine. Naturally, some will break down. Others will find out that they cannot cling to human bodies and idols and to their own false personalities and to mental and material enjoyments, gross or subtle. And then only will they awaken to the reality.

II:30.00f The moment you cling to falsehood, to the idea of "I am so-and-so, a man, a woman, old, young etc.," you get nice kicks, because you are clinging to falsehood. But then, there always comes a day when you find out the falsehood to be falsehood and nothing but falsehood, and then your heart breaks or is broken. This day comes for all, sooner or later, in this life or in many lives. And misery and suffering and pain and frustration alone can bring us to our senses, break our hard shells, stop our craving for enjoyment and sense-pleasures, be it on the gross or on the subtle plane.

II:30.00g Very often, so called 'moral' men and women, leading so-called 'moral' lives on the gross plane, are moral on the gross plane and terribly immoral on the subtle plane. Moral life must always be based on true desires, otherwise you can never maintain it in the long run. Without the higher ideal, and higher intense longing, it can

never be maintained by anybody. Maya is too strong. Unless the outlook is changed, unless a serious attempt is made to minimize our desire for sense-enjoyment, gross or subtle, one can never be moral. The entire outlook has to be changed, and we should really make sincere and repeated attempts to do this.

II:30.00h In the *Gita* Sri Krishna denounces such spiritual people and types, who, while controlling the senses outwardly on the gross plane, go on thinking of sense-pleasures and subtle enjoyments, and enjoy them mentally.

II:30.00i One should control the senses and at the same time think of the Divine. Then only one becomes established in the moral life. Otherwise one will fall down and become a nice hypocrite dabbling in spirituality.

Cosmic consciousness

II:30.01 We proceed from the gross to the subtle, from the subtle to the causal, and then there is a big jump. We cannot connect the Absolute with the relative.

II:30.02 In the course of evolution, things appear as what they are not. We get water in so many forms. There is water in the cloud and the same water-substance in ice. But, to our senses, how different does the cloud appear from the ice!

II:30.03 Western philosophy has never had any great influence on life, not even on the life of the philosopher himself. Western philosophy is all reasoning, and mere reasoning has no great value and only leads us up to a certain point. We see the results in Kant. This is of no value at all as far as life and our progress are concerned. It is just intellectual gymnastics.

II:30.04 The Indian way is quite different. In India, experience comes first, and then, much later, some intellectual foundation is found for the experience—though the experience, not the intellectual reasoning, always remained the first and most important factor. There was never empty intellectual speculation *before* experience. We always stress actual experience, not the speculative system without experience.

II:30.06 Salvation should be the attainment of that which is immutable and eternal. We want a state from which there is no falling down.

II:30.07 Truth is that which is beyond dualism and beyond monism.

II:30.08 ***It is a serious mistake ever to take Cosmic Consciousness for Absolute Consciousness***, because there remains a slight trace of the individual in an experience of Cosmic Consciousness, which is a source of ignorance and obscuration.

II:30.09 Cosmic Consciousness is not better than a glimpse. It is not the attainment of the goal. In spite of having had the experience of Cosmic Consciousness, a person may retain all his silly whims and fancies. I find in the West many people make too much of Cosmic Consciousness and attribute too great a value to such a small experience.

In Cosmic Consciousness there always remains a slight trace of the individual. In real Advaitic experience, nothing is left of the individual.

II:30.10 With God-vision, all our desires and passions become, as it were, 'loosened'. There sets in a disintegration of them, and through that we slowly begin to acquire a true personality, an integrated personality.

II:30.11 After true realization—not after the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness—all these petty desires of ours become like a burnt rope. The experience of a 'glimpse' would be just like a seed that gets a little scorched, but still retains its solidity and form, and may even sprout again.

II:30.13 Everything we see is the pulsation of one Existence.

II:30.14 There are indeed ghosts, goblins and many subtler worlds, many planes of existence. All these are perfectly true, but of no importance. For us there is no sense in attaining a vision of the ghost-world etc. We should strive for the Highest and nothing but that.

II:30.15 Where there is no life, or rather, where we do not *perceive* life, in what we call inert matter, there is such a small manifestation of consciousness that, to us, it appears dead. But the whole Cosmos is really instinct with life. Every stone and rock possesses consciousness, though in a very dull form.

II:30.16 There is absolutely no break between my body and your body, between your body and this table before you. There is no such

thing as a vacuum. They may pump out the air, but they cannot pump out 'ether'.

Intellectual enjoyment is not enough

II:30.19 Because Sri Ramakrishna was filled with intense renunciation, he could realize both the immanent and the transcendent. But ordinarily people just follow their comfortable worldly doctrine without dispassion, without any non-attachment, without real inner purity, without any personal spiritual realization. They agree to some dogma and think they are safe. Anyone who has not attained realization is no better than an atheist, mind you. Mere lip-service to a certain doctrine, a certain religion, has no value.

II:30.19a I am becoming a talking machine, and I sometimes wonder whether it would not be better if we gave all the time we are talking away to real spiritual practice, Japam, meditation etc. But who wants to meditate?

II:30.19b These talks are a form of enjoyment, intellectual enjoyment, but even intellectual enjoyment is enjoyment and merely fulfills our pleasure-seeking instincts. No one who does not perform his practice day by day without any break for a long period of time will make any real progress, and nothing will come of these talks. It is good to have these daily readings we have been having for more than a year now, but they are not all. Only those who are willing to take their practices in right earnest with an effort of the will, will profit by them. Not others.

II:30.19c Sri Ramakrishna will not accept you as His children without having tested every one of you again and again. He does not accept anyone and everyone. So see that you are able to stand the test when it comes.

II:31 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 4, 1934 -- (Vol.II 206)[NY393-399]

Test ideas before accepting them

II:31.01 Before accepting any idea, even from our Guru, we must always try to examine it as well as we can. And when we are convinced, we should try to assimilate it. Truth can always stand tests. Truth is never bound to any petrified dogma or dogmatic assertion that cannot be verified. And when Truth puts us to the test, we—the seekers— too, must be able to pass it. Mere intellectual assertion or assent is not enough. It is the realization of Truth that must be

attained by all. With reference to people also, we should exercise true discrimination, and not allow ourselves ever to be swayed by our irrational petty likes or dislikes, attractions and repulsions. We should test every person again and again, before we allow ourselves to associate with them on intimate terms. We should always find out the roots of the attraction or repulsion we feel for him, and see whether it leads away from Truth or not. Mere charm, bodily or even mental charm, of a person, should never be permitted to bring us into closer and more intimate touch with him. We should find out the worth of his inner being. This, of course, means that we, too, must be fully prepared to be put to the test by others. And it is good for us and for them if they do so.

II:31.02 Once Sri Ramakrishna told his greatest disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who put his Master to the test: *“Test me as a money-changer would test his coins.”*

Ishtam-visualization

II:31.00a The question of the Ishtam is very important. No one reaches the Father except through the Son. And during our evolution the lesser Ishtam merges into the more important one, and finally everything merges into the Formless. In the West you, too, have Christ-visualization in certain Orders of the Roman Catholic Church. It contains the psychological truth India discovered thousands of years ago. In Christ-visualization, Christ fulfills the role of the Ishtam, just as Krishna, Buddha, Ramakrishna does in the respective visualizations. The idea of the Ishtam and the practice of Japam that goes with it, is very important. If a particular Ishtam does not suit a person, that person won't be able to advance.

II:31.04 It is good to think, during a certain period of the Sadhana, that all men are Shiva, and all women Parvati, but consciously, intensely; or, that all men are Rama and all women are Sita. Every time we see a man or a woman, we should at once cover his or her form with Shiva or Parvati, or with Rama or Sita. It is a very effective form of practice for all aspirants and can be done at all times and in all places. Try to take it up and stick to it for some time. Then a great change would come over you.

At the back of the Ishtam there should be the idea of the Formless. The direction should always be from the form to the Formless, though now, for us, the Formless, is still very, very far off.

“Know that which has form to be unreal and the formless to be permanent. Through this spiritual instruction you will escape the possibility of rebirth.

Just as a mirror exists within and without the image, reflected in it, even so the Supreme Lord exists inside and outside this body.

As the same all-pervading ether is inside and outside a jar, even so the eternal all-pervasive Brahman exists in all things.”
—(Ashtavakra Samhita 1.18-20)

II:32 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 5, 1934 -- (Vol.II 206-209)[NY393-399]

The cosmic principle and Maya

II:32.01 The principle of Mahat, mentioned here by Sri Ramakrishna (Vol.II p.206 [NY395g]), means the disturbed but undifferentiated cosmic state, the cause of all things subjective and objective.

II:32.02 In the *Vedantasara* we find:

“From Consciousness associated with the projecting power of ignorance which has a preponderance of the quality of darkness, has evolved Akasha which, in its turn, has produced air, from air has come fire, from fire, water, and from water, earth. As in such Sruti passages, ‘From this Self has evolved Akasha.’ (Tait.Up.2.1.1).” —(*Vedantasara* 1.57)

II:32.04 So, from the Cosmic Principle conjoined with Maya comes Akasha. Prakriti is the out-and-out undifferentiated state. Sankhya says: *“From Prakriti associated with the Self there comes into existence Mahat.”* The Upanishads say: *“From Brahman (Saguna Brahman) there comes into existence Akasha.”*

Matter as such cannot create, but matter associated with the Self becomes creative. Nowhere do we find matter existing as such, unassociated with consciousness.

II:32.11 Brahman has, as it were, transformed itself into Akasha. Brahman associated with ignorance (i.e., Primal Matter) is the first cause of the universe. And from that comes into existence Akasha.

II:32.09 The *Katha Upanishad* says:

“Even to hear of it is not available to many; many, even having heard of it, cannot comprehend. Wonderful is its teacher,

and (equally) clever the pupil. Wonderful indeed is he who comprehends it when taught by an able preceptor.” (Katha Up.1.2.7)

II:32.13 Another passage in the *Katha Upanishad* runs:

“The objects are superior to the senses, the mind is superior to the objects, the intellect is superior to the mind, the Great Atman is superior again to the intellect. The Unmanifested is superior to the Great (Atman), and the Purusha is superior to the Unmanifested. Nothing is superior to the Purusha—that is the end, that is the supreme goal.” (Katha Up.1.3.10-11)

II:32.14 Here superiority is ranged in the scale of subtlety of existence.

II:32.15 Along with the Cosmic, there is the individual. So we have the cosmic mind and the individual minds.

II:32.16 Even in Sankhya, Prakriti ceases to be, in the state of highest illumination.

II:32.17 When we are in Maya, the question whether Maya ever ceases to be does not arise. When we are beyond Maya, we cannot even say that Maya exists. Maya has disappeared. In any case we can never know Maya, but we can transcend Maya and attain a state where Maya has ceased to exist.

II:32.18 This principle of ego is not our ego, but the Cosmic Ego-Consciousness. In the previous state there is no ego-consciousness. In the state of Mahat there is an indefinite consciousness, something like the consciousness in deep sleep. From this appears the Cosmic Dream-world and from that the gross world.

II:32.19 The Vedantin wants to attain to a state of dissociation from all things material, wants to find a way to the highest state, through involution. In the presence of the Spirit, Maya appears as nothing, a mere shadow.

II:32.23 Desires make people abnormal. Every person who desires anything is in a dis-eased, an ab-normal state. He has not reached his true being.

Whatever we look upon as real, draws our entire being, all our feelings and sentiments. This activates us to enjoy and possess that thing. If Brahman becomes real,—if this world becomes real,—we move towards it with our entire being.

II:32.24 The world is Maya when we realize the existence of the

Spirit behind. The world is real when we do not do so and try to cling to it with all our faculties and powers. So the faculty of ceaseless discrimination and dispassion must be cultivated by all earnest aspirants.

It is only when you create a real wilderness in the heart, that you can get God. Our heart is so full of worldly ideas, worldly impulses, worldly clinging and wishes, worldly desires and tendencies in their gross, subtle and even very subtle form, so we can never get God, because God has no place in it. Create the void, become empty of all worldly things and wishes, even the subtle and very subtle ones, then He comes. There is a gross form of worldliness and a subtle form, and both stand equally in the way of God. Both have to be eliminated if you really wish to attain the goal.

II:33 -- Wiesb., Dec. 6, 1934 -- (Vol.II 209-228)[NY393-399,406-414]

Misery to perfection

II:33.01 There is a Sanskrit poem by Swamiji [Swami Vivekananda] where he says,

“SHE who has brought me to the stage of perfection by making me pass through misery.

O Thou most Beautiful whose holy hands hold pleasure and hold pain, Doer of good, Who art Thou?”

II:34 -- Wiesb., Dec. 7, 1934 -- (Vol.II 228-234)[NY406-414,415-426]

Hatha-Yoga

II:34.01 The higher Hatha-Yoga just approaches Raja-Yoga. Hatha-Yoga, if practiced at all, should always lead to Raja-Yoga and should never become an end in itself.

Various experiences on the spiritual path

II:34.03 ‘Vishnu’ is derived from a Sanskrit word that means ‘to pervade’.

II:34.04 When the mind is properly attuned, you hear some vibrations not produced in the ear, some vibrations that the ear catches during a certain state of spiritual development. But this has no great

value. All these small experiences come by the way, and sometimes, when any of them comes for the first time, your mind will even be troubled by it and diverted from its real aim. But those vibrations are not something produced by the ear. Neither are they imagination. They are just like a bell ringing sweetly at a distance. You feel these vibrations in the ear. You specially hear it at the right side of the head.

II:34.05 Even here, in this room, I hear them. They are easily heard when the mind attains a certain state of concentration and calmness, especially in the depths of the night. You should never over-rate their spiritual significance if they come.

II:34.14 Sometimes when one repeats the sound in a higher mood, one creates a vibration. It is like a stone thrown into calm water. From the Cosmic comes the energy, and into the Cosmic it melts away.

II:34.06 All this can only serve as a landmark. I do not care for it, but it shows a certain state of concentration. If the mind is disturbed, you cannot hear it. There are many things, many experiences that come to you, even psychic powers, on the way— enchanting things sometimes, and in many cases they have an enchanting influence on people when you talk to them about them —but, carefully brush all these things aside when they come, otherwise all progress will be stopped. No one can advance any further if he allows himself to be ensnared by their charm.

II:34.07 ***The mind is to be fixed on the point where sound merges into the soundless, where the form merges into the formless, where the name merges into the nameless, thought must be fixed on that which is beyond all thought. You should think of this when doing your Japam.***

II:34.08 In the sound symbol there is the audible and the inaudible aspect, and taking hold of the inaudible aspect you go to Brahman, Saguna Brahman.

II:34.09 Some symbols are symbols of vision, some of the ear, but the goal for everyone is to go beyond all the senses—and all forms and manifestations of the senses—with the help of the senses.

II:34.15 You should see that you never generate more energy than you can control. When you find there is too much physical energy, take less food or fast altogether. If there is too much mental energy, have more meditation. In the course of our progress we have to

pass through many troublesome and abnormal states. But we have to control them.

II:34.17 It is very important that you should transmute energy consciously if the flow of energy becomes too strong, and if you cannot transmute it yet, then just go and exhaust yourself. If you do not do this, the energy will become very dangerous, and you are sure to slip your foot sooner or later. So never be careless in this respect, nor over-confident.

II:35.05 You should never spend more than you have got. He who has a large capital at his disposal, who can renew his store of spiritual energy easily, can give much. The other person can give very little, but the little of the other person is his whole.

II:35 -- Wiesb., Dec. 8, 1934 -- (Vol.II 234-245)[NY415-426,545-557]

The different states of consciousness

II:35.01 If we come to have a different standard, then waking and dream will appear very much alike to us.

II:35.02 If one has passed through the disciplines of life and fully controlled one's desires and passions, likes and dislikes, then only such a realization will come. Only when we are firmly rooted, firmly established in ethical culture and have become dispassionate, we see the strings that thread together all these different states of consciousness.

II:35.03 If we dream, we know it is all Maya. So, Maya experienced in the waking state, should also be seen as a dream. We should have not attachment for Maya.

II:35.04 He who tries to rid himself of Maya should take the position of the 'witness'. As long as you remain the 'witness', you remain unattached. We should be dispassionately 'witnessing' our talks, our feelings, our likes and dislikes, our thoughts, our actions. To the extent in which we are able to stand apart, attachment is minimized.

II:36 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 10, 1934 -- (Vol.II 245-257)[NY545-557]

Dualistic sectarianism

II:36.01 Dualism and pettiness are cousins. You usually find intensity, but awful narrowness in the dualist.

II:37 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 11, 1934 -- (Vol.II 258-278)[NY545-557]

Swastyayana

II:37.01 Swastyayana (Vol.II p.263) means a ceremony that is performed for the fulfilment of some desire and that brings good luck to the family.

II:38 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 12, 1934 -- (Vol.II 279-291)[NY545-557]

Sri Ramakrishna and Truth

II:38.01 Sri Ramakrishna once said, *“Unless I am truthful, how am I keeping these vows? I gave everything away, Dharma and Adharma, but I could not give away Truth.”*

II:39 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 13, 1934 -- (Vol.II 291-299)[NY715-723]

The idea of Cosmic Salvation

II:39.01 Just as there is a Cosmic destruction or destructive power, there is also a Cosmic constructive power. Destruction and construction go on side by side eternally.

II:39.02 No Incarnation can save the world. All cannot be saved. This Cosmic process goes on eternally, and it is only the few, those who have advanced far enough after thousands or millions of lives, that can be saved by an Incarnation; not the others.

II:39.03 On the plane of relativity there must be multiplicity, and multiplicity always means good, bad, evil, birth, death etc., all kinds of things. On the relative plane, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, are eternally inseparable, and there must be manifestations of all the three in different permutations and combinations. Everything else is just a fond dream, caused by our inordinate clinging to the pleasant, to enjoyment, to the transient, the unreal, the changing.

II:39.04 This idea of Cosmic salvation, of the salvation of all through an Incarnation, I do not know wherefrom it ever came. Even Sri Krishna makes this very clear when He says that out of thousands of seekers, of aspirants, only a very few will ever attain the goal.

II:40 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 14, 1934 -- (Vol.II 300-304)[NY736-742]

[The *Life of Sri Ramakrishna* was read (pp.586-589)]

Obstacles

II:40.01 If the seed of the bad *samskaras* is not wholly burnt, it bears fruit sooner or later. That is why every devotee ought to be very careful and wide-awake, and never allow himself to be drawn into undesirable company or any intimacy with persons of the other sex.

II:40.02 The devotee should see that there is at least no physical manifestation whenever a bad thought, desire, passion arises.

II:40.03 Our progress is retarded by so many things:– health, or bad economic circumstances, or both etc., etc. It is really a great grace of the Lord, if we are allowed to advance at all.

Establish the inner harmony

II:40.04 Whenever you feel something is wrong within, just try to establish the inner harmony.

II:40.05 Whenever this harmony is broken, you will find, that the ***centre of consciousness has shifted***. First of all, in such cases, you have fallen down from your centre of consciousness. So, regain your centre of consciousness, and after having regained it, try to regain your harmony.

II:40.06 A buoy floating on the water may appear all right to the casual observer, even if its anchor has not touched the bottom, but it is not all right. The moment your centre of consciousness is shifted it becomes like such a buoy that has torn itself loose from its moorings. In all such cases there is real danger of your slipping your foot and having a nasty fall. There should not be any self-condemnation in the aspirant, but the beginner should not rely on his own powers too much.

II:40.07 Always note your mood and try to establish the inner harmony. Follow this rule strictly, then you will find your growth will be secured.

II:40.08 Old desires may rise any time, first having the form of very tiny bubbles, but more and more assuming the form of a mighty wave. So, "*Sadhu, be on your guard!*"

II:40.09 If there be the tiniest bubble in the mind, it may assume

huge proportions. That is why you should all be careful, and should believe me when I tell you this. It is a fact of experience.

II:40.10 Being beyond or above all passion and desire will only be, when all the desires, passions, etc., etc., bad *samskaras*, get completely burnt to ashes.

II:40.12 We are still quite capable of wallowing in the mire. So always pray (Sri Ramakrishna's prayer), "*O Mother, do not enchant us with Thy Divine Maya.*"

II:40.14 You cannot capture realization with violence or with muscle. It is not something you can snatch with the strength of your muscles, with the strength of your well-trained body. It cannot be had at so low a price.

II:41 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 15, 1934 -- (Vol.II 304-321)[NY736-742]

Become merciful like the Lord

II:41.01 Always remember the beautiful words of the Buddha, "*May all the evil of the world come to me, and may the world be saved.*"

The same idea you find in Shiva churning the ocean and drinking the poison. The idea of the Lord as Redeemer is not only to be found in Christianity. You find it in Hinduism in very many aspects.

II:41.04 In the *Bhagavatam* you find a beautiful story showing the infinite mercy of the Lord. There was a very poisonous snake in a lake, that poisoned the water and was a real danger to the cowherds or shepherds of Brindavan. So Sri Krishna went to punish it. When He called it, the snake came and made obeisance to Him. He asked it, "Why are you poisoning the water?" But the snake Kaliya replied very humbly, "O Lord, what else can I do if Thou hast given me the poison?"

II:41.05 What can a poor man do if the Lord has only given him poison? He can only give what he himself possesses, and if he possesses only poison, poison he must give. This realization should make us merciful.

II:42 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 17, 1934 -- (Vol.II 321-335)[NY736-742,868-876]

Avoid association with unholy persons

II:42.01 One becomes unholy by keeping the company or associating with unholy men. Association forms a very important point in the life of the spiritual aspirant. We should never be careless in this. We think we are not influenced, but we are not sensitive enough to realize all the damage that is being done, and then, later on, we are bound to have a nasty fall.

II:43 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 18, 1934 -- (Vol.II 335-355)[NY868-876]

Forms must take us to the Formless

II:43.01 In the mental world there are various kinds of Divine forms, and the devotee sees some of them when he rises to a certain plane. Not everyone sees them, but all these forms must take us to the Formless. There comes a time when the devotee may not see any form at all. But even if he sees the form, he also gets a glimpse of the Formless, if the vision is really deep. "My Mother's beauty illumines the whole world. The formless beauty of my Mother shines forth everywhere."

II:43.02 During the first stage, aspirants should avoid the other sex like poison, at least most of them should do so; afterwards, they should see only the Mother in every woman, and only Siva in every man. But by then, all woman-forms and all man-forms have lost their attraction and are clearly seen as what they really are, disgusting, dirty things, full of worms and filth.

II:43.03 The Upanishads say, "*If the monk touches gold with attachment, he kills his soul.*"

II:43.04 When you really follow the path, all power is taken away from the lower nerve-centres; energy does not merely rush up to the brain. The sense of body-consciousness is minimized.

II:43.05 You see, Kalipada and Girish belonged to a category by themselves. Girish was very wild and boisterous, but a very advanced soul. Many of these people were not at all morally sound at the beginning of their spiritual life; they were wild, unruly natures, but then at the back there was a highly advanced soul, and at the Master's touch they were completely transformed. Of course, all men, when they approach liberation outgrow their old wayward mentality.

II:44 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 19, 1934 -- (Vol.II 355-367)[NY931-935]

Vijñana, the culmination of spiritual striving

II:44.02 The superconscious state is to be brought down to ordinary consciousness. Inner and outer have to cease to be. No guna-tita, but jivanmukta. It is not enough if one feels the Divine presence in the state of Samadhi. A state of Divine consciousness permeates all one's activities and one's whole life at all times. But then the person should be in such a higher mood that even while the senses are working he sees, in and through all the objects of sense, the one undivided and indivisible Brahman. This is a state of consciousness much higher than Samadhi, but Samadhi is a necessary step to it. To the highest Jñani there should be no inner and outer but all should be the experience of the One. Sri Ramakrishna stresses the state of **Vijñana**, which is a higher state than ordinary jñana, and which alone is the true culmination of spiritual striving.

II:44.03 There are people who see some light, or something, or a form, and think that the goal of life, full illumination, has been reached by them. All these visions are sign-posts, certain indications of progress, but they are very small, petty things indeed. They do not mean anything when considered from the true spiritual standpoint and true spiritual illumination.

Kamini-Kanchana ['Woman and Gold'], defined

II:44.04 '*Kamini-Kanchana*', 'Woman and Gold', should always be understood in the very subtlest sense. Even the slightest tinge of sense-pleasure or sensual craving comes under this head. *Brahmacharya*, true continence, is more than mere outward refraining from sexual intercourse or sexual thought. We must be perfectly free in thought, word and deed from even the very subtlest forms of sexual enjoyment and sexual desire.— We must lose all our man-consciousness and all our woman-consciousness.— First comes the physical, then the mental and then the causal aspect, of course. As long as there is body-consciousness in an aspirant, there is lust in a very subtle form, even if he leads a perfectly controlled life and no longer gives any physical or mental expression to his lower instincts. The seed, in such a case is still there, and he has not yet gone beyond the danger of slipping his foot one day. Similarly, as long as there is the slightest sense of possession, of physical wealth or intellectual wealth, in anybody, the goal is still far off. The sense of

possession, of hoarding etc., even in very subtle forms, all this comes under the head of '*Kamini-Kanchana*'. And before rising beyond *Kamini-Kanchana*, the highest spiritual experience cannot be attained. All these terms have to be understood in their subtlest sense. Here, people are apt to take everything in its gross sense only. But the annihilation of the desire for *Kamini-Kanchana* is not so easy as that.

II:45 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 20, 1934 -- (Vol.II 368-378)[NY939-940]

[*The Life of Sri Ramakrishna* was read (pp.661-662)]

Vijñana

II:45.01 Mahamaya is the personal aspect of Brahman, the relative aspect, the Shakti, the power of Brahman. Through the Saguna aspect the Bhakta comes to the Nirguna aspect, or he may not care to come to the Nirguna aspect at all. "*I do not want to become sugar, I want to taste sugar.*"

II:45.03 The state that comes after Jñana and that is higher than Jñana, is **Vijñana**. This was Swamiji's path.

[The Hymn on Kashi (Kashi-Pancakam) by Sankara was read from *Altar Flowers* p.247.]

II:46 -- Wiesbaden, Dec 29, 1934 -- (Vol.II 378)[NY947-950]

The last words of Buddha

II:46.01 When Buddha's wife came to him and asked to be ordained and to give permission for the ordaining of women, he knew that this permission was going to shorten the life of the Order and to bring about its degeneration, but his heart was so kind that he could not refuse the prayer.

II:46.02 The last words of the Buddha always impressed me very greatly, even before I took up the monastic life, in my student days. They should be pondered again and again by all serious aspirants.

Last words

Then said the Exalted one to the venerable Ananda: "It may be, Ananda, that you will say, 'Gone is the word of the Master! We have no longer any Master now!' But you must not so regard it, Ananda; for

the Norm and Discipline, taught and enjoined by me, they shall be your teachers when I am gone. Now, Ananda, whereas the brethren have the habit of calling one another 'friend',—when I am gone this habit must not be followed. By an elder brother, Ananda, a brother who is a novice should be called by his name or clan-name, or by the word 'friend'; but by a novice, Ananda, an elder brother should be addressed as 'lord' or 'your reverence'.

"Again, Ananda, if the Order so desires, when I am gone, let it abolish the lesser and minor charges.

"As to the brother Channa, Ananda, let the extreme penalty be applied to him when I am gone."

"What, Lord, do you mean, by 'the extreme penalty'?"

"The brother Channa, Ananda, whatever he may wish or whatever he may say, is not to be spoken to, not to be admonished, not to be instructed by the brethren."

Then the Exalted One addressed the brethren: "It may be, brothers, that in the mind of some one brother there is doubt or perplexity, either about the Buddha or the Way to the Path. If it be so, brothers, do ye ask now. Be not hereafter remorseful at the thought, 'Here was our Master face to face with us, and yet we had not the heart to question the Exalted One, though we were in His very Presence'."

At these words the brethren were silent.

Then a second time and yet a third time did the Exalted One address the brethren in the same words. And a third time the brethren were silent.

Then said the Exalted One, "Maybe, brethren, it is out of respect for the Master that ye ask not. Speak to Me, then, as friends to friend, brethren."

Whereat those brethren were silent.

Then exclaimed the venerable Ananda to the Exalted One, "Strange it is, O Lord, a marvel it is, O Lord! Thus assured am I, Lord of this Order of brethren. There is not any one brother that has a single doubt or perplexity as to the Buddha, the Norm, the Order, or as to the Path, or Way to the Path."

"You speak out of assurance, Ananda. But in the Tathagata there is knowledge of the fact— 'There is not in any one brother a single doubt or perplexity as to this'. Of these five hundred brethren of mine,

Ananda, even he who is the most backward is a Stream-winner, one who is assured from the Downfall, assured of reaching the Supreme Wisdom.” Then said the Exalted One to the brethren, “Come now, brethren, I do remind ye: **‘Subject to decay are all compounded things’**. Do ye abide in heedfulness.”

Those were the last words of the Exalted One.

II:46.04 There is no fact more certain in life, you see, than this, that everything that is subject to decay, means misery and always brings misery at the end. This is the great bane of attachment, of clinging to the unreal, to what is transient and fleeting and will never bring us any lasting peace.

End of
READINGS ON
THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOL.II
(English edition. Madras, 1922)
by Swami Yatiswarananda

3. ADDITIONAL READINGS

Comments on Selections

From the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*

(Bengali edition)

by Swami Yatiswarananda

C46 -- Wiesbaden, January 2, 1935

Bengali edition : Monday, March 15, 1886

(New York Edition: pp. 941-944u)

Chapter 49 — The Master at Cossipore)

C46.01 This is a wonderful conversation for a dying man! Never forget that he is dying and suffering excruciating pain in his throat! So grand, so wonderful, so elevating, full of the highest knowledge and illumination. It is marvellous. Therefore I want to translate these passages for you. They are most important.²³

C46.02 A dying man, speaking of the highest things, not in the least affected by his bodily suffering.

Meditation on vastness

C46.03 This, too, can be included in your spiritual practices: At the time of meditation we should think that our personalities and all the personalities of those we love, are melted into the Principle. By thinking like this intensely, day by day, several times, this Principle gets, as it were, into our mind, though It is always there. We can think of a space of which we are all parts. Then, forget the parts and think of this undivided vast space.

Impersonal kind-heartedness through remembrance of the Principle

C46.04 After all, all bubbles will burst one day. When we get attached to some bubble, we should at once know that it is really the ocean and cling to the ocean and not to the bubble. Otherwise there will be trouble and frustration, for there comes a day when all these bubbles will have to be separated, some, probably, never to meet

23. The passages may be looked up by referring to the page and line-addresses (New York edition) indicated at the top of each series of comments.

again. Then people are mostly silly enough to try and find another bubble to cling to and repeat the same experience over again.

Nobody is lost. When you think of the ocean, all are there, in the ocean, in the water-substance, but as bubbles they burst. Always take the Whole, cling to the Whole. Why take the part? What is there in the part that the Whole does not possess? Tenderness is not bad in itself if we have the background and only cling to the background. You can be tender and kindhearted without any danger if there is nothing personal in it—if you do not cling to the bubble, but think of the background only. Otherwise all forms of tenderness are very dangerous. Without the background, love, tenderness, affection, is something awful, hideous, one of the greatest and most fateful pitfalls of Maya.

As a boy I was awfully sentimental. I used to become terribly attached to people after two days even. Then I could no longer bear all the love and affection shown me by my parents and relations and friends and said to myself. "This will have to be changed. I cannot stand it any longer."

Only the thought of the Principle saves us from many a trouble. And you should all consciously intensify this thought day by day until it becomes something alive, something infinitely precious that will always stand by you in the hour of need and never burst as all your bubbles will do so sooner or later.

There is too much clinging in all of you, too much personal affection and aversion which is a great obstacle in your path. But then, always remain tender and kindhearted and loving, thinking of the Principle you have to serve in all, in the saint and the sinner, in the man of knowledge and in the ignorant fool.

C47 -- Wiesbaden, January 3, 1934

Thursday, April 22, 1886 Bengali edition : Tuesday, April 13, 1886
(See: New York Edition: pp. 953c-953, 953I-953o, 954
Chapter 49 — The Master and Buddha)

Don't take phenomena seriously

C47.05 Our whole trouble is that we take the outside phenomena and the phenomenon within us to be real. Then we suffer and cry

and wail. The Bhakta comes to have an attitude of the witness from his Bhakti standpoint. But neither the Bhakta nor the Jñani ever take this phenomenon seriously. If the Lord is making Himself ridiculous, that is His concern, not ours. Why should you bother yourselves about it? But we, fools that we are, take it to be real. I am So-and-so, and then everything else follows.

C47.06 We also take the phenomenon going on within us as real. You must never lose sight of the witness-aspect, but this does not advocate inertness in any way. Passivity is something quite different.

C47.07 Once I had to do a lot of proof-reading, and my mind rebelled and made me even fall ill quite frequently, a thing that had never happened before. So I thought, [What is this? This cannot go on." And I just stood apart, conquered my mind and did my duty without falling ill.

C47.08 All our dealings with others, all our life, all our thoughts are based on some wrong assumption, and some day we shall find out it is all humbug, all hollow, all ridiculous. Whenever there is trouble you should give a very strong injection of Vedanta.

C47.09 All is sport. All is play. Let the Lord make Himself ridiculous. That is not our concern. We must simply play our part and take it as play, as the part of an actor, never as something real. Troubles will come, but they are the troubles you see in a drama; happiness will come and pass, but it too, belongs to your parts, as well as health and illness. It is all the mad play of the Lord, Mother's mad dance, only to be enjoyed by those who know its real nature and are willing to become Her fellow-players and companions. True dispassion comes this way. You may feel shocked when you hear all this, but then truth is always shocking to our nice minds, for we want something comfortable to lean on, something that furthers our interests, and not the truth.

C47.10 Make Mother the centre of your whole being, consciously, for She is directing you whether you know it or not, and then play your part in Her drama well. Be good actors, but actors only. Some have happy parts to play, others miserable parts, but as parts they are all equally beautiful and can be enjoyed equally the very moment they are known and felt to be parts only. Be play-fellows of the Lord, His companions! Realize the mighty fun of it all! Then alone Life becomes worth living.

C48 -- Wiesbaden, January 8, 1934

Bengalli edition : Date: Friday, April 16, 1886

(New York Edition: pp. 957f-957t, 958a-958a

Chapter 49 — The Master and Buddha)

The cross of the Great Ones

C48.01 She (Pagli²⁴) meant 'why do you not accept me', 'why did you push me away mentally'. It was a very strange case, but the Master had such a great tenderness and compassion for her. Always you find this in the Great Ones. We cause them endless trouble and pain, but they come to serve and do not mind all the trouble we are constantly causing them if they can serve and help us. Every Great One has his cross to bear. The physical cross of Christ is not the *only* cross and it is not greater than any crosses other Great Ones had to bear. Think of the Buddha preaching and helping for more than forty years, think of all the others. Theirs, too, was a life of suffering for others, of sacrifice for others, only their sacrifice took a different form. Over here (in the West) everything is seen and understood in such a crude way. As if the material cross and the material crucifixion were everything! Every word meant agony for Sri Ramakrishna, and yet he was always willing to instruct and to see people until he died. Even a few hours before his death he received a devotee who had come a long way to see him and gave him instruction. His was a wonderful life of renunciation and sacrifice and infinite tenderness and love for others. Who can understand him?

Meditation is refreshing

C48.02 People sometimes seek rest in doing nothing, in just being thoughtless. What rest real meditation means! What poise you feel through real meditation and Japam—what mental and physical poise! But people think they find rest in all sorts of diversions and dirty amusements. Meditation and Japam are natural ways of rest and of filling the mind with new freshness. Through them the mind flows in a natural way towards the source of all energy, you see, and

24. The 'crazy woman' who used to burst into Sri Ramakrishna's room at Dakshineswar and Cossipore.

then mind and body are refilled by this energy. All strength, all power, all poise come from the Divine.

C48.03 If any day you feel disturbed or tired, you can just sit down for a few minutes thinking intensely of the Divine: "*Thou art strength, fill Thou me with strength. Thou art purity, fill Thou me with purity. Thou art energy, fill Thou me with energy!*" The whole secret of poise, of calmness, of true human efficiency, is here. In us there is the centripetal and centrifugal force. We have to make use of the centrifugal to get out. Whenever the soul asserts its freedom, the freedom that is innate, it gets out. We are only bound as far as mind and body are concerned. Once we learn how to have them under our control, we become free. This is such a marvellous life of freedom and strength. Real enjoyment lies here. All other sorts of enjoyment are so many worthless glass beads that will break again and again, but this enjoyment is constant and unchangeable.

C51 -C52 -- Wiesbaden, January 8-9, 1934

Bengali edition : Thursday, April 22, 1886

(New York Edition: p. 966p-t, 960r,s

Chapter 49 — The Master's Love for His Devotees)

Pantheism and Vedanta

C51.01 I just took this passage to show you that the idea of the devilish scheme of the world is not the whole of Swamiji. Otherwise there might easily be misconceptions of his teachings and attitude. Swamiji was so many-sided, and everything he says, he says from a certain standpoint, and can only be properly understood, if we too, look at it from the same standpoint. So many people say there are contradictions in his teachings, which is not true. They simply do not know how to approach them.

C52.01 In Pantheism there may be stress on form, but in Vedanta stress is laid on that which is beyond all forms. The ocean is not the waves. That which is the substance of everything is God, God has not become all. Prof. Max Müller says, "Vedantins have been called Pantheists, though their *theos* or their *theoi* were not *Pan*, but *the Pan* was their *theos*".²⁵

25. *Theos, theoi*: Greek for god, gods. *Pan*: the seven-reed-pipe-playing Greek god

C52.02 You see, the bubble as bubble is not the water-substance. The many with all its manifoldness can never be the One, but That which is the Essence is one. Here many mistakes are made regarding the teachings of Vedanta. It is not Pantheism at all, for Pantheism implies God having become all, being all, which is not the teaching of Vedanta.

C52.03 The ideal is to reach a state where the Scriptures ceases to be Scriptures, for even the Scriptures are not the highest knowledge. Higher knowledge is that by which the Imperishable is known and experienced. The stress must be laid on experience, not on theoretical knowledge at all. Ordinarily for the beginner the rule is: apply your Advaita to everything, but not to your teacher, your guru.

Need for daily reading of passages and these notes

C52.04 Simply by repeating Sankara's Six Stanzas on Nirvana (NY Gospel: page 967), we do not feel it, but by repeating this with great intensity again and again, our mind slowly imbibes these truths, ***So, some passages are to be repeated always after meditation and our prayer, and also many times during the day. We should also make it a point to read some of these notes day by day, and read them attentively, thinking of what is said in them and trying to assimilate it. There should be no break in this practice at all.***

Bengali edition : Thursday, April 22, 1886

(New York Edition: 967d, 968h

Chapter 49 — The Master's Love for His Devotees)

Two different approaches: Jñana and Bhakti

C52.05 These are two different approaches, but the two will end in one. The devotee speaks of 'Thou', the Jñani of 'I'. "Lord, some say, I am Thine, others say, Thou art myself." Although there is a slight difference in the expression, the meaning, the ultimate goal is the same.

Theory and practice

C52.06 Theoretically, we can have the idea of the One. There is the iron in the dagger and the iron in the image.²⁶ So far as the sub-

of flocks and shepherds represented as half-man-half-goat in form. `The Pan': Greek for `The All'. [Publisher]

stance is concerned, it is all one and the same: the forms are all different, but in our case forms have become so real that we forget to see the substance. So, for you, this Oneness must still remain as an ideal. There must be other steps as stepping-stones, as working ideals, and first of all you must realize the Immanent before you can realize the One without a second. None can come to the Father except through the Son. This is a great truth not to be forgotten. We very often want to soar very high intellectually, when certain ideas and ideals appeal to us, but then coming down to the practical side of the problem, we find that we must begin in a more modest way if we want to succeed at all. To many of you, Advaita appeals greatly, but then you will have to follow a dualistic Sadhana for a long time to come, until you are fit for the true monistic path. As long as you feel yourselves to be persons, or even men and women, there can be no such thing as Monism for you when you come down to hard facts and the practical forms of Sadhana. So what you all have got to do now is to persevere steadily in your Japam and attempts at meditation and your daily readings and studies, keeping the monistic ideal in the background.

OM SHANTI OM

End of

**Comments On Selections From
THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA
by Swami Yatiswarananda**

26. Reference to an idea in the 'Song of the Dancing Girl'—see p.111.

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THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOLUME I**

Pages per 5th Edition, Madras 1930

[and 'CONDENSED GOSPEL', 6th impression, Madras, 1978]

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A CROSS-REFERENCE OF DATES**

THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA, New York 1942 (6th printing 1977)

versus

a. THE CONDENSED GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA — Madras 1978 (M's original english version, formerly published as THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA Volume I — Madras 1911)

b. THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA Volume II — Madras 1922, 1928

| GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA New York 1977 | | | | Madras | | | | |
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THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA A PRINTING HISTORY

1. M's ORIGINAL ENGLISH VERSION ('OF SELECTED DATES')

1897 THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA - Two pamphlets. No copies extant (As per introduction to THE CONDENSED GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 1978)

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Ed.</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Publisher</i> |
|-------------|------------|---|---------------------|
| ? | 1st | THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA | Brahmavadin, Madras |
| 1911 | 2nd | THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA | SRK Math, Madras |
| 1930 | 3rd | THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOL I | ditto |
| 1978 | 3rd | THE CONDENSED GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA | ditto |

2. M's ENGLISH VERSION, AS EDITED BY SWAMI ABHEDANANADA

| | | | |
|------|-----|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1907 | 1st | GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA | Vedanta Society, New York |
| 1939 | 1st | MEMOIRS OF RAMAKRISHNA | Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, |
| 1957 | 2nd | MEMOIRS OF RAMAKRISHNA | Calcutta |

3. ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF FURTHER SELECTED DATES

| | | | |
|------|-----|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1922 | 1st | THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOL II | SRK Math, Madras |
| 1928 | 2nd | THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA VOL II | ditto |

4. SWAMI NIKHILANANDA'S COMPLETE TRANSLATION

| | | | |
|------|-----|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1942 | 1st | THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA | R-V Center, New York |
| 1944 | 1st | 3300 THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA | SRK Math, Madras |
| 1947 | 2nd | 5000 THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA | ditto |
| 1957 | 3rd | 3200 THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA | ditto |

5. SWAMI NIKHILANANDA'S TRANSLATION - ABRIDGED VERSION

| | | | |
|------|--|---|--|
| 1948 | | RAMAKRISHNA:PROPHET OF NEW INDIA | Harper, New York |
| 1958 | | THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA - Abridged Edition | Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York. |

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Notes