

**VEDANTA**  
and the  
**WEST**

**MARCH • APRIL • 1948**

# *The Upanishads*

A new translation with an introduction by Swami Prabhavananda and Frederick Manchester will be published on April 7, 1948. Pre-publication copies of our DeLuxe Edition now available. Price \$5.00

*NOTE: An appraisal of this work "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD" by Aldous Huxley appears on Page 61 of this issue of our magazine.*

# *The Eternal Companion*

New, Revised Edition.

\$2.50

The teachings of Swami Brahmananda, with a detailed and moving biographical essay by his disciple, Swami Prabhavananda. Brahmananda (1863—1922) was for many years the head of the Ramakrishna Order, and one of the saints of modern India. A book which can be lived by; a powerful daily inspiration to the life of prayer.

"They are like the greatest poetry in that the words are always so simple that anyone could have used them but they are so used as to carry a charge of meaning which is quite unanalysable and illuminating. When I read Brahmananda I don't remember a word he says but feel for some time after that finding God is obviously the only possible concern for a human life."—GERALD HEARD

*Published by Vedanta Press*



# VEDANTA and the WEST

Issued bi-monthly. Publication office: 1946 Ivar Avenue, Los Angeles 28, Calif.  
50c a copy, \$3.00 a year                      Copyright 1948, by Swami Prabhavananda

Editor: Swami Prabhavananda

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

---

Vol. XI

MARCH-APRIL, 1948

No. 2

---

## CONTENTS

HEAR YE, DEVOTEES OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA <i>Swami Vivekananda</i> .....	34
SRI RAMAKRISHNA AS HIS DISCIPLES SAW HIM.....	37
THE TEACHING OF A HOLY MAN.....	43
PREPARATION FOR SPIRITUAL REALIZATION <i>Swami Yatiswarananda</i> .....	47
VIVEKANANDA AT THOUSAND ISLANDS <i>Sister Christine</i> .....	52
WALT WHITMAN ON INTUITION <i>Dorothy F. Mercer</i> .....	58
“GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD” <i>Aldous Huxley</i> .....	61
REAL WORSHIP <i>Swami Vivekananda</i> .....	63

*“Perfection comes through the disinterested performance of action.”—Swami Vivekananda*

## Hear Ye, Devotees of Sri Ramakrishna

*Swami Vivekananda*

It is only just that I should try to give you a little of my views. I fully believe that there are periodic ferments of religion in human society, and that such a period is now sweeping over the educated world. While each ferment, moreover, appears broken into various little bubbles, these are all eventually similar, showing the cause or causes behind them to be the same. That religious ferment which at present is every day gaining a greater hold over thinking men, has this characteristic that all the little thought-whirlpools into which it has broken itself, tend in one single direction—a vision and a search after the Unity of Being. On planes physical, ethical, and spiritual, an ever-broadening generalisation, leading up to a concept of Unity Eternal—is in the air; and this being so, all the movements of the time may be taken to represent, knowingly or unknowingly, the noblest philosophy of unity that man ever had—the Advaita Vedanta.

Again, it has always been observed that as a result of the struggles of the various fragments of thought in a given epoch, one bubble survives. The rest only arise to melt into it, and form a single great wave, which sweeps over society with irresistible force.

In India, America, and England (the countries I happen to know about) hundreds of these are struggling at the present moment. In India, dualistic formulæ are already on the wane, the Advaitists alone hold the field in force. In America, many movements are struggling for the mastery. All these represent Advaita thought more or less, and that series which is spreading most rapidly approaches nearer to it than any of the others. Now if anything was ever clear to me, it is that one of these must survive, swallowing up all the rest, to be the power of the future. Which is it to be?

Referring to history, we see that only that fragment which is fit will survive, and what makes one fit to survive but *character*? Advaita will be the future religion of thinking humanity. No doubt of that. And of all the sects, they alone shall gain the day, that are able to show highest character in their lives.

Let me tell you a little personal experience. When my Master left the body, we were a dozen penniless and unknown young men.

Against us were a hundred powerful organizations, struggling hard to nip us in the bud. But Ramakrishna had given us one great gift, the desire and the life-long struggle not to talk alone, but *to live the life*. And to-day all India knows and reverences the Master, and the truths he taught are spreading like wild fire. Ten years ago, I could not get a hundred persons together to celebrate his birth-day anniversary. Last year there were fifty thousand.

Neither numbers, nor powers, nor wealth, nor learning, nor eloquence, nor anything else will prevail but *purity, living the life*, in one word, Anubhuti, realisation. Let there be but a dozen such lion-souls in each country, lions who have broken their own bonds, who have touched the Infinite, whose whole soul is gone to Brahman, who care neither for wealth nor power nor fame, and these will be *enough* to shake the world.

Here lies the secret. Says Patanjali, the father of Yoga: "When a man rejects all the superhuman powers, then he attains to the 'cloud of virtue.'" He sees God. He becomes God, and helps others to become the same. This is all I have to preach. Doctrines have been expounded enough. There are books by the million. Oh, for an ounce of practice!

As to societies and organizations, these will come of themselves. Can there be jealousy where there is nothing to be jealous of? The names of those who will wish to injure us will be legion. But is not that the surest sign of our having the truth? The more I have been opposed, the more my energy has always found expression. I have been driven away without a morsel of bread: I have been feasted and worshipped by princes. I have been slandered by priests and laymen alike. But what of it? Bless them all! They are my very self. And have they not helped me by acting as a spring-board from which my energy could take higher and higher flights?

I have discovered one great secret—I have nothing to fear from *talkers* of religion. And the great ones who realise—they become enemies to none. Let talkers talk. They know no better! Let them have their fill of name and fame and money and woman. Hold we on to realization, to being Brahman, to becoming Brahman. Let us hold on to truth unto death, and from life to life. Let us not pay the least attention to what others say, and if, after a lifetime's effort, one, only one, soul can break the fetters of the world and be free, WE HAVE DONE OUR WORK. Hari Om!

One word more. Doubtless I do love India. But everyday my sight grows clearer. What is India, or England, or America to us? We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN. He who pours water at the root, does he not water the whole tree?

There is but one basis of well-being, social, political, or spiritual—to know that I and my brother are *one*. This is true for all countries and all people. And Westerners, let me say, will realise it more quickly than Orientals who have almost exhausted themselves in formulating the idea and producing a few cases of individual realisation.

Let us work without desire for name or fame or to rule over others. Let us be free from the triple bonds of lust, greed of gain and anger. And the truth is with us.

*Why this attitude of an idler, that if realization is not possible in this birth, it will come in the next? There should not be such sluggishness in devotion. The goal can never be reached unless a man makes his mind strong, and firmly resolves that he must realize God in this very birth, nay, this very moment. In the countryside, when cultivators go to purchase bullocks, they first touch the tails of the animals. Some of the bullocks do not make any response to this. Rather, they relax all their limbs and lie down on the ground. At once the cultivators understand them to be worthless. There are some others that jump about and behave violently the moment their tails are touched; and the peasants can immediately know that they will be very useful. Their choice is then made from among this active type. Slothfulness is not at all desirable. Gather strength, firm faith, and say that you must realize God this very moment. Then only can you succeed.*

—Sri Ramakrishna.

## Sri Ramakrishna As His Disciples Saw Him

### I

Then it was that Sri Bhagavian Ramakrishna incarnated himself in India, to demonstrate what the true religion of the Aryan race is; to show where amidst all its various divisions and off-shoots, scattered over the land in the course of its immemorial history, lies the true unity of the Hindu religion, which by its overwhelming number of sects discordant to superficial view, quarrelling constantly with one another and abounding in customs divergent in every way, has constituted itself a misleading engima for our countrymen and the butt of contempt for foreigners; and, above all, to hold up before men, for their lasting welfare, as a living embodiment of the Sanatana Dharma, his own wonderful life into which he infused the universal spirit and character of this Dharma, so long cast into oblivion by the process of time.

“Always remember that Sri Ramakrishna came for the good of the world—not for name or fame. Spread only what he came to teach. Never mind his name—it will spread of itself.”

“Once more He has come to help His children, once more the opportunity to rise is given to fallen India. India can only rise by sitting at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna.”

“It took me six years to understand that Ramakrishna was not a holy man, but *Holiness* itself. He was the living embodiment of the Vedas, the Upanishads and other Hindu scriptures. He lived in one single life what not only the Hindu but whole human race lived spiritually for ages.”

—*Swami Vivekananda*

### II

“Such love, knowledge, dispassion and catholicity—I have not seen elsewhere. The Lord has created the Master Himself with His own hands. The power of the Lord has been embodied in him. I think, Jesus Christ, Chaitanya, and yourself (*i.e.* the Master) are one and the same personality.”

—*Mahendra Nath Gupta*

### III

“The Master loved each of us so dearly that everybody thought that he loved him most. With the passing of days I understand the greatness and glory of my Master. He was God in flesh and blood, and in him live all deities.”

—*Swami Adbhutananda*

## IV

“Ah, how, joyfully we lived with the Master at Dakshineswar!—And how free was I not with him! One day on the semi-circular western porch I was rubbing oil on his body. For some reason I got angry with him. I threw away the bottle of oil and strode off with the intention of never returning to him. I went out of the Temple and came near Jadu Mallik’s garden-house. And then I could not proceed further. I sat down. Meanwhile he had sent R. to call me back. When I came, he said, ‘Did you see? Could you go? . . .’

“Once an evil thought rose in me, and as I approached the Master from a distance, he divined it and said: ‘My boy, I see that an evil thought is disturbing your mind!’ So saying, he placed his hand on my head in blessing and uttered some words inaudibly; within five minutes it had gone.”

“Another day, when I returned from Calcutta, he said: ‘Why can I not look at you? Have you done anything wrong?’ ‘No, I replied,’—I had forgotten that I had told a lie. ‘Did you tell any lie?’ he asked me. Then I remembered that I had—”

“A true and living representation of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (renunciation) we saw in Sri Ramakrishna, the Master. We read of Viveka and Vairagya in Scriptures but we saw them personified in Him. Neither in sleeping nor in waking state could Sri Ramakrishna touch a coin. What he has taught us by His own life is that there is no other path to attain God but through Tyaga (renunciation). Look at the life of Sri Ramakrishna and be a man in the best sense of the term.”

To the question whether Sri Ramakrishna was still living, the Swami said in reply, “Have you gone mad? If he does not live, why should we then lead such a life, giving up our home and all? He is. Only pour out your whole heart in prayer to Him, and He will stand revealed in His glory to you and will remove all doubts and confusions that are troubling your mind.” In answer to the further question whether he used to see Sri Ramakrishna after his passing away, he said: “Yes, but only when He is pleased to reveal himself to us; then alone can we see Him. Every one can see Him through His grace. But alas! who longs to see Him? How few have that yearning!”

—Swami Brahmananda



## V

“What other Upanishad would you teach them when there is the living Upanishad? The life of the Master is the living, flaming Upanishad. None could understand the meaning of the Radha-Krishna cult if Sri Chaitanya had not been born and demonstrated it in his life. Even so the Master is the living demonstration of the truths of the Upanishads. . . . He never read the Upanishads or any other book. Yet how is it that he could explain those subtle and complex truths in so simple and straight a manner? If you want to read the Vedas, you have to commit its grammar to memory and read various commentaries, in which every commentator has sought to explain the texts in his own way. Innumerable scholars have been arguing over the texts without coming to any conclusion. Our Master, however, has in very simple language explained all those truths and his words are extant. When you have such a living fountain before you, why dig a well for water.”

—*Swami Premananda*

## VI

“I have not yet been able to understand whether Ramakrishna was a man, a saint, a god, or God Himself, but I know him to be the embodiment of wisdom, love and renunciation. He was totally free from egoism. With the passing of days, as I get more and more intimately acquainted with the spiritual realm and perceive the infinite breadth and depth of the Master’s character and personality, I am being firmly convinced that to compare him with God—*i.e.*, God as we generally understand Him—will be to belittle his infinite spiritual greatness. I have seen him bestowing the love of God freely on all—men and women, the educated and the ignorant, the good and the bad. Wonderful also was his intense anxiety to relieve men of their sorrows and confer upon them eternal peace through God-vision. I may declare with as much emphasis as I can command that the modern age has not seen a greater man engaged in working for the spiritual welfare of mankind, than the Master.”

—*Swami Shivananda*

## VII

“After living in the intimate company of the Master and having meditated long on his unparelled life and character, I have been astonished to find that he was a unique combination of humanity and Divinity. Without seeing him we could never understand that such

a marvelous synthesis of varied ideals and ideas is possible in one and the same personality. My conviction is that he was a God-man; his personality is an example of divine perfections and powers manifesting through the medium of a human mind and body. He belongs to that small group of God-men who are known as World-Teachers.

“The life of the Master was the solution of the national problems of India. He has fulfilled what his predecessors left unfinished. The Master has finally solved the religious conflicts of India and of the world. His unheard-of Sadhanas have awakened the Sanatani Shakti of India for the spiritual welfare of the world.”

—*Swami Saradananda*

### VIII

“Those who went to the Paramahansa Deva were all virtuous and good-natured. His love for his young devotees who became his monk-disciples afterwards may be quite natural. But his love for me was unconditioned and is a mark of his graciousness. God as the Saviour of the sinners was beheld by me in the person of Sri Ramakrishna. Some of those who had seen and known Sri Ramakrishna may be fickle-minded but in comparison with my unsteady and restless nature they were all saints! I never like to walk on straight paths of life. But in spite of all this I was the object of his deepest affection and grace. Oh! his love for me had no limits! He used to bring from Dakshineswar Temple to my Calcutta residence fruits and sweets offered to the Deity and feed me with his own hands. Once in Dakshineswar he fed me with Payasam offered to Mother Kali, with his own hands. When he did so I forgot that I was an adult and felt myself a child. I experienced then that it was the Divine Mother who fed me. He is now no more, but when I think of his love my heart is touched to its deepest core. I cannot dream of another mortal frame through which so much divine love can flow to fallen humanity. I never visited his deathbed, for that was unbearable to me. Wonderful was his way of teaching. He never forbade me to do anything. From my boyhood I did just the opposite thing of what I was asked to do by my elders and superiors. Paramahansa Deva’s method has proved infallible in my case. Whenever I am prompted to speak falsehood, or any evil thought arises in my mind, I see in the mind’s eye my Master’s face, and I naturally refrain from committing any wrong. Sri Ramakrishna is the sole tenant of my

heart. That, however, is in no way due to my worth but to his grace and love. He has taken away all my sins and has made me understand what religion is.”

—*Girish Chandra Ghosh*

### IX

“It was only on Sunday that there was a crowd at the Temple; on other days Guru Maharaj was left alone with his few chosen ones. And why did he keep them? In order that in one night he might make them perfect. When he was alone with his special disciples, they would sing and talk and play together. If a visitor came, he would tell him: ‘Go and have a bath, eat something and rest awhile.’ Then about two o’clock he would begin to talk and he would go on teaching for five or six hours continuously. He would not know when to stop.

“Sometimes Guru Maharaj would wake at four in the morning and he would call all the disciples who were sleeping in his room, saying, ‘What are you all doing? Snoring? Get up, sit on your mat and meditate.’ Sometimes he would wake up at midnight, call them and make them spend the whole night singing and praising the name of the Lord.

“Ramakrishna was able to supply to every man just what he needed. Sometimes a man would come from a distant place with his heart panting for God, but seeing the room full of people, he would shrink back and hide himself in a dim corner. Without a word Ramakrishna would walk to him and touch him and in a moment he was illumined.

“By that touch, Ramakrishna really swallowed ninety-nine per cent of the man’s Karma. Taking other’s Karma was the reason he had his last long illness. He used to tell us: ‘The people whose Karma I have taken think that they are attaining salvation through their own strength. They do not understand that it is because I have taken their Karma on me.’ We do not know how much we owe to him; but some day we shall realise what he has done for us and then we shall know how to be grateful to him.

“He never condemned any man. He was ready to excuse everything. He used to tell us that the difference between man and God was this: If a man fails to serve God ninety-nine times, but the hundredth time serves Him with even a little love, God forgets the ninety-nine times he has failed and would say: ‘Ah! my devotee has served me so well today.’ But if a man serves another man well

ninety-nine times and the hundredth time fails in his service, then man will forget the ninety-nine good services and say: 'That rascal failed to serve me one day.' So Sri Ramakrishna, if there is the least spark of goodness in any one, sees only that and overlooks all the rest.

"In Ramakrishna there was absolutely no ego left. He knew everything. Everything he did was for others. He was not necessitated to come to this world, but he came to help mankind; and every movement of his body, every movement of his mind was directed towards the amelioration of his fellow-men.

"The only real enemy Sri Ramakrishna ever had was a man who was very jealous of the devotion of Mathur Babu for him. Ramakrishna was the embodiment of truthfulness. He always said: 'No man can hope to realise the Truth who is not absolutely truthful.' He practised the most perfect simplicity in his habits. His spirit of renunciation was without reservation and compromise. One day he saw an especially fine mango and he had a mind to take it, but he could not raise his hand to pluck it. Another day he tried to pick a fruit, but with the same result. He was unable to lift his arm; the muscles refused to obey him. 'You see,' he explained 'A Sannyasin should never store anything, so the Divine Mother will not let me lay by this fruit even for a few hours'."

—Swami Ramakrishnananda

*How marvelous are the potentialities of humanity! There is no man so mean or servile but hides within himself the possibility of the Infinite. The ultimate fact in the world is man, not power: the ultimate fact in man is God. Therefore let all men believe in themselves. To all men let us say—Be strong. At any moment may my personal become the hand, the lips, of that Impersonal. Why then should I be weak, either in taking or in losing? Am I not the Infinite Itself? Henceforth do I cast aside pleading and prayer.*

—Sister Nivedita.

## The Teaching of a Holy Man

Into his presence came many devotees, struggling aspirants, young and old monks. Let us listen as Swami Turiyananda speaks on these several themes.

### *On the Mind:*

“It is you who must govern your own mind. Other folks, your teacher, no one can do that for you. Again and again the Master has said, ‘You must try a little. Not until then will the Guru reveal the Truth.’ From experience I can tell you that if you advance one step toward God, He advances ten steps toward you. If you do not make the exertion, no one can be of any help to you. If in your exertion you meet difficulties we can help you for we also have travelled the same path. Do not let the mental disease, *Styana* (idleness) control your mind for with it the mind refuses to do anything.”

“It is well to analyze one’s mind very carefully. Once the Master requested me to increase infinitely my lust which caused me to be greatly amazed. He then explained his meaning of lust as being the desire to get, secure, have. Then He said, ‘Desire to get Him and increase this desire greatly.’”

### *On Devotion:*

“You question, ‘Will not the Lord do anything for His devotee?’ Oh yes, He will, but you must first become a devotee, feeling devotion and loving Him. *Bhakti*, devotion, is no trifling thing. To obtain it the surrender and gift of your mind, life, everything is necessary. If that is not possible, then let tears flow for not having attained love for Him. If you feel miserable because you lack Him know that He is very near you and that the vision of Him and infinite bliss is not far away. Become miserable if you have not realized God, and the more this mood grows the more you will earn His grace. Intensify it still more and yet more.”

“There are two forms of *Bhakti*. First, the ritualistic or obligatory devotion entailing the practice of prescribed amounts of *Japa* or the performance of *Puja* in such and such a way. Second, there is the loving devotion. At this stage the devotee thinks ardently of God and finds no pleasure in things unrelated to God. For either of these, perseverance is absolutely necessary. To discontinue practice

if a little effort does not produce the desired result is folly. Let it be said of you as was said of another that he practiced so intensely that an ant-hill grew around him.”

*On Meditation:*

“Meditation begins with the unification of the meditator, the object of meditation, and the act of meditation. When there is no longer a separation between these three one may be said to be meditating. Japa becomes functional when a portion of the mind continually repeats the sacred Name automatically. When this becomes experienced then it may be said one has advanced a little in Japa.”

“The Jnanis meditate in the head, the Bhaktas in the heart. Spiritual consciousness expands as a result of heart meditation, and with the expansion of consciousness there no longer remains any fixed location of meditation.”

“Japa means that one should utter the sacred Name at the same time meditating on His form, thinking of Him and loving Him. The mere repetition of God’s Name while the mind is attached to worldly things will avail nothing. What is essentially necessary is that we somehow in all ways make Him our own while performing all actions and duties.”

*On Divine Forms:*

“The Master possessed and exhibited two moods. Sometimes he did not like Divine forms, not even his beloved Kali. At such times his mind was immersed in the Absolute. At other times he declared that he could not exist without Divine forms declaring to Divine Mother that he did not desire to see Her formless aspect or have Brahmajnana. He who rejects everything and becomes lost in the formless Brahman is as one-sided as the one who realizes only the forms of God and not the formless absolute aspect. There must be a balance sought.”

*On Yoga:*

“The first door of Yoga is the control of the speech, non-acceptance of gifts, non-expectation, desirelessness and love of solitude.’ This verse had a profound influence on me for I used to indulge in much talk. When I read it, I thought, ‘What! I have not entered even the first door of Yoga!’ I then resolved to control my

speech. I lived by myself, acted as I thought best and spoke to no one."

*On Parigraha (Acceptance of Gifts):*

"Sankara moulded my life, for before I came to the Master a single verse of Sankara used to lift me a step up and give me a flood of light. Much new meaning to words and thoughts was revealed in those days. Even though you do not accept any gift, Parigraha may still be present for it means to think of the future, thinking of ways and means for the future. Where your mind is, there you also are. Birth and rebirth proceed from Parigraha. If you have no Parigraha where would your mind be? Naturally on the Atman itself. Therefore the practice of Aparigraha (*non-acceptance*) can take you to the highest."

*On Attaining God:*

"Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'A man can be sincere only by virtue of merits acquired in many past lives.' Swamiji has nicely said 'God is not a commodity like fish or vegetable to be had for a certain price.' The sages have stated in the Shastras the several paths by which they attained God. One has stated that one should perform Puja in such and such a way. Another says that one should practice Japa. Narada says, 'Just as the river flows intently toward the sea in order to meet it, not changing its course, even so he who seeks God should move towards Him and Him alone giving up all other concerns.' It is said in the Gita, 'Persons who worship Me alone without being attached to anything else, to them thus ever zealously engaged, I carry what they lack and preserve what they already have'."

*On Progressing Towards God:*

"One will surely know within oneself if one is progressing towards God. Others also know of the progress. All passions, lust, anger and greed wane; attachment to and for objects of the senses becomes less and less, and with detachment peace of heart grows."

"The real peace is far off however. But when you see that a man's desire for sense enjoyments is growing less and less and his love is extending over all beings, then you may know that he is progressing towards God. Simply repeating the holy name will not do. If a hole of attachment is in the mind the result of all Japa runs through it even as a man irrigating his field the whole day finds that his field is waterless because of a hole in the wall."

*On Stealing, Dependence, Slander:*

“He who constantly steals others’ property may perform great charities, still he does none. He who always depends on others, may live long, yet he lives not. He who always slanders others may repeat the holy name, yet he does it not,’ so said Kabir.”

“What will it avail if one makes charity with money stolen from others? To live long on the charity of others is as good as death. It is useless for a slanderer to repeat the name of God. This is why Jesus said: ‘Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.’”

*On Love and Lust:*

“Love and lust are two things very closely allied. Hence Sri Ramakrishna used to say, ‘Lust is blind, but love is pure and resplendent.’ It is lust if you have the idea of man, and love if you have the idea of God in your beloved.”

*On Control of the Senses:*

“All trouble is over if the palate and the sex impulse are conquered. When Sri Chaitanya went to Kesava Bharati for initiation into Sannyasa, the latter remarked, ‘You are in the bloom of youth and so surprisingly handsome. Who will be bold enough to initiate you into Sannyasa?’ Sri Chaitanya replied, ‘Sir, you usually examine an aspirant before conferring Sannyasa on him. If you find me qualified, you will naturally be inclined to initiate me also. So please examine me and see if I am fit for it.’ Bharati said to Sri Chaitanya, ‘Put out your tongue.’ The Guru placed some sugar on the tongue. It remained dry and scattered in the air when blown out. There was no need for further examination.”

“‘A man who has controlled all other senses except the palate cannot be considered a master of his senses. When the hankering of the palate is controlled, everything else is controlled’.”

“When the palate is controlled the sex impulse is also controlled. Unless the senses are brought under control there cannot be any spiritual progress. Throughout the Gita there is repeated mention of this: ‘Therefore, O best of the Bharatas, control thou the senses first, and thereby kill this sinful propensity of lust, which destroys one’s Knowledge and Realization’.”



# Preparation for Spiritual Realization

*Swami Yatiswarananda*

## I

In the beginning of our Sadhana we do not get any spiritual experience, because that is only the scavenging period when loads and loads of dirt and impurities have to be removed. Only when the mirror is clean does it begin to reflect. Evil thoughts arise even if the mind has already been made strong to a certain extent, but then they no longer harm it and can easily be conquered. If a boat has a good and experienced helmsman, it can face the storm without fear of perishing. Unless this phenomenal world has been effaced completely, desires and passions, attraction and aversion, can never be annihilated in their subtlest form. "When he realizes the Atman as dwelling in all things and finds all things dwelling in his own Self, the sage ceases to hate." Until then the passions rise in the mind, but if we have strengthened our moral fibre through our Sadhana, we are able to withstand them and drive them away.

Love need not take always the calm, peaceful method. True love can often be as hard as steel, can use harsh words. The knife of the surgeon cuts, but then it cuts in order to heal. These Great Ones may appear cruel and heartless in some of their advices, but through the kindness of their "cruelty" they heal and bring life.

Until we feel the coming of grace, we must strive. Self-effort has its place in spiritual life, and never can real self-surrender come unless we have really striven our utmost.

When the devotee has caught a glimpse of the Transcendental, he no longer troubles and bothers about the right breeze, whether it is a hot breeze or a cold breeze or no breeze at all. He need not unfurl his sails any longer.

The two tests of vision are: Bliss, certitude. Then the mind knows Truth is real. Then something in us knows it is true and it carries with it its own unmistakable light and conviction.

Let the teacher be merged into your own Ishtam, let the form-aspect get merged into the formless. By so doing, you will avoid all fanaticism and bigotry and always remain conscious of the One Principle standing at the back of all teachers and all teachings.

Once Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great dramatist of Bengal, said

to Sri Ramakrishna, "The Lord has created you with His own hands. Us He has created with His machine."

Brahmacharya alone is real Tapasya, and there can be no Tapasya whatever without perfect Brahmacharya in thought, word and deed. This has to be stressed again and again.

## II

Let us try to be as hard as possible against ourselves without any unnecessary or destructive self-condemnation.

I should always use my discrimination even with regard to non-violence. The scorpion, no doubt, follows its own law of being when it stings, but I, too, should follow my own law and protect others from its sting if I can do so.

Buddha taught, "Hatred cannot be conquered by hatred. It is by love that hatred can be conquered." Christ taught, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Evil can never be conquered by evil. Violence can never be conquered by violence. The only weapon that conquers all is love and loving kindness to all creatures.

And what an amount of strength and undauntedness true non-violence requires! We should not be weak, we should not be cowards, but we should at the same time be kind. The person who does not retaliate, however he is hurt, however he is offended by others, is a person of terrible strength, and he alone is a man. All others are miserable cowards hiding their fear and abject cowardice under a cloak of braggardism, physical and mental, and never rising to the stature of a man.

## III

Struggle, struggle, struggle. There is no other way. Let us not be afraid of struggles.

Success largely depends on the regularity and intensity of our daily practices. Very often we are so careless in this. Without steady practice nothing can be attained in spiritual life. Spiritual life must be a life of dedication to the highest, a life of consecration and sacrifice and one-pointedness. So we should be more wideawake and more careful about our own thoughts for our own benefit and for the benefit of others to whom our thoughts may become a danger. Our thoughts, if they be thoughts of lust or greed or violence, are

worse than poison gas, and the havoc created by them is far worse than the havoc created by poison gas. By our impure thoughts we affect people who do not even know impurity. By our pure thoughts we help others in their struggle after purity.

It is essential for us to create the right mood before sitting for meditation. There must be steady, regular practice. Let us rather die in the struggle with our body and our impure mind than give it up. What does it matter if I die or not? What matters is that I realise the Truth, that I attain my full stature, my true being. If we struggle our utmost, if we do our utmost, we have fulfilled our duty. Then the rest must be left to the Divine. Here true self-surrender and resignation to the Lord have their place.

#### IV

Turning the mind constantly and without any break to God, whatever you may be busy with, is the most efficient of all forms of spiritual practice. But you must be able to raise the plane of thought. See that you do not tie your boat to the bank by not fulfilling the preliminary conditions of Yama and Niyama. If you allow your boat to remain tied to the bank, no amount of rowing and exertion on your part will move it even an inch onward.

Try to make the individual ego subservient to the Cosmic Ego. The ego is very difficult to subdue. It is like a monster with hundreds and hundreds of heads.

Never try to face the enemy in the open at the beginning. Never give him a frontal attack. The enemy is still too strong for you. Let us first save ourselves even by flight. Later, we come back with greater strength, with the strength of the Lord, because some day the enemy has to be openly faced and vanquished. Eternal flight won't do.

#### V

Once Ganesa was sitting on the lap of his mother Durga, when he happened to touch Her back and found there to his great astonishment a deep scar. "Mother," said he, "who did that?" "My boy," the Goddess replied, "you ill-treated a little cat, and so I got this mark, everything being My own body." When the question of Ganesa's marriage arose, he refused to be married, because the experience of the little cat he ill-treated and the scar of his Mother's back had taught him a great lesson and had made him realise that

all women were but his own mother.

There is another story about Ganesa which is illustrative of a high lesson. Once Mother promised a beautiful necklace to that one of Her boys who would be able to go round the universe and be back first. Kartikeya departed at once with all possible speed, but Ganesa just remained sitting on the lap of his Mother, and after some time quietly got down, went round Her once, and got on to Her lap again. So when Kartikeya came back he found to his great astonishment that Ganesa was already sitting on Durga's lap and had received the necklace. Ganesa had realised that, his Mother being all-pervading and omnipresent, it was sufficient to go round Her once without going round the whole universe as his brother had done.

All these symbolical stories and representations of truths are highly instructive if we but know how to read them aright. See Mother in every woman, then you, too, will say like Ganesa, "How is it possible for me to marry?" Through the infinite grace of Mother our whole attitude towards men and women can change, just as it had changed in the case of Ganesa.

The more we progress, the more we cease to love ourselves and to identify ourselves with our physical form. In the same way we cease loving others as bodies or feeling any sex-attraction for them. In India, Ganesa is one of the greatest symbols for perfect purity.

## VI

Self-realisation is a very difficult process, and it takes a long time to attain it. But as soon as you come to feel the tide, you know that you are approaching the ocean. And then you should be glad that there is any tide at all. The ocean may still be distant, but if the tide makes itself felt, you know you have travelled a good way down the river. The old impressions must be attenuated, erased through rubbing and rubbing and rubbing, till they have completely disappeared.

Just as the thickness of a cloud in the sky differs, just as this cloud may be only a very thin veil or a dark black cloud which does not allow the sun's rays to penetrate, similarly in this world of Maya there is a thin coat or a thick coat covering Truth.

Some manifestations of Mother are to be saluted at a very safe distance so long as we ourselves are not yet fully immune from their influence. The Mother's play has two aspects, one which binds, and

one which frees; but both are within Maya, not beyond Maya. Never think that the freeing aspect is beyond Maya. It, too, is within the ambit of Maya.

## VII

“Whenever you come across a person who is of a different ideal of life, do not speak out your thoughts.” (Sri Chaitanya).

First there must be physical control, then mental control, and once mental control is attained, thought can never again come down or be dragged down to the sensual plane. This only happens if we have led a controlled life, physically and mentally, for many, many years without any break. Then impure thoughts may now and then arise, but they are no longer able to stain us.

There must be a completely new attitude towards ourselves, towards the world, towards all mental pictures and memories in our mind.

We should feel sorry when an unclean thought wells up in our mind, but this should spur us on all the more and make us more dogged than ever. We should be thankful that we have come to know that such unclean things exist in our mind. If we did not know this, we could never fight them successfully. The greater the trouble, the more manly the fight; the greater our determination to remove them, the greater our relentless tenacity!

If really there is dirt and filth in our mind, let us know this fact, and know how bad it is. To know an evil as it is, is half the battle won. It is always good for us to know the possibilities of our mind to do us great mischief, so that we may be on our guard and become fully aware of its wily attempts at deception. What a terrible amount of misery man creates for himself and others by giving in to the impulses of lust, anger, greed, violence, etc.! And all these impulses lie deeply hidden in our mind too, if we do not come to know them and annihilate them. Unless we turn our mind consciously to the higher life, it will always remain full of these.

*What you think, that you should speak. Let there be harmony between your thoughts and words. Otherwise, if you merely say that God is your all in all while in your mind you have made the world your all in all, you cannot derive any benefit thereby.*

—Sri Ramakrishna.

## Vivekananda at Thousand Islands

*Sister Christine*

We all attended our class lectures. To a Hindu the teaching itself might have been familiar, but it was given with a fire, an authority, a realisation which made it sound like something entirely new. He too "spake like one having authority." To us of the West to whom it was all new it was as if a being from some radiant sphere had come down with a gospel of hope, of joy, of life. Religion is not a matter of belief but of experience. One may read about a country, but until one has seen it there can be no true idea. All is within. The divinity which we are seeking in heaven, in teachers, in temples is within us. If we see it outside, it is because we have it within. What is the means by which we come to realise this, by which we see God? *Concentration* is the lamp which lights the darkness.

There are different methods for different states of evolution. All paths lead to God. The Guru will put you on the path best suited to your development. With what sense of release did we hear that we not only may, but must follow reason. Before that it had seemed that reason and intuition are generally opposed to each other. Now we are told that we must hold to reason until we reach something higher—and this something higher must never contradict reason.

The first morning we learned that there is a state of consciousness higher than the surface consciousness—which is called *Samadhi*. Instead of the two divisions we are accustomed, the conscious and the unconscious—it would be more accurate to make the classification, the subconscious, the conscious, and the superconscious. This is where confusion arises in the Western way of thinking, which divides consciousness into the subconscious or unconscious and the conscious. They cognize only the normal state of mind, forgetting that there is a state beyond consciousness—a superconscious state, inspiration. How can we know that this is a higher state? To quote Swami literally, "In the one case a man goes in and comes out as a fool. In the other case he goes in a man and comes out a God." And he always said, "Remember the superconscious never contradicts reason. It transcends it, but contradicts it never. Faith is not belief, it is the grasp on the Ultimate, an illumination."

Truth is for all, for the good of all. Not secret but sacred. The

steps are: hear, then reason about it, "let the flood of reason flow over it, then meditate upon it, concentrate your mind upon it, make yourself one with it." Accumulate power in silence and become a dynamo of spirituality. What can a beggar give? Only a king can give, and he only when he wants nothing himself.

"Hold your money merely as custodian for what is God's. Have no attachment for it. Let name and fame and money go; they are a terrible bondage. Feel the wonderful atmosphere of freedom. You are free, free, free! Oh blessed am I! Freedom am I! I am the Infinite! In my soul I can find no beginning and no end. All is my Self. Say this unceasingly."

He told us that God was real, a reality which could be experienced just as tangibly as any other reality; that there were methods by which these experiences could be made which were as exact as laboratory methods of experiment. The mind is the instrument. Sages, Yogis, and saints from prehistoric times made discoveries in this science of the Self. They have left their knowledge as a precious legacy not only to their immediate disciples but to seekers of Truth in future times. This knowledge is in the first instance passed on from Master to disciple, but in a way very different from the method used by an ordinary teacher. The method of religious teaching to which we of the West have become accustomed is that we are told the results of the experiments, much as if a child were given a problem in arithmetic and were told its answer but given no instruction as to how the result was reached. We have been told the results reached by the greatest spiritual geniuses known to humanity, the Buddha, the Christ, Zoroaster, Laotze, and we have been told to accept and believe the result of their great experiments. If we are sufficiently reverent and devotional, and if we have reached that stage of evolution where we know that there must be some Reality transcending reason, we may be able to accept and believe blindly, but even then it has but little power to change us. It does not make a god of man. Now we were told that there is a method by which the result may be obtained, a method never lost in India, passed on from Guru to disciple.

For the first time we understood why all religions begin with ethics. For without truth, non-injury, continence, non-stealing, cleanliness, austerity, there can be no spirituality. For many of us in the West ethics and religion are almost synonymous. It is the one con-

crete thing we are taught to practise and there it generally ends. We were like the young man who went to Jesus and asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said, "Thou hast read the prophets. Do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery." The young man said, "Lord, all these have I kept from my youth up." Now we wanted to hear about *Yoga, Samadhi* and other mysteries. This emphasis upon things which were by no means new to us was something of a surprise. But soon we found it was not quite the same, for it was carried to an unthought-of length. The ideal must be truth in thought, word, and deed. If this can be practised for twelve years, then every word that is said becomes true. If one perfect in this way says, "Be thou healed," healing comes instantaneously. Be blessed, he is blessed. Be freed, he is released. Stories were told of those who had this power, and who could not recall the word once spoken. To the father of Sri Ramakrishna this power had come. Would that explain why such a son was born to him? Then there was the life of Sri Ramakrishna himself. "Come again Monday," he said to a young man. "I cannot come on Monday, I have some work to do; may I come Tuesday?" "No," answered the Master, "these lips have said 'Monday': they cannot say anything else now." "How can truth come unless the mind is perfected by the practice of truth. Truth comes to the true. Truth attracts truth. Every word, thought, and deed rebounds. Truth cannot come through untruth. In our time we have an instance in the case of Mahatma Gandhi, regarded by some as the greatest man in the world, of how far the practice of truth and non-injury will take a man. If he is not the greatest man in the world today, he is certainly one of the greatest characters.

Non-injury in word, thought, and deed. There are sects in India which apply this mainly to the taking of life. Not only are they vegetarians, but they try not to injure still lower forms of life. They put a cloth over their mouth to keep out microscopic creatures and sweep the path before them so as not to injure whatever life may be underfoot. But that does not go far, even so there remain infinitesimal forms of life which it is impossible to avoid injuring. Nor does it go far enough. Before one has attained perfection in non-injury he has lost the power to injure. "From me no danger be to aught that lives" becomes true for him, a living truth, reality. Before such a one the lion and the lamb lie down together. Pity and compassion have fulfilled the law and transcended it.



Continenence-Chastity: This subject always stirred him deeply. Walking up and down the room, getting more and more excited, he would stop before some one, as if there were no one else in the room. "Don't you see," he would say eagerly, "there is a reason why chastity is insisted on in all monastic orders?" Spiritual giants are produced only where the vow of chastity is observed. Don't you see there must be a reason? The Roman Catholic Church has produced great saints, St. Francis of Assisi, Ignatius Loyala, St. Theresa, the two Katharines, and many others. The Protestant Church has produced no one of spiritual rank equal to them. There is a connection between great spirituality and chastity. The explanation is that these men and women have through prayer and meditation transmuted the most powerful force in the body into spiritual energy. In India this is well understood and Yogis do it consciously. The force so transmuted is called *Ojas* and is stored up in the brain. It has been lifted from the lowest centre of the *Kundalini*,—the *Muladhar*—to the highest." To us who listened the words came to our remembrance: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

In the same eager way he went on to explain that whenever there was any manifestation of power or genius it was because a little of this power had escaped up the *Sushumna*. And did he say it? or did we come to see for ourselves the reason why the *Avatars* and even lesser ones could inspire a love so great that it made the fishermen of Galilee leave their nets and follow the young Carpenter, made the princes of the clan of Sakya give up their robes, their jewels, their princely estates? It was this divine drawing. It was the lure of divinity.

How touchingly earnest Swami Vivekananda was as he proposed this subject. He seemed to plead with us as if to beg us to act upon this teaching as something most precious. More, we could not be the disciples he required if we were not established in this. He demanded a conscious transmutation. "The man who has no temper has nothing to control," he said. "I want a few, five or six who are in the flower of their youth."

Austerity: Why have the saints in all religions been given to fasting and self-denial, to mortification of the body? True, there have been those who foolishly regarded the body as an enemy which must be conquered and have used these methods to accomplish their end. The real purpose however is disciplining the will. No ordinary

will-power will carry us through the great work before us. We must have nerves of steel and a will of iron, a will which is consciously disciplined and trained. Each act of restraint helps to strengthen the will. It is called *Tapas* in India and means literally, to *heat*, the inner or the higher nature gets heated. How is it done? There are various practices of a voluntary nature, *e.g.*, a vow of silence is kept for months, fasting for a fixed number of days, or eating only once a day. With children it is often the denial of some favourite article of food. The conditions seem to be that the vow must be taken voluntarily for a specific time. If the vow is not kept it does more harm than good. If it is kept, it becomes a great factor in building up the character so necessary for the higher practices.

Beyond a few directions in meditation there was very little set instruction, yet in course of these few days our ideas were revolutionised, our outlook enormously enlarged, our values changed. It was a re-education. We learned to think clearly and fearlessly. Our conception of spirituality was not only clarified but transcended. Spirituality brings life, power, joy, fire, glow, enthusiasm—all the beautiful and positive things, never inertia, dullness, weakness. Then why should one have been so surprised to find a man of God with a power in an unusual degree? Why have we in the West always associated emaciation and anaemic weakness with spirituality? Looking back upon it now one wonders how one could ever have been so illogical. Spirit is life, *Shakti*, the divine energy.

It is needless to repeat the formal teaching, the great central idea. These one can read for himself. But there was something else, an influence, an atmosphere charged with the desire to escape from bondage—call it what you will—that can never be put into words, and yet was more powerful than any words. It was this which made us realise that we were blessed beyond words. To hear him say, “This indecent clinging to life,” drew aside the curtain for us into the region beyond life and death, and planted in our hearts the desire for that glorious freedom. We saw a soul struggling to escape the meshes of *Maya*, one to whom the body was an intolerable bondage, not only a limitation but a degrading humiliation. “*Azad, Azad*, the Free,” he cried, pacing up and down like a caged lion. Yes, like the lion in the cage who found the bars not of iron but of bamboo. “Let us not be caught this time” would be his refrain another day. “So many times *Maya* has caught us, so many times have we exchanged

our freedom for sugar dolls which melted when the water touched them. Let us not be caught this time." So in us was planted the great desire for freedom. Two of the three requisites we already had—a human body and a Guru, and now he was giving us the third, the desire to be free.

"Don't be deceived. Maya is a great cheat. Get out. Do not let her catch you this time," and so on and so on. "Do not sell your priceless heritage for such delusions. Arise, awake, stop not till the goal is reached." Then he would rush up to one of us with blazing eyes and fingers pointing and would exclaim, "Remember, God is the only Reality." Like a madman, but he was mad for God. For it was at this time that he wrote the *Song of the Sannyasin*. We have not only lost our divinity, we have forgotten that we ever had it. "Arise, awake, Ye Children of Immortal Bliss." Up and down, over and over again. "Don't let yourself be tempted by dolls. They are dolls of sugar, or dolls of salt and they will melt and become nothing. Be a king and know you own the world. This never comes until you give it up and it ceases to bind. Give up, give up."

The struggle for existence, or the effort to acquire wealth and power, or the pursuit of pleasure, take up the thought, energy, and time of human beings. We seemed to be in a different world. The end to be attained was Freedom—freedom from the bondage in which Maya has caught us, in which Maya has enmeshed all mankind. Sooner or later the opportunity to escape will come to all. Ours had come. For these days every aspiration, every desire, every struggle was directed towards this one purpose—consciously by our Teacher, blindly, unconsciously by us, following the influence he created.

With him it was a passion. Freedom not for himself alone, but for all—though he could help only those in whom he could light the fire to help them out of Maya's chains;

"Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down,  
Of shining gold or darker baser ore; . . .  
Say 'Om tat sat Om.'"

*Be not a traitor to your thoughts. Be sincere; act according to your thoughts; and you shall surely succeed. Pray with a sincere and simple heart, and your prayers will be heard. —Sri Ramakrishna.*

## Walt Whitman on Intuition

*Dorothy F. Mercer*

“My body, done with materials—my sight, done  
with my material eyes;  
Proved to me this day, beyond cavil, that it is  
not my material eyes which finally see.”

In continuing a discussion of the similarity between Whitman's ideas and the philosophy of the Vedanta, it may be well to point out their agreement on the vexed problem of epistemology; for to both Whitman and the Vedanta no knowledge will be gained unless the spiritual eye is awakened. As Whitman says, “It is not my material eyes which finally see, nor my material body which finally loves.” Empirical knowledge, though valuable, is not ultimate, and Whitman, insofar as he is a mystic, is skeptical of knowledge gained through the senses. He comes to the conclusion not that sense knowledge is fallacious necessarily but that as a means to wisdom it has little worth; moreover, that reason, though it be Godlike is not God, and that if salvation is to be gained, it must be gained through other media than mind and body. There is no denial of mind and body either in *Leaves of Grass* or in *The Bhagavad Gita*, as we have seen, simply a realization of their insufficiency; for as Whitman further says, “From the eyesight, proceeds another eyesight and from the hearing proceeds another hearing, and from the voice proceeds another voice, eternally curious of the harmony of things with man.”

This is necessarily so since the knowledge to be gained is of sameness not difference, and both reason and the senses depend on difference. But for a rational common-sense world, the mystic does not erect a fantastic one, an other-world; he erects no world at all. Imagination does not body forth the forms of things desired nor give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name; the mystic is not of imagination all compact. He simply apprehends beneath the various, a sameness; beneath diversity, unity; beneath appearance, verity; beneath discord, harmony.

Obviously this apprehension cannot be given by reason or the senses, for they cannot transcend difference. They function in the

world of discrete time and space where appearance cannot reveal its essence, its spiritual oneness. To see things as they are and as they are to see them perfect is the triumph of spiritual insight. Intuition, therefore, if one considers it an act of immediate as distinguished from mediate knowledge, may "perceive" this sameness, this harmony within the relational universe of which reason or the senses can take no cognizance, because intuition respects the similitude of things not their difference, and it is their similitude that sanctifies faith in a spiritual one.

And therein lies freedom for both Whitman and the Vedantin; for even though reason may present an ultimate determinism beyond the oneness and consequent freedom intuitively apprehended; even though, as Whitman says, "Freedom only opens entire activity—under the laws"; still the liberated actor is in no wise disconcerted, for his knowledge of freedom is intuitive or mystic rather than rational, and intuitive knowledge is more conclusive since sameness is its consequence and freedom its result. Hence, even though Krishna tells Arjuna at the close of *The Bhagavad Gita*,

"The Lord, brave soldier, has his home  
In every living heart;  
His magic mechanism whirls  
Each puppet through his part,"

still Arjuna is not disheartened by this bit of information; that he must act impelled by a "magic mechanism," that he really has no absolute freedom, does not inhibit his action, because *The Bhagavad Gita* like *Leaves of Grass* is primarily a mystical document, and, as such, its teaching does not depend upon reason but upon intuition. Arjuna has realized the harmony of relations, and the conviction that this vision carried gave him faith. It may be that acting in accordance with it is acting as a puppet, that Arjuna only has freedom within a final determinism, but the rational argument that presents an emptiness of freedom is dispelled by the vision that carries a conviction of freedom. Without any conflict, the will of Krishna becomes the will of Arjuna because oneness has been apprehended.

There is nothing in *Leaves of Grass* which exactly corresponds to the puppet-show incorporated into *The Bhagavad Gita*; nevertheless, Whitman's adherence to "divine law" amounts to much the same doctrine. The "steadfast law" of Krishna and the "divine law" of Whitman are for all intents and purposes the same. Whitman,

like Krishna, makes man a "law unto himself" and like Krishna he insists that it is not his "material eyes which finally see" nor his "material body which finally loves, walks, laughs, shouts, embraces, procreates;" that "from the eyesight proceeds another eyesight," the intuition of the mystic. As the Divine Lord tells Arjuna:

"This kingly secret, kingly lore,  
Most lofty and most pure,  
Is given by intuition, is  
Most righteous, pleasant, sure."

#### WORSHIP OF THE GREAT

*I tried to get an idea of God in my mind, and I find what a false little thing I conceive; it would be a sin to worship, that God. I open my eyes and look at the actual life of the great and saintly ones of the earth. They are higher than any conception of God that I could ever form. For, what conception of mercy could a man like me form, who would go after a man if he steals anything from me, and send him to jail? And what can be my highest idea of forgiveness? Nothing beyond myself. Which of you can jump out of your own bodies? What idea of divine love can you form except what you actually live? What we have never experienced we can form no idea of. So all my attempts at forming an idea of God would fail in every case. And here are plain facts and not idealism; actual facts of love, of mercy, of purity, of which I can have no conception even. What wonder that I should fall at the feet of these men and worship them as God?*

—Swami Vivekananda.

## “Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread”

*Aldous Huxley*

“Give us this day our daily bread.” The phrase refers to the material food upon which the life of the body depends, and at the same time to that bread of grace and inspiration upon which depends the life of the spirit. In the world as we find it today both kinds of bread are woefully lacking. Most of the inhabitants of our planet do not have enough to eat, and most of them are the idolatrous worshippers of false gods—the State, the Party, the Boss, the locally prevailing political Dogma—and, being worshippers of false gods, have rendered themselves more or less completely impervious to the grace, inspiration and knowledge of the true God. Idolatry and hunger, the adoration of the Nation and the quest for markets, raw materials and *lebensraum*—these are the prime causes of war. If there is to be peace and harmonious collaboration among men, we must work towards the elimination of these two war-producing factors. In other words, we must work to provide all human beings with the bread that feeds the body and with that other bread of divine grace which feeds the soul. Everything that lies between the basic physiological need and the basic spiritual need is rather a source of division than of unity. All men agree on the value of food, shelter and clothing, and all who are prepared to collaborate with grace are agreed on the value of spiritual experience. But all men do not agree, and have never agreed, on government, on economics, on art, on religion (in its dogmatic and ecclesiastical aspects.) This being so, the only sensible thing to do is to pay more attention to the things we can agree about, and less to those in regard to which no agreement is probable or even possible. This means in practice that we should concern ourselves primarily, not as is the case today, with the problems of power and ideological orthodoxy, but with those of bread, material and spiritual. The problems of the first class are insoluble on their own level and, in the process of not being solved, lead to war. The problems of the second class are soluble and, in the process of being solved, contribute to the solution of the problems of power and orthodoxy and so make for peace. In the war-tormented world of today the most useful people are those whose concern is with daily bread—those who produce and conserve food for the bodies of

men, and those who permit themselves, and who teach others to permit themselves, to be fed by the bread of grace that gives life to the spirit. Swami Prabhavananda belongs to the second category of useful people, and one of the ways in which he makes himself most widely useful is the way of translation and interpretation. In collaboration with Mr. Isherwood he has given us an admirable rendering of the *Gita*, and now, in collaboration with Dr. Manchester, he is giving us an equally readable version of the principal Upanishads. "He who sees all beings in the Self, and the Self in all beings, hates none." The man who brings this constantly forgotten message out of the past, and who can show others how to see all beings in the Self, and the Self in all beings, is performing an important service to society. Those, on the contrary, who set themselves up as the servants of society—the politicians and the ideologists—see all beings as elements in the super-ego of the national State and the super-ego of the State in all beings; consequently they hate practically everybody and preach the necessity of this hatred to their fellows. These self-styled servants of society are actually society's worst enemies. Whereas the despised "escapists," whose concern is with that which lies beyond politics, on the spiritual level, (together with the food-producers, whose concern is with matters on the physiological level) are in reality society's best friends and the inspirers of the only reasonable policy.

*Though all religions have taught ethical precepts, such as, "Don't kill, do not injure; love your neighbour as yourself," etc., yet none of these has given the reason. Why should I not injure my neighbour? To this question there was no satisfactory or conclusive answer forthcoming, until it was evolved by the metaphysical speculations of the Hindus who could not rest satisfied with mere dogmas. So the Hindus say, that this Atman is absolute and all-pervading, therefore infinite. Also each individual soul is a part and parcel of that universal soul, which is infinite. Therefore in injuring his neighbour, the individual actually injures himself. This is the basic metaphysical truth underlying all ethical codes.*

—Swami Vivekananda.



## Real Worship

*Swami Vivekananda*

It is in love that religion exists and not in ceremony; in the pure and sincere love in the heart. Unless a man is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping God (Siva) is useless. The prayers of those that are pure in mind and body will be answered by God, and those that are impure, and yet try to teach religion to others, will fail in the end. External worship is only a symbol of internal worship, but internal worship and purity are the real things. Without them, external worship would be of no avail. Therefore, you must all try to remember this. People have become so degraded in this Kali-Yuga (Iron Age) that they think they can do anything, and then can go to a holy place, and their sins will be forgiven. If a man goes with an impure mind into a temple, he adds to the sins that he had already, and goes home a worse man than when he entered it. A place of pilgrimage is a place which is full of holy things and holy men. But if holy people live in a certain place, and if there is no temple, even that is a place of pilgrimage. If unholy people live in a place where there may be a hundred temples, the holiness has vanished from that place. And it is most difficult to live in a place of pilgrimage, for if sin is committed in any ordinary place it can easily be removed, but sin committed in a place of pilgrimage cannot be removed. This is the gist of all worship—to be pure and to do good to others. He who sees God (Siva) in the poor, in the weak and in the diseased, really worships God (Siva). And if he sees God (Siva) only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man, seeing God (Siva) in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him God (Siva) is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples.

A rich man had a garden and two gardeners. One of these gardeners was very lazy and did not work; but when the owner came to the garden, the lazy man would get up and fold his arms and say, "How beautiful is the face of my master," and dance before him. The other gardener would not talk much, but would work hard, and produce all sorts of fruits and vegetables which he would carry on his head to his master who lived a long way off. Of these

two gardeners, which would be the more beloved of his master? God (Siva) is that master, and this world is His garden, and there are two sorts of gardeners here; the one who is lazy, hypocritical and does nothing, only talking about Siva's beautiful eyes and nose and other features; and the other, who is taking care of God's (Siva's) children, all those that are poor and weak, all animals, and all His creation. Which of these would be the more beloved of Siva? Certainly he that serves His children. He who wants to serve the father must serve the children first. He who wants to serve God (Siva) must serve His children—must serve all creatures in the world first. It is said in the Scripture that those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants. So you will bear this in mind. Let me tell you again that you must be pure and help any one who comes to you as much as lies in your power. And this is good Karma. By the power of this, the heart becomes pure, and then God (Siva) who is residing in every one, will become manifest. He is always in the heart of every one. If there is dirt and dust on a mirror, we cannot see our image. So ignorance and wickedness are the dirt and dust that are on the mirror of our hearts. Selfishness is the chief sin, thinking of ourselves first. He who thinks "I will eat first, I will have more money than others, and I will possess everything"; he who thinks "I will get to heaven before others, I will get freedom before others" is the selfish man. The unselfish man says, "I will be last, I do not care to go to heaven, I will even go to hell, if by doing so I can help my brothers." This unselfishness is the test of religion. He who has more of this unselfishness is more spiritual and nearer to God (Siva) than anybody else, whether he knows it or not. And if a man is selfish, even though he has visited all the temples, seen all the places of pilgrimage and painted himself like a leopard, he is still further off from God (Siva).

# *The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination*

(VIVEKA-CHUDAMANI)

\$2.50

Shankara (686—718 A.D.) the great Indian philosopher and saint, wrote this treatise in the form of a dialogue between teacher and disciple. It describes the manner in which ultimate spiritual wisdom may be achieved through self-discipline and constant discrimination between the real and the unreal. An introduction by the translators, Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, discusses Shankara's philosophy and its implications for the man of today.

# *The Wisdom of God*

(SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM)

\$2.50

Stores of ancient India's saints, seers and philosopher-kings, including the life and teachings of Sri Krishna, "the Christ of India." This is a classic work of eternal truth and great literary beauty. Translated by Swami Prabhavananda.

"In which are enshrined the great truths concerning the nature of God and man, man's final end and the means whereby that end may be attained."  
—ALDOUS HUXLEY

"A shockingly urgent message to mankind . . ."  
—CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

"It is a treasure of thought from which the entire world should profit."  
—ROMAIN ROLLAND

"One of the supreme religious classics of the ages brilliantly translated. The author deserves and I am sure will have the gratitude of the English-speaking world."  
—DANIEL A. POLING, *Christian Herald*

*Published by Vedanta Press*