

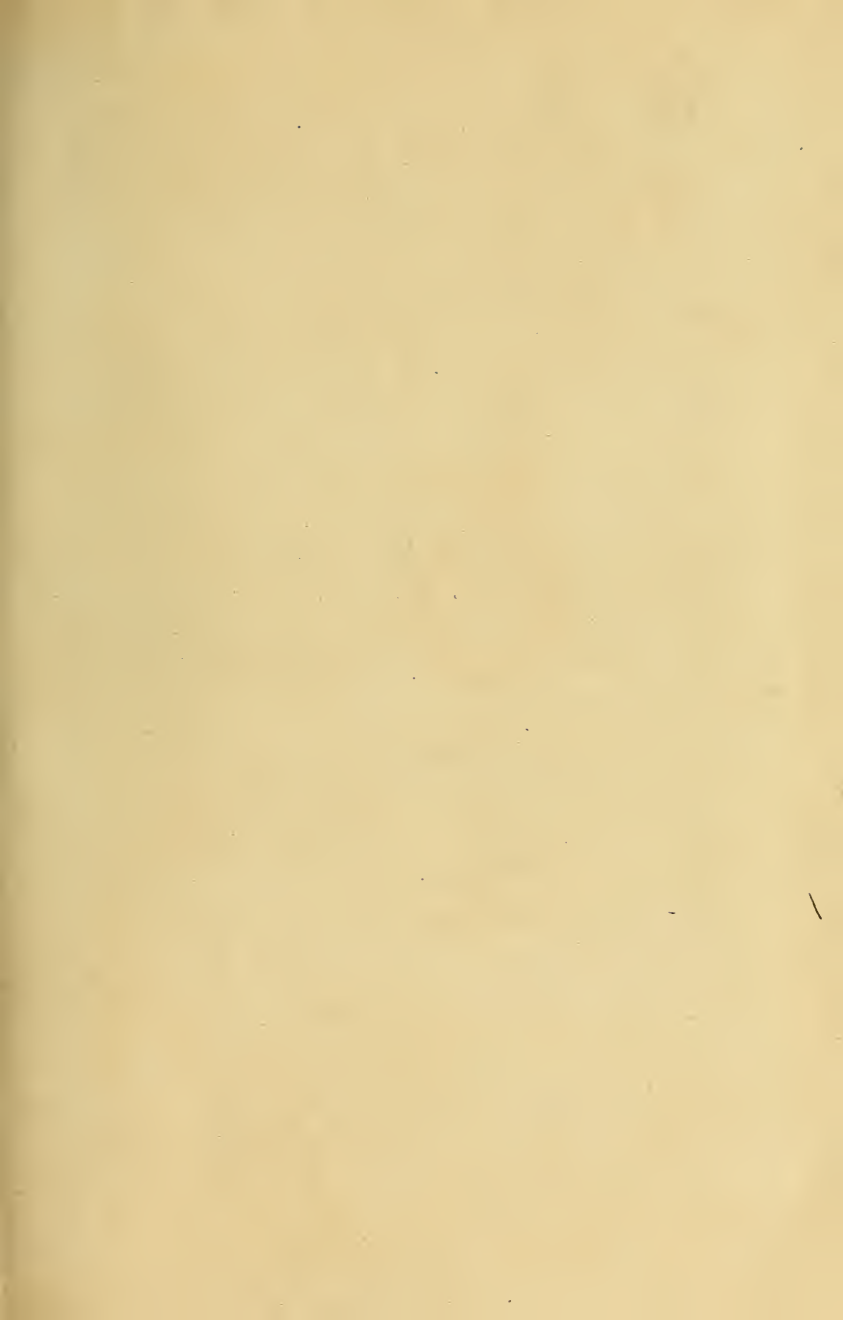


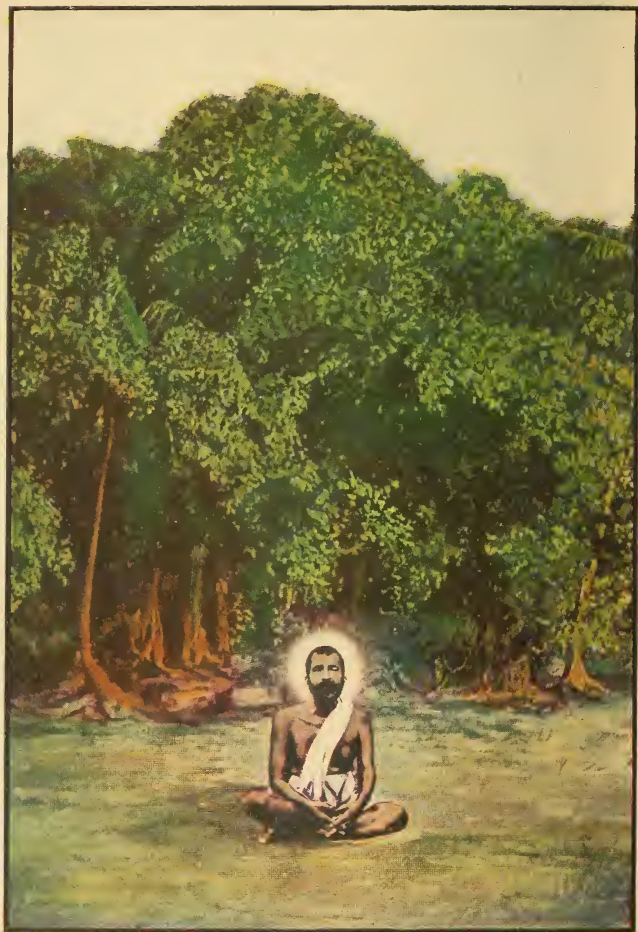
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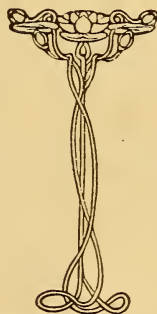
Ramakrishna.

The GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

*According to M. (Mahendra),
a Son of the Lord and Disciple*

OR

THE IDEAL MAN FOR INDIA
AND FOR THE WORLD



PART I

PUBLISHED BY SAN FRANCISCO VEDANTA SOCIETY
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LETTERS ON THE
GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

FROM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I.

Dear M.,

C'est bon mon ami—now you are doing just the thing. Come out man. No sleeping all life; time is flying. Bravo! That is the way.

Many many thanks for your publication—only I am afraid it will not pay its way in a pamphlet form. * * * Never mind pay or no pay—let it see the blaze of daylight. You will have many blessings on you and many more curses—but *vaisaho sada kala banata saheva**.

This is the time.

Yours in the Lord,

(Sd.) VIVEKANANDA.

October, 1897. c/o Lala Hansraj, Rawalpindi

* That is always the way of the world!

II.

Dehra Doon,
24th November, 1897.

My Dear M.,

Many many many many thanks for your second leaflet. It is indeed wonderful. The move is quite original, and never was the life of a great teacher brought before the public untarnished by the writer's mind as you are doing.

The language also is beyond all praise, so fresh, so pointed, and withal so plain and easy.

I cannot express in adequate terms how I have enjoyed them. I am really in a transport when I read them. Strange isn't it? Our teacher and Lord was so original, and each one of us will have to be original or nothing. I now understand why none of us attempted his life before. It has been reserved for you, this great work. He is with you evidently.

With all love and *namaskar*,

(Sd.) *ŪIVEKANANDA*.

(P. S.) Socratic dialogues are Plato all over—you are entirely hidden. Moreover, the dramatic part is infinitely beautiful. . Everybody likes it—here or in the West.

(Sd.) *Ū*.

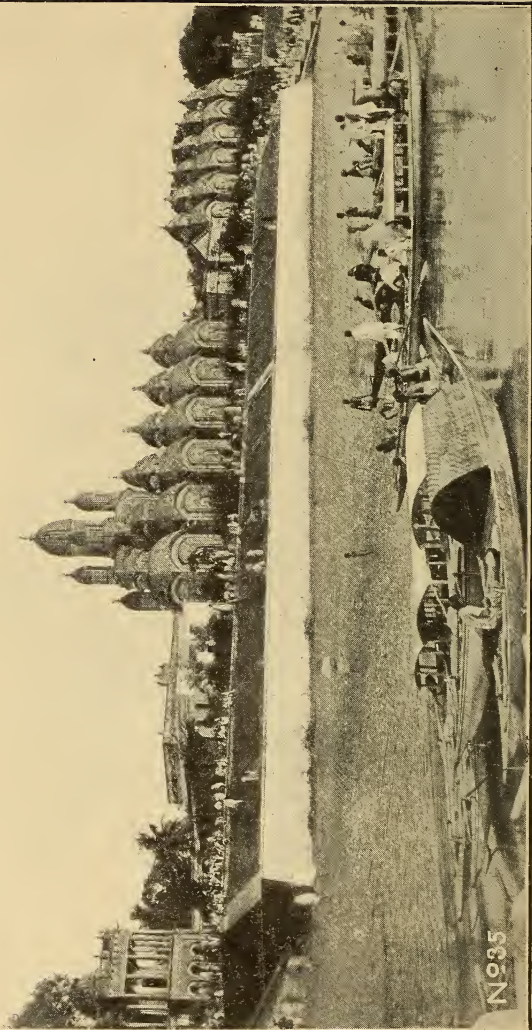
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Dakshineswar-Temple, Calcutta, India, where Sri Ramakrishna realized God.

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THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

INTRODUCTION

SRI RAMAKRISHNA—A SHORT SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

Birth of Sri Ramakrishna—His father Khudiram and mother Chandramani—The primary school—His daily worship of Raghubir, his household God—Mixing with holy men—Listening to the recital of the Sacred Books—Beholds a miraculous Light of Glory—Comes down to Calcutta—Sees God at the Temple of the Universal Mother at Dakshinেশwara—'Like one mad'—Thrown into the company of holy men in the Temple—Listens to the recital of the Vedanta by Totapuri—Practises austerities according to the Sacred Books—Talking with the Mother of the Universe—His 'members near and dear to him'—His devotees—Ramakrishna and the Brahma-Samaj—Reconciliation of all Religions—His female devotees—The communion of devotees.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA was born in a village called Kamarpukur, in the district of Hughli, Bengal, on Wednesday, the 20th of February, 1834, or the 10th of Falgun, 1756 Saka, the second lunar day of the light fortnight. He came of a highly respected, though poor, Brahman family. The village of Kamarpukur is about eight miles west of the sub-division Arambag, formerly called Jehanabad, and about twenty-six miles south of Burdwan.

Ramakrishna's father, Khudiram Chatterjee, was a great devotee. His mother, Chandramani Devi, was the impersonation of kindness. In her there was no guile. The family used formerly to live in a neighboring village called Deray, three miles from Kamarpukur. Khudiram, with the independence of a cultured Brahman, declined to appear before a law-court and give evidence in favor of the local magnate, the landlord of the village. The great man made the place too hot for Khudiram, and he left Deray with his family and settled in Kamarpukur.

Sri Ramakrishna was called Gadadhar in his childhood. He received some lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic at the village primary school. Shuvankara, the well-known mathematician, whose arithmetic is widely read in Bengal, only, as he used to say, threw his head into confusion.

After leaving the village school, the boy was not allowed to sit idle at home. His next duty was to attend to the daily worship of his household God, Raghubir. Every morning he

chanted the name of the Lord, put on a holy garment, and gathered flowers. After ablutions, prayers¹ and meditation on the Supreme Being², the One and Indivisible God, he worshipped Raghubir, also called Rama, one of the Incarnations of the Supreme Being, and the Hero of the well-known epic, Ramayana. He could sing divinely. The songs that he heard during theatrical performances³, he could recite from the beginning to the end. From a boy he was always happy. Men, women and children—everybody loved him.

Holy men used to visit at the guest-house of his neighbors, the Lahas of Kamarpukur. Gadadhar, as Ramakrishna was then called, would go amongst these holy men and try his best to minister unto them with the devotion of a disciple.

Brahman scholars were often, as is the practice amongst Hindus, engaged to read from the Sacred Books about the life and teachings of the various Incarnations of God, and sing and narrate the incidents in the vernacular. Ramakrishna would listen to these men with rapt attention. In this way he mastered the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagabat—all religious epics relating to Rama and Krishna who are both regarded by Hindus as Incarnations of God.

When eleven years old, Ramakrishna was one day going through the corn-fields to Anur, a village near Kamarpukur. As he told his disciples afterwards, he suddenly saw a Vision of Glory and lost all sense-consciousness. People said it was a fainting fit; but it was really that calm and serene mood, that super-conscious state, called *Samadhi*, brought on by God-vision.

After the death of his father, Ramakrishna, then seventeen or eighteen years old, went with his elder brother to Calcutta. The brothers came down to Calcutta with the intention of seeking their fortune. They spent some days at Nathair Bagan; thence they removed their lodgings to Gobinda Chatterjee's house at Jhamapukur. Ramakrishna was employed by Gobinda to officiate as an assistant priest under him. In this capacity he came in contact with the Mitras and other respectable families of Jhamapukur who entrusted to him the daily worship of their household Gods.

Rani Rashmani, a rich, pious Bengali lady, built the well-known Temple at Dakshineshwara, a village about four miles from Calcutta, in the summer of the Bengali year 1262,

¹ Gayatri. ² Brahma. ³ Jstras.

Thursday, May 31, 1855 A. D., on the day of the full moon, the 18th of Jaistha. The eldest brother of Ramakrishna, Pandit Rama Kumara, was appointed to be the chief priest of the Temple.

Ramakrishna used often to come to the Temple to see his brother. Within a few days he was himself employed as an assistant priest. His second brother, Rameswara, also officiated as a priest from time to time. He left two sons, Ramlal and Sivaram, and one daughter, Lakshmi Devi.

In the course of a few days, a change came over Ramakrishna. He was found sitting alone for long hours before the Image of the Mother¹. Evidently his mind was drawn away from the things of this world. It was in quest of some Object not sought by men of the world.

His people shortly arranged for his marriage. They hoped that marriage would turn his mind away from his Ideal World. His newly-married bride, Sri. Sri Saradamani Devi, was the daughter of Ram Kamal Mukhopadhyaya of Joyrambati, a village only four miles from Kamarpukur. She was only six years old at the time of her marriage (1859), while her husband was twenty-five.

After his marriage, Sri Ramakrishna returned to the Temple-garden at Dakshineshwara. This was the turning-point of his godly life. In a few days, while worshipping the Mother, he saw strange Visions of Divine Forms. During evening service, his duty, amongst other things, was to wave² the lights, holy water, flowers, etc., before the Sacred Image. But filled with the Divine Idea as he was, he would begin the ceremony, but very often forgot to bring it to a close! Indeed, he did not stop until his attention was drawn by the Temple people to the strangeness of his conduct. On other occasions, too, he would sit down to worship the Mother; but very often it was noticed that he was not going to stop at all! Stranger still, he would place on his own head the flowers intended as offerings to the Mother of the Universe!

It was soon found by the Temple authorities that Ramakrishna was, in the present state of his religious feelings, incapable of doing the duty of a priest any longer. Indeed, in the present state of those feelings, he went about like a man who was not in the right state of mind. Rani Rashmani's son-in-law, Mathoor, however, looked upon him in a different light.

¹ Kali or Consort of the Lord of Eternity. ² Aratrika.

He called him a Prophet sent by God for the salvation of mankind. As for the daily worship of the Mother, Mathoor had another priest appointed to do the duty.

Thus it came about that Ramakrishna could not go on with his work as a priest. Nor could he go on doing his duties as a householder.

The marriage hath been only in name. He saith, 'Mother, O Mother!' night and day. Now he is like a stock or stone, or a figure made of wood! Now he is found behaving like a person of unsound mind! At another time he behaveth like a child! He hideth himself from the sight of worldly-minded men! He liketh not those who do not love the Lord, nor doth he listen to any words except those of God! He saith without ceasing, 'Mother, O my Divine Mother!'

There was a guest-house in the Temple-garden. Holy men who had given up the world used to come there as guests. Totapuri, a holy man, stayed there as a guest for eleven months. He it was who expounded to Ramakrishna the Vedanta philosophy. During the exposition, Totapuri observed that his disciple was no ordinary man, and that he used frequently to be put into a state of Divine Ecstasy¹ in which the finite ego goeth out of sight and becometh one with God, the Universal Ego.

A Brahmani lady, who had also given up the world, came as a guest into the Temple a little before Totapuri. She it was who helped Ramakrishna to go through the practices enjoined by the Scriptures called the Tantras. She looked upon him as the Incarnation² of Chaitanya, the God-Man of Nadiya, and read before him the Sacred Books³ relating to his life and teachings.

Vaishnava Charana, a well-known Pandit amongst the Vaishnavas of the time, used often to come and see Ramakrishna. Once he took him to Colootola, a district in Calcutta, to witness the proceeding of a religious assembly⁴. The people there were a little shocked at the sight of Ramakrishna, then in a state of God-consciousness, stepping up to take the seat set apart for Chaitanya, the Divine Incarnation whom they all worshipped. Vaishnava Charana was the president of this religious assembly.

Vaishnava Charana once said to Mathoor, son-in-law of Rashmani, then manager of the Temple,—'The madness of

¹ Samadhi. ² Avatar. ³ Charitamrita, etc. ⁴ Chaitanya Sabha.

this young man is not of the ordinary kind. He is mad after the Lord! Both Vaishnava Charana and the Brahmani lady found out that Ramakrishna was filled with the 'Great Idea'—the Divine Idea. Like Chaitanya he used to pass through three different states of religious consciousness, *viz.*, the purely Internal State—in which there can be no outward consciousness; the Half-Conscious State—in which outward perception is not entirely lost; and the Conscious State—in which it is possible for one to chant the holy name of the Lord. With 'Mother, O Mother!' ever on his lips, he would talk unto the Divine Mother without cessation. He would ask *Her* to teach him. He would often say, 'O Mother, I know not the Sacred Books¹; nor have I anything to do with the Pandits well-versed in them. It is Thou alone Whose words I shall hear. Teach Thou and let me learn.'

The sweet name of Mother, Ramakrishna applied to the Supreme Being, God the Absolute, Who transcendeth all thought, all time and space. The Divine Mother once said to him, 'Thou and I are One. Let the end of thy life in this world be deep devotion² unto Me. Do thou pass some days in this world for the good of mankind. And there shall come unto thee many worshippers. Then thou shalt be pleased to see that there are in the world not only the worldly-minded, but also those that are pure and free from worldly desires, loving Me alone, their Divine Mother.'

In the evening, at the time of divine service³, Ramakrishna would, amidst the sound of bells, cymbals and drums, cry out from the terrace of the Kuthi, saying, 'Come ye that love God and tarry not; O, how I long to see you all! Come, my own, or else my life shall quit my body!'

Keshab (Sen) saw Ramakrishna about the summer of 1875 A. D. Keshab was then staying with his disciples in a garden at Belgharia, about three miles from the Temple-garden at Dakshineshwara. With Ramakrishna was his nephew Hridaya.

Vishwanatha Upadhyaya, usually known as the Captain, visited Ramakrishna about this time. He was the representative of the Nepal Government at Calcutta. Mahendra Kavi-raja and Mahimacharan met him shortly after.

His disciples, some of those that were near and dear to him, first met him between 1879 and 1882. He had then passed the stage of 'madness for the Lord.' He was like a

¹ Shastras. ² Bhakti. ³ Aratika.

child, gentle and full of joy and gladness. Only he was, as a rule, in a state¹ of intense God-consciousness. Coming down from this plane he used to move about in his Ideal World. Verily, he behaved himself like a child five years old, with 'Mother, O Mother!' always on his lips.

About the end of 1879, came Rama and Manomohan. Kedar and Surendra came next; Chuni, Latoo, Nitya-gopal and Tarak also came about that time. Towards the end of 1881 and the beginning of 1882 came Narendra (Vivekananda), Rakhal, Bhabanath, Baburam, Balaram, Niranjan, M. and Jogin. In 1883 and 1884 the following disciples came and met Ramakrishna: Kishori, Adhar, Nitai, Gopal of Sinthi, Gopal (junior), Tarak of Belgharia, Sarat, Sasi, Subodh, Sanyal, Gangadhar, Kali; Girish, Debendra, Sarada, Kalipada (Ghosh), Upendra, Dwija, Hari; Narendra (junior), Paltu (Pramatha), Purna, Narayan, Tej Chandra, Haripada; Haramohan, Joggeswar, Khirode, Hajra, Jogin and Kishori of Krishnagar, Manindra (Khoka); Bhupati, Akshay, Nabagopal, Gobinda of Belgharia, Ashu, Girindra, Atul, Durgacharan, Suresh, Prankrishna, Nabai Chaitanya, Hariprasanna, Mahendra (Mukerjee), Preo (Mukerjee), the saint Manmatha, Binode, Tulsi, Daksha; Haris (Mustafi), Basak, Kathak Thakur, Sasi Brahmachari of Balli, Nitya Gopal Goswami, Bepin of Konnagar, Dhiren, Rakhal (Chatterjee), and others.

The following also saw Sri Ramakrishna—many of them men of light and leading: Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Pandit Sasadhar, Doctor Rajendra, Doctor Sirkar, Doctor Bhaduri, Bankim (Chatterjee), Mr. Cook of the United States, Mr. Williams (a great devotee), Mr. Missir, Michael Madhu Sudan (the poet), Krishna Das Pal, Pandit Dinabandhu, Pandit Syamapada, Doctor Ram Narayan, Doctor Durga Charan, Nilkantha; and Trailanga Swami, the great Saint of Benares. Mother Ganga of Brindaban also met him when he was with Mathoor during his pilgrimage to Brindaban. Mother Ganga regarded him as the Incarnation² of Divine Love. She was therefore unwilling to part from him.

Before his immediate disciples ever met him, other well-known devotees had been to the Temple-garden to see Ramakrishna. Thus he came to know Krishnakishore, the venerable old Brahman of Ariada, Mathoor, Sambhu Mallik (an English-educated wealthy citizen of Calcutta), Narain

¹ Samadhi. ² Avatar.

Shastri (a Sanskrit scholar who read logic¹ at one of the colleges at Nadiya), Gouri Pandit of Indesha near Hughly, Achalananda, Chandra, Padmalochan, the court Pandit of a former Maharaja of Burdwan, Dayananda, the founder of Arya Samaj, and many others. It is needless to add that the inhabitants of Kamarpukur, his native village, and those of Seore and Syambazar, etc., many of them intensely devoted to God, were amongst those that used often to meet him.

The leaders of the Brahma-Samaj, with their disciples, often came in contact with him. Keshab Sen, Bijoy, Dina Bose, Pratap, Sivanath, Amrita, Trailokya, Krishna Bihary, Manilal and Umesh amongst the older members; Hirananda, Bhawani, Nandalal, Benoy, Pramatha, Mohit, and many others amongst the younger members of the Brahma-Samaj, often met him. He, too, would often come amongst them. During the lifetime of Mathoor, Ramakrishna saw Debendra Tagore, leader of the Adi Brahma-Samaj; and he once paid a visit to that Samaj during divine service. He paid a similar visit to Keshab's church when divine service was being conducted by Keshab; and to the church of the Sadharan-Samaj, one of the many sects into which the Society² of Brahmas has been split up.

Sri Ramakrishna often visited Keshab at his house and rejoiced in his company and that of his followers. Keshab, also, sometimes alone and sometimes with his disciples, often came to the Temple-garden at Dakshineshwara to see him. At these meetings Ramakrishna spoke for long hours about the Lord, and his audience listened with rapt attention to the words of wisdom that fell from his lips. Like an inspired prophet he spoke, and very often he was thrown into a state of Divine Ecstasy! His corporeal frame would become motionless; his respiration stopped; his eyes moved not! All sense-consciousness would leave him, and he became filled with God-consciousness instead.

At Kalna near Burdwan he met Bhagabandas Babajee, a Vaishnava saint. The Babajee observed his unique state of Divine Ecstasy and said, 'Verily Thou art an Incarnation of God, eminently fit to take the seat set apart for Chaitanya.'

Besides teaching the fact that *God may be seen*, his great object was to point out the harmony amongst all religions. He realized, on the one hand, the Ideal set up by each of the

¹ Nyaya. ² Brahma-Samaj.

various sects of the Hindu religion; on the other, the Ideal of Islam and that of Christianity. He recited in solitude the name of Allah, and meditated upon Jesus Christ. In a vision, he saw Jesus in His glory. In his chamber, he made room for the pictures not only of Hindu Gods and Goddesses, including Buddha, but also for that of Jesus. In that picture, Jesus is represented as delivering Peter who is about to be drowned, and as stilling the storm that was raised. The picture of Jesus is still to be seen in his chamber. English and American men and women may be found to-day squatting on the bare floor of that room, meditating upon God and upon Sri Ramakrishna.

One day he said to the Divine Mother, 'O Mother, I long to see how Thy Christian devotees pray unto Thee. May it please Thee to take me to a place where they come together for divine service.' Some days after, he was found standing at the entrance of a Christian church in Calcutta, looking in and watching the divine service held within. Upon his return to the Temple-garden, he said to his disciples, 'I went to the church, but did not get in, lest the steward should not suffer me to enter the Temple here and worship the Mother.'

Ramakrishna had devotees also amongst women. He would give joy to Gopal's mother by calling her by the sweet name, 'Ma.' He looked upon all women as Incarnations of the Divine Mother, and he worshipped them as such. Only he would warn men not to come in contact with women until they had realized them as such Incarnations, and until they had learnt to have a pure love for God. Indeed, he enforced this rule even in connection with women well-known for their purity, piety and deep devotion to God. To the Divine Mother he once said, 'O Mother, I will put a knife across my throat if any impure, lustful thought ariseth in my mind.'

The number of his followers is large. Some of them are known and some unknown. It is impossible to name all. In this Gospel the names of many will be found mentioned. The following names may be added to the list of those who visited him during their boyhood: Ramakrishta, Puttoo, Tulsi, Sasi, Bepin, Nagendra, Upendra, Surendra (Gupta), Suren, Shanti, etc. Many girls also saw him. All these are at present his devoted followers.

Many are those who have become and are becoming his followers to-day. Madras, Ceylon, the United Provinces; Kumaun, Nepal; Bombay, Rajaputana, the Punjab; and

Japan; all contain men and women who aspire to follow in his footsteps. Nay, the family of his disciples lieth scattered to-day not only in Asia, but also in America and Europe, and notably in the United States and England.

THE TEMPLE-GARDEN

1. *The Master Teaching in the Temple*:—It is Sunday. The devotees are free from work, and they come in numbers to the Temple-garden to see Sri Ramakrishna. The door is open to everybody. The Master freely talketh to all men irrespective of creed, color, sect or age. Holy men, be they novices or those that have attained the highest stage of spirituality; Hindus or Christians, or members of the Brahma-Samaj; Hindus who worship God as the Primal Divine Energy¹, or those² who worship God as the Preserver (Vishnu); men, women; all alike are coming to see the Master. Blessed art thou, Oh Rani Rashmani, for it is thy religious merit that hath caused this beautiful Temple to be raised up! It is also due to thee that people are able to meet and worship this Prince amongst men, this Holy Image of the Divinity, which unlike clay or marble doth move about to the delight of all that love the Lord!

2. *The Porch and the twelve Temples of God (the Father)*:—The Temple-garden is situated about five miles north of Calcutta on the banks of the holy river Ganges. Going there by boat one landeth on the broad brick-built steps of the ghat leading to the Temple. Sri Ramakrishna used to bathe at this ghat. East of the landing is the *chandni* (the porch). The roof of this building resembles an awning and is supported by pillars. The *chandni* is used especially at night by the Temple watchmen on duty. Their chests of mango-wood and one or two water-vessels (*lotas*) made of brass, are often found there lying about. The Baboos of the neighborhood often come here and take their seats before stepping down to bathe in the holy waters. They please themselves with gossip as they rub their bodies with oil. Many holy men and women belonging to the various sects of the Hindus come into the Temple and wait here until the hour is over for morning offerings to the Gods and they have partaken of the accepted offerings.³ Not unfrequently a female worshipper⁴ of the Mother is found

¹ Shakti. ² Vaishnava. ³ Prasad. ⁴ Bhairavi.

seated here. She hath given up the world and is dressed in ochre-colored clothes and holds in her hands the trident, the symbol of her order. She, too, will come into the guest-house and is waiting until the morning offerings have been presented.

The *chandni* is exactly in the middle of the long row of temples dedicated to Siva, who symbolizes God the Father. The temples are twelve in number, six of them being to the north of the porch and the remaining six to the south. Passengers by the boats which ply on the river point out to one another the twelve temples, saying, 'Look! yonder is the Temple-garden of Rani Rashmani!'

3. *The Temple of God (as Love Incarnate)*:—Next to this row of temples and the *chandni*, and situated east of them, is the courtyard. The yard rests on concrete paved with tiles. In the middle are two temples, one facing the west, the other the south.

The first is situated to the north of the second and is dedicated to Radha and Krishna (God Incarnate manifesting Himself as the Incarnation of Divine Love). The Images of the Gods stand with their faces turning to the west. There are steps leading from the courtyard into this temple. The floor of the temple is paved with marble. There are chandeliers hanging from the ceiling of the vestibule. When unused they continue to hang as before, protected by red linen covers. The vestibule¹ is supported on the western side by a series of columns at regular intervals. At the entrance to the passage between two of the columns is seated a solitary porter keeping watch. In the afternoon the direct rays of the setting sun might find their way into the Sanctuary, and canvas screens have thus been provided. They are intended for the passages left open between the columns. In the south-east corner of the vestibule is a big jar containing holy water from the Ganges. Next to the threshold of the door leading into the Sanctuary is a small brass vessel containing the 'Nectar of Divine Feet.' The devotees come, bow down before the Gods, receive some drops of this sacred water on the palm of their right hand and drink it with the greatest reverence.

Inside the Sanctuary are the Holy Images of Radha and Krishna.

4. *The Temple of God (the Mother)*:—In the southern temple is the beautiful Image of the Divine Mother. She is called here the Savior² of the world. The floor of the temple is

¹ Dalan. ² Bhabatarini.

paved with marble. The Image is placed on a raised platform of stone furnished with steps on the southern side. The stone platform has upon it a silver 'lotus of a thousand petals.' On this lotus is the Symbol of the Absolute lying down on His back with His head to the south and His feet to the north. This Image is made of white marble. Upon Him standeth the Mother of the Universe with one foot on His breast and the other on His thigh. She is apparelled in a gorgeous Benares cloth and Her Person is decorated with jewels of many kinds. On the lotus of Her feet are tinkling anklets called *nupur* and various other kinds of anklets, and the red *jaba*, with the fresh leaves of the Bael tree, rendered fragrant by sandal paste. One of these anklets is *panjeb*, used by up-country women. This ornament was procured by Mathoor, son-in-law of the foundress Rani Rashmani, at the special desire of Sri Ramakrishna. The Mother's arm is adorned with various ornaments made of gold inlaid with jewels; the lower arm, with bracelets called 'cocoanut-flower', *paincha*, *bauti* and *bala*; the upper arm, with armlets called *tarr*, *tabiz*, *baju*; the last with a pendant attached to it. Round Her neck She weareth the golden *cheke*, the pearl necklace with seven strings, the golden necklace with thirty-two strings, the 'chain of stars' (*tara har*) and—the garland made of human skulls. On Her head She weareth a crown of gold and Her ears are adorned with *kanbala* and *kanpash*, and with golden ear-rings that look like flowers; and *chaudani* and the 'golden fish.'

The beauty of Her aquiline nose is set off by a golden nose-ring with a pearl-drop attached to it. She hath three eyes, the third being the Eye of Divine Vision. She hath four arms. With one of the two left hands, She holdeth a decapitated human head and with the other a sword. With one of Her right hands, She offereth boons to Her devotees, and with the other—the uplifted one—She saith, 'Fear not.' The head and the sword symbolize Death and the terrible side of Divinity, even as Her offer of boons and Her assurance of help to Her devotees bring out the loving side and put them in mind of Her boundless love and mercy.

Round Her waist She weareth a terrible garland made of human arms as well as golden waist-chains called *neem fruit* and *komarpata*.

In the north-east corner of the temple is a bedstead supporting a bed where the Mother taketh Her rest. From the

wall near the bed hangs a *chamar* (made of the white hair from the tail of the cow called *chamari*), used for the purpose of fanning the Mother. Many a time hath Sri Ramakrishna fanned the Mother with this *chamar*. On the steps are kept vessels containing drinking water for the Mother. On the silver lotus is a small image of a lion made of the eight metals, the image of the guana and the trident. In the south-west corner of the platform is the image of a female fox. In the southern part is the black image of a bull, and in the north-east corner that of a goose. On one of the steps leading to the platform the Image of Narayana (God the Preserver) is installed on a small silver throne. By His side is Ramalala, the Image of Ramachandra, God Incarnate, obtained by Sri Ramakrishna from a holy man. Close to Ramalala on the same step is another small Image of Siva called Baneshwar and also the images of various other manifestations of God. The Divine Mother standeth with Her face to the south.

Within again and close to the northern wall of the temple, is the sacred pitcher made of copper, filled with the holy water of the Ganges for the Mother to wash Her face. Above the Holy Image is a beautiful canopy, and the background is a piece of Benares cloth embroidered with flowers of many colors. The canopy overhead setteth off the beauty of the Image. Twelve columns, apparently made of silver, stand at the corners at the platform round about the Holy Image. They include inner as well as outer columns.

The entrance to this temple is through passages between pillars, protected by strong doors. The guard is seated near one of the passages. Near the threshold again, as in the case of the other temple, is a small cylindrical brass vessel containing the Nectar of the Mother's Feet. The top of the temple is adorned with nine pinnacles.

5. *The Theatre-hall*¹:—In front of the temple and exactly to the south of it is the spacious Theatre-hall. It is rectangular and the splendid terrace is supported by both inner and outer rows of columns. Theatrical performances², etc., take place here on special occasions, especially on the day of the Festival³ held in honor of the Mother.

6. *The Guest-house*⁴:—To the west of the courtyard is the row of twelve temples of the father already mentioned. On the three other sides are sets of rooms with lobbies leading to

¹ Nata-Mandir. ² Jatras. ³ Kali-puja. ⁴ Atithi-sala.

them. The rooms to the east are: (1) the store-room; (2) the room¹ for keeping *noochis* and sweetmeats; (3) the room for cooking the food offering for Vishnu who doth not accept any fish or meat offerings; (4) the room for getting ready fruits and other offerings; (5) the room for cooking the offerings for the Divine Mother. Lastly, there are the lobbies used for feeding the guests, including holy men, Brahmans, beggars, etc. These, if they do not sit at meat in the guest-house, must proceed to the office of the steward of the Temple-garden and apply for their doles of rice and *dal* and other necessaries. The steward bids the officer in charge of the stores give what they want.

7. To the south of the Theatre-hall is the place of sacrifice.

8. No fish or meat may be offered to Vishnu, who is worshipped here under the name of Radhakanta or the Lord of Radha. The food offerings for the Mother include fish or meat. On the day of lunar conjunction² (dark fortnight), goat is offered. The worship at the temples is completed before 12 o'clock noon, by which time rice and the various dishes that are prepared in the kitchen have been offered. In the meantime the Guest-house is filled with holy men, poor men, women and other guests.

The Brahmans have a separate corner allotted to them during dinner. The officers of the Temple who happen to be Brahmans dine with the other Brahmans.

The steward hath his food³ carried to him into his own room. The Babus of Janbazar, the descendants of the foundress, Rani Rashmani, pay occasional visits to the Temple, when they put up in the two-storied building outside the Temple courtyard called the *kuthi*. They, too, have their food³ carried to them into the *kuthi*.

9. *The Steward's*⁴ *and the Office rooms*⁵:—In the rooms lying south of the courtyard are the quarters set apart for the officers of the Temple and also the office rooms. Here the steward and the clerk are always present; and the store-keeper, the maid-servants, men-servants, priests, Brahman-cooks and porters are always found walking in and out. Some of these rooms are kept under lock and key. They contain the sacred utensils, the furniture of the Temple-garden, carpets, awnings for the courtyard, etc. Some of these rooms were used as store-rooms on the occasion of the great Birthday Festival

¹ Noochi-ghar. ² Amabasya. ³ Prasad. ⁴ Khajanchi. ⁵ Daftarkhana.

formerly held here in honor of Sri Ramakrishna. The cooking for this great festival used to be done on the adjoining grounds lying south of this set of rooms.

There is a gate north of the courtyard and leading to it. The porters are stationed here as well as in the *chandni*. The votaries who desire to worship God in the temples must leave their shoes behind at the gate.

10. *The Master's Chamber*:—In the north-west corner of the courtyard, and immediately to the north of the row of twelve temples dedicated to Siva, is the well-known chamber in which Sri Ramakrishna used to pass his days in communion with God. Next to it and situated west is a semi-circular verandah (balcony), with a roof also semi-circular, supported partially by columns. It looketh out on the Ganges as she floweth past the terrace of the Temple-garden, running along her bank. Sri Ramakrishna often watched from this place the sacred waters with his face to the west, looking upon the holy river all the time as a manifestation of the Deity. To the west of the balcony is a narrow garden-path running north and south. To the west of this path is a flower garden. Next to the garden is the terrace along the side of which floweth the Ganges with sweet melodious murmurs.

11. *The Concert-room*¹:—The Master's chamber is bounded by a rectangular verandah on the north. Next to this room and the verandah is another garden path going west to east. This path again has a flower garden next to it lying north. North of the flower garden is the Concert-room. The revered Mother of the Master now in heaven passed her last days in a small chamber just under the Concert-room.

Next to this building is the Bakultala, or the foot of the Bakul trees, and the river-ghat which leads to it. The female folk of the neighborhood bathe at this ghat. A pious and devout Brahman lady as she was, the dying mother of Sri Ramakrishna was removed to this ghat, and she breathed her last in the presence of her weeping Son—with the lower half of her body immersed, after the manner of the Hindus, in the holy waters of the Ganges.

There is a second Concert-room in the south-west corner of the Temple-garden, close to the office rooms.

12. *Panchabati*:—Panchabati is situated a little north of the Bakul trees. Panchabati is a 'collection of five trees', viz.,

¹ Nahabatkhana.

Bata, the Indian fig, the Peepul, the Neem, the Amlaki and the Bael tree. They were planted at the desire of Sri Ramakrishna. It was at the foot of the Panchabati that he went through various religious practices¹. Latterly, he used often to walk about this place, sometimes alone, sometimes with his disciples. Coming back from Brindaban, he caused to be scattered about on this spot, the holy dust that had been brought from that place of pilgrimage.

Close to Panchabati and situated east was a thatched hut (now turned into a brick-built room) in which Sri Ramakrishna practised many religious austerities and with a single-minded devotion meditated upon God.

In this place there is a second Banyan² tree built round at its foot with a terraced seat. It is an ancient tree and joined with it grows another, *viz.*, a Peepul³ tree. This ancient tree has many hollows within. It has become the home of birds and animals.

The terraced seat is circular in form. It is provided with steps at two different points—the south and the north. It is used by people that visit the Temple-garden and specially by those who wish to retire into solitude and meditate upon God, with the Holy Ganges flowing past before them. Seated here with his face to the west, many a day did Sri Ramakrishna pass in the midst of his devotional exercises. In those days he would call unto the Mother of the Universe with a yearning which only equalled that of the cow crying for her calf! Across that hallowed Seat to-day there hath fallen a branch of the Peepul tree, the comrade of the banyan. This branch hath not been completely severed from the banyan tree, but continueth partially to adhere to it. It seemeth that the God-man that is worthy to take that seat hath not come into the world yet.

13. *Jhautala and Baeltala*:—Going a little north of Panchabati, one reaches a railing made of iron wires. On the other side of the railing is the Jhautala, a collection of five willow trees. Devout worshippers of God rejoice to see them from the bank of the Ganges at Bagbazar, Calcutta, where they may have come for purposes of ablution.

Going a little east from the Jhautala is Baeltala, or the foot of the Bael tree. Sitting at the foot of this tree, Sri Ramakrishna went through various religious austerities.

¹ Sadhan. ² Bata. ³ Ashwatha.

Beyond the Jhautala and the Baeltala is the wall that separates the Temple-garden from the Government Magazine.

14. *The Kuthi*:—Getting out of the northern passage at the entrance of the courtyard, one comes across a two-storied house called the Kuthi. Whenever Rani Rashmani or her son-in-law Mathoor visited the Temple, they used to put up at the Kuthi. During their life-time the Master used to pass his days in a chamber there on the ground-floor facing the Ganges. There is a splendid view of the holy river from this room. A straight path from the Kuthi running from east to west leads to the river-ghat at the foot of the Bakul tree.

15. *Gazitala, the Main Gate, and the Back Gate*:—Going on due east from the northern entrance of the courtyard in the direction of the eastern gate, we have on our right a fine tank called Ghazi-pukur, having two pucca ghats, one to the north and the other to the west of the tank. The western ghat is used for the purpose of washing the sacred utensils and is called the 'Platewashing Ghat.' A little to the north-east of the ghat is an old tree and the foot of this tree is called Gazitala. This is the place where an old Mahomedan saint used to live long ago and pass his days in the contemplation of God. His departed Spirit is worshipped even to-day by the poor people, both Hindu and Mahomedan, who live in the vicinity of the Temple.

The eastern gate of the Temple-garden, or the Main Gate is a little to the east of Gazitala. People who come from Alam-bazar or Calcutta enter the Temple through this gate. The people of Dakshineshwara come in through the Back Gate or the north-eastern gate. When the Master used to come back from Calcutta into the Temple, sometimes at midnight, the cab which brought him stopped at the Main Gate. The porter was then waked up and asked to unlock the gate. Sri Ramakrishna would ask him to come with him to his chamber in the Temple and he would see him rewarded with sweetmeats, which the Temple people would send him every evening out of the sanctified offerings made to the Deity.

16. *The Goose-tank¹: the Cow-house*:—There is another tank called the Goose-tank to the east of Panchabati. To the north-east of this tank are the stable and the Cow-house. To the east of these is the back gate or north-eastern gate. Through this gate the people of Dakshineshwara come into

¹ Hangspukur.

the Temple. This is the gate used also by those officers of the Temple who live in this village with their families. Those without families had room for them within the Temple.

There is a straight narrow pathway running from the southern extremity of the Temple-garden to Panchabati. This path runs from south to north along the bank of the Ganges and is lined with flower plants on both sides. Passing on its way between the *chandni* and the southern ghat of the river, it comes to the foot of the Bakul trees, just leaving the northern ghat on its left, and at last comes up to Panchabati.

The garden path which runs from west to east, and is situate to the south of the concert-room¹ and the Kuthi, goes past the Gazitala as far as the eastern gate. This, too, has flower plants on both sides. In the same way, the path leading from south to north on the eastern side of the Kuthi, runs past the Goose-house until it reaches the Cow-house. The garden to the east of this path contains many flower plants and fruit plants and also a tank.

17. *The Flower-garden*:—Just before the break of day, the sweet sound of bells cometh from the Temple upon the ear of the devotee. They make known abroad the morning service with the waving² of lights, which bringeth the tidings of love and joy unto all God's creatures; for the Mother of the Universe is up again and will continue to bless Her own, Her beloved children. The morning tunes are played on the flageolet³ to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals and come upon the ear from the concert-room. It is not as yet red in the east, for the day-star is not up yet to give light and life to this world of ours. At such an early hour they are plucking the flowers in the Temple-garden to be offered during the morning service to God.

On the bank of the holy river and just to the west of Panchabati are the Bael tree and the sweet-scented milk-white Gulchi flower. Close to them is the mango-creeper⁴. Sri Ramakrishna had a great liking for the flower plant Mallika (the tulip), the mango-creeper so dear to Sri Radhika, and for the Gulchi flower. He had the mango-creeper brought down with him from Brindaban whither he had gone with Mathoor on pilgrimage, and planted at Panchabati.

The part of the Temple-garden to the east of the path running towards the cow-house above-mentioned, contains many

¹ Nahabatkhana. ² Aratrika. ³ Rasunchouki. ⁴ Madhavi.

flower plants. Amongst others, there are the fragrant Champak, the five-faced Jaba, the Jaba pendant like ear-rings, the rose and the gold-flower¹. On the hedges grows the creeper Amaranth, called Aparajita or the 'unvanquished', with blue flowers used for the worship of the Divine Mother. Very close to these are the Jui (jasmine) and the Shefalika flowers.

Alongside of the long line of the twelve temples of Siva and situate just to the west of them are also many flower plants—the white oleander², the red oleander, the rose, the jasmine³ and the large double jasmine⁴. There is also the thorn-apple⁵, especially used for the worship of Siva. At intervals there is the sacred holy basil⁶ plant growing on brick-built platforms.

To the south of the concert-room are the double jasmine, the (single) jasmine, 'the king of scents,' and the rose—all sweet-scented flowers. Within a short distance of the southern river-ghat are two flower plants with beautiful fragrant flowers—one called the lotus-oleander and the other the cuckoo-eyed. The color of the latter resembles that of the eyes of the cuckoo.

Near the Master's room and growing west of it are a couple of plants with flowers called the Krishna-crest (the cox-comb flower), resembling the crest adorning the head of Krishna, the Incarnation of Divine Love; also the double jasmine, the jasmine, the king of scents, the rose, the tulip, the Jaba, the white oleander, the red oleander; the five-faced Jaba, the China-rose, etc.

Sri Ramakrishna, too, used formerly to gather flowers for divine worship. On one occasion he was plucking the leaves of the Bael tree near Panchabati, when a portion of the bark came off. It seemed to him as if the Divinity that was within him and was manifest in all things without had received a severe wound. He *felt* this in his very soul, and thenceforward ceased plucking the leaves of the Bael tree. On another occasion he was walking about, gathering flowers for the worship of the Mother. Suddenly it flashed on his soul that the various flower plants before him were so many nosegays—things of beauty decorating the macrocosm,—bouquets decorating the outward manifested form of the Absolute. Sri Ramakrishna perceived in his soul that the worship of the Deity was thus being celebrated night and day without any

¹ Kanchan. ² Karavi. ³ Jui. ⁴ Bel. ⁵ Dhutura. ⁶ Tulasi.

cessation. Henceforward he ceased to pluck flowers any more for the purpose of worshipping the Deity.

18. *The Lobbies and the Balcony*:—There is a lobby running east to west leading to the Master's room. It is two-winged; one wing facing the courtyard to the south, the other facing north and commanding a view of the Kuthi and the garden paths round about. The Master used often to be seated in the southern lobby with his disciples, talking of God or singing with them the Name of the Lord. In the northern wing there used sometimes to be celebrated the festival in honor of his birthday. There with the disciples and other devotees, he would sit at meat and eat out of the accepted offerings¹ amidst the joy and excitement of the festive occasion. Very often, at the head of his disciples, Keshab Sen would come to see Sri Ramakrishna and meet him in this very verandah, listen to the words of wisdom that proceeded out of his mouth and watch the state of Divine Ecstasy into which he was frequently thrown. Here it was that Keshab and his disciples were entertained with popped² rice, cocoanut, luchi and sweets. It was here again that the Master was once put in a state of *Samadhi* at the sight of Narendra (Vivekananda).

19. *The Abode of Joy and Gladness*:—The Temple-garden has turned out to be an abode of Joy and Gladness. The Deity is worshipped night and day in His various aspects as Father³; as the Incarnation⁴ of Divine Love; and again as the Mother⁵ of the Universe, Savior of the world. The offerings regularly made during divine worship every day are many and various. The guest-house, which accordeth welcome to holy men and mendicants, is an institution connected with the Temple, highly valued by those that resort to it. The view of the sacred river flowing past the Temple-garden calls up thoughts that appeal to the highest nature of man. No less inspiring is the garden within the Temple compound, with flowers of variegated hues which charm the devout lovers of God with their fragrance, beauty and sanctity. What giveth the finishing touch to this fascinating picture of the Temple-garden is the saintly figure of the God-man, intoxicated night and day with the joy of the Lord.

Verily, here goeth on a perennial festival in honor of the Ever-Joyful Mother. The music from the concert-room celebrateth this never-ending festival, pouring out melodies that

¹ Prasad. ² Muri. ³ Siva. ⁴ Krishna. ⁵ Kali.

send a thrill of joy through the soul of the lover of God and very often put him in a state of ecstasy. The sacred music never tireth of proclaiming night and day to the world the glad tidings of joy, *viz.*, that our Mother hath not only created us, but always looketh after us, Her own children. It beginneth the song at early dawn, repeateth it at about nine in the morning at the time of divine worship, and again at about twelve noon when the Deity retireth to rest. The song is again taken up at about four in the afternoon, when the Mother ariseth, once more sitteth in state, and is ready to receive the worship offered by Her devotees. The festive song is yet once more repeated at candle-light, when it calleth upon the world to be ready for evening worship. The closing strains of this soul-stirring music reach the ear at about 9 o'clock at night, when the Mother retireth to rest:—music sweet and sonant in the solemn sweetness that reigneth in the Temple-garden at that solemn hour, in the midst of the increasing darkness—the garment which the Mother now putteth on to remind Her children of the Eternity when nothing was,—neither Man nor Woman, neither the Sun nor the Moon, the Earth, or the Starry Firmament above!



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THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SECTION I.

1882

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST MEETING WITH THE MASTER

IT is the spring of 1882, the season of flowers and of the sweet southern breeze. The sun is about to set on the Temple of the Mother of the Universe one pleasant day in the month of March. All nature smileth and rejoiceth. At such a time came about M.'s first vision of the God-man.

The Temple of the Mother where Sri Ramakrishna made his abode for years is on the eastern bank of the Ganges, in the village of Dakshineshwara, about four miles north of Calcutta.

He was seated on the lounge (the smaller of the two bedsteads¹) in his own chamber, which looked out on the sacred waters of the Holy Stream (the Ganges) as it flowed past. The disciples and other devotees were seated on the floor. They looked on his smiling, benignant face and drank the nectar of the living words that fell from his hallowed lips.

Facing the east and smiling, the Master talketh of the Lord.

M. looketh in and standeth speechless! Is it Sukadeva* before him that talketh of the Lord? Is M. standing on a spot to which have come together the various holy places of pilgrimage to hear the Divine preacher that is seated before him? Is it again the Lord Gouranga Deva (Chaitanya) seated before him with Ramananda, Swarup and other beloved disciples in the Holy Land of Puri†, singing forth the sacred name of the Beloved Lord and His glorious works?

Sri Ramakrishna speaketh, saying, 'Suppose at the name² of the Lord the hairs of your head and body stand on their ends, or tears of joy start out of your eyes; verily I say unto you

¹ Taktaposh. ² Hari or Rama.

* The holy sage who loved the Lord from his infancy.

† Puri, in Orissa, contains the temple of Jagannath. Gouranga (Chaitanya) was here for about the last twenty-four years of his life.

the term is over of your 'works for the Lord', (for instance, the daily service¹, morning, noon and evening, laid down for the twice-born). Then and not till then have ye the right to give up works²; then indeed will works drop off of themselves. In this state of the soul, let the devotee only repeat the name of the Lord (Ram, Hari, or simply the symbol Om). That would suffice; no other works need be done.'

The Master saith again, '*Sandhya* endeth in *Gayatri**; *Gayatri*, in the simple symbol Om†.'

M. is staying at Barahanagar (near Dakshineshwara). He has come with Sidhu, a friend, unto the Temple-garden in the course of an evening walk. It is Sunday, and M. is free from work.

In the course of his walk, M. had first visited the garden-house of P. Banerjee. There Sidhu had said to him, 'There is a beautiful garden on the bank of the Ganges. Let us go there. A holy man dwelleth there called the Paramahansa.'

M. standeth speechless. He thinketh within himself, saying, 'O what a charming place! What a charming man! How sweet and charming are his words! The very idea of leaving this place troubleth the soul. But let me first look about and have a clear idea of the Temple. I will then come back and sit at his feet.'

M. comes out of the 'room into the quadrangle. He visits the temple of God the Father³, of God⁴ Incarnate as Love, and, lastly, that of God⁵ the Mother.

It is just evening—the time of divine service. The priests are moving the lights before the sacred Images to the accompaniment of bells, cymbals and drums. From the southern end of the Temple-garden there is wafted upon the soft southern breeze the sweet music, tune after tune, played by the temple musicians upon flageolets and other musical instruments. That music is carried far over the bosom of the Ganges until it is lost in distant Immensity! The breeze that bloweth from the south—how gentle and fragrant it is with the sweet odor that cometh from many a flower! The moon

¹ Sandhya. ² Karma. ³ Siva. ⁴ Radhakanta. ⁵ Kali—God in His relation to the conditioned and the finite as distinguished from *Brahman* or God the Absolute.

* *Gayatri*, the *Vedic mantra* (sacred text) which the Brahman and other twice-born Hindus repeat every day, while meditating upon the Supreme Being.

† Om, the *Vedic symbol* for the Supreme Being.

is just up and the Temple and the garden are soon bathed in the soft silvery light. It seemeth as if Nature and Man both rejoice and hold themselves in readiness for the evening service.

M.'s joy is full at the blessed sight. Sidhu speaketh to M., saying, 'This is Rashmani's Temple. Here the Gods are ministered unto from day to day—from morning till night. Here, too, are fed every day holy men and the poor, out of the offerings made to the Deity.'

The two friends wend their way through the grand quadrangle back towards Sri Ramakrishna's chamber. Coming up to the door of the room they notice that it is pushed to. M. has learnt English etiquette and does not wish to get in. It would be, so he thinks, quite rude to enter in without leave.

The incense was burnt just a little while ago.

At the door stands Brinda, the maid-servant. M. talks to her.

M.:—Well, my good woman, is he in—the holy man?

Brinda:—Yes, he is inside this room.

M.:—How long hath he made his abode here?

Brinda:—Oh, many, many years.—

M.:—I suppose he has many books to read and study.

Brinda:—Oh dear, no; not a single one. His tongue talketh everything—even to the highest truths! His words come down from above!

M. is fresh from college. He is told that the Master is not a scholar! That puts him at his wit's end. He stands aghast—speechless!

M.:—Very well. Is he now going on with the evening service¹?—May we come in?—Will you be so kind as to tell him that we are anxious to see him?

Brinda:—Why! you may go in, my children; do go, and take your seats before him.

Thereupon they enter the room. No other people are there. The Master is seated alone on the smaller of the two bedsteads. Incense is burning and the doors are closed. M. salutes with folded hands. A mat is spread on the floor. At his word, M. and Sidhu take their seats.

The Master makes many kind enquiries: 'What is thy name? Where dost thou live? What art thou? What has brought thee to Barahanagar?' etc., are some of the questions

¹ Sandhya.

put to M. M. says everything; but he notices that in the course of conversation, Sri Ramakrishna gives his mind to some other object on which he is meditating.

Is this God-consciousness? It calls up to M.'s mind the image of a person quietly seated, rod in hand, to catch fish. The float trembles just as the fish bites at the bait. The man eagerly looks at the float. He grasps the rod with all his strength. He does not talk to anybody, but is all attention.

M. hears later on that he is put into a peculiar state of God-consciousness¹ several times every day, when he loses all sense of the external world.

M. (to Sri Ramakrishna):—I am afraid, Sir, thou wilt have to go through the daily evening service². In that case we shall not trouble thee any more to-night, but call on another occasion.

Sri Ramakrishna:—No, no, you need not be in a hurry.

He is silent again for a time. When he hath opened his lips he saith, 'Evening service. Why, that is not it?'

A short while after M. saluteth the Master. He biddeth M. good-bye, and saith, 'Come again.'

On his way back to Barahanagar, M. said to himself, 'Who may this God-man be? How is it that my soul longeth to see him again? Is it possible that a man may be great and yet not be a scholar? . . . What means this yearning of the soul for him?—He, too, has bid me come again.—I must come to-morrow or the day after.'

CHAPTER II.

MASTER AND DISCIPLE

A couple of days after, at about eight in the morning, M. called again.

The Master is going to be shaved by the barber. The winter cold is still lingering and he hath on a moleskin shawl hemmed with red muslin. On seeing M., the Master saith, 'Well, thou art come. Very good. Take thy seat here.'

It was on the southern verandah leading to his room that the meeting took place.

Seated before the barber, he had on a pair of slippers and the shawl described above.

He talketh to M. while the barber is attending to him. His face is, as usual, smiling. Only he stammers a little while talking.

¹ Samadhi. ² Sandhya.

Master (to *M.*):—Where is thy home?

M.:—In Calcutta, Sir.

Master:—With whom hast thou been staying here at Barahnagar?

M.:—With my sister, Sir, at Ishan Kaviraja's house.

Master:—At Ishan's? O, I see. Dost thou know how Keshab hath been doing at present? I heard he was seriously ill.

M.:—Yes, Sir, I, too, heard the same. Probably he is doing well now.

Master:—I made a vow to offer gifts—green cocoanuts and sugar—to the Divine Mother for Keshab's recovery. I would sometimes wake up in the midst of my sleep at night and cry unto Mother, praying, 'O Mother, do grant that Keshab may get well. If Keshab doth not live, whom shall I, O Mother, talk to when I shall go to Calcutta?'

Master (continuing):—Dost thou know there hath been recently to Calcutta one Mr. Cook? Hath he been delivering lectures? Keshab took me on board a steamer the other day and he was there.

M.:—Yes, Sir, I have heard a good deal about him. I have never had any occasion to hear him lecture. Nor do I know much about him.

Master:—Pratap's brother came and stopped here for a few days. He said he had come here to stay. He had no work to do, and he had left his wife and children in the care of his father-in-law. We took him to task for his want of self-respect.

Dost thou not think it wrong of him to go about like this when he hath lots of children to bring up? Should a stranger come to feed and look after them? I wonder that he is not ashamed that somebody else taketh care of his family,—that his father-in-law should be asked to bear his burden! I rated him rather severely and told him to look about for work. It was when his folly was thus pointed out to him that he left here.

Master (to *M.*):—Art thou married?

M.:—Yes, Sir.

Sri Ramakrishna starteth at these words. He saith, 'Ah me! He hath already taken a wife! May the Lord help him!'

M. gets confused at these words and sits speechless, hanging down his head like one guilty of a serious offence. He then saith to himself, 'Must then marrying be so bad?'

*The Master reproveh
M. for having married*

Master:—Are there any children born?

M. can hear the beating of his own heart! He answers in a feeble voice, 'Yes, Sir.'

The Master is shocked. He rebuketh M., saying, 'Alas! and children, too, to bring up!'

M. feeleth that a terrible blow hath been dealt to his egoism.

After a while, the Master looketh kindly upon M. and saith in an affectionate tone, 'Thou seest, my boy, there are some good signs about thee. I can know them by looking at one's eyes and brow. The eyes of Yogis have a peculiar look—those that in previous incarnations passed their days in communion with God. In the case of some it seemeth as if they have just left the seat¹ of divine contemplation!'

'Well, now, thy wife, what dost thou think of her? Is she of a divine nature², leading Godward and to light? Or the reverse, leading only to darkness³ and away from God?'

M.:—She is good enough, but ignorant.

Master (sharply):—*She* is ignorant and *thou* art wise! Thou thinkest that thou hast attained wisdom? Dost thou?

M. knoweth not what wisdom and ignorance truly consist in. His idea is that a wise man is he who reads books. [This false notion was of course afterwards taken away and he was then taught that knowing God alone is true wisdom and not knowing Him is ignorance.]

When the Master said, 'Dost thou think thou hast attained wisdom?' M.'s egoism received a second blow.

Master:—Dost thou like to meditate upon God as 'with form' or as 'without form?'

This question maketh M. look confused again and setteth him thinking. Is it possible that one could have faith in a *Formless* God, and believe at the same time that He *hath* a form?

Or, how can it be that believing Him to be 'with form,' one could think that He is also 'formless'? Can two contradictory attributes co-exist in the same substance? Can white things like milk be black also at the same time?

After thinking for a while, M. saith, 'I should like, Sir, to meditate upon God as the *Formless* Being rather than as a Being 'with forms.'

Master:—That is good. There is no harm in looking at Him from this or the other point of view. Yes, to think of

¹ Asana. ² Vidya Shakti. ³ Avidya Shakti.

Image worship:—
Is God with form or without form?

Him as the Formless Being is quite right. But take care thou dost not run away with the idea that that view alone is true and that all else is false. Meditating upon Him as a Being 'with forms' is equally right. But thou must hold on to thy particular point of view until thou realizest—until thou *seest*—God, when everything shall be clear.

M. is speechless once more. He heareth again and again from the lips of the Master that contradictories are true of God. He hath never come across such a strange thing in his books and to these all his learning is confined. His egoism receiveth another blow, but is not yet completely knocked down and crushed. So he goeth on questioning and reasoning a little with the Master.

M:—Please, Sir, one may believe that God is 'with form.' But surely He is not the earthen images that are worshipped!

Master:—My dear Sir, why call it an earthen image? The Image Divine is made of the Spirit!

M. cannot follow this. He goeth on saying: 'Is it not, Sir, one's duty to make it clear to those that worship images that God is not the same as the images they worship, and that in worshipping they should keep God Himself in view and not the clay images?'

Sri Ramakrishna (sharply):—It hath grown to be a fashion with you Calcutta people to think and talk only of 'lecturing' and bringing others to light! How art thou going, pray, to bring light unto thy own self? Eh? Who art *thou* to teach others? The Lord of the Universe will teach mankind if need be—the Lord Who hath made the sun and the moon, men and brutes, the Lord Who hath made things for them to live upon, Who hath made parents to tend and rear them,—the Lord Who hath done so many things, will He not do something to bring them to light? Surely He will, if need be! He liveth in the temple of the human body. He knoweth our inmost thoughts. If there is anything wrong in image worship, doth He not know that all the worship is meant for Him? He will be pleased to accept the worship, knowing that it is meant for Him alone. Why must thou worry thyself about things above thee, and beyond thy reach? Seek to know and revere God. That is the duty nearest thee.

M.'s egoism is now completely crushed. He thinketh within himself, saying, 'It is indeed perfectly true what this God-man

is saying. What business have I to go about preaching to others? Have I known God myself? Do I love God? It is, as the proverb hath it, like bidding my friend Sankara lie down on my bed when there is no bed to lie down upon even for my own self! About God I do know nothing. It is the height of folly and vulgarity itself—of which I should be ashamed—to think of teaching others! It is not mathematics, history or literature to be taught in the present case: it is the science of God! Yes, the words of this holy man do fully appeal to me.'

This was the first attempt on the part of M. at arguing a point with the Master and happily the last.

Master:—Thou wast talking of 'images made of clay.' Well, there often cometh a necessity for worshipping even such images. It is God himself Who hath provided these various forms of worship. The Lord hath done all this—to suit different men in different stages of knowledge.

The mother so arrangeth the food for her children that every one getteth what agreeth with him. Suppose a mother hath five children. Having got a fish to cook, she maketh different dishes out of it. She can give each one of her children what suiteth him exactly. One getteth rich *polow* with the fish, while she giveth only a little soup to another who is of weak digestion; she maketh fish with the sour tamarind for the third, fried fish for the fourth, and so on; exactly as it agreeth with the stomach. Dost thou see?

M.:—Yes, Sir, now I do. The Lord is to be worshipped in the image of clay *as a spirit* by the beginner. The devotee as he advances may worship Him independently of the image.

Master:—Yes, when again he *seeth* God he realizeth that everything—images and all—is a manifestation of the Spirit. To him the image is made of Spirit—not of clay. God is a Spirit.

M.:—Sir, how may one fix one's mind upon God?

Master:—To that end one must chant without ceasing the Name of God and His great Attributes. One ought always to mix in the company of holy men. One must always go among the Lord's devotees or those that have given up the things of this world for the sake of the Lord. It is, no doubt, hard to fix one's mind upon God in the midst of the world's cares and anxieties. Hence one must go into solitude now and then in order

The value of Solitude

to meditate upon Him. In the first stage of one's life in the Spirit, one cannot do without solitude.

When plants are young they have need of a hedge being set about them for their protection, or else goats and cows will eat them up.

The mind, the retired corner and the forest are the three places for meditation¹. One should also practise discrimination² between the Real (God) and the unreal (the phenomenal world). It is thus that one may be able to shake off one's attachment to the things of this world, e. g., sensual pleasures, wealth, fame, power.

M.:—Sir, how ought one to live in the world as a householder?

Master:—Do all thy duties with thy mind always fixed upon God. As for thy parents, wife and children, serve them as if they were thy own. But know thou in the inmost recess of thy heart that they are really not so,—unless they, too, love the Lord. The Lord alone is really thy own—and those that love the Lord.

*Problem of Life—
How solved for the
Householder*

A rich man's maid-servant will do all her duties, but her thoughts are always sent forth unto her own home. Her master's house is not her own. She would, indeed, nurse her master's children as if they were her own children, often saying, 'My own Rama,' 'My own Hari.' But all the while she knoweth fully well that they are not her children.

The tortoise moveth about in water in quest of food; where, thinkest thou, abideth her mind? On the bank of the river, to be sure—where her eggs are laid. In the same way thou mayest go about doing thy work in the world, but take good care that thy mind always resteth upon the Hallowed Feet of the Lord.

Suppose thou enterest into the world without acquiring by spiritual culture³ a love⁴ for the Lord. Then, depend upon it, thou shalt get entangled. Misfortune, grief and the various ills that flesh is heir to, will make thee lose the balance of thy mind. The more thou wilt throw thyself into the affairs of the world and trouble thyself with worldly matters, the more thy attachment shall be to the world.

Rub thy hand with oil if thou wishest to break the jack-fruit open. Else the milky exudation of the fruit shall stick unto

¹ Dhyana. ² Vichara. ³ Sadhan. ⁴ Bhakti.

thy hands. First get the oil of devotion¹, anoint thy hand and then deal with the affairs of the world.

But to this end, solitude is the one thing needful. Suppose thou wantest to make butter. Then let the curds be set in a place beyond the reach of other people. The curds will not stand if disturbed. The next step for thee is to churn, seated in a quiet place. If thou givest thy mind unto God in solitude thou wilt receive the spirit of renunciation² and devotion. If thou givest the same mind unto the world it will turn out to be vulgar and thou wilt think upon the world alone—which is another name for 'Lust and Gold.'

The world may be likened to *water* and the mind to *milk*. Pure milk once mixed in water cannot be got back into the pure state once more. Its purity is kept up in another state, *i. e.*, if it is first turned into butter and then placed in water. Let then the milk of thy mind be turned into the butter of Divine Love¹ by means of religious practices³ in solitude. The butter will never get mixed with the water but will come up to the surface. Thy mind will likewise remain unattached to the world. Though in the world it will not be *of* the world. True knowledge⁴ or devotion being attained, the mind will now stand apart from the world—unattached to it.

Along with this, practise Discrimination⁵; 'Lust and Gold' are unreal; the one Reality is God. What uses hath money? Why, it giveth us meat and clothes and a place to live in. Thus far it goeth, and no further. Surely thou canst not see God with the help of money. Nor is money the end of life. This is the process of discrimination. Dost thou see this?

M.:—Yes, Sir, I do. I recently had occasion to go through a Sanskrit play, called *Prabodb Chandrodaya*. Therein I read of Discrimination.

Master:—Yes, Discrimination. Behold, what is there in money or in female beauty? Using thy Discrimination, thou shalt find that the body of even a beautiful woman is made up of only flesh and blood, skin and bones, fat and marrow,—nay, of the entrails, as in the case of all other animals, of urine and excreta, etc. The wonder is that man loseth sight of God and giveth his mind purely to things of this kind!

M.:—Sir, is it possible to see God?

¹ Bhakti. ² Tyag. ³ Sadhan. ⁴ Jnana. ⁵ Vichara.



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Master:—Certainly. These are some of the means by which one can see God:—(1) Going from time to time into solitude, (2) Chanting His names and His Attributes, (3) Discrimination, and (4) Earnest prayer,—with a yearning for the Lord.

How to see God

M.:—Sir, what state of the mind leadeth up to God-vision?

Master:—*Cry unto the Lord with a yearning heart, and then thou shalt see Him.* People would shed a jugful of tears for the sake of their *wife and children!* They would suffer themselves to be carried away by a stream of their own tears for the sake of *money!* But who crieth for the Lord? Cry unto Him not for making a show—but with a longing and yearning heart.

The rosy light of the dawn cometh before the rising sun. Likewise is a longing and yearning heart the sign of the God-vision that cometh after.

Thou mayest see God if thy love for Him is as strong as the three attachments put together, *viz.*, the attachment of a worldly man to things of the world, the attachment of the mother to her child, and the attachment of a chaste and devoted wife to her husband.

The thing is, in order to see God, one must love Him, heart and soul. One must make one's prayers so that they may reach the Divine Mother.

The kitten knoweth only how to cry unto its mother, saying 'mew,' 'mew.' As for the rest, the mother-cat knoweth it all. She putteth her young ones wherever she pleaseth—now in the kitchen, now in the soft downy bed of the householder. Yes, the kitten knoweth only how to cry unto its mother.

CHAPTER III.

M. is putting up at his sister's house at Barahanagar, which is about a mile distant from the Temple. Since he saw Sri Ramakrishna, M. has never ceased to think of him. It seemeth as if he has always before his eyes the smiling figure of the Master—that he is listening to his words, sweet as nectar. 'How could this poor Brahman,' M. thinketh to himself, 'go into these deep problems of life and soul! And his teachings, how remarkably clear!' M.'s feelings are worked up to a high pitch of excitement; and he thinketh day and night of taking the earliest opportunity of seeing him the second time. The following

*M. meets Narendra
(Vivekananda)*

Sunday, between three and four in the afternoon, M. cometh again to the Temple in company with Nepal Babu of Barahanagar.

The Master is in the same room, seated on the lounge. The room is filled with devotees. It is Sunday and they are free. M. doth not as yet know any of them. After saluting him with folded hands, M. taketh his seat on one side. The Master, smiling, talketh to the devotees present.

M. observeth that the Master's words are specially addressed to a young man called Narendra (Vivekananda), who is now only nineteen years old. He is a college student and a member of the Sadharan Brahma-Samaj. His words are full of spirit. His eyes are large and dark. They beam intelligence and tell of the great soul within. He hath the looks of one that loveth the Lord.

Vivekananda: How to deal with bad men

M. seeth that the subject of the talk is the conduct of worldly men. Such people throw ridicule upon those that seek God. The question is, how to deal with such people.

Master (smiling, to Narendra):—What dost thou say, Narendra? Worldly men will say all manner of things against the godly. When the elephant wendeth its way through the public road it hath, indeed, at its back a lot of curs and other animals running after, barking and clamoring. But it turneth a deaf ear to all their clamors and goeth its way. Suppose, my boy, people speak ill of thee behind thy back. What wouldst thou think of them?

Narendra:—I would look upon them as a lot of curs barking after me.

Master (laughing):—No, my dear, go not thou so far as that. (*Laughter.*) Know that God maketh His abode in all things—animate and inanimate. Hence, everything is an object of our worship, be it man or beast, bird, plant or mineral, etc.

In our dealings with men all that we can do is to take heed to ourselves that we mix with good people and avoid the company of bad people. True that there is God even in a tiger; but surely it doth not follow that one should fall on its neck and hug the brute to one's bosom. (*Laughter.*)

One may say, 'Why should I run away before the tiger, seeing that it is God in one form?' To that the answer is, that those who wish you to run away from the tiger are also God manifest in other forms. Why should we pay no regard to *their* words?

In a certain forest there lived a holy man who had a number of disciples. One day he taught them, saying, 'God is in all things; knowing this we should bend our head by way of adoration before every object in this world.' It chanced that a disciple of his one day went out to get firewood for the sacrificial fire. All on a sudden he heard a shout raised, 'Get out of the way, get out of the way! Here is an elephant rushing about!' At this everybody ran away except this disciple. He thus reasoned within himself, saying, 'The elephant is God in one form; why shall I flee away?' He kept standing where he was, saluted the elephant as the Lord and began to chant His praise. The driver of the elephant continued crying, 'Run away, run away;' but the disciple would not stir a single step. At last the elephant seized him with his trunk and cast him away on one side. The poor boy, stunned, scratched and torn, lay bleeding on the ground.

The preceptor heard of this and came with his other disciples to the spot. They carried him home and applied restoratives. When he came to himself they asked him, 'Well, why didst thou not quit the spot when thou heardest the man shout that the mad elephant was coming on?' The boy answered, 'Master once said to us that it is God who revealeth himself in man and other living creatures. I looked on the Elephant-God and thus did not care to quit the spot.' The preceptor said, 'My son, it is indeed true that it was the Elephant-God that was coming, but the Driver-God, did he not warn thee to get out of the way. It is true God manifesteth Himself forth in everything. But if He is manifest in the elephant, is He not equally, if not more, manifest in the driver? Tell me, then, why thou didst not pay heed to *his* warning voice.'

In the Sacred Books it is written, 'Water is the same as God Himself.' But some water is fit to be used for divine service; some only for washing up plates or dirty linen, or for washing the face and the hands after meals. The latter may not be used for drinking purposes or divine service! In the same way there are good men and bad men, lovers of God and those that do not love God. In the hearts of them all, indeed, God abideth. But one cannot have dealings with bad men and with those who love not God. Our relation with them cannot be very close. With some of them, only a nodding acquaintance is all that is possible. With many others even

that is out of question. It is meet to live apart from such people.

Narendra:—Should we hold our peace, if bad people come to offend us or do actually offend?

Vivekananda: Doctrine of Non-Resistance *Master*:—A person living in society, especially as a householder, should *make a show* of the spirit of resisting evil for purposes of self-defence. At the same time care should be taken to avoid paying back evil for evil.

In a field there came together certain cow-boys keeping watch over their cattle. In that field there was a terrible, venomous serpent. One day a holy man was coming that way. The boys came running to him and said, 'Your Holiness, please go not that way. A tremendous snake is over there.' 'My children,' said the holy man, 'Thank you, but I am not afraid of your snake. I know holy texts¹ which will keep me from harm of all kinds.' So saying he wended his way in that direction. The boys did not go with him,—they were so much afraid of the snake. At the sight of the holy man, the snake came running towards him with its hood raised. He muttered a holy text and the snake fell at his feet, helpless like an earthworm. The holy man said, 'Well, why dost thou go about doing evil to others? Let me give thee a holy Name (of God). Repeat this always and thou shalt learn to love God; thou shalt see Him at the end; thy desire to do evil to others will at the same time leave thee.' The snake had the holy Name whispered into his ear. He bowed down before his preceptor and said, 'Lord, what more must I do in order to get salvation?' 'Repeat the holy Name,' said the preceptor, and do harm to no living thing. I will come once more and see how thou farest.' So saying he went away.

Some days passed in this way. The cow-boys noticed that the snake would not bite. They pelted it with stones. But it looked meek and inoffensive like an earthworm. One day one of the boys held it by the tail, and whirling it round and round, dashed it several times against the ground. The snake vomited blood, was stunned and did not move. The boys thought it was dead and left the place.

Late at night the snake came to life. Softly and with great difficulty it moved and dragged itself into its hole. Its body was broken. In the course of a few days, it was reduced to a

¹ Mantras.

skeleton, and it was many, many days before it could come out of its hole to look for food. For fear of the boys it used to come out only by night. Since its initiation by the holy man, it had ceased to do harm to any creature of God. It tried to live as well as it could upon leaves of plants and things of that kind.

The holy man¹ soon came back. He looked about, seeking the snake; but in vain. At last the boys said that it was no more. It was hard for the holy man to believe this, for he knew that the Name of the Lord which it repeated carried such spiritual power that death was out of question before the problem of life had been solved, *i. e.*, before he had *seen* God. So he made a search and called out to it repeatedly by its name. The snake came out of the hole and bowed down before its preceptor². They talked to each other thus:—

Holy man:—Hallo, how dost thou do?

Snake:—Thank thee, Lord; I am quite well, God willing.

Holy man:—How is it that thou art brought down to mere skin and bones? What is the matter?

Snake:—Lord, in obedience to thy bidding, I try to do no harm to any living creature. I live upon leaves and things of the kind. It is just possible that I have thus got thinner than before.

Holy man:—Well, I am afraid it is not the food alone that hath brought thee to this pass! There must be something else to do with it. Just think it over a little.

Snake:—Ah, now I see it all. The cow-boys one day dealt with me rather severely. They held me by the tail and dashed me against the ground with great force—several times. They, poor fellows, had no idea what a great change had come over me! How should they know that I was not going to bite anybody or do the least harm to anybody?

Holy man:—For shame, my dear! Thou must be an idiot not to know how to save thyself from being thus handled by thine enemies. Why didst thou not *hiss* at those who wanted to kill thee, so as to put them in fear of thee?

Sri Ramakrishna then went on, saying, 'So raise the hood and hiss, but *bite* not. There is no harm in hissing at bad men, your enemies. Keep them off by showing that thou art ready to give tit for tat—that thou knowest how to resist evil. Only one must take care not to pour out one's venom into the

¹ Mahatma. ² Guru.

blood of one's enemy. Resist not evil by doing evil in return. All that thou mayest do is to make a show of resistance with a view to self-defence.'

A disciple.—Sir, why are there bad men in God's world? Why is there evil in this world?

Master.—In God's creation, diversity is the general rule. Hence there is evil as well as good. Again, there are various kinds of objects, e. g., animals, plants and minerals. Amongst beasts, again, there are those which are gentle and inoffensive and also those like the tiger which are ferocious and live upon other animals. Some trees bring forth good fruit, sweet as nectar; while others bring forth poisonous fruit which causes death. Likewise there are good men and bad men, holy men and those that are sinful; just and devout men and those that are attached to the world.

Men may be divided into four classes:—(1) Worldly men¹ (those that are bound in the fetters of the world); (2) The Seekers² after Liberation; (3) The Liberated³; (4) The Ever-Free⁴.

The *Ever-Free*.—Narada, the Holy Sage and others: These abide in the world for the good of other men—for teaching the Truth unto others.

The *Worldly* are those that are attached to the little things of this world—money, honors, titles, sensual pleasures, power. They forget God and never give a thought unto Him.

The *Seekers after Liberation* do their best to avoid the world made up of 'Lust and Gold' as it is. But it is given to a few amongst them to find what they seek, viz., Liberation.

The *Liberated* are those that are not influenced by either 'Lust' or 'Gold.' Holy men are examples. In their mind, there is not a trace of attachment to things of this world. They meditate always on the Hallowed Feet of the Lord.

Suppose a net is cast into a tank. Some of the fishes are much too clever for the fisherman and take care never to be caught in the net. These may be counted on one's fingers, and to these may be likened the Ever-Free.

But most of the fishes are caught in the net. Of these some try their best to make their escape. These are the Seekers after Liberation. But of these a couple or two only are able to leap out of the net into the water. We often see such

¹ Baddha. ² Mumukshu. ³ Mukta. ⁴ Nitya.

fishes; they leap out with a splash, the fisherman as well as others shouting, 'Look! Look! there is a big fish fleeing away.'

But most of the fishes are not able to get out of the net. And what is more, they do not care to get out! They would rather rush into the mud at the bottom of the tank, head foremost, entangled in the net as they are, and there lie down still, thinking all the while, 'We are all quite safe and secure and we need not fear any longer.' The poor things know not that the fisherman will in a short while draw the net to land full of the fishes. To these last may be compared the 'Worldly.' They feel secure in their muddy homes; but, alas! they are entangled in the meshes of the world, to be soon deprived of the Water of Life and hauled up to the land to be killed!

The bondage of the world is the bondage brought about by 'Lust and Gold.' Worldly men are bound hand and foot. They think they will find peace and rest and security in the mud at the bottom of the tank, *i. e.*, in 'Lust and Gold.' They know not that it is these which cause death of the soul. When one of these 'Worldly' men is on his death-bed, his wife saith to him, 'Thou departest from this world: but what property leavest thou to me?' The wife speaketh not a word about the Lord. The dying man himself is so much attached to the world that the light of a burning lamp in the sick-room troubleth him and he crieth out, 'Who is there? See that more than one wick is not burnt and that more oil is not wasted than is absolutely needed.'

The worldly man thinketh not of God. If there is time at his disposal and he hath nothing to do, he will either talk empty twaddle or do things that are of no use to anybody. Upon being asked, he saith, 'To sit still I am not able. Hence am I setting a hedge.' Time hangeth heavy on his hands. So he must play at cards or dice! (*Pin-drop silence in the room.*)

A disciple:—Sir, a man of the world,—how may he be saved? Is there any remedy for him?

Sri Ramakrishna:—Certainly. Let him seek the company of holy men. Let him from time to time go into retirement away from his family, in order to meditate upon the Lord. Let him practise Discrimination. Let him pray earnestly unto the Divine Mother, saying, 'Oh! Mother, grant unto me Love and Faith.' Once thou gettest Faith, thy work is done. *Oh! there is nothing higher than Faith.*

(*To Kedar*) Thou must have heard of the power of Faith. Ramachandra was God Incarnate; it is said that He had to build a bridge across the sea (lying between India and Ceylon¹). But Hanuman, the great lover of the Lord, had great faith in the power of His Name. He repeated that Name and behold! he found himself at once on the other side. To show the power of Faith the Lord Himself had to build a bridge while the devotee who had faith in His Name needed no bridge to carry him across. (*The Master and the disciples all laugh.*)

Another devotee of the Lord wrote down the name of Rama on a leaf and handed it to a person who wanted to go across the sea, saying, 'Thou needst not be afraid, my friend; have Faith and go across walking over the deep, but mind thou showest not any want of faith; for, then, thou shalt be drowned.' The man had the leaf tied up within the folds of his cloth. He went his way walking over the sea. As he went on, he was seized with the desire of looking into the writing. He brought out the leaf and read the name of Rama (God) written large on it. Upon this, he thought to himself, 'Only the name of Rama! Is this all?' But then with the loss of faith, down went he under the water!

Let one have but Faith in the Lord and depend upon it, he will get salvation;—no matter if he hath committed the vilest sins—the murder of Brahmans, women and the rest! Let him but say, 'Lord, I shall not do so again,' and take His Hallowed Name.

And the Master sang:—

O Mother, let me but die with Thy Holy Name on my lips. Then shall I see whether or not Thou givest me Liberation at the end.

The Sinner and the Power of God's Name With Thy Name on my lips, I care not if I have killed holy men² and women and the child in the mother's womb! I care not if I have been guilty of drinking wine! Little do I care for these, even for one moment! Taking Thy Name I can indeed aspire for the high place of Him³ whom Thou hast appointed to be the Creator of the Universe.

The Master speaketh of Narendra who is seated before him: You all see this boy, so gentle and unassuming. A naughty boy is gentle enough in the presence of his father; but he is quite another when running about and playing at the *Chandni*. A boy like him belongeth to the class of the *Ever-perfect*. (By the *Chandni*

¹ Lanka. ² Brahmans. ³ Brahma.

the Master meant the long porch of the Temple next to the landing ghat.)

These are never bound in the fetters of the world. When they get a little older in years, they feel an awakening within their heart and walk Godward at once. They come down into the world as teachers of mankind. They love not the things of this world,—their mind never goeth after 'Lust and Gold.'

There is mention made in the *Vedas* of a bird called '*Homa*.' It liveth high up above the clouds away from the din and bustle of this world. There it bringeth forth its egg which beginneth to drop as soon as it is brought forth. For days together it goeth on falling; and it is hatched during the fall. Such is the height that the young which cometh out of the egg goeth on falling until it getteth its wings and eyes!

Then it is that it cometh to know that it is being brought down with a tremendous force and that the mere touch of the earth will bring on death. Afraid of being thus dashed against the ground it shooteth upwards in quest of its mother who liveth high up above the clouds.

The Parent-bird is the Divine Mother who abideth above with the Infinite—high up above and beyond the world of the senses. Those of Her children that are nearest to Her are these pure young souls to whom life continueth to be a mystery until their eyes are opened and they can fly upon their wings. When their eyes are opened they see clearly the death that is before them—if they only touch the world and the things of the world,—money, honors, sensual pleasures, etc.! Just as their eyes are opened, they change the course of their life and turn Godward, knowing that their Divine Mother is the only *Reality* in Whom they live and breathe and have their being, and to Whom they must always look up for Light and Life.

Narendra left the room.

Kedar, Prankrishna, M. and many others were still in the chamber with the Master. The Master still talketh of Narendra and smileth as he talketh.

Master (to the disciples):—Ye see, Narendra excelleth in everything, be it singing, playing on musical instruments, or reading and writing. The other day he had a discussion with Kedar. But Kedar's words were chopped off by him as it were, as soon as they were spoken. (*The Master and all others present laugh.*)

(To M.) Is there any book in English on the art of reasoning?

M.:—Yes, Sir, it is called Logic.

Master:—Well, give me some idea of this book.

It is a sore trial for M. He taketh courage and saith:—

‘One part of Logic deals with reasoning from general propositions to particulars. Thus:—

All men are mortal,
Pandits are men,
∴ Pandits are mortal.

Another division deals with reasoning from particulars to general propositions. Thus:—

This crow is black,
That crow is black,
That other crow is black; and so on.
Hence, all crows are black.

The reasoning by Simple Enumeration as above is however open to fallacy for it may be that in some unknown lands there may be found *white* crows.’

* * * * *

Sri Ramakrishna did not appear to pay much attention to these words. It seemed as if they fell flat upon his ear. Thus the conversation on the subject came to an end.

The meeting has broken up. The disciples are walking about the garden. M. is walking by himself at the ‘Cluster of the five trees’¹.

It is about five in the afternoon. Coming back to the verandah, north of the Master’s chamber, M. cometh upon a strange sight. The Master is standing still. Narendra is singing a hymn. He and three or four other disciples all remain standing with the Master in their midst.

M. is charmed with the song. Never in his life hath he heard a sweeter voice. Looking at the Master, M. marvels and becomes speechless. The Master standeth motionless with eyes that move not. It is hard to say whether he doth breathe!

‘This state of divine ecstasy,’ saith a disciple, ‘is called *Samadhi*.’ M. has never seen this, nor has he ever heard of this. He thinketh within himself, ‘Is it possible that the thought of God maketh a man forget the world? How great

¹ Panchavati.

must be his faith and his love for God who is put into such a state! The song ran as follows:—

SONG

1. O my mind, meditate thou upon the Lord, the essence of Spirit, Him Who is free from all impurity.

Unparalleled is His glory, charming is His shape, dear is He now to the heart of devotees!

2. Behold, His Beauty is enhanced by fresh manifestations of Love! It putteth into the shade the luster of a million moons put together! Verily, the lightning flasheth out of this Glorious Beauty, and the Blessed Vision causeth the hairs to stand on end.

The Master is deeply touched when this line of the song is chanted forth. The hairs on his body actually stand on end. His eyes are bedewed with tears of joy. The smiles on his lips show the ecstatic delight that he feeleth at the sight of the Blessed Vision. Yes, He must be enjoying a vision of unequalled Beauty which putteth into the shade the refulgence of a million moons! Is this God-vision? If so, what must be the intensity of devotion and of faith, of the discipline and the austerities which may bring such a vision within reach of mortal man?

The song went on —

3. Worship His holy Feet on the lotus of thy heart.

Behold the Beloved Form of matchless beauty now that the mind enjoyeth peace and the eyes are filled with Divine Love.

That bewitching smile once more! Behold! his body is motionless. His eyes are half closed and fixed, as it were, upon vacancy. It seemeth as if he beholdeth some strange Vision—of things that are beyond the sense-world—and is thus filled with Ecstasy!

The song cometh to its close. Narendra singeth forth the last lines—

Inspired with Love Divine be immersed, O my mind, in the sweetness of Him Who is the Fountain of Absolute Intelligence and Bliss.

* * * * *

M. wendeth his way back home with this unique picture in his mind of *Samadhi* and of the ecstasy of Divine Love. The sweet music which went to his heart bubbleth up, as it were, from time to time as he goeth along:—

'Be incessantly merged, O my mind, in the sweetness of His Love and Bliss. Yes. Be drunken with the joy of the Lord!'

CHAPTER IV.

The next day is a holiday and M. calls again at about three in the afternoon.

The Master is seated in his chamber. The mat is spread on the floor. Narendra, Bhavanath and one or two other disciples are seated—all young men, nineteen or twenty years old. Smiles, as before, play about his lips. He is seated on the lounge and converseth with the boys.

M. entereth into the chamber. Looking at him, the Master laugheth and laugheth. He crieth out, 'Look! he is come again.'

The boys all join in the merriment.

M. falleth down at his feet. On previous occasions he saluted the Master with folded hands,—after the manner of persons who receive an English education. But to-day he hath learnt how to fall down at his Feet. He taketh his seat and the Master telleth Narendra and the other disciples what maketh him laugh. He saith:—

'A peacock had once a small quantity of opium given unto it at four in the afternoon of a certain day. Well, punctually at four in the afternoon the next day, who should come in but the self-same peacock longing for a repetition of the favor, *viz.*, another dose of the opium.' (*Laughter.*)

M. thinketh to himself, 'He hath indeed said well. I go back home, leaving the mind behind with this God-Man, the like of whom I have never seen. Night and day one thought presseth me,—"When shall I see him again?" It seemeth as if somebody draweth me unto this place. It is impossible for me to go elsewhere and to give up the idea of coming here.'

Thus thinking, M. watcheth the Master amusing himself in the company of the boys. It seemeth as if a running fire of chaff is being kept up by the Master, and as if these boys are of his own age and he was playing with them. Peals of laughter, with brilliant flashes of humor, follow one after another, calling up the picture of a fair where the Joy of the Lord may be had for sale.

M. marvels at the thought of this unique character. He thinketh to himself, 'Was it this person who was in a state of *Samadhi* yesterday and who gave us an example of Divine Love never seen before? Was it he who took me to task the first day because I had entered into the married state? Was it he who declared that God is *with form* and that likewise

God is *without form*? Was it he again who declared that God alone is the only Reality, all else is transitory—now is, but the next moment vanisheth out of our sight? Was it, indeed, he who said the other day, 'Do thy work in this world unattached, with thy mind always turned to thy Home—the Abode of the Everlasting, the Abode of our Divine Mother; even as the maid-servant doeth her work—with her mind always turned to her country home, where her own people, her dear ones, reside?'

In the midst of his merriment the Master looketh on M. from time to time. M. is seated speechless, motionless, gazing up into his sweet face all the time!

He saith to Ram Lall, 'This young man here (*i. e.* M.) is a little older than the boys; he is thus somewhat grave. He holdeth his peace, as thou seest, all the time that the boys are laughing and making themselves merry.' M. is about 27 years old.

The Master talketh of *Hanuman*, one of the devout characters mentioned in the *Ramayana*. 'How ready is *Hanuman*,' saith he, 'to give up everything for the sake of the Lord—money, honors, pleasures of the body and the rest!'

Renunciation

The Master singeth—

SONG

Do I stand in need of sweet fruits? O, no! The Fruit that I have got hath made my life fruitful—the fruit of Liberation borne by the Divine Tree¹ planted in my heart!

I sit down at the foot of the Celestial Tree¹ called the Lord² of the Universe: I get whatever fruit I want from that Tree. Talking of fruits, let me assure thee once for all that I am not one who will accept any fruits that the world can give!

He singeth of *Hanuman's* renunciation—of the world and its pleasures—and as he singeth, loseth all sense-consciousness.

He is now in a state of *Samadhi*—the superconscious or God-conscious state. The body is again motionless! the eyes are again fixed! He is seated just as we see him in the photograph.

The boys were only a moment ago laughing and making merry! Now they all look grave. Their eyes are fixed steadfastly on the Master's face. They marvel at the unheard-of wonderful change that hath come over the Master. M. seeth the Master in *Samadhi* for the second time.

¹ Kalpa. ² Rama.

It taketh him long to come back to the sense world. His limbs now begin to lose their stiffness. His face beameth with smiles, the organs of sense begin to come back each to its own work. Tears of joy stand at the corner of his eyes. He chanteth the sacred name of Rama (God Incarnate). M. thinketh to himself, 'Was it this God-Man who was only a few moments back sporting with the boys like a five-year old child?'

He hath returned to his former state and saith to M. and Narendra, 'I desire to hear you both talk in English and question and reason amongst yourselves.' At the words, both M. and Narendra laugh. They talk, but not in English. For M. to take part in a discussion in the presence of the Master is out of the question; the chamber of his mind which furnisheth materials for such things hath been, so to speak, closed once for all. The Master presseth them once more, but the talk in English doth not come about.

It is five in the afternoon. The disciples will go back to their homes and they all leave the Temple except Narendra and M., and Narendra will stay with the Master to-night. He will wash his face and his hands and feet; he goes, pitcher in hand, towards the Jhau trees and the goose-tank,— both situated in the northern part of the Temple compound. M. paces up and down the garden walks thinking of the extraordinary Man whom it hath been his good fortune to meet. Walking round about the Kuthi and coming up to the goose-tank, he is surprised to find Sri Ramakrishna talking with Narendra alone by the side of the tank. They stand on the landing of the steps leading to the tank-water. Narendra hath washed and standeth talking, pitcher in hand.

*With some of his
members nearest to his
heart*

'Behold,' saith the Master, smiling, 'thou art a new visitor; let not thy visits be few and far between. During the "first love!" the meetings between lovers come oftener than at other times. Is not that so?' (*Narendra and M. laugh.*)

The Master smileth and goeth on: 'Well, then, thou shouldst come here oftener. What sayest thou?'

Narendra smileth and saith, 'Yes, Sir, I shall try to come.'

The Master turneth back and proceedeth in a southerly direction towards his chamber.

Narendra and M. walk with him on either side. Coming near the Kuthi, he saith to M., 'Dost thou know how peasants buy their bullocks for the plough? Oh, they are very expert

in these matters and know very well how to choose good bullocks from bad. They know whether the beasts have got any mettle or not. They touch the tail and the effect is miraculous; those that have no mettle will offer no resistance, but lie down on the ground as if they were satisfied with everything. Those that have mettle, on the other hand, will jump about as if protesting against the liberty taken with their body. The peasants will choose the latter. Now Narendra is a bullock of this latter class; he hath true mettle within.'

The Master smileth and goeth on, saying, 'But there are many who have no grit in them—who are like popped rice put in milk; soft and loose! no strength within! no capacity for sustained effort! no power of will!'

It is evening. The Master meditates upon the Lord in his own chamber.

To M. he saith, 'Wilt thou go and find Narendra who is walking about in the Temple-garden, and converse with him? Thou art to tell me what sort of a boy he is.'

It is evening and the temple priests worship the Deity, waving the lights and flowers and other sacred offerings before the Holy Images. M. meeteth Narendra again on the landing of the river-ghat west of the *Chandni*. They were, as they said, very glad to meet each other. Narendra said, 'I belong to the Sadharan Brahma-Samaj! I am a college student, etc.'

It is getting late and M. will take his leave. Something, however, seemeth to hold him back. Leaving Narendra, he looketh about for Sri Ramakrishna. The charm of His songs hath gone to his heart and he longeth to hear more from his lips.

Not finding him in his chamber he setteth his face to go to the theater-hall¹, just in front of the temple of the Divine Mother.

The Master paceth up and down the hall alone, in the dim religious light within. Within the temple is the Image of the Mother of the Universe with a brilliant light burning on each side. In the hall the dim light that burneth seemeth to prepare a soft mixture of light and darkness so very good for religious contemplation.

M. was beside himself with joy when he heard Sri Ramakrishna chanting the holy Name of the Divine Mother. He was spell-bound!—like one helpless under the spell of the exorcist!

¹ Nata-Mandir.

*What thinkest thou
of Me?*

He now draweth near the Master and saith with great diffidence and humility, 'Sir, are any more hymns going to be sung to-night?'

The Master thinketh for a while within himself and saith, 'No, there will be no more songs to-night. But, look here, I am going to Balaram's house at Calcutta one of these days. Come there and thou shalt hear songs (from me).

M. (to Master):—As the Master pleaseth.

Master:—Dost thou know the house? Dost thou know Balaram Bose?

M.:—No, Sir; I do not.

Master:—Balaram Bose! At Bosepara?

M.:—Very well, Sir; I shall make enquiries.

(Sri Ramakrishna walketh with M. up and down the hall.)

Master:—Well, let me ask thee a question. *What thinkest thou of me?*

M. holdeth his peace—deep in thought!

Master:—What thinkest thou of me? I mean, how much, how many *annas* of True Knowledge have I got?

M.:—The meaning of *annas* of Knowledge is not clear to me. All I can say is, *It hath up till now never been given unto me to see such marvellous wisdom and love of the Lord and faith and renunciation and communion with God and catholicity all in one and the same person. Never—and nowhere else!*

The Master laugheth.

M. taketh his leave and boweth down before the Master, bending his head and falling at his feet. He cometh as far down as the northern gate, but turneth back as if he is put in mind of something.

He cometh back to the Master, who is still pacing the hall all alone.

Yes; walking up and down the hall in that dim light—half light, half darkness. Alone,—by himself; companionless! So walketh alone in the depth of the forest the king of animals—the lion—with his Self, the only Companion of his solitude. And rejoicing in that Companionship¹! Verily doth the King of men rejoice to go about companionless in the wilderness of the world!

Awestruck, speechless, doth M. look on the Master! He thinketh to himself, 'Here is Man's Ideal realized indeed! Man scorning the ground and communing with the Infinite!'

¹ Atmaram.

Master (to *M.*):—How is it that thou comest back?

M.:—Sir, I am afraid it is some rich man's house to which Thou askest me to go. Well, there may be porters and other people standing in my way. I think I had better not go. It is here that I should like to meet thee always.

Master:—Why, my dear Sir?—thou shalt mention my name! Say that thou desirest to see *me*; and doubtless somebody will lead thee to me.

M.:—As the Master pleaseth.

Saying this, *M.* boweth down again and departed.

SECTION II.

1882

VISIT TO PANDIT ISHWARA CHANDRA VIDYÁSÁGAR

CHAPTER I.

Present:—Vidyáságar, Bhavanath, M., Hazra and many others.

The Master had a great desire to see Pandit Ishwara Chandra Vidyáságar. One afternoon, he was seen taking a carriage and coming with his disciples all the way from Dakshinshwara, a distance of about six miles, to see the Pandit in his house at Badurbagan, a district in Calcutta.

It was Saturday, the 5th of August, 1882, about 5. P. M.; the seventh lunar day in the dark fortnight of the month of *Shrabana*.

The carriage drew up in front of the door of the Pandit's house. The Master alighteth, supported by M. Before reaching the staircase that led up to the Pandit's library, which was also his drawing-room, he said to M. with some concern; "I say, dost thou think I ought to button my coat?"

M. answered, saying, "Oh don't trouble thyself, Lord, on that account. Things of this kind are not at all binding upon thee."

The Master, childlike, seemed to be convinced, for he paid no further attention to it. He looked as teachable as a five-year-old child!

The party was then led upstairs into a room next to the landing with the door looking out towards the south. In this room the Pandit was seated on a chair, facing the south. A table, after the European fashion, with books and papers lying about, was before him, as usual.

M. then announced the Master's arrival and at once introduced him to the Pandit who stood up to receive him. The Master stood with his face to the west, and with one hand resting on the table. He looked on the Pandit in silence. But his sweet, child-like, radiant face was wreathed in smiles.

There was some company present, including the Pandit's friends and pupils. One of them was a boy who had come to ask for a free studentship in connection with one of the schools of which the Pandit was founder and proprietor.

Standing and thus looking at the Pandit, the Master, as usual, lost all sense-consciousness. He had passed into the state of *Samadhi*. After a while, taking his seat he said, as was his wont, "I want some water to drink." Thereupon Vidyasagar inquired of M. whether the Master would like to take some sweetmeats¹ also, which he had just received from Burdwan. Finding no objection, the Pandit went into his inner apartments and soon came back with the water and the sweetmeats. He placed them before the Master. The disciples also partook of them.

When they offered to one of the disciples, Vidyasagara said, "Oh he is a child of this house. Never mind him." Thereupon the Master said, "Yes, this young man is good. He is like the river *Falgu* with an apparently dried-up bed, but with an active, invisible current underneath. Internally he is full² of pith and marrow."

Master (to Vidyasagar):—This day I am at last fortunate enough to come down to the ocean³. Up till now I came across canals, marshes, or, at most, rivers. (*Laughter.*) (Here the Master referred to the literal meaning of the word Vidyasagar, which meaneth the 'Ocean of knowledge.')

Vidyasagar:—Then, Sir, thou art welcome to take home some salt water from thy ocean. (*Laughter.*)

Master:—No, my dear Sir, thou art surely not the salt ocean. Thou art not the ocean of *Avidya* (Ignorance which leadeth one away from God). Thou art the ocean of milk, the ocean of *Vidya* (True knowledge leading Godward). (*Laughter.*)

Vidyasagar:—Well, Sir, I am afraid thou mayst say *that*. (*Laughter.*)

Master:—Thy nature is made of the *sattva* element of man's nature which leadeth to Illumination or True Knowledge. Only thy *sattva* is in that phase which maketh thee active and devoted to the doing of good works. Charity⁵, kindness⁶ towards others are good, if practised without attachment. So practised and with devotion⁷ they will lead to God.

Further, I should say that thou deservest to be called a Perfect Man; for has not thy kindness for others made thee

¹ Mithai. ² Antassara. ³ Sagar. ⁴ Vidya. ⁵ Dana. ⁶ Daya. ⁷ Bhakti.

*The Master in
Samadhi*

*Knowledge which
leads Godward⁴*

*Work without
Attachment*

soft and tender of heart? Bear in mind, potatoes and other vegetables do not get tender until they are *Siddha* (well-boiled). (*Laughter.*)

(The word *Siddha* may mean either 'a perfect man' or 'well-boiled.' Hence the pun on the word by the Master.)

Vidyasagar:—But *Kalai* pulse pounded to pulp when *Siddha* (well-boiled) gets hard and is by no means tender. Is it not so? (*Laughter.*)

Master (laughing):—Well, my dear Sir, thou art no such thing; I mean, thou art not a mere *pandit*,—dry and hard and good for nothing.

In the Hindu almanac, it is mentioned that on a particular day there will be 20 Adas* of water, But thou shalt not be able to squeeze out of the almanac a single drop!

*The Master on the
Value of Mere
Book-learning*

Our so-called learned men will talk big. They will talk of Brahman, God the Absolute, of Jnana Yoga, Philosophy, Ontology, and the rest. But there are very few that realize the things they talk about.

The highest learning¹ is that by which we know God.

All else—the sacred books², Philosophy, Logic, Grammar, etc., etc., as such, only load and puzzle the mind. They are good only when they lead to the *Highest Learning*.

In one sense there is no use going through the whole of the Lord's Song³.

Say "Gita," "Gita," ten times. That is sufficient. For said ten times, it cometh to be "*tyagi*," "*tyagi*." Now *tyagi* meaneth a person giving up the world for the sake of God—riches, honors, work with attachment, sensual pleasures, etc.

In one word, the Gita sayeth, "Give up." The ideal Sannyasin (ascetic) will give up the secular work and the fruit of all works.

The ideal house-holder⁴ will give up the world from the mind, *i. e.*, he will give up the fruits of all works for the sake of the Love⁵ of God.

Thus the substance of the Gita is, 'O man, love the Lord alone—give up everything for the sake of the Lord.'

A holy man had a manuscript book with him. Somebody asked him what it was about. The saint opened the book

¹ Paravidya. ² Shastras. ³ Gita. ⁴ Grihastha. ⁵ Bhakti.

* Adas are measures of capacity.

before the man, who was surprised to find that on every page was written only the name of God—the words, 'Om Rama!'

Chaitanya Deva, in the course of his pilgrimage through the Deccan, came across a certain devotee who was in tears all the while that a Pandit was reading from the Gita. Now this devotee knew not letters. He could not follow a single text of the Gita. Upon being asked why he shed tears, he replied, 'It is indeed true that I do not know a word of the Gita. But all the while that it was being read I could not help seeing with my inner eye the beautiful form of my Lord Sri Krishna seated before Arjuna in the field of Kurukshetra and saying all those things that are said in the Gita. This it was which filled my eyes with tears of joy and love.'

This man who knew not letters had the Highest Learning, for he had a pure love¹ for God and could realize Him.

THE MASTER ON JNANA YOGA; THE VEDANTA OR ADVAITA
PHILOSOPHY, OR PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNCONDITIONED

Master:—Well, I was talking of *Vidya*. But Brahman is above and beyond *Vidya* (the relative Knowledge which leadeth Godward), as well as *Avidya* (the world which keepeth all beings away from the knowledge of God).

(a) *Brahman of the Vedanta—The Absolute and the Unconditioned*

The Knowledge leading Godward is the last, topmost step of the stairs leading up to the roof. The Absolute is the roof.

The phenomenal world² is made up of that³ which leadeth Godward and that⁴ which doth not. Thus God the Absolute⁵ is above and beyond the phenomenal world.

The Absolute is unattached to good or evil. It is like the light of a lamp. You may read the Holy Scriptures⁶ with the help of that light. It is equally open to you to forge a document with criminal intent in the same light.

(b) *The Absolute is Perfectly unattached: The Problem of Good and Evil solved*

Again, the Absolute is like a snake. The snake hath poison in its fangs. But it is none the worse for it. The poison doth not affect it or cause its death. It is poison in relation to other creatures whom it may come to bite.

Whatever misery, whatever sin, whatever evil we find in this world is misery, sin and evil relatively to us. God the

¹ Bhakti. ² Maya. ³ Vidya. ⁴ Avidya. ⁵ Brahman. ⁶ Bhagavat.

Absolute is not affected thereby. He is above and beyond all these things.

Evil in creation is not evil to the Absolute and the Unconditioned any more than the venom in the fangs of the snake is venom to the snake. He is above and beyond Good and Evil.

Yes, that Being is perfectly unattached. He is not to be judged by any human standard of good and evil. His sun sheddeth light equally on the evil and the good.

Everything—even the revealed Scriptures, the Vedas, the Puranas, the Tantras and all other sacred books have, with one sole exception, become, as it were, defiled² like leavings of food, having been uttered by the mouth of human beings. That

One Exception is Brahman. For when one readeth the Vedas and other sacred books one must use the vocal organs and thus cause them (the books) to be in touch with the mouth, so to speak. Thus they may be said to have all been defiled like leavings of food. But no creature in this world has yet been able to give proper and adequate expression to God the Absolute. He is unspeakable, unthinkable, inconceivable!

Vidyasagar:—I must say, here is, indeed, something that I have learnt to-day. The Absolute is the One Substance that has never have defiled by the mouth!

Master:—Yes, that is so. It is a Being not conditioned by anything—Time³, Space⁴, the Law of Causation⁵, etc. How can one give expression to it by any word of mouth?

The Absolute is again like the unfathomable ocean. Nothing can be predicated of it—the Being beyond the bounds of Relativity—of all existence! The last feeble attempt to describe this Being—the attempt made in the Vedas—is to call Him by the name of Bliss⁶ Everlasting!

If thou art asked to describe the ocean, thou standest with thy mouth wide open and canst only stammer out, “Oh what a vast expanse! what a lot of waves! what thundering sound, incessant and eternal!” That is all!

The utmost that Sukadeva and holy sages like him could do was to see and to touch the water of this Immortal Sea, and taste a bit! Had he gone down into that Sea, he would have been merged into It, never to have come back into this world any more!

¹ Avyapadesyam. ² Uchhista. ³ Kala. ⁴ Desa. ⁵ Nimitta. ⁶ Anandam.

Once upon a time, some ants came to a mountain of sugar. The ants, of course, had no idea that it was such a big thing.

(d) *The Great Mystery is Unfathomable by Conditioned Knowledge: Parable of the Ants and the Mountain of Sugar*

They ate up a few particles of the sugar and were filled. Then they took each a particle. As they went their way, they thought the next time they would be able to take away the whole mountain to their place of habitation!

Such, alas, is the condition of man! It is given to some few, indeed, to realize the Supreme Being¹. But, unfortunately, many run away with the idea that they have fully known, fully enjoyed communion with, fully realized, that Infinite Being!

The sugar mountain seemeth to be all but carried home by the ant; for is it not filled and satisfied with its meal? Thus, too, the self-deluded rationalist! He is satisfied with his ounce of reason. *Ergo*, he comprehendeth Brahman!—he knoweth what the Absolute is and what It is not!!!

People talk glibly of the Infinite, the Absolute, the Unconditioned, as if they had a conception of It all!

Sukadeva and other holy sages were at best ants of the larger sort. If we say that they were able to eat up eight or ten particles of the sugar, we have said enough in their favor.

It is just as absurd to say that God the Absolute has been known and comprehended by anybody, as it is to say that a mountain of sugar has been carried home by some ants to be eaten up.

The union between the Undifferentiated (the Universal Soul) and the Differentiated (the individualized soul²) is the goal of the Vedantin.

(e) *The Goal of the Vedantin*

Once upon a time a doll made of salt went up to the sea with a view to measure its depth.

The Parable of the Salt Doll

The salt doll had a sounding line and lead in its hand. It came to the edge of the water and looked on the mighty ocean that was

before it. Up to this point it had continued to be the salt doll that it actually was, keeping its own individuality. But no sooner did it take one step forward, and put its foot to the water, than it became one with the ocean—lost—entirely lost to view! Every particle of the salt doll now melted away in the sea-water. The salt of which it was made had come from

¹ Brahman. ² Jiva.

the ocean, and behold, it came back once more to get reunited to the original salt of the ocean!

The 'Differentiated' once more became one with the 'Undifferentiated.'

The human soul is the salt doll—the Differentiated Individualized Ego. The Absolute, the Unconditioned—is the Infinite Salt Ocean—the Undifferentiated Ego.

The salt doll could not come back and tell of the depth of the Mighty Ocean. Such is he who is fortunate enough to realize God the Absolute in the unfathomable depth of *Samadhi*¹ which wipeth out all individuality. Undifferentiated as he is, he comes not back out of the deep to tell the world the nature of God, the Absolute and Unconditioned. For if it be ever possible, my Mother willing, for the salt doll to come back differentiated again, it must speak in the terms of the finite—in the language of the Differentiated. It must behave as an inhabitant of the relative phenomenal world.

This is why the *Great Mystery* defies all attempts at explanation. The Absolute and Unconditioned cannot be stated in terms of the Relative, the Conditioned. The Infinite cannot be expressed in the terms of the Finite.

A certain father had two sons. When they were of age he wished to put them on the first stage of life—that of the student². To this end they were placed under the care of a preceptor and with him made to go through the Vedas and other sacred books. In this way there passed some days. The father wished now to see how the young men were on with their studies. He sent for them and asked them whether they had read the Vedanta which purports to teach the Highest Knowledge to the aspirant. The sons replied that they had.

Father:—So, my boys, you have read the Vedanta. Well, tell me what sort of a Being is God³, the Absolute?

Eldest son (quoting the Vedas and other Scriptures):—O father, It is not capable⁴ of being expressed by words, or of being known by the mind. O, He is so and so; I know it all. (Here quotes texts from the Vedanta.)

Father:—Very well, that will do. So thou hast known Brahman; thou mayest go about thy business. Now, my boy,

¹ Nirvikalpa. ² Brahmacharin. ³ Brahman. ⁴ Avangmanasogocharam.

let me hear what *thou* hast got to say. What sort of a Being is the Absolute?

The second son, to whom this question was put, hung down his head and sat quite mute. Not a word proceeded out of his mouth, Nor did he make any attempt to speak. He continued in this state for a long time.

The father thereupon said, 'Yes, my boy, thou art after all right. Nothing can be predicated of the Absolute and the Unconditioned! No sooner dost thou talk of Him one way or the other, than thou statest the Infinite in terms of the Finite, the Absolute in terms of the Relative, the Unconditioned in terms of the Conditioned. The silence is more eloquent than the recitation of a hundred texts¹ and the quoting of a hundred authorities.'

Yes, he who hath True Knowledge ceaseth to have anything to do with talking or controversy.. God, the Absolute, is the one Substance to be realized—not described or known. The sign of True Knowledge or Realization is cessation of doubt and therefore of philosophical discussion.

(f) *Realization*

How long doth the clarified butter in a pan set over a cooking-stove go on making a noise? Why, so long as it doth not get to the right degree of heat so as not to have any trace of water left. The clarified butter not sufficiently hot bubbleth up and it giveth forth that well-known sound *kawl, kawl*.

Like the butter melted to the right temperature and not giving any sound is he who has got True Knowledge—that is, who has realized God, the Absolute.

The butter not heated is the aspirant for knowledge. The water with which it hath got mixed must be made to go off by its being set over the fire. This is the *ego* or self which gets very clamorous in the process of being got rid off. As soon as this egoism is shaken off it is *pucka*. No noise, no clamor, (*Laughter.*)

At the same time the impurities all settle down on the bottom of the pan. Worldliness or attachment to women—'carnality and gold'—and their attendant evils (sensuality, work with attachment, etc.) are the impurities.

Again, the Perfect Man is like the pitcher of water filled to the brim. When the pitcher is being filled, it gives out a gurgling sound, *bawk, bawk*. As soon as it is filled the sound

¹ Slokas.

ceases altogether. The sound is reasoning or discrimination leading up, my Mother willing, to True Knowledge. The sound tells us that the pitcher has not been filled up. Discriminating¹, too, proves that the Goal has not yet been reached.

The bee buzzeth so long as it doth not settle down on the flower and begin to drink of the honey. As soon as it tasteth the honey, all buzzing is at an end.

The question now ariseth, how do we explain the relation between a 'Perfect' Preceptor and his disciples? The preceptor must talk with a view to drive away the ignorance of the disciple. This is *discriminating*—which, however, does no harm.

Is Discriminating possible after True Knowledge?

The butter in a pan set over the fire when melted to the right degree of heat hath no doubt ceased to make any sound. But throw in an unbaked cake² into the hot melted butter, and the result is that the heated butter in contact with the water in the cake once more begins to give off sounds. The sound goes on so long as the cake is not sufficiently fried and made ready for eating.

The cake is the disciple. The sound which the heated butter (*i. e.*, preceptor) makes the second time is the process of discrimination which he is called upon to go through in order that the disciple might be brought to light. The cessation of the sound tells us that the preceptor has stopped talking as soon as the disciple hath been illumined.

The result of the foregoing position is that the Higher Self³ alone knoweth the Higher Self. He, the Knowledge Absolute⁴ is capable of being realized by Him, the Knowledge Absolute alone.

(g) The Higher Self alone knoweth the Higher Self

The Differentiated Soul, so long as it continueth to be differentiated and walketh on the lower plane cannot as such realize God, the Absolute.

The Undifferentiated alone realizeth the Undifferentiated.

This is the true meaning of the expression 'God is unknown and unknowable.'

All differentiation takes place in the domain of *Maya*. In other words, *Maya* causes the differentiation. It ends with the cessation of *Maya*.

The World-system (Maya) is unreal

All the facts of the universe—every object, every phenomenon—that comes under creation, preservation and destruction—under body, mind and

¹ Vichara. ² Luchi (Poori). ³ Atman. ⁴ Bodhaswarupam.

soul; under waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, even in meditation¹, etc., all come under *Maya* (the world-system).

Vedanta Philosophy
interpreted by the
School of Sankara

All these are looked upon as unreal by those² that interpret the Vedanta Philosophy after Sankara and the like.

According to these, the Absolute is the only Reality; the universe³ is unreal⁴, *i. e.*, when looked at from the point of view of the Absolute. To the Absolute or the Undifferentiated, the universe and man and other creatures⁵ are unreal, for the only Reality is the Absolute.

When *Maya* is realized as unreal the differentiated ego⁶ has been completely shaken off or effaced, so to speak. There is no trace of the ego left behind. It is perfect *Samadhi*.

It is absurd to say 'the world is unreal' so long as we remain convinced that we ourselves are real! A person who has not realized the Absolute cannot realize that the world is unreal.

On the other hand, a saint returning from *Samadhi* to a lower spiritual plane gets back, my Mother willing, his differentiated, attenuated, though purified, ego.

Getting back his ego the saint is thrown once more upon the world of relativity. So long as his ego is real to him (real relativity), the world is real too, and the Absolute is unreal (unreal relativity)!

He with his differentiated ego restored to him perceiveth the world-system (*Maya*) as real. Only the ego being purified by God-Vision, he seeth the phenomena of the universe as manifestations of the Absolute to the senses. He also seeth the world-system (*Maya*) as either *Vidya* or *Avidya*.

Vidya leadeth Godward. To this belong discrimination⁷, non-attachment⁸, love of God⁹, etc. *Avidya* leadeth away from God. To this belong carnality¹⁰, riches¹¹, honors, work with attachment, etc.

Vijnanis are they who have realized God in *Samadhi* both (1) as Impersonal or the Undifferentiated, and (2) as God personal.

Realization:
Reconciliation between
the Non-dualist and
the Dualist

(Literally *Vijnani* means, he who possesseth an intimate Knowledge of God.)

Vijnanis have realized that the Absolute and Unconditioned it is who, as the Primal Divine Energy, causeth this differentiation¹², namely, God, the world-

¹ Dhyān. ² Vedantists or Jnanis. ³ Jagat. ⁴ Mithya. ⁵ Jiva. ⁶ Aham. ⁷ Viveka
⁸ Vairagya. ⁹ Bhakti. ¹⁰ Kamini. ¹¹ Kanchan. ¹² Bheda.

system, the soul and the universe. They have seen God both within and without and have received this Revelation from Him direct. God (Personal) hath said to them, 'I am the Absolute (*Brahman Nirgunam* of the Upanishads) realized in *Samadhi*. I have caused this differentiation. I am the Origin of the twenty-four categories—of the human soul and the world.'

The Personal God causing this differentiation—creating, sustaining, destroying—hath manifested Himself in various forms to those¹ that seek *the Personal God*² alone, as well as to the *Vijnanis*, as a Person with the three qualities³.

The *Sattva Gunas* (material) of the Divine Person preserveth, the *Rajas* createth, and the *Tamas* destroyeth. These three *Gunas* dwell in the Divine Person. But He is not in them. He is quite unattached.

The *Vijnani*, with his soul (his ego) purified, hath thus seen God, *i. e.*, the Personal side of the Absolute as well as the Impersonal. He hath heard His voice both within and without him. Not only so. He hath talketh to Him. He hath ministered unto Him as father, mother, son, wife, servant, brother, etc. According to the testimony of these perfect men—these *Vijnanis*—therefore the world-system⁴ is not an illusion, but the manifestation to the differentiated but purified ego of a Real Being as a Person who has created (or from whom have been evolved) the human soul and the soul of every created being as well as this universe.

This testimony is infallible because based upon *Revelation*.

The Lord revealed Himself unto the Rishis as both Personal and Impersonal. Such revelation is made from time to time for the salvation of mankind as well as the joy of devotees.

When the Supreme Being is thought of as inactive⁵—neither creating, sustaining nor destroying—I call Him by the name

Brahman or *Purusha* (the Male Principle), the Impersonal God. When I think of Him as active—creating, sustaining, destroying—I call Him by the name of *Shakti*, or *Maya*, or *Praṁṛiti* (the Female Principle), or the Personal God.

Analogies indeed do not go on all fours with the things to be made clear by them. They are at best one-sided⁶, being intended to clear up one particular phase of an unknown thing and bring it out from obscurity.

¹ Bhaktas. ² Shakti or Ishwara. ³ Gunas. ⁴ Maya or Shakti. ⁵ Nishkriya. ⁶ Ekadeshi.

(b) *The only Proof of God, Impersonal or Personal: Revelation*

The Impersonal and the Personal God

Illustration: 'He is a tiger' does not mean he is a tiger in every respect, even to the head, the teeth, the claws, the tail!

The use of analogies It is not meant that he hath claws or a tail like a tiger. The meaning is simply that he is *fearful-looking*.

No analogy can be perfectly satisfactory to explain the relation between the Impersonal and the personal God. It is a thing to be realized.

Yet analogies enable us to catch a glimpse, however faint, of the real state of things regarding matters spiritual which go beyond the bounds of sense-consciousness.

But really the distinction between Brahman (God inactive) or Impersonal God on the one hand and Shakti (God active) or Personal God on the other, is a distinction without a difference.

(i) *One and the same Being*

The Impersonal and the Personal are one and the same Being, even as fire and its burning property are one. Ye cannot conceive the fire apart from its power of burning.

They are one, even as milk and the whiteness of milk are one. One cannot conceive the *milk* without the *whiteness*.

They are one, even as a gem and its brightness are one.

They are one, even as a serpent and its movement in a crooked line are one. Ye cannot conceive the serpent without its serpentine tortuous motion.

CHAPTER II.

THE OMNIPOTENT MOTHER

Master:—As I have already said the Personal God createth, preserveth and destroyeth. She hath made Herself manifest as

Is God Partial?
Are all men equal? powers or phenomena leading Godward¹ and as powers or phenomena leading away from God². Manifestation of this Omnipotent Power³

differs in varying centres of activity. In men as well as in other creatures, this varies. For variety is the law—not sameness.

Vidyasagar:—Is it then the case, Sir, that we come into the world with unequal endowments? Is the Lord partial to a select few?

Master:—Well, I am afraid thou must take the facts of the universe as they are. It is not given to man to see clearly into the ways of the Lord.

¹ Vidya Shakti. ² Avidya Shakti. ³ Shakti.

As the 'Omnipresent'¹ He is present in and through all creatures,—in and through all things—even in the smallest of His creatures, the ant for instance. Yes, God is immanent in all His creatures. But the fact remaineth, that these creatures do vary in their power and endowments.

If that were not the case, how is it that one man is very often a match for ten men and beateth them? We all know how another would run away before a single individual who is more than his match.

As in the physical, so in the moral world; so, too, in the spiritual world. Morality varieth. There, too, are different degrees of spirituality.

Allow me to put it to thee, why is it that thou enjoyest the respect of all far more than many other people? Surely thou dost not mean to say that thou art a phenomenon, that thou hast a couple of horns standing out from the front of thy head and that, therefore, people come to see thee. (*Laughter.*)

No. Variety is the law and my Divine Mother is the One Being manifest as many. Herself of infinite power She hath become differentiated into living creatures², and all other things³ of the universe—of varying powers and endowments—physical, intellectual, moral or spiritual.

And my Divine Mother is no other than the Absolute (the *Brahman* of the *Vedanta*).

And the Master sang:—

PSALM

My Divine Mother: Omnipotent, Unknown, Unknowable

1. Is there anybody who knoweth Kali, My Divine Mother⁴, She Who is the Consort of the Absolute⁵ (or the Spirit of Eternity). Even the six schools of philosophy do not get a sight of Her.

The yogi always meditateth upon Her at the Muladhara* and at the Sahasrara†.

There go about a goose and a gander in this wilderness of lotus and these associate with each other. These are the Spirit of Eternity⁶ and His Consort.

2. My Divine Mother is the most beloved of the Absolute⁷, even as *Sita* is the most beloved of *Rama*.

¹ Vibhu. ² Jiva. ³ Jagat. ⁴ Kali. ⁵ Kala. ⁶ Siva or Brahma. ⁷ Siva.

* The Muladhara is the first lotus with four petals in which the yogi meditates upon Siva and Shakti (God Impersonal and Personal) as manifest in their glory. It is the root of the Sushumna in the spinal cord.

† *Sahasrara* is the lotus with a thousand petals which is the goal of the Shakti waked up by the yogi at the Muladhara. When the Shakti reaches the *Sahasrara* and gets united to Siva or Brahma (the Impersonal God), the result is *Samadhi* in *Brahma-jnana*.

It is the Spirit of Eternity¹ (the Absolute) that knoweth the greatness of my Divine Mother—greatness which is hidden from the view of ordinary beings. Who else can know to such an extent?

3. My Divine Mother giveth birth to the Universe—now think of Her greatness!

She appeareth in Her majesty in each finite being² as an individual just as She pleaseth. She hath Her own way³ in everything.

4. Saith Prasad (the psalmist): 'To think that one can know Her is to think that one can swim across the great, mighty ocean. People only laugh at the idea!'

I understand this well enough by the mind, but alas! my heart⁴ will not see this. It is a dwarf that must aspire to get at the Moon.

At the end of this hymn the Master is once more found to be in that indescribable region of *Samadhi*. The sweet angelic voice hath become still. The outer eyes have become fixed and steadfast. The inner eye looketh within and beholdeth the Vision of Glory. The Blessed Vision the Master enjoyeth for a while. His face shineth with a heavenly luster and at last breaketh into smiles.

The Master in Samadhi: Revelations in Samadhi
Half returning to the plane of consciousness, he sayeth, 'Yes, my Holy Mother is none other than the Absolute*. She it is to whom the six systems of philosophy, with all the learned disquisitions that are in them, furnish no clue.

The differentiated ego being taken away by my Mother, there cometh the realization of the Impersonal in *Samadhi* and then it is the Impersonal God—not the individual soul—that realizeth the Impersonal. *The Omnipotent Mother*
With the ego purified and as such retained, the seeing or realization of the Personal God or any of Her manifestations is possible by Her Grace—manifestations, such as Sri Krishna, Chaitanya Deva and other Divine Incarnations, etc., etc.—manifestations as men, women, children and all living creatures; nay, all the twenty-four categories.

It pleaseth my Mother, the Personal God, to efface the self in selfless⁵ *Samadhi*. The result is the realization of the Impersonal God in *Samadhi*.

Sometimes it pleaseth Her to keep that self on in Her devotees and then to appear before them (as a Personal God) and talk to them.

¹ Mahakala. ² Ghata. ³ Ichhamai. ⁴ Prana. ⁵ Nirvikalpa.

* Brahman of the Vedanta: *Atmani Chaibam Vichitras Chahi—Brahma Sutras*, 28, i, ii.

The key to the realization of the Absolute is with the Divine Person alone, the *Saguna Brahman* of the Upanishads, the Personal God of devotees.

Revelation versus

Reason:

The Personal God

how proved:

The Impersonal God

how proved

The power of discrimination¹ which the philosopher relieth upon cometh from Her, my Divine Mother (the Personal God).

On the other hand, prayer, meditation, devotion, self-surrender, are all derived from my Omnipotent Mother.

Again, the knowing one in *Samadhi* is sometimes kept on in that state and sometimes not. Who keepeth Him on in that blessed state? Who bringeth Him down to the lower plane of sense-consciousness? Why, it is the Divine Person, my Holy Mother.

Such a Person cannot be unreal. She is the Personal side of the one Reality, the Absolute (*Brahman* of the Vedanta). Yes, my Mother has declared unto Her children, 'I am;' 'I am the Mother of the Universe,' 'I am the *Brahman* of the Vedanta,' 'I am the *Atman* of the Upanishads.'

Thus the Personal God revealeth Herself. Revelation is the proof of Her existence.

Again, the Impersonal Undifferentiated God, the Absolute, is *revealed* by the Personal God, *i. e.*, the Personal side of God the Absolute². The saint in *Samadhi* cannot say anything about the Absolute. Like the salt doll getting into touch with the mighty ocean he is lost! Nor can he, coming down from *Samadhi*, say anything about the Absolute. Once differentiated, he is mute as to the Undifferentiated. Once in the relative world, his mouth is shut as to the Absolute and Unconditioned.

My Mother (the Personal side of the Absolute) saith, 'I am the Absolute (the *Nirguna Brahman* of the Upanishads).'

Thus, too, Revelation is the only proof of the Impersonal God.

However one may describe the Absolute or the Impersonal, one must throw one's differentiated *ego* into the description. His Absolute is at least covered, so to speak, by this *ego*.

Surely with our feeble powers of ratiocination and discrimination¹, we cannot reach the Absolute. Hence, revelation not ratiocination, inspiration not reason.

¹ Vichara. ² Mahakala.

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 body¹ which is derived from the Lord.

Spiritual Form of the Deity

It is not everybody, but the perfect man alone, that can see these divine forms through the grace of my Mother.

Once Ramachandra (God Incarnate) said to his great devotee², 'My son, tell me in what relation thou regardedst me, and how thou meditatedst upon me.' The

The Path of Knowledge or Philosophy, and the Path of Devotion or Love, equally lead to Realization

devotee replied, 'O Rama, at times when the conviction³, I am the body, clingeth to me, I worship Thee as the one Undivided⁴ God; then I look upon myself as part⁵ of Thee—a fragment, as it were, of Divinity! At other times I meditate upon Thee as my Divine Master, and think myself as Thy servant. When, however, I am blessed, O Rama, with Knowledge⁶ of God, the Absolute, I see, I realize, that *I am Thou* and *Thou art Me.*'

The devotee meant that after *Samadhi* his 'I' was merged or lost in Rama; by which he meant the Undifferentiated Ego, God the Absolute and Unconditioned. This is *Brahmajnana*.

Again, suppose there is an Infinite Expanse of Water—water above, water beneath, water in all directions. Portions of the water we may imagine get changed into ice by contact with cold and thus solidified. Again, suppose that the same ice is exposed to heat, then the solid ice is liquified. It is changed into water once more.

Water to Ice and Ice to Water

The Absolute is the Infinite Expanse of Water. The portions of this water that are changed into ice are the Spiritual Personal Forms of the Deity manifest to devotees. The cold is the *Bhakti* of the devotee, his love, his devotion, his self-surrender. The heat again is discrimination between the Real (*i. e.*, God the Absolute) and the unreal or phenomenal universe, leading up to selfless⁷ *Samadhi* and the total effacement of the self which saith 'I,' 'I.'

To a devotee (dualist worshipper), the Lord may manifest Himself in various forms. To a person that reacheth, my Mother willing, to the height of Absolute Knowledge in

¹ Bagavati Tanu. ² Hanuman ³ Dehatma-buddhi. ⁴ Purna. ⁵ Amsa. ⁶ Tatwa-jnana. ⁷ Nirvikalpa.

Samadhi, He is the Absolute once more, Formless, Unconditioned.

Herein is the reconciliation between realization by philosophy¹ and that by love².

To him to whom it had been given to realize the Impersonal-Personal God, it hath been revealed that the twenty-four categories* (taking in the external world) have all been derived from the Mother.

What is the external world?

Identity of God, the Soul and Nature

Be it known that the Holy Mother is both One and Many, and the Absolute beyond One and Many. She hath not only differentiated

into the ego within man, but also into the other various categories.

The Advaitist's position, *viz.*, Brahman is God, the Absolute and Unconditioned, must be accepted in its entirety; because, first, Brahman has been realized in *Samadhi*:

The New Philosophy

and, secondly, because Brahman has been revealed by my Mother as the Unconditioned

that may be realized in *Samadhi* alone, and as being the Impersonal side of Her own Self. Let not anybody, however, say, 'My position is the only correct, rational and tenable position; those that believe in a Personal God are wrong; the Personal God is a myth; the Personal God has no power to give liberation³, etc.'

The philosophical Advaitist, so long as he relies on the unaided powers of his reason, answers this question by saying,

The Problem for the Philosophical Advaitist: — How can the Perfect Soul be led to think that It is imperfect?

'I do not know how this delusion (*viz.*, the fact of the Undifferentiated Ego⁴ being differentiated into the individual soul) has come about.'

The answer which realization giveth is conclusive. My Mother (the Personal side of God the Absolute) saith: 'It is I, the Brahman of the Vedanta, that have caused this differentiation.' So long as ye say, 'I do know,' or 'I do not know,' ye look upon yourself as a person. Being a person, ye must take these differentiations as facts—not delusions.

My Divine Mother saith again, 'It is only when I efface all personality that the Undifferentiated (my Impersonal side)

¹ Jnana. ² Bhakti. ³ Mukti. ⁴ Atman.

* The five gross elements, the five subtle elements, the five external instruments, *viz.*, the eye, etc., the five organs of sense, the mind, the determinative faculty (buddhi) and the ego.

may be realized in *Samadhi*.' And then it is all silence about delusion or no delusion, fact or no fact, knowing or not knowing. This is Knowledge¹ of the Absolute.

CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT REVELATIONS AND THE NEW PHILOSOPHY

Till then there is the 'I' in me, and my Mother (the Personal God), the Almighty, revealing Herself to Her children through various Forms² of Glory and through the Divine Incarnations, Sri Krishna, Chaitanya Deva, etc., and manifesting Herself as the twenty-four categories—as living creatures³ and as the cosmos⁴. Yes, it is owing to *Her* power that no created being can get rid of this self which saith, 'I,' 'I,' in all created beings and which maketh him of the earth earthly.

*First addition:
Necessity of a
Personal God*

In the second place, it is She, my Divine Mother, who teacheth *Bhakti* (love, devotion, prayer and self-surrender) to the devotee and thus changeth his *ego* of the world into the ego of knowledge⁵, making the ego thin like a line—a length without breadth. Lastly, look at Her omnipotence!

If it pleaseth Her, She may take away the last trace of this ego⁶ from any created being and bless him with the Knowledge¹ of God, the Absolute and Unconditioned. This result is come to by the differentiated *ego* being merged or lost, *by Her Grace*, in the Undifferentiated Ego,—the Absolute—the Atman or the Brahman.

You cannot shake off the self. Even those⁷ that realized the Absolute in the ecstasy of *Samadhi* would come down, my Mother willing, to a lower plane and have just sufficient self⁸ left to hold communion with the Personal God. Is it not difficult to raise the voice incessantly to *ni*, the highest note of the gamut?*

So long as thou art a person with an *individuality* of thy own, God will, if it so pleaseth Him, manifest Himself to thee as a Person.

Nor canst thou conceive, think or perceive God otherwise than as a Person, so long as *thou* art a person. Such is the constitution of thy self.

¹ Brahmajnana. ² Rupa. ³ Jiva. ⁴ Jagat. ⁵ Ego of Vidya. ⁶ Ahankara. ⁷ Atmaram. ⁸ Aham.

* Corresponding to the *si* of the European musical scale.

The goal of the Advaitist is the merging of the conditioned ego into the Unconditioned Brahman.

The Advaitist and ordinary men

This is not meant by my Divine Mother for everybody. For, with the majority of mankind the ego is a thing which cannot be shaken off in this life, or any other life in the near future.

Thus they (ordinary men) must, so long as they cannot attain *Samadhi*, meditate upon, commune with, the Personal God. For sages and the Scriptures¹ and Revelation all agree in assuring us that the Unconditioned doth manifest itself to man—both within him and without him—as a conditioned being;—the Impersonal as a personal God. These personal manifestations are by no means less real, but infinitely more real than the body, or the mind, or the external world. 'Hence,' saith the Knowing One, 'is the necessity of a Personal God.'

It hath pleased my Divine Mother to have, in the course of creation (or evolution), become not only my (individualized) *self*, but also the *external world*.

The Second: Identity of the Mother (the Personal God) with the Soul and Cosmos

To him alone, who cometh down from *Samadhi* to the plane of sense-consciousness, is left a thin self (like a line—a length without breadth) just sufficient individuality to retain only the Spiritual Vision². This enableth him to see the soul and the world as well as himself as my Holy Mother manifesting Herself in these different multifarious forms³.

This vision of Glory of my Holy Mother manifesting Herself in the course of evolution as the twenty-four categories, including the external world as well as the internal, is a vision not given to everybody to see and enjoy. The perception of this vision is granted unto him alone who hath realized the Formless Impersonal God, Absolute and Unconditioned, in selfless *Samadhi*, and the Personal God with forms in conscious *Samadhi*.

Yes, even the Knowing One who loseth his self in *Samadhi* and cometh one with the Absolute and thus realizeth It, is forced by some Unseen Power to come down to the lower plane of sense-consciousness.

Who is this Unseen Power? This question bringeth us to my Omnipotent Mother (the Divine Person), who alone has it quite within Her power to keep both the self and efface it in *Samadhi*.

¹ Shastras. ² Divya Chaksu. ³ Rupa.

The philosopher says it is Karma—previous works or works in previous incarnations—which causes the saint in *Samadhi* to come down to a lower plane.

The Third: The Omnipotent Mother and Karma: Can God Personal give Knowledge of the Absolute?

Of course, so long as there is the self or ego there is both the *actor*¹ and the *action*². There is alike the *cause* and the *effect*. Not only that; there are as *facts*, also, the millions of living creatures, the cosmos with the twenty-four categories, time past, time present, time future,

previous births, future births and all other differentiations.

But if there are these differentiations taken as stubborn facts, there is also the *Almighty Differentiator*, my Divine Mother, the Personal God³.

The position is made stronger by Revelation. For, my Divine Mother saith, '*It is I who have caused this differentiation. Good works and bad works all obey Me. There is, true enough, the Law of Karma, but I am the Lawgiver. It lieth with Me to make and unmake laws. I order all Karma, good or bad. Therefore, come unto Me through love*⁴, devotion, prayer, self-surrender or philosophy⁵, if you like; or with good works² leading Godward; and I will lead you across this world, the ocean of all work. I will give you Knowledge of the Absolute⁶, also, if you like. If there is still work after *Samadhi*, if there is still the *ego* and the body, be it known that such Karma, that *ego* and that body, I myself order to be retained for purposes of My own.'

All this She hath revealed unto Her children, Her servants.

So if Knowledge of the Absolute is one's end in view, one may attain to it ultimately if one would earnestly pray for it to the Almighty Mother and throw oneself entirely upon Her mercy.

Can the lover of God (Bhakta) get Knowledge of the Absolute?

The devotee⁷, if thus desirous for such knowledge, cometh to my Mother (to any of Her Divine Manifestations) with the *ego* of *Bhakti*,

to find in the end the whole of his *ego* swept away in *Samadhi*, my Mother willing.

It is the Personal God (the *Saguna Brahman*), my Divine Mother, who hath caused this differentiation into the subject and the object, It is She who can and doth efface the *ego* in *Samadhi* and give a Knowledge of the Absolute.

¹ Karta. ² Karma. ³ Saguna Brahman of the Vedanta. ⁴ Bhakti. ⁵ Jnana. ⁶ Brahma-jnana. ⁷ Bhakta.

That it is She who doth so, we learn from Revelation.

The philosopher who doth not rely upon Revelation so much as upon Reason, saith that the Personal God cannot give Liberation¹ to the soul, or, what is the same thing, the Knowledge of the Absolute.

It is from a lower plane (that of relativity or the phenomenal world), the plane of I and thou, that the philosopher saith: 'It is I that can give a Knowledge of the Absolute² to myself.' In the same plane you must, from the necessity of your nature, admit God Personal, my Omnipotent Mother.

It doth seem strange that while it is supposed to be quite within the power of the individual with his limited faculties to give the Knowledge of the Absolute to himself, my Omnipotent Mother hath not that power; that although ye can bring to yourself your own liberation, my Omnipotent Mother has not the power of giving you that Liberation!

The philosophers forget that the same Being is both Personal and Impersonal. They do not see that the Supreme Being manifesteth Itself as a Person of Infinite Power so long as we are persons,—Infinite Power including the power of giving *Brahmajnana*.

But Reason alone and single-handed is such an uncertain guide!

Moreover, the power of Reason or Discrimination upon which the philosopher relieth, also cometh from God Personal.

Thus another thing is added to the position of the purely Advaitist philosopher, *viz.*, that it is the Personal God that can and doth give *Brahmajnana*.

It is Absolute Knowledge so long as there is complete self-effacement and *Brahman* is realized in *Samadhi*, and you are silent, postulating neither existence nor non-existence regarding It.

The Fourth:
Man's "Absolute" must
imply the "Relative"

No sooner do you talk of *Advaitam* than you postulate a *Dvaitam*. For if there is One, there are also Two.

Talking of *Monism*, you take for granted *Dualism*.

Talking of the 'Absolute,' you take for granted the 'Relative.' For, *your* 'Absolute,' until realized in *Samadhi*, is at best the correlative of the 'Relative,' if not indeed a mere word put in certain letters of the alphabet!

¹ Mukti. ² Brahmajnana.

Talking of the 'Unchangeable¹,' you take for granted the *changeable²* or the play-world.

Talking of the 'Impersonal³,' you take for granted the 'Personal⁴.'

Just as talking of 'Light,' you postulate the existence of 'Darkness,' its correlative.

Just as there is 'Happiness,' there is also 'Misery,' its correlative.

Whose changeable play-world it is, of the same Being it is the Unchangeable. Whose Unchangeable it is, of the same Being it is the changeable.

It is through the changeable phenomenal world that you must feel your way up to the Unchangeable, the Unconditioned. It is again from the latter that you must feel your way back to the former (now no longer unreal, but manifestations to the senses, of the Unchangeable).

When ye talk of the 'Absolute,' ye cannot possibly express as it is. Ye must throw* over it a foreign element—*that of your own personality.*

After all, we must fall back upon *Revelation*. It is the Divine Person, my Mother, who saith, 'I am God Personal⁵, I am the Absolute⁶ realized in *Samadhi*.

Yes, you cannot think or speak of the butter without postulating the *esse* of the *buttermilk*.

Reconciliation between Mayavada, the view of the Advaita philosopher of the School of Sankara and Parinamavada, and the doctrine of Cosmical Evolution, held by the Sankhya School of Kapila: between Advaitism and Vishistadvaitism

Of the buttermilk is the butter: so of the butter is the buttermilk. If the buttermilk is known by its relation to the butter, the butter is equally known by its relation to the buttermilk. In the plane of personality—the plane of sense and even higher consciousness—you must admit both 'butter' and 'buttermilk.'

So long as *you* are a person, the *ego* being kept on by the Divine Mother, your 'Absolute' must imply a 'Relative,' your Unchangeable must imply a changeable play-world, your Substance must imply qualities, your 'Impersonal' must imply a 'Personal' Being, your 'One' must imply 'Many.'

When the Divine Mother wipeth out your *ego* (personality) in *Samadhi*, *Brahman* is realized and it is all silence and *What-*

¹ Nitya. ² Lila. ³ Avyakta. ⁴ Vyakta. ⁵ Saguna. ⁶ Nirguna.

* *Adhyasa*, superimposition, of the philosopher.

ever is, is *There*. For verily the salt doll stepping down to measure the depth of the sea telleth no tale, when One with the Infinite Deep!

Were it ever possible to lay down the position by an analogy, you might say that the original milk was *Brahman* realized in *Samadhi*, the butter was the Impersonal-Personal God revealing Himself, and the buttermilk the Universe made up of the twenty-four categories.

My Divine Mother (the Personal Phase of *Brahman*) hath declared, 'I am the *Brahman* of the *Vedanta* (Impersonal-Personal God). It is within *My* power to give Absolute Knowledge, which I do by causing the effacement of the lower self¹ and the realization of the Higher Self in *Samadhi*.'

The Fifth: The path of Love as well as of Philosophy leadeth to Absolute Knowledge

The efficacy of Prayer and Faith

Thus, in the first place, you may come unto *Brahman* through the path of philosophy², my Mother willing. It is given to few, especially in this *Kali yuga*, to come through this road, so very difficult* it is to shake off the conviction, 'I am the body,' which clingeth to us.

Again, you may come through *prayer* for Light and for Love; self-surrender to Him, Love of God, are the various elements of *Bhakti*. First come to my Divine Mother (the Personal God) through these.

Take my word for it, that if your prayer come from the bottom of your heart, my Mother shall respond to it, if you will only *wait*. For, this She hath revealed unto Her children.

Pray to Her again, if you want to realize Her Impersonal Self. Should She deign to grant your prayer—for She is Omnipotent—you would be in a position to realize in *Samadhi* Her Impersonal Self, also. This is precisely the same thing as Absolute Knowledge (*Brahmajnana*).

Only, I must add that the devotee as a rule will be quite content with realizing the Divine Person alone—My Divine Mother, or any of Her Infinite Forms of glory, including the Divine Incarnations—*Sri Krishna*, *Chaitanya Deva*, etc., etc.—the 'Visible Revelations of God.' As a rule, the *Bhakta* doth not long for the realization of the Impersonal. He is anxious that the whole

The Bhakta's Wish

¹ Aham or the ego. ² Jnana-yoga.

* *Kleshodhikatarastesham abyaktasaktachetasam Abyakta'hi gatirduhkham dehabadhbhiraba'pyate:—Bhagavat-gita, chap. XII, 5.*

of his ego should not be effaced in *Samadhi*. He would fain have sufficient individuality left to him to enjoy the Vision Divine as a person. He would fain taste the sugar in place of being one with the sugar itself.

To such a devotee my Mother appeareth as a Person (the Personal God), for She is loving to Her devotees—Her children.

He, who has thoroughly realized the Deity, must insist upon Realization as about the only great fact in spiritual matters.

It won't do to say from the beginning of the chapter 'I see God—Impersonal—Personal—manifest in and through all things. Why, everything that I see, man, woman, beast, bird, tree or flower, is God! Oh, I am full of joy and bliss! I am past all happiness and misery! *Soham* (I am He), *Soham* (I am He), and so forth.'

What, as a rule, is absolutely necessary is the *preliminary discipline*¹. Without it, one cannot have *Bhakti* (love of God). Without this discipline, it is indeed a far cry from Absolute Knowledge.

For the precious treasures are safe in the room under lock and key. You have not unlocked those treasures. Surely it doth not lie in your mouth to say, 'I have opened the lock and have got into the room. Behold, I have laid my hands on those longed-for treasures, those shining gems, diamonds, jewels! Look here, I have possessed them all!'

The Blessed One that hath beheld the Vision Divine, becometh like a child, simple, open (*Sarala*), turning his eye upon the fresh world as it is, stripped of its artificial names and formulas. Often he is intoxicated with the wine of Divine Love, at the sight of the Revelation before him. He is one with the Living Fountain of Holiness. With him, therefore, as a rule, there hath ceased all distinction between *shuchi* (purity) and *ashuchi* (impurity).

Lastly, sense-consciousness leaves him from time to time and in *Samadhi* he looketh like a *Jada* (an insentient, motionless, inanimate thing).

Until Realization, one must be pure, one must renounce the world—*Kamini* and *Kanchan*—carnality and the worship of mammon.

¹ Sadhana.

CHAPTER IV.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND BHAKTI YOGA

It is so difficult to get rid of this sense of 'I' which puts a barrier in the way of *Brahmajnana*! Even after Absolute Knowledge the released soul is forced, as I have said, by some Unseen Power, my Divine Mother, to come down to the plane of sense-consciousness, and hath this sense of 'I,' though in a thin form, attached to him.

*The necessity of
God Personal:
The Way to solve the
Problem of Life*

Thou dreamest of a tiger. Thou tremblest in every limb. Thy heart throbbeth violently. Thou wakest up to find that is was a mere dream. But all the same, in thy waking state, thy heart goeth on throbbing.

That being the case, *i. e.*, the sense of 'I' refusing to leave thee, what should be done? Why, let it have one sole limiting adjunct¹. Let it stay as the 'Servant of the Lord.'

*Packa ami (the ripe
self or the self as it
should be)*

But 'I' and 'Mine' of worldly men is ignorance leading away from God.

Everything is ordered by the Lord. It is ridiculous for man to say, 'I am the Lord of the creation,' 'I am the master,' 'All these things are mine.'

On two occasions the Lord cannot help smiling:—

A person is taken seriously ill and is shortly going to die. The doctor steppeth in and saith to the mother, 'Why, Ma, there is no cause for anxiety at all. I take it upon myself to save thy son's life.'

The doctor seeth not that it is the Lord who is bringing about the death of her son!

The Lord smileth and saith, 'It is I that am causing the death of this man, and the fool of a physician saith that *he* is going to save his life.'

Again, when two brothers are busy making a partition of their landed properties, they take a measuring tape, draw it out across the land and say, 'This side is mine, that side is yours.' The Lord smileth and saith, 'These fools! they call the land their own! They do not see that every bit of the ground belongeth to Me.'

A rich man hath a garden, which he hath placed in charge of his steward. When visitors look in, the steward is all

¹ Upadhi.

attention to them. He taketh them through the different parts of the garden and the house attached to it, saying, 'These are, gentlemen, our mango trees. These others are our *lichi, golap, jam* (rose-berries), etc. Here, you see, is our drawing-room. Over there are our oil-paintings and other pictures so splendid, etc., etc.

*Parable of the Rich
Man and his Steward*

Now suppose the steward hath done something to merit the displeasure of his master. Dost thou know how he is dealt with? Why, he is ordered peremptorily to leave the garden at once. Not even sufficient time is allowed him to bring away his wooden chest!

And it was, bear in mind, the very same man who was so warmly talking away of 'Our this' and 'Our that!'

The 'mine' (or 'our') of the steward cometh of *ajnana* (ignorance leading away from God).

Reason is weak. Faith is omnipotent. Reason cannot go far enough and must stop at some point.

Faith will work wonders.

Yes, Faith shall enable man to cross the mighty ocean itself, without any the least difficulty.

*The Omnipotence
of Faith*

Ramachandra, God Incarnate, worked hard to throw a bridge over the part of the sea separating Ceylon from the mainland of India. But as if to prove to the world the majesty, the omnipotence of Faith, He gave it to His devotee, the great *Hanuman*, to cross the ocean by the unaided power of Faith!

Once a *Bhakta*, a friend of *Vibhishana*, King of Ceylon, wanted to go across the sea. *Vibhishana*, to whom he appealed for help, had the name of Rama (God) written on a leaf without the knowledge of his friend. He then said to the *Bhakta*, his friend, 'Take this and take care thou hast it tied to the end of thy cloth. This will enable thee to walk across the ocean in safety. But, mind, never try to look into the leaf. For, thou shalt go under, the moment thou openest it.'

The devotee put faith in his friend's words. He walked the ocean for some time in perfect safety. But, unfortunately, he took it into his head to try and see what precious thing was tied to the end of his cloth, which could take him unhurt through the mighty deep. He opened the leaf and down he went into deep water!

Yes, Faith is omnipotent. Before it, the powers of Nature all shrink and give way! You get over seas and mountains

with perfect ease and the utmost indifference. What is more, sin and iniquity, worldliness and ignorance, all go out of sight before Faith.

And the Master sang:—

SONG

The Name of God

1. O, My Divine Mother, let me but die with *Durga, Durga*, Thy (hallowed) name, on my lips:

Then shall it be seen, O Giver¹ of all Good, whether or not in the end Thou wilt take Thy poor child over to the other side of the sea (of the world).

2. I might be the slayer of a cow or a *Brahman!* I might have made away with an unborn child yet in the mother's womb! I might be a drunkard! Nay, more, I might have put a woman to death!

But I care not the least for these terrible sins. With all these I have power enough to raise myself to the exalted position of the Creator² of the world.

Yes, Faith is at the root of all spiritual progress. Thou canst do without all other things; *Only Thou must have Faith.*

Have but Faith in the Lord, and Thou shalt become at once free from the vilest, the blackest, of all sins.

SONG

Faith at the Root

1. Various thoughts rise in my mind when I think of my Divine Mother.

One's reward is just as much as the strength of one's love for God. At the root of all there must always be absolute *Faith*.

2. The Holy Feet of my Divine Mother, the Consort of the God of Eternity, form the Lake of Nectar. If the mind be in that Lake of Immortality—if it goeth on taking its dip into that lake—then nothing more is needed—you may do without the rest—be it worship³ with flowers and incense, be it the pouring of oblations⁴ into the sacrificial fire, the silent recitations⁵ of the name of God, or the sacrifice⁶ of animals, etc.

3. The devotee of my Divine Mother, the Goddess of the Universe, has in his very lifetime a soul released from the bondage of the world. O, he is made purely of joy everlasting.

Yes, the one thing needful is Faith and *Bhakti* (love, devotion, prayerfulness and self-surrender).

It is exceedingly difficult, especially in this *Kali* age, to come to my Mother through *Vichara*, the discrimination of the Real⁷

¹ Sankari. ² Brahma. ³ Puja. ⁴ Hom. ⁵ Japa. ⁶ Bali. ⁷ Brahman.

from the unreal phenomenal universe by the limited faculties of man, unaided by the Divine Person, *i. e.*, unaided by Revelation.

Verily has *Ramaprasad*, the 'Sweet Psalmist' of Bengal, laid stress upon this difficulty in his well-known song, "O my mind, etc.—

And the Master sang:

SONG

Identity of the Personal God and the Impersonal God
Difficulty of Jnana yoga

1. "O, my Mind! what line art thou taking to realize that Being? Thou art groping about like a mad man in a dark room!

2. Do thou try thy best to bring under thy control the Moon, who is a door-keeper at the gate of the House (the Microcosm). In the House are various apartments and amongst them a Thief-chamber where the (Divine) Treasure is kept hidden:

Once the Moon is under thy control, thou mayest, secretly like a thief, work thy way to the Treasure in the Thief-chamber and make it thy own.

But when the Moon is beyond thy control and it is daybreak, the Treasure in the Thief-chamber shall hide itself from thee.

3. With a view to that Love, the great *yogi* practiseth, one decade after another, meditation for re-union with the Universal Soul.

Once this Love springeth up in his (the *yogi's*) heart, he draweth the Supreme Being near unto him, much as the loadstone draweth the iron.

4. Go into the six schools of philosophy. There that Being thou shalt not find! Nor in the *Tantras* or the *Vedas*! That Being is fond of the sweet syrup of *Bhakti*. A Being of Joy Everlasting, She resideth in all Her Majesty in this city (*i. e.*, the Microcosm).

5. Saith *Prasad*: 'The Being whom I call my Mother and try thus to realize, shall I give out Her real name*?'

Would not that be breaking my (sacred) cooking-pot in the courtyard of the house (or in the market-place) before the eyes of the unfeeling multitude? Guess, O my Mind, who that Being is, by the hints I have thrown out with my off-eye.'

There is deep silence at the end of this song, which was listened to with rapt attention. Every one is moved. The Master remained for a long while with his mind fixed upon the Hallowed Feet of the Divine Mother, the Great Burden of this soul-stirring psalm.

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* *Brahman* of the Vedanta both *Saguna* and *Nirguna*, Personal-Impersonal.

CHAPTER V.

A friend asketh *Vidyasagar* the meaning of *chatar*.

Vidyasagar (smiling):—*Chatar*, i. e., *chattara* or *uthan*,—the quadrangle of a house; or the market-place.

Master (to *Vidyasagar*):—Exactly, Oh! *thou* must know, *pandit* (scholar) as thou art. (*Laughter.*)

Well, what is *thy* idea of the Deity?

Vidyasagar (looking round on the company present):—Excuse me, Sir, I am afraid I must look for another occasion to talk with Thee by myself. (*Laughter.*)

Master:—Oh, thou must know it all. Only, I suppose, thou dost not care. The Lord¹ of the Ocean is the Master of untold treasures,—gold, diamond and jewels. But it is hardly to be expected that the presiding God of the Sea should take a note of each of the valuable things that could be found in his vast domain—the Great Sea. (*Laughter.*)

Again, very often, thou wilt find a great *Babu*, the owner of vast wealth, quite ignorant of even the names of his servants! (*Laughter.*)

The *Babu* is too big to be on terms of familiarity with such commonplace people! (*Laughter.*)

* * * * *

Master (to *Vidyasagar*):—Wilt thou not once come into the garden? It is a charming place, so grand, so beautiful.

Vidyasagar:—Certainly. *Thou* hast been so kind as to come. Is it not my duty, too, to pay thee a visit?

Master (smiling):—Visit to me! Oh! for shame, for shame!

Vidyasagar:—My dear Sir, this from thee! I have a right to ask for an explanation.

Master:—Well, my good Sir, I tell thee what. We are but fishing boats, small and light enough to row about to all sorts of places. (*Laughter.*) *Thou* art a big merchant-man! Who knoweth thou mayst not run against a sand-bank if thou venturkest too far up stream? (*Laughter.*) But the time—the present occasion—doth make some difference. Doth it not? (*Laughter.*)

Vidyasagar (smiling):—Oh, I see; the rains have recently set in. (*Laughter.*)

¹ Varuna.

THE PARTING

It is about 8 P. M. The carriage is ready to take the Master back home to the Thakurbadi at Dakshineshwara. The Master becometh absent in mind for a while. He is evidently meditating upon the Divine Mother. Is he also asking for Her blessing upon his good host?

It is the dark fortnight of the month of *Sravana*. The Master rising to depart, Vidyasagar, with a lighted candle in his hand, leadeth the way downstairs, on through the compound of his house to the gate. Near it is the carriage from the Thakurbadi, waiting to receive the Master and his companions.

An unexpected sight greets the eyes of the party as they come up before the gate. It is a man who may be a little under forty, standing before the gate with folded hands. He is dressed in white and has a white *Sikh* turban on the head. He wears a smiling face, has a fair complexion and expressive eyes. No sooner doth he see the Master, than he falleth at his feet, with the head mounted with the big turban touching the ground.

Saith the Master:—Is it you, Balaram? How is it that I find thee here?

Balaram replies smiling:—Oh, Sir, I have been waiting for some time here at the gate to see thee.

Master:—Well, why didst thou not come in?

Balaram (smiling):—I came up late; so I wouldn't interrupt thee; and thought it is as well to stay here.

* * * * *

The Master then steppeth into the carriage with his companions.

Vidyasagar (to M.):—Shall I see the *gharry* hire paid?

M.:—No, Sir, thou needst not trouble thyself. It has already been paid by a friend.

The Pandit then folds his hands, and bends his head and body to make his *pranama* (salutations) to the Master.

All those assembled about the carriage do the same. The coachman lets go the horses. Away rattles the carriage in a northerly direction.

The little crowd at the gate, with the venerable Vidyasagar at their head still holding the lighted candle in his hand, standeth for a while looking on in the same direction, won-

dering who this God-intoxicated man may be, so wise, yet so childlike, so full of joy, so sweet, so godly!

Verily a Lightning sent down to set ablaze into Life the dry dead bones of a workaday world! Embodied Love like the dew of Heaven falling on the dry thirsty heart of man! A voice crying into sunken, self-weary man, *Thou must be born again and love!* A Healer, from another Clime, of this 'strange disease of modern life!' A Man among men eager to solve for them the enigma of the universe!

SECTION III.

October 1882

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE TEMPLE OF DAKSHINESHWARA WITH NARENDRA (VIVEKANANDA), RAKHAL, M., AND OTHER DISCIPLES

CHAPTER I.

STORY OF THE MASTER'S LIFE AS TOLD BY HIMSELF

Sri Ramakrishna is filled with joy to-day, for Narendra has come to the Temple to see him. Narendra has bathed here and has taken his morning meal¹ out of the offerings accepted by the Gods.

It is Monday, the 16th of October, 1882; the fourth lunar day of the light fortnight of *Ashwin*. The Durga Pujah will be celebrated on Thursday next.

Rakhal has been staying with the Master for some time. Ramlal and Hazra are also here. Two Brahma boys are with Narendra. M. is also here.

After the morning meal, which was taken between eleven and twelve o'clock, Sri Ramakrishna asked Narendra and the other disciples, specially Narendra, to rest a while. A bed was prepared for the purpose on the floor of the room. A quilt with a mat underneath and a white sheet spread out over it and some pillows and bolsters made up the simple bed. The Master squatted on the bed by the side of Narendra and talked with him and the other disciples like a child. His eyes were fixed on Narendra and his face was radiant with smiles. He will place some ideals of life and character before the disciples—specially before Narendra and teach them *How to live*.

Master (to Narendra and others):—When this change (caused by God-Vision) came over me, I longed to hear the Word of God. I always looked about for places where the Sacred Books² were being read or recited—the books specially containing an account of the life and teachings of the various Incarnations of God—Sri Krishna, Rama³, etc. I used to go to Krishnakishore to hear him read the Life of Rama³.

What a stupendous faith had Krishnakishore! Once he had been to Brindaban on pilgrimage. There in the course of his

¹ Prasad. ² Bhagavata, Mahabharata, etc. ³ Adhyatma Ramayana.

walk one day, he chanced to feel thirsty. Seeing a person standing near a well, he asked him to draw a little water for him. The man said that he came of a very low caste so that he was not a fit person to draw the water for a Brahman. Krishnakishore said, "Wilt thou pronounce the name of God¹ and thus make thyself pure?" The man did so and then drew up the water for him; and he, a Brahman, drank of the water! How great was the power of his Faith!

Krishnakishore and his Faith

A holy man once came to the river side and abode for some time at the Ariada ghat. We thought of paying him a visit. I said to Haladhari at the Temple one day, 'Krishnakishore and myself are going to see the holy man; art thou going too?' Haladhari replied, 'What is the use of one's going to see a being with a material body which is no better than a cage made of clay!'

Now Haladhari was a Pandit and used always to read the 'Song of the Lord²,' and the Vedanta Philosophy, which saith, 'God is real and everything else is unreal.' All these words were reported by me to Krishnakishore. He got highly offended and said, 'What! And all this hath been said by Haladhari! Is it possible that he looketh upon the body of a holy man as a cage made of clay—a holy man whose only thought is God and who hath given up the world and its pleasures and excitements for the sake of the Lord? Doth he not know that the body of one who loveth the Lord is made up of the Spirit—not of matter, as in the case of ordinary men?' When he came next time to the Temple in the morning to gather flowers for Divine worship, he turned away his face to avoid Haladhari, so much had he been offended at his words.

Once he asked me, 'Why hast thou cast off the holy thread?' When this change came over me for the first time everything was blown away as if by the great cyclone of *Ashvin*³. The old landmarks were swept away. There was no outward consciousness; who was to take care of either the holy thread or even the piece of cloth I used to put on?

State of Sri Ramakrishna after God-vision

Lost in intense God-consciousness, I was nude the greater part of the day. When, therefore, Krishnakishore took me to task for having parted with the holy thread, I only observed,

¹ Siva. ² Gita. ³ Cyclone of 1864.

'Thou shalt see it all clearly if thou art once seized with madness for the Lord!'

It came about as I had feared. He, too, turned out 'mad' for the Lord. He used to shut himself up in a room in which he sat still and only repeated, 'Om! Om!'—the Vedic symbol for God the Absolute.

His people thought that he had actually gone mad. They called in a physician¹. Dr. Rama of Natagore came to see him.

Krishnakishore said to the physician, 'Let me, good Sir, be healed of my disease—and not of the *Om* which by the grace of the Lord I have learnt to value in these days.' (*Laughter.*)

The True Self

Looking in on another occasion I found him musing. I asked what the matter was. He replied, 'The tax-collector was here. He held out the threat that he would dispose of my brass bowls and water-pots in case I failed to meet his demands! This has made me so anxious.' Upon this I smiled and said, 'Never mind, let him do his worst and sell off thy goods and chattels. Let him bind thy body and take it to the judge if need be; what mattereth it to thee? Surely, *thou* art not the body; so he won't be able to bind *thee*—*thy True Self*; for art thou not *Khaw*², my dear Sir, as thou often sayest?' (*Narendra and others laugh.*)

Yes, he used to say that his True Self (that is, God the Absolute) was like the formless space round about us. O, he

Like Formless Space

was an ardent reader of the *Ramayanam*³ in which Rama is always addressed as an Incarnation of God, the Absolute. I often amused myself, saying, 'Thou art *Khaw*; thy True Self is not the body, but the Universal Soul. On that day I assured him, saying, 'No tax shall be able to draw thee away. Let them seize thy gross body which thou art not—according to thy own showing.' (*Laughter.*)

In my state of madness for the Lord I used always to speak my own mind as to men and things. I regarded not the position of men. I was not in the least afraid of rich people or men of position.

*No Respector
of Persons*

One day Jatindra Tagore came into the adjoining garden belonging to Jadu Mallik. I asked Jatindra 'What is the whole duty of man?' I asked again, 'Is it not our first duty to fix our mind on God?' Jatindra said, 'We

¹ Kaviraj. ² Akasha. ³ Adhyatma.

are men of the world. Is liberation ever within the reach of worldly men? Witness Rajah Yudhishtira, who, pure as he was, had to bear the sight of the infernal regions for having once spoken what was not the truth.' This gave great offence to me. And I cried out, saying sharply, 'What a curious man thou art! Thou rememberest well the fact that Yudhishtira had to bear the sight of those regions! But, pray, what thinkest thou of his love of Truth, his love of God, his forgiving temper, his perception of the Real, his non-attachment to things of the world?' I was going to run on like this when Hriday stopped my mouth. Jatindra soon after left, saying that he had some pressing business to attend to.

On another occasion I went in company with the Captain¹ to Sourindra Tagore's house. Upon first meeting him I said, 'Look here, Sir, I shall be unable to call thee 'Rajah' or such-like thing, for that would be speaking what was not true.' (Rajah in Sangskrita means the ruler of a kingdom.) He conversed with me for some time, during which we were frequently interrupted by visitors, amongst whom were some Europeans. I noticed that he was like other worldly people troubled with many things. He sent word to Jatindra Tagore (his eldest brother), informing him of our visit. A message came from Jatindra, which said that he had a trouble in the throat and could not come.

One day I observed an elderly Brahman repeating the Name of the Lord at the Barahanagar ghat on the bank of the holy river Ganges. I observed that he was thinking of something else and gave him two slaps on the back of his body to draw his attention back to the Lord! (*Laughter.*)

Once Rashmani (the foundress of the Temple here) came to visit the Temple. She came inside the temple of the Mother when I was worshipping as priest. She asked me to chant the Holy Name. I sang, but observed that she was thinking of something else and sorting the flowers for worship. I gave her a couple of slaps. This made her sit quiet with hands folded in adoration. (*Laughter.*)

I repeated my sad story to my cousin², saying, 'How queer and offensive are my ways getting to be! Is there no help?' Well, I prayed unto my Divine Mother with a yearning heart and at last I was able through Her Grace to shake off this habit.

¹ Bishwanath of Nepal. ² Haladhari.

In my then state of the soul words not relating to God did jar upon my ears. I used to sit by myself and cry whenever I heard people talking on worldly matters. Once, Mathur Babu took me with him up-country to various places of pilgrimage. While at Benares we put up a few days at the house of Rajah Babu. One day I was in the drawing-room with Mathur Babu who was conversing with Rajah Babu and his people. They were talking purely of worldly matters: 'So much money has been lost or gained by the transaction,' and words like these. I cried bitterly by myself, saying to the Divine Mother, 'Where hast Thou brought me, O Mother? Verily, I was far better off at the Temple at Dakshineshwara than in this place of pilgrimage! They have come indeed to visit the holy shrines, but behold, O Mother, they talk only of Lust and Gold! The Temple was a far better place for me, because there I had not to hear such talk.'

The Master presseth Narendra to take a little rest. And he himself goeth up to the smaller bedstead to rest a while.

CHAPTER II.

WITH NARENDRA AND OTHER DISCIPLES CHANTING FORTH THE NAME OF THE LORD

It is afternoon, and Narendra is singing the sacred hymns. Amongst those present are Rakhai, Latu, M., Preo, a Brahma friend of Narendra's and Hazra.

Narendra sang to the accompaniment of the drum¹:—

SONG

O my mind, meditate thou upon the Lord, the essence of Spirit,
etc.

Vide song, page 41

SONG

In the Temple of the Heart shineth the Blessed Vision of the Lord who is the One Reality, who seeketh the good of all His creatures, and whose form is so beautiful. Let us behold this beauty over and over again and be thus immersed in that Sea of Beauty.

1. O Lord come into my heart as Infinite Wisdom Divine! Speechless, but with a mind that knoweth not peace, shall I then throw myself at Thy Hallowed Feet!

3. O arise in the firmament of my Soul as the Embodiment of Immortal Bliss, so that at the blessed Vision we shall rejoice, drunken

¹ Khole.

with the joy of the Lord, much as the bird *chakora* rejoiceth and sporteth about in the sky drunken with joy at the sight of the moon!

* * * * *

SONG

Be filled with joy and gladness and repeat the sweet Name of the Lord!

At His Name shall arise a flood out of the Sea of Nectar; of this ye may drink without cessation—yes, drink and give away just as you please.

The Thunder of His Name shall snap the fetters of sin by which you are bound.

Come let us be intoxicated with the joy of the Lord and thus have our heart's desires fulfilled.

* * * * *

Narendra and the other disciples sing and dance round about the Master to the accompaniment of the drum. They sing in a chorus:—

‘Be immersed for ever, O my mind, in the sweet nectar of Divine Love.’

And again:—

‘In the Temple of my Heart shineth the glorious beauty of the Lord who is the Only Reality—the Being who seeketh the good of all His creatures, the Embodiment of all that is beautiful.’

At last, Narendra, with the drum hanging from his neck, singeth:—

‘Speak the sweet name of the Lord by thy mouth filled with joy.’

At the end of the song the Master embraceth Narendra saying, ‘Peace be unto thee, my boy, and the joy of the Lord! How shall I speak of the joy unspeakable that thou hast given me to-day!’

The fountain of Divine Love within the heart of the Master welleteth up to-day and overfloweth.

It is close upon 8 P. M. He paceth up and down the northern verandah alone, drunken with the joy of the Lord!

He paceth from one end of the verandah to the other with quick and excited steps;—He holdeth converse with the Divine Mother.

Like one who hath gone mad he crieth out, ‘What (evil) canst thou do unto me?’

Doth the Master say that the powers¹ of evil cannot do any harm to him who hath the Divine Mother to protect him?

They are going to stay to-night. Narendra will stay; hence of his joy there is no end.

The supper is ready. Mother at the concert-house² has made everything ready for the supper—the thin cakes of bread, *dal*, etc. Surendra bears the greater part of the expenses. The disciples stay here off and on.

The supper is ready to be served on the south-eastern verandah into which the Master's chamber opens.

The supper is being served. Narendra and other disciples stand before the door of the chamber and talk.

Narendra (to M.):—How do you like, Sir, our boys and young men of the present day?

*Narendra on School
and College Discipline*

M.:—Well, they are not bad; but they stand in need of religious instruction.

Narendra:—So far as I have seen they are going from bad to worse. *Bird's-eye*, the company of young men, foppishness and playing the truant, these are things that may be seen almost every day.

M.:—In our day when we were students, I never came across such things!

Narendra:—I suppose you never mixed with such boys. I myself have seen persons of questionable character talking with boys, whom I know, on terms of familiarity. The wonder is how and when they could know one another.

M.:—Is it indeed so?

Narendra:—O, I know it myself how some of my friends have in this way lost their character. School and college authorities and the guardians of boys ought to have an eye on these matters.

They were talking on when the Master stepped out of the chamber and, smiling, asked, 'Well, what were you talking about?' Narendra said, smiling, 'We have been talking on matters connected with schools and colleges. The character of boys is not all that could be desired.' Upon this the Master turning to M. looked grave and said—'Talking on these matters is not good; talk of the Lord and nothing else! Thou art older than these boys. Thou oughtest to have known better. It was

One Thing is Needful

¹ Maya. ² Nahabat.

thy duty to put them on their guard and to warn them not to talk on anything but the Lord.'

M. feels a little abashed. Narendra and other disciples hold their peace for a time.

Narendra is about 19 or 20 years old; while M. is about 27 or 28.

They sit down to eat the supper. The Master is happy; he smileth as he seeth Narendra and other disciples going on with their repast.

The Master rejoiceth very much to-day. After supper the disciples have come together inside the chamber and are resting on the mat spread on the floor. They talk with the Master and rejoice. It seemeth as if a fair is being held here;—where the Joy of the Lord may be had for sale.

Saith the Master to Narendra:—Wilt thou sing forth the hymn beginning with—'The full moon of Divine Love riseth on the firmament of Divine Wisdom?'

Narendra went on singing to the accompaniment of the drum¹.

SONG

1. The full moon of Divine Love riseth on the firmament of Divine Wisdom.

The Ocean of Love overfloweth; O, how full of joy is the Lord!

Victory unto Thee, Merciful Lord! Victory! Victory!

2. Behold the gate of Heaven is flung open and the vernal breeze of the New Dispensation beginneth to blow.

It breaketh into waves of joy: it carrieth the fragrance of Divine Love, which maketh the Yogis drunken with the joy of communion.

Victory unto Thee, Merciful Mother! Victory! Victory!

3. On the sea of this Universe is the Lotus of the New Dispensation. Thereupon is seated in Her Majesty the Divine Mother, The Embodiment of all Joy!

See, the Bees (the devotees) drink of the nectar therein!

They are filled with God-consciousness. Ah, behold the gracious countenance of the Mother!

It delighteth the heart: it doth fascinate the Universe!

Falling at Her Feet are companies of holy men, singing and dancing, drunken with joy.

What Beauty unparalleled! O! the Blessed Vision bringeth peace unto the heart!

¹ Khole.

Prem Dass (the psalmist) falleth at the feet of every one and saith,
 'Sing forth, O, my brethren!

Victory unto the Mother! Victory! Victory!

The Master singeth and danceth. With him in their midst the disciples sing and dance.

The song is over. The Master walketh up and down the north-eastern verandah that leadeth into his chamber.

Here is Hazra seated. He repeateth the Name of the Lord as he telleth the beads of his rosary. The Master taketh his seat by his side and holdeth converse with Hazra and M.

He saith to a disciple:—Dost thou see visions of God in dreams during sleep?

God-vision in Dreams *Disciple*:—Yes, Sir, the other day I had a most interesting dream. It seemed as if the whole Universe were a vast expanse of water. Water, water everywhere before me and nothing but water! Water without beginning or end! Suddenly there arose a flood. Some of the boats that were visible at a distance went down under the water. A few only escaped. Amongst them was one belonging to my mother. Well, I was on board a ship which carried a chosen number of passengers. What was our astonishment to see a Brahman walking over the deep unconcerned—as if he were taking steps on firm ground. I cried out, 'How is it that thou walkest over the Deep?' The Brahman replied smiling, 'Here is nothing to be afraid of; my feet rest upon a bridge which is under water.' I asked, 'Whither art thou going, Lord?' He replied, 'I am going to the *City of the Mother*¹.' I felt eager to join the holy man and cried out, 'Do tarry a little, Lord, and I shall join thee; for that is precisely the place whither I, too, long to go.' He only smiled and said, 'O, I am in a hurry to reach that place². It will take thee some time to come down. Mark the path which will lead thee safe to the City, and then come and follow me.'

Master:—A thrill passeth through my body as I hear the dream thus related by thee—the hairs of my body stand on their ends! The hour is come when thou shouldst be initiated.

¹ Khole. ² Bhavanipore.

CHAPTER III.

WHICH TO SEEK FIRST?—THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
OR SOCIAL REFORMS?

It is 11 P.M. Narendra and other disciples go to sleep. They lie down on a bed spread on the floor of the Master's chamber.

It is daybreak. Some of the disciples are already up. They are seated on the bed meditating on the Lord. What is the

*Sri Ramakrishna
chanting his Matins*

Master doing all the time? He repeated the Names of the Lord in a voice sweet as nectar.

He goeth about within the chamber perfectly nude like a five-year-old child. He steppeth to the various pictures hung on the walls and saluteth, touching the wall with the forehead. He openeth the door and looketh on the holy river with reverential feeling. He chanteth the Holy Name of the Lord and saith, 'O, my Divine Mother, Thou manifestest Thyself in everything¹. Thou art the same as Thy Word which hath taken the form of the Sacred Scriptures—the Vedas, the Puranas and the Tantras—the Bhagavad Gita and the Gayatri. And, Mother, Thy devotees are only manifestations of Thee! Thou art the same as God the Absolute² beyond time and space; on the other hand, Thou art the Divine Energy manifesting Thyself in this Universe. Thou art the Being Inactive³. Thou art, again, the Principle of Activity⁴. Thou art the *Formless* Being and Thou art *with Form*. Thou art the Universe⁵ before us. Thou art the Twenty-four Categories of the philosopher!

It is daybreak and the priests are waving the lights before the Holy Images. The sweet and holy sounds of the conch-shell, of the bell, and of the cymbals come vibrating from the temples.

The disciples arise and see that the priests and servants are already gathering flowers to be presented as offerings to God. The concert⁶ plays pieces of music proper for the morning hour.

Narendra and other disciples have washed themselves. They now come up smiling before the Master. He standeth

*Narendra and the
One Thing Needful*

on the north-eastern verandah close to his own chamber. His face beameth with smiles.

Narendra:—We noticed several *Sannyasins*—followers of Nanak—seated at the 'Cluster'⁷ of five trees.

¹ Bhagavata — Bhakta — Bhagavan. ² Brahman. ³ Purusha. ⁴ Prakriti. ⁵ Virat.
⁶ Nahabat. ⁷ Panchabati.

Master:—I know; they arrived here only yesterday.

(To Narendra):—I should like to see you all seated together.

The disciples have seated themselves on a mat. The Master looketh on them with delight and converseth with them.

Narendra raises the question, 'What are the means of attaining God?'

Master:—The one thing needful is love or devotion¹ to God. As to renunciation² and discrimination³ (between the Real and the unreal), these will come of themselves if one loveth the Lord.

Narendra:—Sir, in the Sacred Books it is stated that one may practise communion in the company of women. Is that not so?

Woman as Mother? *Master*:—To practise in the company of women! Why, that is not good. There is, indeed, such a path spoken of in the Sacred Books⁴, but walking along such a path it is exceedingly difficult to reach the Goal. The risk of a fall is almost sure.

As a point of discipline, woman may be regarded first, as mistress (the aspirant regarding himself as lover); second, as lady-mistress (the aspirant regarding himself as her hand-maiden); third, as mother. I, for my part, regard women as my *mother*. The part of a *hand-maiden* or *maid-servant* is not open to objection. That of a *lover* almost invariably bringeth on a downfall. That of a *child* is the purest and best of all.

The *Sannyasins* who were the followers of Guru Nanak have now come to pay their respects to the Master. They salute him saying, 'Thou art the Lord⁵ of the Universe taking a human form! Salutation unto Thee!' The Master returned their greetings and asked them to be seated.

He saith to the disciples and the holy men⁶:—'Nothing is impossible with God. The nature of the Lord no one can say. Everything can be predicated of Him.'

Once there lived two holy men; they practised austerities with a view to see God. One day, Narada, the holy sage, was going his way by their hermitages. One of them said to Narada, 'Art thou coming down from Heaven? If so, tell me what the Lord of Heaven is doing.' Upon this, Narada replied, 'Yes that is so, I am coming down from Heaven: I saw the Lord of Heaven causing camels and elephants to enter into

¹ Bhakti. ² Vairagya. ³ Viveka. ⁴ The Tantras. ⁵ Namō Narayan. ⁶ Yogis.

the eye of a needle and saw the animals passing in and out.' One of the holy men observed, 'There is nothing here to marvel at. *Nothing is impossible with God.*' The other man said, 'O, that is impossible! It only showeth that thou hast never been to the Lord's place.'

The first man had the faith of a babe and he was a true believer. For nothing is impossible with God who hath created this wonderful Universe!

It is about nine in the morning. The Master is seated in his chamber. Manomohan, a disciple, is come from Konnagar with his family. He saluteth the Master saying, 'I am taking my family down to Calcutta. The Master maketh kind enquiries and saith, 'This is the first day of the (Bengali) month—an inauspicious day; and thou art taking thy family down to Calcutta! I really don't know what to say.' Saying this he smileth and passeth on to other matters.

Narendra and his Calcutta friends have bathed in the Ganges. They come into the Master's chamber to dress themselves. The Master saith to Narendra with great eagerness, 'Go to the foot of the Banyan tree and there meditate on the Lord for some time; shall I give thee something to sit on?'

Narendra and his Brahma friends have seated themselves on the terraced brick-work built round the tree and are meditating upon the Lord.

It is past ten in the morning. The Master cometh up a little while after. M. is also here. The Master talketh with Narendra and his friends.

How to Meditate

Master (to Narendra, etc.):—In the course of meditation one needeth to be merged in the Lord. If one floateth on the surface, one cannot hope to reach the precious stones lying at the bottom.

Saying this, the Master singeth:

SONG

1. O, my mind, take thou the Name of the Mother and dive deep—
Into the depth of the heart—the Ocean which is the repository of
all precious gems.

2. Thou mayest not get the treasures after a few immersions, but
that proveth not that the sea of thy heart hath no treasures within.

3. In this sea there are the alligators, *viz.*, the six passions, (lust,
anger, etc.)

They move about in quest of food. Hence rub thy body with the
turmeric of Discrimination¹.

Viveka.

The scent of the turmeric will keep thee from being touched by the alligators.

4. Many are the precious gems that lie scattered about on the bottom of the sea.

Take a plunge to the bottom, saith Ramaprasad, and thou shalt get them.

Narendra and his friends come down from their seats at the foot of the 'Five Trees¹' and stand round the Master.

The Master with his face to the south walks with the disciples in the direction of his chamber. He talks as he walks. He saith: 'Rub thy body with turmeric and the alligators will be kept off. Love, anger, avarice, etc., are the six alligators. Discrimination is the turmeric. It enableth one to understand that God is the only Reality and all else unreal.

What availeth book-learning or the delivery of lectures if there is no Discrimination—the sense that God is the one Reality and all else is transitory?

First, set Him up in the Temple of the Heart; first realize God. Speeches, lectures and the rest, these may be taken up

after ye have *seen* God,—not *before*. People talk glibly of Brahman—God the Absolute—all the time that they are attached to things of this world. What doth all this come to? Mere blowing of the conch-shell without any Gods to worship within the temple². Let me speak a parable unto you.

There was once a young man named Podo in a certain village. In that village there was an old, dilapidated temple.

The Holy Image of God, once worshipped, had disappeared and it was now the home of small bats. One day at nightfall the villagers were surprised to hear the sound of bells, gong and conch-shell issuing from the deserted temple. Men, women and children, all flocked to the place. They thought some devotee must be worshipping some Image of God recently set up within the temple and performing the evening ceremony²—waving the lights and flowers, fruits, holy waters, etc., before the Image. With folded hands they all stood before the temple listening to the sacred sounds.

One of them more curious than the rest had the courage to peep in. What was his surprise to see Podo ringing the bell

¹ Panchabati. ² Aratrika.

Seek ye first the Lord

'Lectures and Social Reforms' afterwards

God in the Temple of the Heart

and blowing the conch-shell! The floor was as dirty as before with impurities of all kinds and there was no Image of God to worship! He then called out saying, 'O, Podo, thou hast no Image of God¹ in thy temple. How is it thou hast raised all this clamor by blowing the conch-shell? And behold thou hast not yet taken the trouble to cleanse the temple, to remove the dirt and impurities of years and to wash the floor with the holy waters of the Ganges! And the building continued to be soiled as before night and day by the small bats*, eleven in number!

First, realize God in the Temple of your Heart. To that end you must cleanse it of all impurities—all sin and iniquity—all attachment to this world caused by the sense-organs. One must free oneself of one's sensuous nature in order to realize God. It is then that the time cometh for blowing the shell if need be. Talkest thou of social reforms? Well, thou mayest do so *after* realizing God. Remember, the Rishis of old gave up the world in order to attain God. This is the one thing needful. All other things shall be added unto thee if indeed thou carest to have them.

If ye seek the gems lying at the bottom of the sea ye must take a plunge to the bottom, giving up all other works. First set up the Image of God; then talk of blowing the conch-shell. First see God and then talk of lectures and social reforms.

It is a most difficult task—that of teaching others. He who seeth God receiveth His Commandment. He alone who receiveth the Lord's Commandment is competent to teach others.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MARRIED MAN'S PROBLEM

By this time the Master has come up to the northern verandah which runs east and west. He stands on that verandah close to his chamber with Narendra, Mani, and other disciples.

The Master saith repeatedly that God cannot be seen by a person who doth not possess Discrimination² and Non-attachment³.

¹ Madhava or Sri Krishna. ² Viveka. ³ Vairagya.

* Eleven sense-organs or *Indriyas*; five organs of perception, five of *Karma* or work (hands, feet, etc.) and the head organ or *mind*.

Mani who is 27 or 28 years old has received an English education. He is married and thinks to himself, saying, 'Do these (Discrimination and Non-attachment) mean renunciation of the world like a *Sannyasin*—outward renunciation of 'Lust and Gold?'

The Problem for the Householder

Mani (to the Master):—Sir, what if the wife saith to the husband, 'Thou art neglecting me; I shall commit suicide?'

Master (in a solemn serious tone):—A wife who standeth in the way of the husband seeking God should be given up and left to her fate. It mattereth not that she putteth an end to her life. Let her do anything that she liketh. A wife who standeth in the way of the husband seeking God is an ungodly¹ wife who leadeth to ignorance and spiritual death.

Mani is absorbed in deep thought and leaneth back on the wall. Narendra and other disciples stand speechless for a moment.

The Master is talking with them for a while. Suddenly he turns to Mani who continues in the same posture leaning back on the wall. He speaketh these words aside to Mani:—'But the case is different with a person who hath a genuine, sincere love for the Lord; everybody cometh under his control—kings, bad men and wife. They may come round and follow in his footsteps and walk in the path which leadeth to the Lord. If the husband sincerely loveth the Lord, the wife may come under his control, be religious and help him in his struggle to attain eternal life.

Mani feeleth that the fire kindled in his breast hath been put out. He enjoyeth peace of mind once more.

Mani (to the Master):—What a fearful place is the world²!

Master (to Mani, Narendra and others):—The life of a worldly man is terrible, indeed! Chaitanya Deva once said to Nityananda—

'Listen, listen, O my brother,
For a worldly man there is hardly any hope of salvation.'

(Aside to Mani):—Hardly any hope of salvation to the worldly man who hath lost sight of God. This doth not apply to a person who sincerely loveth the Lord. One who hath realized the Lord can remain in the world and yet be fearless. Let such a person retire into solitude from time to time and thus attain sincere devotion and love to the Lord.

¹ Avidya. ² Samsara.

Well, such a person can remain in the world¹ and yet be fearless. Chaitanya Deva had several householders for his disciples. They were in the world but not of the world. They lived unattached to the world.

* * * * *

It is about noon. The morning service is over with the performance of the ceremony of waving the lights, holy water, flowers, etc. The Gods in the Temple will rest a while at noon. A piece of music is being played by the concert² announcing the event. The Master sitteth at meat. Narendra and other disciples will also, like the Master, take their meals out of the sacred offerings presented to the Gods at the Temple and graciously accepted by Them.

¹ Samsar. ² Nahabat.

SECTION IV.

October 1882

STEAMER TRIP WITH KESHAB CHANDRA SEN, LEADER OF THE BRAHMA-SAMAJ—THE NEO-THEISTIC MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

CHAPTER I.

THE MASTER IN SAMADHI

This is the day when the Goddess¹ of Wealth and Prosperity is worshipped in India. It is the full moon after Durga Puja; Friday, the 27th of October, 1882. He was seated in his room in the Temple-garden talking with Bejoy Goswami and Haralal. A gentleman came in and said, 'Keshab Sen has come; he is on board a steamer which has just come up here and which stands before the ghat.'

A short while elapsed and Keshab's disciples came in and bowed down before Sri Ramakrishna. They said,—'Sir, here is the steamer for thee; Keshab Babu is on board, and has sent us to thee with a request that thou wilt kindly come on board and join him. Thou mayest be assured that thou wilt enjoy the trip.'

It is just four o'clock. A boat takes the Master to the steamer. Stepping into the boat, he loses all sense-consciousness! He is in *Samadhi!* With him is Bejoy.

M. is on board the steamer. As the Master's boat is coming up, M. looks at the blessed sight—the picture of the Master with the senses all still and motionless before the Blessed Vision that his soul is enjoying. He got on board the steamer at about three o'clock in the afternoon. He is very eager to see the meeting between the Master and Keshab and witness the joy that is sure to come of such a meeting. The mind of many a young man like M. has been captured, so to speak, by the saintly character of Keshab and by his unrivalled eloquence.

Indeed, many regarded Keshab as their own flesh and blood and had thus given him their heart's love. Keshab has received an English education; he is well versed in English philosophy and literature; in the next place he has on different

¹ Lakshmi.

occasions called the worship of Images by the name of 'idolatry.' It is certainly curious that such a man looks upon Sri Ramakrishna with reverence and admiration and visits him at the Temple off and on! It is a most interesting task for M. and others to find out the common ground on which they both meet together.

The Master, indeed, holds that God is without form. He is thus at one with Keshab on this point, but he also holds that God is 'with form,' too. He meditates upon God the Absolute¹. At the same time he does not neglect to worship with flowers, incense and other offerings, the Images with forms—manifest as Gods and Goddesses in the Hindu Pantheon. What is more, he sings and dances before them with the madness of the joy of the Lord. The Master, unlike an ascetic, lies down on a bed supported by a bedstead; the cloth that he puts on is red-bordered; he uses also coats and stockings and slippers. With all this he is not of the world. The signs of him are all like those that mark out an ascetic from a householder; hence people call him a Paramahansa. On the other hand, Keshab holds that God is without form; he lives the life of a householder in midst of his wife and children; he delivers lectures in English; he brings out a newspaper dealing with religious subjects; he does also attend in his own way to worldly affairs.

The boat has come alongside. Everybody is eager to see him. They crowd to the gangway. Keshab is anxious to see that the Master gets on board the steamer in safety.

It is with great difficulty that he is brought back to sense-consciousness once more in order to be taken inside the cabin on the upper deck. The state of divine ecstasy has not left him even now. He leans on a disciple as he is led into the room. He takes his steps mechanically, but his mind is fixed on God.

He has now entered the cabin on the upper deck. Keshab and others bow down to him. But what little sense-consciousness has been left is now beginning to leave him altogether. Inside the cabin are a bench, a table and a few chairs.

The Master is seated on one of the chairs; Keshab on another; Bejoy has also taken his seat. Other devotees, most of them Brahmas, are also seated, many of them on the bare floor. The cabin is a small one. Many remain standing at the door and the windows, and they eagerly peep in.

¹ Brahman.

The Master is now in *Samadhi* again; absolutely devoid of outer consciousness! Everybody is watching his face. Keshab sees that many people have come together within the cabin and that the Master is in need of more air. Bejoy, until lately a follower of Keshab, has after the schism become a member of another sect, the Sadharan Brahma-Samaj. He spoke against Keshab on different occasions with reference to his having given away his child-daughter in marriage in opposition to the well-known principles of his sect. Keshab is thus a little unprepared to meet Bejoy, whose visit to the steamer is most unexpected.

Keshab leaves his seat. He will open the windows.

All look earnestly on the Master with fixed eyes. He comes down from his *Samadhi*; but the consciousness of the Divine Presence continues to be as intense as before. He talks to the Mother of the Universe in words that are hardly articulate.

*The Prison-house of
the World*

Saith he, 'Oh Mother! why hast Thou brought me here? They are hedged round and are not free! Is it indeed possible for me to save them out of their prison-house?'

Is it that the Master looks upon men of the world as beings who are shut up within a prison-house (*Samsar*); who cannot get out into the free air of God-consciousness; who cannot so much as see the Light Divine; who, in short, are bound hand and foot by affairs of the world? Men of the world can indeed see only the things within their prison-house—pleasures of the senses and worldly things. Is it thus that he saith to the Divine Mother, 'Why hast Thou brought me here?'

There is Nilmadhab of Ghazipur present at this unique meeting. Observing that the Master has come to himself, he and a Brahma devotee begin to talk of Powhari Baba, the great saint of Ghazipur.

The Soul and the Body

A Brahma (to the Master):—Sir, these gentlemen have been fortunate enough to see Powhari Baba at Ghazipur. The Baba is another holy man like thy good self.

Not even now hath the Master got back the power of speech. His heart is full; he cannot speak. He only smileth on the good man who talketh of the Baba.

Brahma (to the Master):—Sir, Powhari Baba hath got thy photograph too, which he hath put up in his own room.

The Master smileth again and pointeth to his own body with his finger. At last, in a subdued tone, he saith, 'A pillow-case! It is nothing but a pillow-case.'

'The pillow and the pillow-case!' The Soul and the Body! Doth the Master say that the body alone dieth and the Soul dieth not, that the photograph is of the body which will not last forever? Does he for this reason say, "Let us not set a very high value on a photograph which is of the body, but rather worship Him who is the Ruler of the Soul within?"

The Master goeth on:—But there is one thing to be borne in mind. The heart of the devotee¹ is the Temple of the Lord.

*The Lord's
Drawing-room*

It is indeed a fact that the Lord is more or less manifest in all things. But He is manifest in a special sense within the heart of the devotee. Thus, a Zemindar can be met at any of the houses of which he is owner. Still people would say, the Zemindar may be usually seen in a particular drawing-room. The heart of the devotee is the Lord's drawing-room. If one wanteth to meet the Lord, one hath better seek an audience in the drawing-room. (*Laughter.*)

The same Being whom the Vedantists call *Brahman* (the Absolute) is called *Atman* (Universal Soul) by the Yogis, and *Bhagavan* (or God Personal with Divine attributes) by Bhaktas (devotees or God-lovers).

The high-caste Brahman always remaineth one and the same person. When his duty is to worship the Lord he is called the priest, but when the same man is employed in the kitchen he is called a cook.

The Vedantist, who seeks to realize God the Absolute, reasons, saying, 'Not this, not this'; that is, the Absolute is not

The Non-dualist

this, not that; not any finite object; nor the individual soul or the external world. When as the result of this kind of reasoning, the mind ceases to be moved by desires, when, in fact, the conditioned mind vanishes, then is it that one can attain True Knowledge², then is it that one's soul goeth into *Samadhi*. Such a man truly realizes God the Absolute and consequently finds the phenomenal universe to be unreal. He realizes that names and forms applied to finite objects are like dreams; that God the Absolute cannot be described by words; indeed, that one cannot so much as say that God is a Person.

Such is the point of view of a Non-dualist. Devotees or Lovers³ of God, however, think and feel differently. Unlike the Non-dualists they look upon the waking state as a real

¹ Bhakta. ² Brahmajñana. ³ Bhaktas.

state and upon the external world as real and not like dreams. They believe also in names and forms. They say that the objects before us of the universe are the works of God, Who is a Personal God and is possessed of many attributes. The starry heavens, the sun, the moon; the mountain, the sea; men, birds and beasts; all are His glorious works. He is the rich man and these are His riches. He is both within and without. The most advanced among devotees further says, 'It is He Who hath become manifest before us as the Human Soul and the External World, as the twenty-four categories* mentioned by the philosopher¹.' The devotee wanteth not to be one with the sugar but would rather have a taste of it. (*Laughter.*)

Do ye know how the devotee actually thinketh and feeleth? He saith, 'Oh Lord! Thou art the Master, I am Thy servant; Thou art my Mother and I Thy child;' or again, 'Thou art my child and I Thy father or Thy mother;' or thus, 'Thou art the whole and I Thy part.' The devotee will not say, 'I am God.'²

The Yogi (or the aspirant who seeketh to commune with God) wisheth also to realize the Universal Soul³. His object is to bring by self-control the finite human soul⁴ into communion with the Infinite Soul³. He trieth first to put together his mind which lieth scattered in the act of running after the world of senses; he then seeketh to fix it on the Universal Soul. Hence is the necessity of meditating on Him in solitude and in a posture which causeth no distraction.

But it is One and the same Substance[†], the difference being only in the names. It is the same Being Whom men call by the name of the Absolute², the Soul³ of the Universe, the Personal God⁵ with Divine Attributes. The first is the name applied by the Vedantist philosopher (Monist), the second by the Unionist⁶, and the third by the Devotees⁷ (Dualists).

¹ Sankhya. ² Brahman. ³ Atman. ⁴ Jivatman. ⁵ Bhagavan. ⁶ Yogi. ⁷ Bhaktas.

* The twenty-four categories are the following, viz. :—the five gross elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space); the five fine elements; the five organs of sense, the five organs of work; the mind; the determinative faculty (buddhi); the ego; *Prakriti*.

† "Substantia"—Spinoza.



CHAPTER II.

GOD PERSONAL, THE OMNIPOTENT MOTHER¹ AND HER POWERS

The steamer hath already left and is on its way back to Calcutta. Many are those who look on Sri Ramakrishna with eyes that do not move and who drink the nectar of the words that drop from his hallowed lips. They cannot feel that the steamer is in motion. The Temple-garden is left behind and the eye can no longer see the picture of that beautiful Temple. Beneath are the sacred waters that reflect the blue firmament above. But the murmurs of the waves—with crests of foam into which they are broken as the steamer passes cleaving along—are lost on the ears of the devotees. The magic of the Blessed Vision hath thrown a charm over them. They have before them a wonderful Being, a God-in-Man and a Man-in-God, with smiles playing on his sweet face radiant with the joy of the Lord, with eyes the beauty of which is enhanced by the collyrium of Divine Love. They look, as if charmed, on one who hath given up the world and its pleasures, on one intoxicated with the love of the Lord, on one who looketh not for anything except the Lord. The conversation goeth on.

Sri Ramakrishna:—According to the Non-dualistic Vedanta philosophy as explained by Sankara, God the Absolute (Brahman) is the only Reality; and the phenomenal world before us is unreal. The Personal God, the Divine Mother¹ Who manifesteth Herself to us as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, is not a Reality in the absolute sense, that is, in the sense in which the Absolute is understood to be Real. But it is impossible for an ordinary mortal to go beyond the jurisdiction of God Personal, however he may reason, saying, 'Not this, not this,'—unless, stripped of his relative sensuous nature, his soul becometh one with the Absolute² Unconditioned God, in that blessed, serene and ecstatic state called *Samadhi*. When one saith, 'I am meditating upon God,' even then, one is going about within that jurisdiction, one cannot shake oneself free from the idea of a Personal God possessed of Attributes.

Thus God the Absolute and God Omnipotent and Personal are the same. A belief in the one implieth a belief in the

¹ Shakti or Kali. ² Brahman.

other. Thus fire cannot be thought of apart from its burning power. Nor can its burning power be thought of apart from the fire. Again, the sun's rays cannot be thought of apart from the sun, nor can the sun be thought of apart from its rays.

What is milk like? Well, people say it is whitish sort of thing. Now, you cannot think of the milky whiteness apart from the milk; nor can you think of the milk apart from its milky whiteness.

Thus God the Absolute cannot be thought of apart from the idea of God with Attributes or God Personal, and *vice versa*. The Unconditioned, the Absolute, the Noumenon, the Substance on the one hand, and the Conditioned, the Relative, the Phenomenon, the Attributes on the other hand, are correlatives—the one cannot be thought of apart from the other.

God Personal with Attributes, the Primal Divine Energy, as we conceive that Being to be, createth, preserveth and destroyeth. The sacred books¹ call that Being by the name, Mother² of the Universe.

Thus God Personal and God Impersonal are one and the same Substance. I call that Being the Absolute or Unconditioned when I cannot think of It as Active or as creating, preserving or destroying. I call that Being Personal and possessed of Attributes when I think of It as active, creating, preserving, destroying and under all possible aspects.

The Being is the same; only the names are different under different aspects like the same substance expressed in different languages such as, *jal*, *water*, *pani*, *vari* and *aqua*. A tank may have four ghats (landing-places with steps). The Hindus drink at one ghat, they call it *jal*. The Mahomedans drink at another and call it *pani*. The English who drink at a third call it *water*.

God is one, only the names are different. Some call Him by the name of Allah, some God, some Brahman, others Kali, others again Rama, Hari, Jesus, Buddha.

Keshab (smiling):—Do say it once more, revered Sir, in what different ways Kali, the Mother of the Universe, is making Herself manifest in this world of Her sports.

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling):—Oh! the Mother sports with the world, Her toy, under various aspects and various names. Now She is the Goddess³ Unconditioned, Absolute, Formless; now

¹ Tantras. ² Kali or Shakti. ³ Mahakali.

the Everlasting¹ as distinguished from Her works. Under another aspect She is the Goddess² of burning ghats or crematories, the Dreaded Being that presides over Death; now again does She stand forth before us to bless, ready to preserve³ Her children.

The Divine Mother

Under another aspect, She appears pleasing to the eye of Her devotees as the Mother⁴ with the dark-blue complexion—Consort of the God of Eternity and of Infinity. Those sacred books, the Tantras, speak of the Goddess⁴ Unconditioned, the Absolute. When nothing was—no sun, no moon, no planets—nothing but darkness deep, there was alone my Divine Mother, Formless! As Mother with the dark-blue complexion worshipped in Hindu homes, She is more accessible to man; She calleth up human interest in a greater degree—coming to us with Her favors and saying to Her children, 'Fear not.' She is the Goddess that is worshipped in Hindu households. As Preserver, She appeareth in times of plague, famine, earthquake, drought or excess of rain. At burning ghats or crematories, She appeareth in the form of Death. The dead body, the jackal, the spirits⁵ of destruction are Her terrible companions. She liveth in the midst of those horrible scenes, those fearful environments. Streams of blood, a garland of skulls thrown round Her neck and a girdle made of the hands of those that are dead, are the symbols that mark Her out as the Dread Mother, the All-Destroyer.

Now look at Her mode of Creation. At the end of a cycle—upon the destruction of the world—my Mother, careful Matron that She is, putteth together the seeds of Creation. The mistress of a house hath a hodgepodge pot of her own in which to keep sundry things for household use. (*Keshab and others laugh.*)

What is Creation?

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling):—Yes, my friend, that is indeed so. The mistress of the house hath such a pot in her possession. In it are kept the 'sea-foam' in a solid state, small parcels containing seeds of the cucumber, gourd, etc. She bringeth them out when wanted. In the same way my Mother keepeth the seeds of Creation after the destruction of the world at the end of a cycle. (*Laughter.*)

My Mother, the Primal Divine Energy, is both within and without this phenomenal world. Giving birth to the World, She liveth within it! She is the Spider and the World is the

¹ Nitya-kali. ² Smasan-kali. ³ Rakshya-kali. ⁴ Shyama. ⁵ Dakini, Yogini.

Spider's Web that She hath woven! The Spider bringeth the web out of Herself and then liveth on it. My Mother is both the Container and the Contained, the Efficient and Material Cause of this World-system.

*The Spider and
Her Web*

Is Kali, the Mother, of a dark-blue complexion? Oh, no! She is so far away from human ken that She only seemeth to be so.

Doth not the sky look blue from a distance? The sky near us is colorless. Pretty much the same is the case with seawater. It is of a dark-blue color when looked at from a distance. Come near it. Take a little up in the hands and thou shalt find it colorless. Thus go near and realize Kali (the Divine Mother), and She will appear to be the same as God the Absolute, about Whom no Attribute can be predicated.

And the Master sang, drunken with the wine of Divine Love—

SONG

Identity of the Mother and God the Absolute

Is my Divine Mother black?

O my mind! What dost thou say?

The Infinite is the Garment that She putteth on!

Though black, She illumineth the lotus of the heart!

Sri Ramaṅṛishna (to Keshab and others):—Bondage and Freedom are both Her making. That man is bound with the chains of 'Lust and Gold' is due to the illusory power of *Maya* that my Divine Mother hath created as part of Her plan of the universe.

The Enigma of Life That man can make himself free from his fetters is, again, due to the mercy and grace of the same Being, my Divine Mother. She taketh Her children across the sea of the world and removeth the chains with which they are bound hand and foot.

And the Master sang divinely with that voice which in its sweetness rose superior to the voice of the gods¹ in heaven who sing there the glories of the Most High:—

SONG

The Divine Mother and the Liberated Soul

1. O my Mother of the dark-blue complexion, Thou art flying the paper kite of the human being in the market-place of this world!

That kite flieth on the wind of hope and is fastened to a string made of Illusion.²

¹ Gandharvas. ² Mâyâ.

2. The wooden framework of the paper kite is the skeleton—ribs, veins and the internal organs of the human body;

The kite is made purely of Thy own attributes¹; the rest of the workmanship is merely ornamental.

3. The string is made sharp with the powdered glass of worldliness;

Out of a hundred-thousand kites, one or two only have their string cut through and they are thus set free; O, then, how Thou laughst and clappst Thy hands!

4. Prasad saith: The kite thus set free will be carried rapidly on favorable wind until it droppeth into the Infinite beyond the sea of this world.

My Divine Mother is always in Her sportive mood. The world, indeed, is Her toy. She will have Her own way. It is Her pleasure to take out of the prison-house and set free only one or two among a hundred-thousand of Her children!

A Brahma:—Sir, She can if She pleases set everybody free. Why is it, then, that She hath bound us hand and foot with the chains of the world?

Why is the Human Soul Imperfect?

Sri Ramakrishna:—Well, I suppose, it is Her pleasure. It is Her pleasure to go on with Her sport with all these beings that She hath brought into existence. The player amongst the children that toucheth the person of the Grand-dame, the same need no longer run about. He cannot take any further part in the exciting play of 'Hide and Seek' that goeth on.

The others who have not touched the goal must run about and play to the great delight of the Grand-dame. She would by no means be glad if everybody should touch Her person at the same time and thus bring the sport to a close. Hence Her joy and Her clapping of hands when one only out of a hundred-thousand snappeth the string that bindeth the kite of the human soul to the world. (*Joy of the devotees.*)

It is my Divine Mother that hath said to the human soul, as if in confidence, with a twinkle of Her eye, 'Go and live in the world until further orders.' Surely, the human soul is not to blame. It is quite possible that She out of Her grace can turn away the mind from things of the world and thus give it freedom once more and pure devotion to the Lotus of Her Feet.

And the Master sang, placing himself in the position of men of the world and laying the trouble of his heart before the Divine Mother.

¹ Sattva, Rajas, Tamas.

SONG

The Divine Mother and Her Children

1. This indeed is the thought that weigheth heavily on my heart:—
Thou, my own Mother, art here and I am wide awake, and behold!
thieves (passions) do rob me of my all!

2. Sometimes I form the resolution of repeating Thy holy Name,
but I forget to do so at the proper hour!

O, now I know, I *feel*, that all this is Thy trick.

3. Thou hast not given, so Thou hast not received, aught to keep
or to eat; am I to blame for this?

Hadst Thou given, Thou wouldst have surely received, and I
would have offered Thee, out of Thy own gifts!

4. Fame or calumny, sweet or bitter, all is Thine!

O, Thou Ruler of all tender feelings, why dost Thou break them
as they are called forth in me instead of giving them play?

5. Prasad saith: Thou hast given me the mind but hast with a
twinkle of Thine eye confided to it a secret at the same time.

Thus do I roam about seeking joy through a world, which is Thy
creation, taking bitter for sweet, unreal for real.

* * * * *

It is my Divine Mother That hath created this delusion,
which hath left man struggling in this sea of the world.
Prasad saith: O Mother! Thou hast in giving me the soul
secretly bidden it live attached to the world.

CHAPTER III.

WORK¹ WITHOUT ATTACHMENT OR THE PROBLEM FOR THE
MAN OF THE WORLD SOLVED

A Brahma:—Sir, is it a fact that one cannot realize God
unless one giveth up the world?

Master (smiling):—Assuredly not. It is certainly not for you
to give up everything. Ye are very well off as ye are. There
are both pure gold and the dross; the pure crystallized sugar
and the molasses with all its impurities; are they not both
sweet? (*Laughter.*)

O! I should think that you are very well. Do you know *nox**
(a kind of play with cards)? Having taken more cards from
the Player and scored more points than were necessary, I have
lost the play. Ye are far too clever for the Player. Ye rest
content some with ten points, some with six, some others even

¹ Karma Yoga.

* One need score only 17 points to win this game.

with five! Ye have been clever enough not to ask for more from the Player; so ye have not lost the play. The play still goeth on. That is all right; think ye not so? (*Laughter.*)

Verily I say into you, it mattereth not whether you live the life of a householder or ye are men of the world. Only ye must fix your mind on God. Do your work with one hand and touch the Feet of the Lord with the other. When ye have no work in the world to do, hold His Feet fast to your heart with both your hands.

The mind is everything. If the mind hath lost its liberty, ye lose yours. If the mind is free, you are free too. The mind may be dipped in colors, red, orange, yellow, violet or green. It is like the white cloth just returned to you by the washerman. This white cloth thou may dip in any color thou likest. Study English, and ye must speak in English in spite of yourself (*laughter*); ye put on boots, you whisle; in fact you do your level best to behave like a native of England. The Pandit who studies Sanskrita must quote couplets¹. If the mind be kept in bad company, it will color one's thought and conversation. Placed in the midst of devotees, one's mind shall meditate upon God and talk on God and God alone.

The mind is everything. It changeth its nature according to the object—according to the things amongst which it liveth and acteth. The attraction for the wife is of one kind and the affection for the child is of a quite different nature. On one side is one's wife, on another side is the child; one caresseth both, but moved by quite different impulses!

THE SENSE OF SIN; MESSAGE TO CHRISTIANITY AND THE BRAHMA-SAMAJ

Sri Ramakrishna (to the Brahma devotees):—The bondage is of the mind. Freedom is also of the mind. I am a free soul; be it in the world, or in the forest, I am not bound. I am the son of God, the son of the King of Kings. Who is there to bind me in fetters? In case thou art bitten by a snake, one way of getting rid of the venom is to make use of thy will-power and say, 'There is *no* venom, there is *no* venom.' In the same way thou shouldst say, 'I am not in fetters; I am free.'

They once placed a book in my hands written by Christians. I wanted them to read and explain passages from it. Would

¹ Shikha.

you believe me that there was only one theme in that book—sin and sin—from the beginning of the chapter to the end!

(*To Keshab*):—The members of the Brahma-Samaj also talk of sin and sinners alone. The fool who saith without ceasing 'I am in bondage' doth, indeed, bring bondage on himself in the end! The wretch who saith eternally 'I am a sinner, I am a sinner' turneth out a sinner, indeed!

The name of God when uttered through faith by a sinner shall bring salvation unto him. 'What! have I not chanted His holy Name and must I be a sinner still? Must I still be in bondage?'—are words of Faith in the Lord. Krishnakishore was a pious Hindu, a Brahman of Brahmans, who worshipped the Lord with a single-minded devotion. He went to Brindaban on pilgrimage. One day, while visiting the various shrines, he felt very thirsty. He went to a well where he found a man standing whom he asked, saying, 'Sirrah, canst thou draw some water for me? What caste art thou? The man replied, 'Oh, divine Sir, I belong to a low caste, that of a cobbler.' Krishnakishore thereupon said to him, 'It matters not; utter the name of the Lord; say, 'Siva,' 'Siva,' and draw the water for me.'

Chant the Name of God and, depend upon it, your body, mind and soul shall become pure.

Why talk of sin and hell-fire all the days of your life? Do say but once, 'I have, O Lord, done thing that I ought not to have done and I have left undone things that I ought to have done. O Lord! forgive me!'

Saying this have faith in His hallowed Name and ye shall be purged of all sins.

And the Master sang on the power of God's sacred Name.

SONG

God's Sacred Name and its Power

1. O Mother, grant unto me to die
With Thy sacred Name on my lips;
Then, O good Mother, I shall see whether
Or not Thou savest this poor helpless child of Thine.
2. I care not if I kill the sacred cow or
A god-like Brahman, or even the child in its
Mother's womb; O, I care not if I am sinful
Enough to drink or even to kill a woman.

With all these sins of the darkest type, I have within my easy reach, and can lay claim to, the high office of the god whom Thou hast appointed to be the Creator¹ of the world.

* * * * *

To my Divine Mother, I prayed for pure devotion² alone. With flowers in my folded hands, I prayed, saying, "Do Thou, O Mother, grant that I may have pure unalloyed devotion². Here is sin, here again is merit, O take them both, I lay them at Thy Feet. Here is knowledge (of many things), here again is ignorance, O take them both and grant that I may have devotion² alone. Here again is purification on the one hand and defilement on the other; I desire neither of them. Here are good works, here are bad, and both I lay at Thy Feet; O, grant that I may have devotion alone and love for Thee!"
(To the Brahma devotees):—Listen to a song by Ram Prasad.

SONG

My Divine Mother and the Discipline of the Mind

1. Come, O my Mind, let us go out for a walk.

Let us gather the four* fruits at the foot of the Kalpa Tree†, viz., my Divine Mother.

2. Thou hast, O my Mind, two wives; take Non-worldliness³ with thee on thy way to the Tree.

Ask—about the Lord—Her Son called *Viveka* Who knoweth the Real (God) from the unreal phenomenal world.

3. O, when shalt thou lie down in the abode of the blessed with Purification⁴ and Defilement⁵ alike by thy side;

Thou shalt see my Divine Mother as soon as all difference between the two co-wives ceaseth to exist.

4. Do thou turn out thy parents, Egoism⁶ and Ignorance⁷.

Should Mine-ness⁸ try to draw thee into its hole do thou cling to the post of Patience.

5. Tie to a worthless post the two goats called Virtue⁹ (due to the good works) and Vice¹⁰ (due to the bad works);

Should they prove refractory, let them be killed before the altar of God with the sword of Knowledge.

6. Admonish, O my Mind, the children of thy first wife Worldliness¹¹ from a safe distance;

Should they not obey thee, see that they are drowned in the Sea of True Knowledge¹².

¹ Brahma. ² Bhakti. ³ Nivritti. ⁴ Shuchi. ⁵ Ashuchi. ⁶ Ahamkara. ⁷ Avidya. ⁸ Moha. ⁹ Dharma. ¹⁰ Adharma. ¹¹ Pravritti. ¹² Jnana.

* Four fruits: *Dharma* (good works); *Artha* (wealth); *Kama* (desires); *Moksha* (liberation of the soul).

† Kalpa Tree—a tree in Heaven which grants everything that the believer prays for.

7. Prasad saith: If thou go on like this, thou shalt be able to render a satisfactory account of thyself to the Lord of Death;

And I shall be glad to call thee 'my child,' 'my darling,' the 'idol of my father' and by other pet names; and thou shalt be indeed a mind after my mind.

THE PROBLEM OF LIFE FOR THE MAN OF THE WORLD

It may be given even to the householder to see God. It was the case with Raja Janak, the great royal sage. A great devotee once called the world a structure of dreams. But, according to Prasad, another great lover of God, that is not the whole truth, and one may be in the world though not of the world.

And the Master sang:—

SONG

The World to a Lover of God

1. The world is indeed a thing of joy; let me eat and drink and be merry.

2. Raja Janak, the great royal sage, was he inferior in any respect to the holy man who has given up the world?

Oh no, he it was who was loyal to both Matter and Spirit*, who realized God and at the same time drank his cup of milk. (*Laughter.*)

But one cannot rise to the height of Janak Raja all of a sudden by leaps and bounds. Janak spent many long years in devotional practices, in solitude, away from the din and bustle of the world. Thus it behoveth everybody to go into solitude for some time. It is a great thing, if one can cry out for the Lord for three days steadily, in solitude, away from the haunts of men. Indeed, one day passed in such a way would be a great gain. People are ready enough to shed, for wives and children, tears that will fill a water-pot; but who crieth for the Lord? It would do men of the world infinite good if they would now and then retire into solitude to the end that God may be seen and realized.

There are thousand-and-one difficulties in the way of the aspirant in the first stage of his spiritual life. These difficulties are caused by the world and its attractions. The tree planted on the footpath standeth in need of a fence lest it be eaten up by goats and cows. The fence is to last so long as the

* Loyal to matter and Spirit. — Compare 'Sensibility' and 'Rationality' (of the Hegelian philosophers).

plant is young and tender; when the trunk and roots get thicker and stronger no fence will be needed. An elephant tied to the trunk of such a tree will not injure it.

The disease of a worldly man is of a serious type. His organs with their functions are entirely out of order. He hath lost sight of the Lord, his own Father, and is attached to 'Lust and Gold.' These have brought all this trouble on him and he needeth rest and solitude.

Would you keep a large water-jar and savoury pickles in the same room in which a patient is laid up with typhoid fever? If ye wish to cure such a patient ye must have him removed from that room, in case it is impossible to send away the jar and the pickles!

A man of the world (a householder) is such a patient; worldly things make the water-jar; desire to enjoy those things is the patient's thirst. The mouth waters at the mere thought of the pickles; they need not be placed before us. Women looked at with a carnal eye are such things. Hence solitude is the best remedy for it.

First, have a sense of what is Real and what is unreal; and, secondly, know what it is to live unattached to the world. Having these two, viz., Discrimination¹ and Non-attachment² we may live a family life. In the sea of the world are the crocodiles—passions and desires. Rub thy body with turmeric pounded to a pulp, if thou wishest to bathe in that sea; for then, crocodiles will do no harm to thee. The turmeric is Discrimination¹, *i. e.*, knowing of the Real from the unreal and Non-attachment². God is the only Reality; the phenomenal universe is unreal.

Yearning for the Lord Along with this another thing is wanted—that is, intense devotion to God. The Gopees of Brindaban had such a devotion. They had an intense love for Sri Krishna—God-Incarnate. Here is a song about their love for the God-Man.

SONG

Yearning for the Lord

1. O, the sweet flute is again being played on in yonder wood!
(I for my part must go there!)
(My Beloved of the dark-blue color standeth waiting for me there!)
O tell me, my dears, if you too are coming or not.

¹ Viveka. ² Vairagya.

2. My Beloved—O, I am afraid He is a mere word—an empty sound to you, my friends!

But to me He is the vital part. O, He is my very life, my heart, my soul!

Sri Ramakrishna is in tears as he sings. He saith to Keshab and other devotees with great feeling, "Ye are Brahmas; ye believe that God is formless and do not believe in God-Incarnate. Well, it mattereth not. Ye need not accept Râdhâ and Sri Krishna or any persons as Incarnations of the Supreme Being. But the attachment, the intense love, the yearning which they¹ felt for Sri Krishna is a thing which ye may well make your own.

Yearning is the next step leading to realization—to God-vision."

CHAPTER IV.

MASTER AND DISCIPLE: GOD, THE ONLY MASTER

It is the ebb-tide. The steamer is going fast down stream towards Calcutta. It gets to the other side of the Howrah Bridge within sight of the Botanical Gardens. The Captain has orders to go a little farther down. How far the steamer has actually gone down the river is not known to those who are listening to Sri Ramakrishna and watching his movements. They listen with rapt attention! They have no idea either of time or of distance!

Keshab now offers the Master popped rice with the kernel of the cocoanut. All present are invited to partake of these. They take them within the folds of their cloth, eat and are very happy. It seems as if a festival were being held on board the steamer.

The Master notices that Bejoy and Keshab are not quite at home in each other's presence. He would see that they make up their differences. Is it not his mission to see on earth Peace and Good-will among men?

Master (to Keshab):—Look here, my dear Sir, here is Bejoy. As to your quarrels and fights—well, don't worry yourselves on that account. There was fighting enough even between Siva and Rama. (*Laughter.*)

Siva was Rama's spiritual guide! After a little fighting, they made it up and became once more as good friends as

¹ Gopees.

ever. But the fighting went on among their followers. The gibberish of the ghosts and the chatter of the monkeys could not easily be quieted down. Ye, too, will be very good friends once again. But your followers—well, I dare say, they will go after you. (*Laughter.*)

One's own flesh and blood! That is how he (Bejoy) standeth in relation to thee. These differences, thou knowest, are things that cannot be avoided. There was the tug-of-war even in the case of father and son. Take the case of Rama and his sons—Lava and Kusha. Take another case. The weal of the mother and of the daughter is the same; still they observe the 'Tuesday' each on her own account as the day of fast and prayers. It is as if the weal of the one went against the weal of the other.

In the same way, thou, Keshab, hast a religious Society (Samaj) of thine own; and Bejoy must have a separate Society of his own, too! (*Laughter.*)

Well, there is room enough for all kinds of things under Providence—even for quarrels and differences. When it was God-Incarnate Himself Who appeared at Brindaban the question may very well be, 'Why did Jatilla and Kutilla stand in the way of His mission of *Love*?' I suppose, His sport as the Divine Lover would have died a natural death from want of nourishment, but for those obstructives, the Jatillas and Kutillas. (*Laughter.*) Opposition addeth zest to a thing. Ramanuja held the doctrine of qualified Non-dualism. His spiritual guide, however, was a Non-dualist without any qualification; so they had their differences. Master and disciple criticised each other. This sort of thing cometh about every day. Be it so; still to the master the disciple is his own.

They all rejoice. Sri Ramakrishna saith to Keshab. That thy disciples break away from thee is no wonder. Never dost thou study their nature before taking them in.

Men are the same in form and appearance. But they differ in the qualities of their nature. In some the 'qualities'¹ lead them Godward. In others they² make them inclined to multiply work and duty. In a third class, they³ cause Ignorance which turneth the mind away from God. Pooli, a kind of cake, may all have the same look, but they differ as to their contents. In some the contents are the sweet condensed milk; in others, it is the kernel of the cocoanut sweetened by

¹ Sattva. ² Rajas. ³ Tamas.

treacle or sugar. In others again, the contents may be Kalai pulse boiled without any admixture of sweets. (*Laughter.*)

The way of thinking and feeling into which I for my part have been put by my Divine Mother is somewhat different.

*Sri Ramakrishna's
relation to the
Divine Mother*

I go about eating and playing, child as I am of my Divine Mother. It is *She Who* must know all the rest.

Ineed there are three words which prick me to the core: (1) Spiritual Guide¹, (2) Doer² or Free Agent and (3) Father³. I am not the Free Agent; it is my Divine Mother. I am only an humble instrument in Her hands. I for my part do not wish to lead a family life and be a father of children. I would much rather give all my time to God and minister unto Him—as manifest in all His creatures and not merely in the members in one particular human family. Again, God is our only spiritual guide.

It is He alone Who will teach as Master. I for my part feel like a child which feeleth its weakness as soon as it cannot see its mother.

God, the only Master

Men as spiritual guides can be had by hundreds of thousands. Everybody is anxious to be master. How many are there who would care to be disciples?

The task of a master teaching a disciple is very hard indeed. If the master has seen the Lord, if by Him he hath been commissioned to teach, it is quite a different matter. So commissioned were Narada, Suka-deva; also Sankaracharya.

*The Commissioned
Teacher*

When thou art without such a commission, who will listen to thee? Thou knowest Calcutta and her fondness for the latest sensation. The milk in the kettle will, of course, puff up as soon as it is put upon the fire. But the puffing will cease when the fire is withdrawn from under the kettle. The people of Calcutta are remarkably fond of sensations. They begin digging the well at one place; but they will give it up as soon as they find that the earth is hard and strong. They then set to work digging at another place. The soil, suppose, is sandy there; they will as readily give up digging at that spot. They will then look for another locality. That is indeed the way of the people. Their good opinion is by no means worth having.

¹ Guru. ² Karta. ³ Baba.

Again, there are people who think a particular thought and believe it to be God's Commandment. Such an idea is quite a mistaken one. One may look for God's Commandment after seeing Him and talking with Him and not until then. God's Word!

What is God's direct Commandment?

—What wonderful weight must It carry! A mountain may be moved by It. A lecture taken by itself hath no force whatever, apart from God's direct Commandment. People may care for lectures, only for a short time; after which everything will escape from their memory. As to living up to the things taught—well, they will care even less for it!

In that part¹ of the country there is a tank called Haldarpukur. People used to throw dirt round about the tank.

Making disciples and teaching without Divine Authority condemned

Others that came there for washing purposes or for morning ablutions called the offenders names in loud, excited voice; but all in vain. The offence was repeated on the following morning. Upon this they sent word to the Municipal authorities. A peon wearing a badge round his waist, came to make enquiries. He put up a notice to all concerned not to 'commit nuisance.' Wouldst thou believe it that the nuisance abated at once? (*Laughter.*)

For the teaching of divine truths a badge of Authority is the one thing needful. Else, for a man to teach others—O, it would be ridiculous! To think that a person must teach who doth not know—that the blind must lead the blind! Thou shalt thus do greater evil than good! It is only when thou hast seen God that thou canst hope to see through other people and tell them what diseases (of the soul) they have been taken with.

Thou must have the direct Commandment² of God. Else it would be asserting thyself to say, 'I teach' or 'I am the master and ye are my disciples.' Self-assertion is the offspring of Ignorance. One enjoyeth real freedom in this very world if one can but realize that God is the sole Actor in this world-system³ and that we are only instruments in His hands. All trouble, all want of Peace, cometh of the notion 'I am the Lord—I am the Free Agent'⁴.

¹ Kamarpukur. ² Adesha. ³ Jagat. ⁴ Karta.

THE WESTERN IDEA OF WORK: IS WORK THE END OF LIFE
OR A MEANS TO THE END?

Sri Ramakrishna (to Keshab and other devotees):—You talk glibly of doing good to the world. The world to which you desire to do good—is it contained in a nutshell? In the next place, who are ye, pray, to do good to the world? First go through devotional practices and see God. Then it is that Inspiration and powers¹ will come down to you and ye may talk of doing good. Not till then.

A Brahma devotee:—Sir, dost thou mean to say that we are to give up all work until we have seen God?

Sri Ramakrishna:—No, my dear Sir; why shalt thou give up all work? Meditation, the chanting of hymns, the repeating of His holy Name, and other devotional exercises thou must have to go through.

Devotee:—Dost thou mean work connected with the world? Shall we then give up all worldly affairs?

Sri Ramakrishna:—Yes, thou mayst attend to them too; only so much as thou canst not do without, in order to live in this world. But thou shouldst at the same time pray unto the Lord with tears in thine eyes for His grace and for strength to do thy duties without expectation of any reward or fear of punishment in this world or the next. Say when thou prayest, 'Lord, grant that my work in the world and for the world may grow less and less day by day. For I see that my work growing manifold only maketh me loose sight of Thee. Sometimes I think I do my duties remaining unattached to the world, but I know not how I deceive myself and do them through attachment instead. I do my alms and behold! I seek for fame, O, I know not how!'

Sambhu (Mallik) talked of one's founding hospitals and dispensaries, schools and colleges; of building roads, sinking wells, and digging tanks for the good of all.

The End of Life I said to him, 'Yes; but thou must be unattached while doing good to others; and thou must be careful to take up only such works as come in thy way—such works, again, as appear to be of a pressing necessity. Do not seek them—do not seek more work than thou canst well manage. If thou dost, thou wilt lose sight of the Lord. Go to the shrine of Kali, the Mother of the Universe;

¹ Siddhis.

before thou seest the Holy of Holies, and on thy way to the shrine, thou mayst do thy alms. But if thou continuest thy charitable work until late in the evening when the doors of the temple have been closed upon all pilgrims, thou wilt not see the Mother. Clever people would first see the Holy Mother, pushing their way through the multitude that assembles at the gates of the temple; and after seeing Her they may turn their attention to almsgiving and other good works.

First see God and then talk seriously of thy duties.

What, thinkest thou, ought to be the end in view of those who go on performing their duties? Work or the performance of one's duty is the means and God is the end. Do not take the means for the end! So said I once to Sambhu. "Suppose," I said, "thou seest God, or God manifesteth Himself to thee; wilt thou then say to Him, 'Lord, do Thou grant that I may have lots of dispensaries and hospitals, and schools and colleges?'" (*Laughter.*) No; they are wanted as long as thou art in the world—which is only transitory compared to Eternal Life. A true devotee shall rather pray in this wise: 'Grant, O good Lord, that I may have a niche in the Lotus of Thy Feet, that it may be my privilege to live always in Thy Holy Presence, and that I may have deep unalloyed devotion unto Thee.'"

Hard, indeed, is work without attachment. It is hard in this materialistic age¹ to get through all the works—all the duties—laid upon us by the Sacred Books. Verily, life in this age cometh out of food! Work and duties—O, there is hardly time enough for them! It will be all over with the patient suffering from the high fever of this world if he is allowed to go through the slow process of treatment practised by the old-fashioned Hindu physicians. People are short-lived and the fever carrieth one off in a few hours. The specific for the present day is Dr. Gupta's patent fever mixture. This produceth effect at once.

Yes, in this age, the one means of realizing God is sincere devotion² to and love for Him—and earnest prayer, and the chanting of His holy Names and of His Divine Attributes.

(To Keshab and other devotees):—Your path, too, lieth through devotion³ and self-surrender to the Lord. Blessed are they who like you sing His Name. Your path is clear and rational. Ye cannot shake yourself free from egoism⁴; thus it is proper for you not to go far like a Non-dualist and hold

¹ Kaliyuga. ² Bhakti. ³ Bhakti-yoga. ⁴ Ahankara.

that 'God, the Absolute, is the only Reality and that the world is unreal like a dream.' Ye are not philosophers¹ but devotees². Ye believe in a Personal God. That is right. Go on in this way. But have a yearning for the Lord and, depend upon it, ye shall see Him as a Reality!

CHAPTER V.

AT THE HOUSE OF A DISCIPLE

The steamer has come back to Koyla Ghat (Calcutta). All on board hold themselves in readiness to land. Coming out of the cabin they see that fool moon has bathed the bosom of the Holy Ganges and the banks adjoining with her mellow light.

The Master with two or three disciples including M. gets into a cab which is waiting for him on the shore. Nandalal, Keshab's nephew, also gets in. He wishes to go with the Master some distance.

When all have seated themselves in the cab Sri Ramakrishna saith, "Where is he?" meaning Keshab. In a few moments Keshab cometh up smiling, and saying, "Who are the persons that are going with him?" Being satisfied with the answer, he boweth down before the Master, who affectionately bids him adieu.

The cab has set out. It is that part of the town where the English live; beautiful well-watered streets on both sides with beautiful mansions! It is the full moon. The splendid palatial buildings seem to repose under the soft, serene light. Near the gates are gas-lights; within are brightly illuminated rooms; the sweet sound of music reaches the ear, evidently from songs sung to the accompaniment of harmoniums or pianos by European ladies.

The Master is filled with the joy of the Lord as the carriage drives along. Suddenly he saith, "I am thirsty; what is to be done?" Nandalal stops the carriage before the gates of the India Club and goes upstairs to fetch water. Water is brought in a glass tumbler. The Master smiling asks, "Is the glass well washed?" Nandalal says, 'Yes.' The Master drinks from the glass.

He is child-like in his simplicity. He putteth forward his face to look at the various objects on both sides. His joy

¹ Vedantists or Jnanis. ² Bhaktas.

knoweth no bounds as he seeth men, animals, carriages, houses, the moon-light, the lighted streets!

Nandalal alights at Colutola. The cab comes to a stop before the door of Suresh Mitra's house. Suresh is very much attached to the Master, but he is not at home. He has gone to visit a newly purchased garden at Kankurgachi.

His people open a room on the ground-floor and invite the party to be seated there.

The cab fare is to be paid. Who is to pay it? Had Suresh been at home, he would have paid it. The Master saith to a disciple, "Ask the ladies of the house for the fare. I suppose they know well enough that their husbands and lords are in the habit of coming to our place." (*Laughter.*)

Narendra (Vivekananda) lives in the same neighborhood, so the Master sends for him. Meanwhile the inmates of the house have led him upstairs into the drawing-room.

Vivekananda with the Master The matting of the floor is covered with a carpet and a white sheet. Three or four bolsters are lying about. On the walls there hangs a beautiful oil-painting which Suresh means to be a picture of the Harmony of All Religions. In that painting Sri Ramakrishna is represented as pointing out to Keshab that all religions lead to one Goal, viz., God—be it Hinduism, Mahomedanism, Buddhism, Christianity on the one hand, or their various sects on the other.

He talketh with smiles on his lips when Narendra cometh up. His joy is redoubled. He saith smiling to Narendra as he talketh, "We enjoyed such a pleasant trip on board the steamer with Keshab Sen. Bejoy also was there and many of those present here." Pointing to M. he saith, "Thou mayst ask M. how I said to Keshab and Bejoy about the mother and daughter both observing the 'fast on Tuesday'—each for the welfare of her own, and how God's sports in this world would suffer for want of nourishment in the absence of obstructives like Jatilla and Kutilla!"

(To M.):—"Was this not so, M.?"

M. replied, "Quiet so, Revered Sir."

It is getting late. But Suresh has not come back as yet. The Master will go back to the Temple-garden at Dakshineshwara. It is about half-past ten and he must leave for the garden.

The streets are flooded with moonlight. The cab is at the door. The Master getteth in. Narendra and M., each boweth down low to the Master and goeth back unto his own house.

SECTION V.

1883

SRI RAMAKRISHNA WITH KESHAB CHANDRA SEN AT LILY COTTAGE

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINE MOTHER AND HER MANIFESTATIONS

“He looketh for Thee with a yearning heart as Thou comest.”—Song by Joydeva.

It was after 2 P. M. on the 28th of November, 1883, that a young man could be seen walking up and down the footpath of the Circular Road before Lily Cottage. The footpath runs close to the cottage north and south.

Lily Cottage is south of Mangalbari—a locality where the Brahma devotees belonging to Keshab’s Samaj have settled. Here Keshab lives with his family. But Keshab is very ill—his friends say that there is little chance of his getting well.

Sri Ramakrishna loves Keshab. He will come to-day to see him. He has by this time left the Temple at Dakshineshwara for Calcutta. It is thus that this young man, his disciple, paces up and down the footpath and watches for his beloved Master. Carriages come to view one after another and every time he looks up to see if he is coming.

He will wait. He watches the passers-by. He looks on the building opposite—the Victoria College, where Brahma girls and Brahma ladies receive instruction. North of the College building is a garden-house, the residence of an English gentleman. The young man has this house also in full view before him.

All is not right there. As he observes for a long time, there is hurrying to and fro amongst the inmates of the house; and their looks are sad. Presently come on the scene the ominous hearse and the drivers and servants dressed in black: they wear the livery of Death, for it is He Who hath visited at the house: a spirit hath passeth away: the human soul hath left this body of clay! It came into this world out of Eternity It hath left the world!

“Whither?” saith the disciple to himself as he walketh up and down. “Whither doth the soul pass as it leaveth this world?—verily it is raised out of Eternity unto Eternity!”

Carriages rattle away before him. He lifteth his eyes; but he hath not come.

It is five in the afternoon. The Master hath come up. Latoo and two or three other disciples are with him. Rakhai and M. are also there.

He is received by Keshab's people and is led upstairs. In the corridor that runs south of the drawing-room, the Master hath taken his seat.

THE MASTER IN SAMADHI

He hath been waiting for a long time. He will see Keshab who is lying ill in the inner apartments. He getteth impatient. But Keshab is just taking a little rest in the midst of his great sufferings; so his people say—with great humility. He will come and see the Master soon.

Keshab has been taken seriously ill. Hence his disciples are so careful about him. Sri Ramakrishna however getteth more and more impatient to see him. He appealeth to Keshab's disciples—Prasanna, Amritta and others.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Keshab's disciples):—Well, there is no need of *his* coming here. Let *me* go in and see him.

Prasanna (humbly):—Sir, kindly wait one moment; he will be here presently.

Sri Ramakrishna:—O dear, it is ye who are standing in the way: how I long to see him!

Prasanna talks about Keshab to turn his attention.

Prasanna:—Sir, a great change hath come over him. Like thyself he is often found talking unto the Divine Mother!

Talking with the Mother Like thyself he is often found talking unto the Divine Mother! Like thyself he heareth Her voice and sometimes sheddeth tears!

Doth Keshab talk to the Divine Mother and smile and cry like a child? The good news is too much for the Master. He loseth all sense-consciousness and passeth into the state of *Samadhi*!

There is this God-intoxicated man seated motionless like a statue. It being cold weather he hath on a coat made of green Cashmere. He is seated with folded hands. His body is erect. His eyes move not. Deep in *Samadhi*! He continueth in this state for a long time. No sign that this unique state of Divine Ecstasy is going to leave him!

It is evening. They have lighted the drawing-room. He is returning to the sense-world. They are trying to take him into that room.

He is seated on a couch—with cushion chairs and couches and mirrors on all sides—in the lighted room. But the state of God-consciousness hath not entirely left him. He smileth like one who hath been drinking. He looketh on the couches and cushioned chairs, mirrors and the rest. He talketh to himself and to his Divine Mother!

Sri Ramakrishna (at the sight of couches, etc.):—These were of use, indeed, sometime back! But now?—They are of little use.

Doth the Master see with his inner vision that Keshab's hour was come and that he would depart out of this world unto his Divine Mother?

God-vision and Immortality of the Soul He looketh at Rakhal, a young disciple, and saith with fondness, "Rakhal, is it thou?"

He talketh to the Divine Mother, saying, "Here Thou art, O Mother! How beautifully dressed Thou art! Do not trouble, O Mother! but take Thou Thy seat!"

The Brahma devotees have filled the room by this time. His disciples, Latoo, Rakhal, M., are seated near him. He talketh on the Immortality of the Soul. Doth he see with a clear vision that Keshab's soul must pass away? Saith he—"The Body and the Soul! The body hath a beginning. It must have an end. The body must die. The soul dieth not!"

"The soul standeth apart from the body. Until one seeth God, one cannot help believing that the soul is the same as the body. The idea clingeth to the Ignorant—to him who hath not seen God. To the Knowing One it is plain that the soul is not the same as the body."

"The shell of the unripe betelnut adhereth to the nut. It is so hard to part the one from the other. Such is not the case with the ripe nut. The shell doth not adhere to it; the nut is felt rolling inside, if shaken."

Who is it that now enters the room? A figure made of skin and bones—a veritable spectre coming on towards the Master! He holds on to the wall for support! He comes near the couch. He falls down at the hallowed feet of Sri Ramakrishna, who is now seated on the carpeted floor and is still in a state of divine consciousness. The figure before him is Keshab, or rather the wreck of him who was once Keshab, the hero of a hundred platforms, the observed of all observers,

the idol of Young Bengal, the god-like figure whose very presence was so often inspiring as he sat conducting divine service in the Brahma-Samaj and poured out his soul like a child in prayer to the Divine Mother—in words never to be forgotten—so forceful, so earnest, so sweet, so charming!

Still in a state of ecstasy! He looketh on Keshab as on one he knoweth not. Keshab is seated and saith aloud, "Here am I, Sir! Here am I!" Keshab softly stroketh his left hand.

But no return to the sense-world! Drunken deep at the Fountain of Immortal Bliss! A little while and he talketh to himself—like one gone mad! Is this the madness of Divine Love? Saith he:—

So long as I do not have a knowledge of my True Self, so long as the Reality getteth out of sight behind semblances¹ I have a perception of many things and persons — as Keshab, Amritta, Prasanna. Perfect knowledge is knowledge of One-ness—of One only Reality behind the 'many things'—One God behind the phenomenal Universe.

The Knowing One seeth again that this Reality—this Universal Soul—hath differentiated Itself into living beings and the world—in short, into the twenty-four categories of the philosopher.

Only it is Divine Energy² which manifesteth Itself more or less everywhere. The One Soul hath indeed differentiated Itself into many things; but in some the Manifested Energy is greater, in some, less. Vidya-sagar asked, 'Is it a fact that the powers given us by God are greater in the case of some and less in the case of others? Is God partial?' I answered, 'If that were not the case how is it that one man is a match for ten, nay, sometimes for fifty? If that were not the case again, how is it that we have come here all the way from Dakshineshwara to see thee? Inequality is a fact in God's creation and must have a deep meaning. It certainly doth not prove that God is partial.'

*Special Manifestation :
The Divine Incarnation*

He in whom the divinity of the Lord is manifested possesseth powers far greater than those of anybody else.

The rich man may have many houses to live in. But he may be generally met in a certain drawing-room—of which he

¹ Upadhi. ² Shakti.

is especially fond. The soul of him who loveth the Lord is a Drawing-room of the Lord. Unto it there come down special powers from the Most High.

Do ye ask, what are the signs of such a person? Well, these are great works wrought by him in the Name of the Lord. Verily they are the fruit of great powers.

This Primal Divine Energy¹ or God the Creator is the same as God the Absolute². One cannot be thought of without the other being suggested. The refulgence (of the gem) cannot be thought of without the gem being suggested; nor can the gem be thought of without its lustre being suggested. Take again the snake and its tortuous motion; the one cannot be thought of without the other idea being called up.

The identity of God the Absolute and God the Creator cannot be made perfectly clear by means of words. Reasoning by analogy only throws some light on it.

Now, God (the Creator), my Divine Mother, hath manifested Herself as the twenty-four categories of the philosopher. It is a case of Involution and Evolution³. In Her were involved the Human Soul⁴ and the External World⁵. These have been gradually evolved out of Her. Why do I yearn to see Rakhal, Narendra (Vivekananda) and other young men? They have not as yet touched the world—they have not touched 'Lust and Gold.' Verily the Divine Mother is revealed in the flesh—the Unmanifested Energy hath manifested Herself in the form of this world and markedly in these human forms!

Hazra indeed often taketh me to task saying, "Why goest thou about to think of these young men. I wonder what thou art going to do to give thy mind to God!" (*Here Keshab and others laugh.*)

Well, Hazra's words did set me thinking seriously of the matter. I prayed unto the Divine Mother, saying, "Mother, is all this true that Hazra saith? Am I indeed losing sight of Thee?" Well, I also asked Bholanath; and it was he who assured me that the Mahabharata made the matter quite clear. It is pointed out there that a person in

Samadhi who seeth God hath nothing in this unreal, phenomenal world for his mind to rest upon. He, therefore, cannot help seeking the company of pure souls who have a love for

¹ Adya-Shakti. ² Brahman. ³ Anulom and Vilom. ⁴ Jiva. ⁵ Jagat.

*Special Manifestations
of the Mother—pure
souls like Narendra
untouched by the world*

God and who do not love 'Lust and Gold.' This dictum of the Mahabharata at once relieved my mind. It was to me much as a precedent is to a suitor before a court of justice. (*Laughter.*)

Hazra is not to blame. Until God is seen one must reason saying, 'Not this, not this,' *i. e.*, God is a Being who abideth quite apart from either Man or Nature. It is quite otherwise who hath seen God. He realizeth the fact of Involution and of Evolution¹—that the phenomenal world and the human soul were involved in God the Absolute and that they are the forms in which He manifesteth Himself—forms which have been evolved out of Himself. To get the butter as a distinct object one putteth aside the butter-milk: in the end one cannot help realizing that as for the butter-milk the butter is its own: and that as for the butter the butter-milk is its own: the two are correlated. Yes, Man and Nature are His manifestations—only in some created things He manifesteth Himself in a greater degree than in others.

The more is the love of God deepened in the human soul after realization, the easier it becometh to feel His presence in all things. Until a flood causes the river to overflow thou must follow its round-about course in order to reach the sea. After the flood there is deep water on land itself and thou mayst row from any point to the sea, straight as the crow flieth.

After the harvest hath been reaped one need not any longer go round along the balk—one may walk straight to any point over the fields.

He who hath once realized Him seeth that the Lord manifesteth Himself in all things. Above all, He revealeth Himself in man—more specially in those pure souls who are of themselves fixed upon God and are turned away from the little things of this world—turned away from 'Lust and Gold.' (*Perfect silence.*)

It is indeed hard for a man who cometh down from *Samadhi* and hath seen God, to give his mind to the little things of this world. Hence he seeketh the company of such pure souls, for they have not touched the world and the things that the world can give—money, honors, titles, power, sensual pleasures.

The Divine Mother is the same as God the Absolute. When thought of as Inactive He is called the Absolute². When again, He is thought of as Active—as Creating, Pre-

¹ Anulom and Vilom. ² Brahman or Purusha.

serving and Destroying—then the Being is called the Divine Energy or the Divine Mother¹. The Absolute expressed in terms of the Relative is the same as the Divine Mother—the same as God the Father. The father leaveth the management of the household to the mother. The mother receiveth all her power and authority from the father. Thou canst not think of God (the Absolute) *behind* the Universe without thinking of the God of the Universe, the Divine Mother. The thought of the One must call up to you the thought of the Other.

Brahma-Samaj and the Motherhood of God

The thought of the Male Principle in the Universe must suggest to you the thought of the Female Principle; and the thought of the Female Principle must suggest to you the thought of the Male. One that understandeth what is 'Father,' doth also understand what is 'Mother.' (*Keshab laughs.*)

One that hath a sense of *darkness* hath also a sense of *light*, its correlative. One that knoweth the meaning of *night* knoweth also the meaning of *day*, its correlative. One that hath a feeling of *joy* hath also a feeling of *grief*, its correlative. Dost thou see this?

Keshab (smiling):—Yes, Sir, I do.

Sri Ramakrishna:—What Mother do I mean? The Mother of the Universe—She Who doth create and doth preserve—She Who protecteth Her children always from evil and teacheth them how to live in the world and how again to obtain Liberation and True Knowledge. A true child cannot live apart from the mother. He knoweth not anything—but his mother knoweth everything. The child only getteth his meat out of his mother's hands and roameth about in play. He casteth all his cares upon the mother,

Keshab:—That is quite true, Sir.

CHAPTER II.

THE LAST WORDS WITH KESHAB SEN

By this time Sri Ramakrishna hath come down to the sense-world. The company assembled in the drawing-room eagerly watcheth him as he talketh smiling with Keshab. Strange, that neither Keshab nor the Master saith, 'How dost thou do?' or 'How dost thou feel?' No words are spoken but those about God alone.

¹ Shakti or Prakriti.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Keshab):—The members of the Brahma-Samaj—why do they dwell so much upon the glory of God's Works? 'O Lord, Thou hast made the sun, Thou hast made the moon, Thou hast made the stars.' Why do you dwell so much upon these things? Many are there that are charmed with the beauty of the garden—its glorious flowers and sweetest odors—few seek the Lord of the Garden! Which is the greater of the two—the garden or its Lord? Verily the garden is unreal so long as Death stalketh in our midst; but the Lord of the Garden is the one Reality!

After having taken a few glasses at the bar of a tavern, who careth to enquire how many tons the liquors in the barrels that are there for sale weigh? A single bottle sufficeth for one.

At the sight of Narendra I am drunken with joy. Never have I asked him, 'Who is thy father?' or 'How many houses hath he got of his own?'

Men do value their own goods; they value money, houses, furniture: hence they think that the Lord would view His own works—the sun, moon, stars—in the same light! Men think He would be glad if they spoke highly of His works.

Sambhu (Mallik) once said, 'Sir, do thou bless me that I may die leaving all my wealth at the hallowed Feet of the Divine Mother.' I replied, 'What dost thou speak? It is all wealth to thee! To the Divine Mother it is no better than the dust over which thou walkest.'

There was once a theft committed in the Temple of Vishnu—the thief had stolen the jewels that adorned the Divine Images.

Mathoor (Manager of the Temple and son-in-law of Rani Rashmani) and myself went up there to see what was the matter. Mathoor cried out saying, 'Thou, God, hast no worth! They took away all Thy jewels, but Thou wert unable to do anything!' Upon this I said to him sharply, 'How foolish it is of thee that thou talkest in this strain! The jewels of which thou speakest are as good as lumps of clay to the Lord of the Universe Whom thou worshippest in this Image! Remember, it is from Him that the Goddess of Fortune deriveth all power!'

Doth the Lord care for all the wealth that one may offer to Him? O, no. His grace lighteth on him alone who can offer Love¹ and Devotion. What alone He valueth is such Love and Non-attachment² and Renunciation³ for His sake.

¹ Bhakti. ² Viveka. ³ Vairagya.

One's idea of God varieth with the way in which one's nature is made up. One man¹ is fond of meat and offereth animals in sacrifice unto his God. Another² hath his mind turned to *many* things, and his offerings to his God are of *many* kinds. A third man³ liketh not to make a show of his worship to the world. He offereth flowers, leaves of the Bael tree and the holy Ganges water. He offereth the plainest things—sweet cakes⁴, or a preparation⁵ of milk, rice and sugar.

Various Classes of the Lovers of God

There is yet another class⁶ of worshippers. They are like children. Their soul is unattached to the elements⁷ that go to form their body and mind. Their worship consisteth purely in believing in the Name of the Lord and repeating it with devotion. Yes, the Name of the Lord alone and nothing else!

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling to Keshab):—Thou art ill; well, there is a deep meaning in that. There hath passed through thy body many a devotional feeling that seeketh the Lord: thy sickness beareth witness to those feelings. Of the havoc done by them to the system one can form no idea at

The Lord's Hospital and the Treatment of the Soul

the time they arise.

A ship goeth past over the Ganges but nobody attendeth to it. A little while after the big waves are found beating upon the bank and sometimes washing away portions of it.

An elephant entering into a hut soon maketh it totter to its foundations and at last pulleth it down. The love for the Lord is in its greatness like the elephant. It very often pulleth down the frail house of clay called the human body.

When a house is set on fire, some of the things inside are first burnt up; then the house is taken up as a whole by the fire and burnt. Much the same thing cometh to pass when God is seen. The fire of God-vision first burneth up the various passions—Lust, Anger, etc.;—then the false *ego* which saith, I am the Doer (Lord); and, lastly, the whole house, *viz.*, the body.

Thou mayst think that the Lord's Will is done. But no: the physician leaveth not the patient until he is made perfectly whole. Thy name hath been entered as a patient in the hospital books and thou canst not get away unless thou art 'seen cured' by the physician in charge (the Doctor Saheb). Why didst thou suffer thy name to be so entered? (*Laughter.*)

¹ Tamo-guni. ² Rajo-guni. ³ Sattva-guni. ⁴ Battasa. ⁵ Payas. ⁶ Cunanita Bhaktas.
⁷ The Three Gunas.

Keshab goeth into a fit of laughter at the Master's reference to the Lord's Hospital.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Keshab):—Hriday used to say, "Never have I witnessed such Love of God—and such illness, too, joined to it," I was at the time taken very ill with diarrhœa of a rather severe type. It then seemed as if myriads of ants had been eating into my brain. But the words that I used to speak were all concerning the Lord. Ram of the village Natagore, a Hindu physician, finding me—when he called—in the midst of a homily, said, "Hath this man really gone out of his wits, that he goeth on talking like that with a body made of mere skin and a couple of bones!"

Master (to Keshab):—Everything is ordered by Her Will. Thou doest Thy Will alone, O Mother Divine! Thou doest Thy Own work, but foolish man taketh all the credit to himself, saying, 'It is I that have done it.'

The gardener knoweth well how to deal with the common rose; and also with the rose Bussora which is of a superior type. As for the latter, he cleareth the soil round about its roots to give it the benefit of the night dew. The dew addeth freshness and strength to the plant. It may be that the same is the case with thee. The Divine Gardener knoweth how to deal with thee. He diggeth round about thee to the very roots, to the end that the dew of His Inspiration shall fall on thee and thou shalt be purer, stronger than before; and thy work even greater and more abiding than ever.

The Divine Gardener

*The Lord's Prayer
for Keshab*

Whenever I hear that thou art ill, my heart is sore troubled. The last time that thou wast unwell, I used to wake up during the last part of the night and cry unto my Divine Mother, saying, 'O Mother, if it be that anything evil come upon Keshab, with whom shall I converse about Thee when I shall come to Calcutta?' Coming to Calcutta I presented offerings of food and sugar, to the Divine Mother, praying to Her earnestly for thy weal. I had made a vow to make these offerings to Her.

All present look with wonder and amazement at the Master;—thinking of the depth of his unspeakable love for Keshab. He continueth:—

To speak the truth, my anxiety for thee during thy present illness hath not been as intense as it was on former occasion.

It has been, however, a little for the last two or three days.

At the door leading from the east into the drawing-room stood Keshab's venerable mother.

Umanath saith in a loud voice to the Master, "Sir, here is mother bowing down to thee."

The Master smileth. Umanath continueth saying, "Sir, mother asketh thee to bless him so that he may soon get well." The Master replieth, "Let thy prayers

*All power cometh from
the Divine Mother*

be offered up to the Divine Mother Who is made up of Bliss Everlasting. She it is Who removeth all troubles—all the ills that flesh is heir to." Speaking to Keshab, again, the Master saith,—

"It would be better for thee not to stay in the inner apartments for long hours. With women and children round about thee thou runnest the risk of sinking in the sea of Ignorance and of losing sight of the Lord. Thou shalt feel better if words about the Lord are spoken unto thee by thy friends."

*Solemn Warning
to Keshab*

Solemnly doth the Master utter these words. Presently he passeth into the state of a veritable Child from that of a serious Teacher. He smileth and saith to Keshab, "Let me look at thy hand." He taketh it up on the palm of his own hand and gently tosseth it up and down as if he were going to find its weight. At last he saith, "No it is all right, thy hand is light enough; it is only the hand of those that think evil and do evil that are not so. (*Laughter.*)"

"Mother ordereth everything. But foolish man, who now is and the next moment goeth out of sight into eternity, seeketh to take all the credit unto himself!

"It is on two different occasions that the Lord smileth. Once when He findeth two brothers dividing with a rope the land left by their father, and saying, 'This is mine and that is thine!' He smileth, saying, 'The fools call the land their own not knowing that the universe is Mine.'

"Once again doth the Lord smile. The child is dangerously ill and the physician saith to the weeping mother, 'Fear not, mother. I take upon myself to see that thy child getteth well.' The fool of a physician knoweth not that it is the Lord that slayeth and no human power will be able to save! (*Absolute silence.*)"

A fit of cough cometh upon Keshab. It lasteth for a long time. The suffering of the venerable patient toucheth the heart of everybody present. All look for the end of the fit

with bated breath. The suffering hath been great indeed! And Keshab must leave the room and go back to his sick bed. He falleth down at the feet of the Master and boweth down with his head touching the ground.

Keshab goeth out of the room into his own chamber, holding to the wall as before.

* * * * *

They have asked Sri Ramakrishna to take some sweetmeats before he leaveth for the Temple at Dakshineshwara. He is talking with the company present. Keshab's eldest son is seated by his side.

Amrita saith, "This is his eldest son. Wilt thou be so kind as to give him thy blessings?" Amrita watcheth the Master gently stroking the person of the young man. *The Divine Mother to bless:— none else* He saith again, "Sir, wilt thou not put thy hand upon his head and bless." The Master replieth, "It is not given to me to bless. It is for the Divine Mother to do so. All blessings come from Her."

He smileth, and continueth fonding the boy as before. Speaking of Keshab, the Master goeth on saying to Amrita and other Brahma devotees, all disciples of Keshab:—

"It is not given to me to say of a person, 'Let him be healed.' Of my Divine Mother I never asked such power. My constant prayer is, 'O Mother, do Thou grant that I may have Bhakti—pure, sincere love un-mixed with worldly desires of any kind, e. g., the weal of the body, pleasure, money, fame, etc.' Never have I asked of Her the power of doing such miracles as the healing of diseases.

"How great is Keshab—honored alike by men of the world that seek for wealth and by holy men that seek for the love of God.

Estimate of Keshab before the disciples I once met Dayananda in a garden house. He expected Keshab on that day and was asking everybody if Keshab had come up. In his yearning for Keshab he frequently left his room to make enquiries.

"Dayananda called the Bengali language *Gouranda Bhasha*.

"Keshab, I suppose, did not believe in the Vedic gods and the efficacy of the Vedic sacrificial fire¹. So Dayananda had

¹ Homa.

said, 'The Lord hath made so many things; could He not make the gods as well?'"

The Master speaketh highly of Keshab before his disciples and saith:—

"Keshab is free from the vulgar pride of the preceptor¹ who cometh in his own name. Very often hath he said to many of his disciples, 'Go ye to the Temple at Dakshineshwara where ye will have your doubts solved.' It is my way also to say, 'Let

Keshab increase a million-fold.' What shall I do with fame?"

"Yes, Keshab is great—honored alike by men of the world and by holy men who seek God alone."

The refreshment over, he will now leave for the Temple. The Brahma devotees have stepped downstairs with him to see him off.

Coming downstairs the Master observeth that there is no light on the ground floor at the foot of the stairs. He saith to

Amrita and others, "All these places should be lighted, for the Divine Mother abideth in every house. Such an omission leadeth to

poverty. See that such an omission doth not take place again."

With two or three disciples Sri Ramakrishna set out in a cab on his way back to the Temple.

¹ Guru.

Fame for the Master

*The Presence of the
Mother in our homes*

SECTION VI.

1883

A DAY WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE TEMPLE AT DAKSHINESHWARA

CHAPTER I.

The 19th of August, 1883 is a Sunday, and the first day after the full moon. So the devotees have leisure to come and see their beloved Master at Dakshineshwara, at the Temple of the Mother¹ of the Universe, the Consort of the Spirit of Eternity. Everyone has free access. He talks with everybody who comes. His visitors are from all classes of people—Sannyasins, Paramahamsas; Hindus, Christians and Brahmas; Shaktas, Vaishnavas and Saivas; men as well as women. Glory be unto Rani Rashmani, whose goodness has erected this noble Temple where people are coming to see and worship this God-Man.

It is noon. The Master is seated upon the smaller bedstead in his room. He has taken a little rest after breakfast. Here M. comes and salutes him, falling at his hallowed feet. He bids him sit down and kindly enquires about the welfare of himself and family. A short while and the Master begins to talk with him upon the Vedanta.

Sri Ramakrishna (to M.):—Well, the Ashtavakra Samhita deals with the knowledge of Self. The knowers of Self declare, 'I am He,' *i. e.*, 'I am that Highest Self.' This is the view of all the Sannyasins belonging to the Vedantic school. But it is not meet that a man of the world should hold such a view. Such a man does everything, and how at the same time can he be that Highest Self, God the Absolute, who is beyond all action?

The Vedantists hold that the Self has no attachment to anything. Pleasure, pain, virtue, vice, etc., can never affect the Self in any way, but they do affect men who think that their soul is the same as the body.

Smoke can blacken only the wall but not the space through which it curls up.

There was a certain devotee, named Krishnakishore, who used to say that he was a mere void², or empty space. He

¹ Kali. ² Kha.

meant to say that he was the same as the Highest Self or God the Absolute, Who is sometimes likened to empty Space¹ because nothing can be predicated of Him. A true devotee, he had some right to say so. As for others it doth not lie in their mouth to give out such an idea.

But it is good for everyone to cherish the idea that he is free. 'I am free, I am free;' if a man constantly says this, he is sure to be free. On the other hand, he who always thinketh that he is in bondage bringeth bondage, indeed, on himself in the end.

The weak-minded man who always saith, 'I am a sinner, I am a sinner,' is sure to have a fall. A man should rather say, 'I repeat the holy Name of God, how can there be any sin in me or the bondage of the world?'

Then turning towards M. he saith, "To-day my mind is not at ease. I hear from Hridaya* that he has been ailing much. Is this anxiety due to attachment² or to the feeling of charity³?"

M. did not know what to say in reply. M. remained silent.

Sri Ramakrishna:—Dost thou know what is *Maya*? Love towards one's own father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, nephew, niece, etc., is called *Maya*; and charity means loving all beings. Now, what is this, my anxiety, due to? Attachment or charity?

But Hridaya did a great deal to me.

He served me much. He never hesitated to do all sorts of menial services for me. But he proved a scourge in the end; so much so that unable to stand such treatment once I went to the rampart⁴ to die by throwing myself into the Ganges flowing below. But let that go; my mind will be set at rest if now he gets some money.

Now, whom am I to ask for money? Who cares to make an appeal to the Babus for this purpose?

At two or three o'clock in the afternoon, two of his disciples, Adhar and Balaram, came in. They prostrated themselves before him and took their seats. They asked how he was

¹ Akasha. ² Maya. ³ Daya. ⁴ Posta.

* Hridaya Mukerjee was an old servant of Sri Ramakrishna and served him for upwards of twenty years at the Temple of Dakshineshwara, *i. e.*, till 1881. He was a remote nephew of his. His birthplace was the village of Siore in the district of Hugli. This village is five miles away from Kamarpukur, the birthplace of the Master. He breathed his last towards the end of April, 1899, in his own native village. Hridaya is the pet abbreviation of his name used by the Master.

doing. The Master replied, "Well, my body is all right; not so is the mind." He did not mention anything about Hridaya's illness.

CHAPTER II.

In the course of conversation when the talk was about the Goddess Singhavahini (the Goddess seated upon a lion) worshipped by the Mallick family of Barabazar, he said, "Once I went to see the Goddess. She was staying with a certain family at Chashadhopapara, a district in Calcutta. The house was almost a deserted one. The family had become very poor. In some places there were filth and dirt lying about. In others mosses could be found growing. The cement upon the wall was crumbling down, brickdust and sand dropped slowly from the walls. Other houses belonging to the Mallicks are very neat and clean, but this was not so."

Then turning towards M. he said, "Well, can you explain why this was the case?"

Unable to explain, M. remained silent.

Sri Ramakrishna:—The thing is, every one must reap the fruit of his past actions. We should believe in the inherited tendencies¹, etc.

"One thing I saw in that deserted house," resumed he, turning towards M., "viz., that the face of the Goddess was beaming with glory. We should believe in the Divine Presence infilling the Images of the Deity."

*The Divine Presence
in Images*

"I went to Vishnupura," continued he. "The Raja has several fine temples. In one of the temples there is the Image named Mrinmayi. A big tank is before the temple."

(To M.) But how is it that I smelt in the tank water the spices that females used with a view to perfume their hair? I did not know that they offered such spices to the Goddess when they went to worship Her. When near the tank and I had not seen Her Image, I saw Her Divine Form up to Her waist in *Samadhi*. The Mother of the Universe appeared to me in *Samadhi* in the form of Mrinmayi.

By this time other devotees arrived. The talk then turned on the Kabul war, and the civil war that came after. One of the devotees gave the news that Yakub Khan had been

¹ Law of Karma.

deposed from the throne. He said, "Sir, Yakub Khan is a great devotee!"

Sri Ramakrishna:—Well, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, are things that one cannot separate from the body.

The Problem of Evil and Devotees We read in Kabi Kankan's "Chandi" that Kalubira, a great devotee, was shut up in jail.

They placed a heavy stone upon his breast. But Kalu was a highly-favored child of the Mother of the Universe!

The fact is, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, come with the body.

How great a devotee was Srimanta! How fondly did the Divine Mother love his mother Khullana! But what an amount of trouble he had to go through! They took him to the scaffold to be executed.

A woodman—a great devotee was fortunate enough to see the Divine Mother; and She loved, and showed Her kindness towards him very much; but he had to go on with the business of the wood-cutter all the same. He must sell the fire-wood to get his livelihood.

It does not follow that a devoted lover of God must be very well-off in the world. He is rich in spirit though he may be poor in worldly things. Devaki in prison saw God in the form of a human being holding conch-shell, discus, mace and lotus in His four hands. But she with all her God-vision could not get out of the prison.

M.:—Get out of the prison! It seemeth to me that she should have got out of her body, too, that being the source of her troubles.

Master:—The thing is, the body is the fruit of one's past actions; so a man must bear with it, as long as his actions are not cleared. A blind man taking a bath in the holy water of the Ganges gets all his sins washed off. But his blindness keeps on all the same. It is the fruit of his actions in his past life.

M.:—'The shaft that has gone out of the bow must run out its race.' One has ceased to have any hold on such a shaft.

Master:—The body may be happy or miserable. But the true devotee is all the time *rich* in spirit—rich in Knowledge and in the love of the Lord.

Take for instance, the Pandavas. How many dangers and difficulties had they to face! What privations and trials to go

through! But amidst all these they never lost their love and devotion to God. Can ye find others equally wise and devoted to God?

CHAPTER III.

WITH VIVEKANANDA; AND IN SAMADHI

At this time Narendra and Vishwanatha Upadhyaya came in. Vishwanatha was the Nepalese resident at Calcutta. The Master used to call him Captain, and hence all his disciples too called him by that name. Narendra was about twenty-two at that time, reading in the senior B. A. class. He used to come off and on to see the Master, especially on Sundays. Bowing down to him Narendra took his seat.

The Master asked him to sing. There was hanging from the western wall of the room a stringed musical instrument. Narendra took it down and began to turn its keys to raise the note of the strings to the necessary pitch to the accompaniment of *bawa* and *tabla* (musical instruments). Every one was intently looking upon his face, eager to listen to his songs.

Master (smiling to Vivekananda):—This instrument no longer soundeth as before.

Captain:—It is filled; therefore there is no sound; as with a vessel filled to the brim with water.

Master:—But how dost thou explain the life of Narada and other Divine Teachers? They had realized God but spoke. They were filled but gave forth sounds.

Captain:—They spoke for the good of mankind.

Master:—Yes, that is so. Narada and Suka Deva came down from the highest state of *Samadhi*. Their heart went out to those that were weary and heavy-laden and knew not God. They spoke for the good of others.

Vivekananda sang the following song:—

SONG

When shall we realize in the temple of our heart, the All-Good and All-Gracious form of God, the only Reality? Constantly looking on Him when shall we dive deep in the Sea of that Divine Beauty?

Thou wilt come into my soul as Knowledge Absolute, as God Infinite. The dumfounded mind, made restless by its intense joy, will take refuge at Thy feet. Bliss—like embodied nectar, sweet and life-giving, will rise in the firmament of the soul. Looking at Thee

thus manifest unto us I shall be mad with joy, even as the bird *chakora* is mad with joy at the sight of the moon.

I shall kill myself at Thy feet, O Beloved, and then the end of my life will be realized. Thou art King of kings, One without a second, All-Peaceful, All-Gracious.

Thus, even in this life shall I enjoy heavenly bliss; O what a glorious privilege! When shall I look at Thy Holy and Pure Self? O, all impurities shall fly away from me, before that Glory, even as darkness flieth away before light!

Do Thou light in my heart a burning faith, that like the pole-star is ever a sure and infallible guide. O, Thou friend of the weak, do Thou thus fulfil my only desire. Thus lost in the infinite bliss of Thy love I shall forget myself entirely, having Thee as my own, all day and night! Oh, when is that to come about?

Sri Ramakrishna lost himself in deep *Samadhi* as soon as he heard the words, 'Bliss—like embodied nectar sweet and life-giving!' There he sat, with clasped hands, erect, turning his face eastward; there he was diving deep into the Ocean of Beauty—the All-blissful Mother; no external consciousness! Breath had almost stopped; no sign of motion in any one of his limbs; no twinkle in the eye! Sitting like one drawn in a picture! He had gone, gone away somewhere from this kingdom,—from this world of the senses!

The *Samadhi* ended. In the meantime, Narendra, seeing him in *Samadhi*, had gone out of the room to the eastern verandah. There Hazra was seated upon a blanket, telling his beads. Narendra began to talk with him.

Sri Ramakrishna's room by this time had been filled with devotees. After the *Samadhi* had left him, the Master looketh for Narendra in the room. He was not there. The Tanpura was left upon the ground! The devotees all had their looks fastened on the Master.

Master (referring to Narendra):—"He hath lighted the fire. It mattereth not now whether he remaineth in the room or hath left it!" Then turning towards the Captain and the devotees he saith, "Meditate upon God, the Sole Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Eternal, and ye also shall have Joy Everlasting.

That Being of Knowledge and Bliss is always here and everywhere; only it is hidden from view by Ignorance. The less is your attachment to the senses, the more shall be your love towards God."

Captain:—"The more we near our home at Calcutta, the farther are we away from Kasi (Benares) and the more we near Kasi, the farther are we away from our home.

Master:—As Srimati (Radha) was nearing Sri Krishna, She was getting the charming smell of His sweet Person. Yes, the more one approacheth God the more doth one's love towards Him increase. The more doth the river near the sea the more it is subject to ebb and flow.

Master:—The Ganges of Knowledge flowing in the soul of a wise man¹ (a Vedantist) runneth only in one direction. To him the whole universe is a dream. He always liveth in his own True Self. But the Ganges of Love in a devotee's² heart runneth not in one direction. It hath its ebb and flow. A devotee laugheth, weepeth, danceth, singeth. He wants sometimes to merge into his Beloved. He swims in Him, dives and rises up in his *joḡ* as merrily as a lump of ice floats upon water.

But in fact God the Absolute³ and God the Creator⁴ are one and the same Being. God the Absolute, Knowledge-Intelligence-Bliss is the same as All-Knowing, All-Intelligent and All-Blissful Mother of the Universe. The bright, precious stone and its brightness cannot be separated in thought, for ye cannot think of the stone without its brightness; nor can ye think of the brightness apart from the stone⁵.

The Absolute, Knowledge-Intelligence-Bliss, the Undifferentiated, is differentiated into One and Many. He has various names applied to Him according to the various powers manifested. That is the reason of His having many Forms. Hence the devotee hath sung, 'O my Divine Mother⁶, Thou art even all that.' Wherever there is action, such as creation, preservation and destruction, there is Shakti or Intelligent Energy. But water is water whether it moveth or doth not move. That One Absolute, Knowledge-Intelligence-Bliss, is also the eternally Intelligent Energy, Who createth and preserveth and destroyeth the universe. Thus it is the same Captain whether he does not do anything or performs his worship or visits the Governor-General. In all cases it is the same Captain. Only those are his different Upadhis or adjuncts.

Captain:—Yes, Sir, that is so.

Master:—I said this to Keshab Sen.

Captain:—Well, Sir, Mr. Keshab Sen does not respect our Hindu manners and customs and laws. How can he be a real saint? He is a Babu,—not a holy man.

¹ Jnani. ² Bhakta. ³ Brahman. ⁴ Shakti. ⁵ Mani. ⁶ Tara.

Master (smiling and turning towards the devotees):—Captain always wanteth me never to go to Keshab Sen.

Captain:—But your Holiness must go. What can I do?

Master (sharply):—Thou goest to the Governor-General, who, according to thy Shastras, is a *mlechha* (non-Aryan); and for money too! And may I not go to Keshab Sen? He meditateth upon God, uttereth His name! It doth not lie in thy mouth to say so—thou, who often sayest, 'It is God Who hath in the process of differentiation become the human soul and the world itself!' What thou sayest thou must mean, what thou meanest thou must say!

After this Sri Ramakrishna abruptly left the room and went to the north-eastern verandah. The Captain and other devotees remained waiting for him in the room. Only M. accompanied him to the verandah where Narendra was found talking with Hazra. Sri Ramakrishna knew that Hazra posed as an out-and-out Monist—all dry. He would say, "All the universe is a mere dream. All kinds of worship and offerings are mental delusions. God is the one Changeless Entity. A man should meditate upon his Self and nothing else," and so on.

Master (laughing):—Hallo! What are you talking about?

Narendra (laughing):—We are talking about themes too big for ordinary mortals.

Master (laughing):—But however you may talk, know that pure selfless devotion¹ and pure selfless knowledge² are both one and the same thing. The goal is the same. Smooth and easy is the path of devotion leading to God.

Narendra:—Yes, there is no use reasoning after the philosopher. 'Make me mad with Thy love, O Mother!'

(To M.):—Sir, I have been reading Hamilton, and he writes, 'A learned ignorance is the end of Philosophy and the beginning of Religion.'

Master (to M.):—What is the meaning of that?

Narendra explained it in Bengali. Sri Ramakrishna laughed and thanked him in English, saying, "Thank you." Everyone laughed at this, for the Master's knowledge of English was confined, at most, to half-a-dozen such expressions.

¹ Bhakti. ² Jnana (through Philosophy).

CHAPTER IV.

Evening was drawing nigh. The devotees one after another took leave of the Master; and so did Narendra.

The day was drawing to a close. It was almost evening. The Faras* was arranging the lights. The two priests of Kali and Vishnu were busy making their prayers as they stood in the midst of the sacred waters of the Ganges which came up to their waist;—purifying themselves, body and soul. They were shortly to go into their respective temples to perform the *aratrika* ceremony—the waving of lighted lamps, etc., before the images of the Deity, and do other nightly services. The young men of Dakshineshwara, stick in hand, had come with their friends to take a walk round the garden. They walked about the rampart and enjoyed the evening breeze made fragrant by the flowers. They watched the slightly-undulating breast of the swift-flowing Ganges of the month of August. Some of them, perhaps more thoughtful, could be found walking about by themselves in the solitude of the sacred trees called the Panchavati. Sri Ramakrishna also looketh on the Ganges for some time from the western verandah.

It was evening, the lamp-lighter had lighted all the lamps of the big Temple. The old maid-servant came and lit the lamp in Sri Ramakrishna's room and burnt incense there. In the meantime the *aratrika* ceremony began in the twelve shrines dedicated to Siva. It began, soon after, in the temples of the Mother of the Universe, and of Sri Vishnu. The united and solemn sound of gongs, bells, cymbals, etc., grew more solemn and sweet when it was sent back by the murmuring Ganges hard by.

It was the first lunar day after the full-moon. A short while after night-fall the moon arose. Gradually the tops of the garden trees as well as the big Temple compound were bathed in the balmy light of the moon. At the magic touch of her light, the waters of the Ganges shone bright like silver and flowed, dancing with great joy as it were.

The Master, just after the evening, bowed down to the Mother of the Universe. He repeated the holy Names of God, keeping time all the while by clapping his Hands. In his room there were pictures of various manifestations of God

* Faras.—The temple servant who arranged the lights.

and of God-men. There were Sri Gouranga with His devotees singing the praises of God; the baby Krishna with His Mother Yasoda; the Goddess of Learning; the Mother Kali; Dhruva; Prahlada; Sri Rama crowned; Sri Radha Krishna, etc. He bowed down to every manifestation of God, as drawn in the pictures, repeating Their holy Names. He repeated his favorite sayings, all having a grand unifying principle running through them, such as:—

(1) *Brahma—Atma—Bhagavan* (*i. e.*), God the Absolute (God of the philosopher), God of the Yogi, God of the devotee are three in one, one in three.

(2) *Bhagavata—Bhākta—Bhagavan*;—the Word, the devotee and the God of the devotee are three in one, one in three.

(3) *Brahma-Shakti, Shakti-Brahma*. (God the Absolute is the same as God the Mother.)

(4) *Veda-Purana-Tantra*. (The various Scriptures and their one Theme, *viz.*, God.)

(5) *Gita-Gayatri*.

(6) *Sharanagata, Sharanagata* (I am thine, I am thine.)

(7) *Naham, naham—Tuhu-tuhu* (not I, not I, but Thou; Thou art the True Actor; I am only an instrument in Thy Hands).

(8) *Ami Yantra, Tumi Yantri* (I am the instrument, Thou art the Being Who uses the instrument), etc., etc.

After all these repetitions were over, he meditated upon the Mother Divine with clasped hands.

Some of the devotees had been walking about in the garden during the evening. When the *aratika* ceremonies were over in the temples, they came together one after another in Sri Ramakrishna's room. He was sitting upon the bedstead. M., Adhar, Kishore, etc., were sitting before him on the floor.

Master:—Narendra (Vivekananda), Rakhai and Bhabanath—these are *Nityasiddhas* (perfect even from their birth). They need no training. What training they go through is more than they need. Ye see Narendra never careth for any one. He was going with me in the Captain's carriage the other day. When the Captain requested him to sit upon the seat of honor, he did not mind him at all. Moreover, he never showeth to me that he knoweth anything lest I praise him before men. He has no *Maya*, no attachment. He looketh as if he is free from all bondage. He is very polite in his manners. For a single individual, he hath very many good and noble qualities, such as reading, writing, singing and playing upon musical

instruments. At the same time he knoweth how to control his senses. He hath said that he will not marry. Narendra and Bhabanath are affinities. Narendra doth not come to me very often. That is good. For I always fall into *Samadhi* whenever I see him and do not know what to do.

SECTION VII.

1884

VISIT TO SURENDRA'S GARDEN

CHAPTER I.

THE MASTER SINGING AND DANCING WITH HIS DISCIPLES

On the 16th of June 1884, Sunday, the sixth lunar day (dark fortnight) of *Jaishtha*, Sri Ramakrishna was invited by one of his beloved disciples, Surendra, a householder, to a feast made at his garden-house at Kankurgachi near Calcutta. These invitations were invariably occasions for the gathering of his disciples, would-be disciples and his admirers. They were really occasions of festivity and rejoicing, on which the Name of God was chanted to the accompaniment of *mridangas* and other musical instruments. All the while the Master could be seen at his best,—singing, dancing, with the joy of the Lord and frequently lost in that blessed state of the soul, in the enjoyment of God-consciousness, called *Samadhi*.

When the singing of devotional hymns and the spiritual excitement which came with it were over, the company present was treated by the Master to one of those celestial conversations laden with sermons for the spiritual welfare of humanity—to a veritable feast of reason and flow of soul—which shall never die in the memory of those that had the rare good fortune, the privilege, to listen to them.

The first part of the day was given to *Sankirtan* (the singing forth of the Name of the Lord). They were singing the songs telling of the separation of the Gopees from the Lord Sri Krishna who had gone to Mathura.

The Gopees were the milk-maids of Brindaban who loved the Lord Sri Krishna then living in their midst as a shepherd-boy. Sri Krishna is looked upon as an Incarnation of God. He loved and was loved by everybody. He is the Impersonation of Divine Love. When eleven years old He left Brindaban.

In the course of the songs the Master was frequently put in a state of *Samadhi* (divine ecstasy).

They are singing. Suddenly he rises to his feet saying, "O my friend, do thou bring my beloved Krishna to me, or take me over to the place where He is."

The Master hath lost his own personality in that of Radha, chief of the Gopees. He realizeth that he and Radha are one.

With these words he standeth speechless and motionless, with fixed, half-closed eyes that move not, evidently losing all sense-consciousness. Coming to himself he again, in a voice that draweth tears from the eyes of those that hear him, crieth out, "O my friend, do me this favor and I shall be thy most devoted servant. Remember it was thou that taughtst me my love for the Beloved."

The chorus goeth on singing. Radha is made in the song to say, 'O! I will not go to the bank of the Jamuna to draw water; for coming up to the Kadamba tree I am put in mind of my Own, my Beloved.'

The Master, heaving a sigh, saith, "Ah me!" The chorus chanting aloud the Name of the Lord, Sri Ramakrishna is again on his feet and in *Samadhi*.

Getting back his sense-consciousness, he can only say inarticulately, 'Kristna, Kristna,' for 'Krishna, Krishna.' The proceedings are brought to a close by the Master himself leading the chorus in the well-known piece, 'Victory to Radha, Victory to Govinda.' He danceth with his disciples who form a ring round him.

The dancing and singing all take place in the reception hall. The Master then withdraweth into one of the adjoining rooms to the west.

The Madness of Love for the Lord To M., one of the disciples, the Master talking of the Gopees saith, "How wonderful is their devotion!¹ At the sight of the Tamal tree² they were seized with the very madness of love."

Disciple:—This was also the case with Chaitanya Deva. Looking at the forest he thought it was Brindaban that was before him!—the sacred city, the birth-place of Sri Krishna.

Master:—Oh! if any one is but favored with a single particle of this ecstatic Love (Prema). What devotion! Of this devotion they had not only the full complement (sixteen annas) but a great deal more than the full complement—five *Sikas*, five annas.

¹ Anuraga. ² The dark color of the Tamal tree put Radha in mind of the Lord Sri Krishna.

"It is immaterial whether or not one believes in the Incarnation of Radha and Krishna. One may believe (like the Hindu or the Christian) in God's Incarnation; one may not. But let all have a yearning for this intensity of love for the Lord. That is the one thing needful.

*The One Thing
Needful*

"If thou must be mad, be not so with things of this world. But be mad with the love of the Lord."

He then cometh back into the hall (the disciples coming after him) and seateth himself.

A bolster is placed there for his use. Before touching it, he saith, "*Om Tat Sat*. The Lord is the only Reality." The pillow is of course a thing which hath been impure by the unholy touch of worldly men and the Master is Purity itself.

Purity

It is getting late, but no dinner is being served. The Master becometh a little impatient. He is like a child.

Surendra is the host. He is a beloved disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

The Master saith, "Surendra's disposition has grown admirable. He is very outspoken. He is always bold enough to speak the truth. Then he is generous. Those that go to him for help never come back disappointed."

Serve only the Lord

Master (to M., a disciple):—You went to Bhagavan Das. What sort of man is he?

Here cometh in Niranjan, a young disciple of his. The Master standeth up saying, "O! thou art come after all!" He is filled with joy.

Master (to M.):—This young man is remarkably free from guile. Openness as opposed to dissimulation is the fruit of the practice of a good many religious austerities in one's previous incarnations.

Freedom from Guile

In that well-known song by Tulsi Das—'Oh my brother! do thou cling to God,' occur the words, 'Give up dissimulation and cunning.' Dost thou not see that whenever God hath taken a human form this great virtue of guilelessness hath never failed to come to view? Look at Dasaratha, the father of Rama, and Nanda Ghosh, the father of Sri Krishna. They were all free from guile.

Master (to Niranjan):—Like men of the world thou hast accepted service. But thou art working for thy mother. Other-

wise, I should have said, 'For shame! for shame! The Lord alone must thou serve.'

The Service of the Lord

Master (to Mani Mallick):—This young man is open and guileless to a degree; only now-a-days he tells fibs a little, that is all. The other day he said that he would come to see me, but he did not.

Referring to the same disciple the *Master* saith, "A change for the worse hath come over his face. It seemeth a dark shadowy film hath spread over it. All this is due to office work. There are the accounts and a hundred other different matters to attend to!"

The Curse of the Service of the World

Bhabanath is another disciple of his. He is talking to his fellow-disciple M.

Anxiety for a Disciple

Bhabanath (to M.):—Thou hast not been to the Lord's place for a long time. The *Master* was talking to me about thy absence and was asking me whether it was a fact that he (the *Master*) had turned out to be an object of disrelish¹ to thee.

Sri Ramakrishna who hath heard everything saith kindly to M. "Quite so. Why is it that thou didst not come?" Poor M. could only stammer out some lame excuses. Here came in Mahima.

Master (to Mahima):—This is indeed a visit quite unexpected! We expect a boat at most in this poor river of ours. But here cometh a ship! But then it is the rainy season. (*Laughter.*)

The conversation next turneth on the spiritual aspect of feasts.

Master (to Mahima):—Why is it that people are fed in a feast? Dost thou not think it cometh to offering² a sacrifice to God³, Who is the Living Fire in all creatures?

But bad men, not God-fearing, guilty of adultery, fornication, etc., should on no account be entertained at a feast. Their sins are so great that several cubits of the earth beneath the place where they eat become polluted.

On one occasion Hriday gave a feast. A considerable number of those that were bidden were sinful men. I said to Hriday, "Look here! If thou feedest these wicked people I shall leave the house at once!"

Master (to Mahima):—Somebody said that formerly thou usedst very often to give feasts. I dare say thy household and other expenses have since multiplied!

¹ Aruchi. ² Ahuti. ³ Brahman.

CHAPTER II.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE MODERN IDEA OF WORK

Pratap Chandra Majumdar, a member of the Brahma-Samaj, cometh and saluteth Sri Ramakrishna. He returneth his salutation with his well-known modesty, bowing down very low.

Pratap saith, "Sir, I have recently been to Darjeeling."

Sri Ramakrishna:—But thou dost not appear to be much the better for the change. What's the matter with thee?

Pratap:—The same complaint to which he (Keshab Chandra Sen) succumbed.

There is then a talk on Keshab's life. Pratap taketh part in the conversation. "Keshab was in his youth marked by non-attachment¹ to the world. He was seldom found merry or cheerful. While a student at the Hindu College, he formed a close friendship with S. Thus it was that he came across S.'s revered father, Devendranath Tagore." "Keshab assiduously practised," continued Pratap, "both communion by meditation and devotion. He was even subject to fits of unconsciousness due to excessive devotion, but he always succeeded in keeping them in check. The great end of his life was to bring religion within reach of the householder."

The conversation turneth next on a certain Mahratta lady. Pratap saith that she had been to England and that she had embraced Christianity. He asketh the Master whether he hath ever heard of the lady. The Master replied, "No; but from what I hear from thee I should think that she must be a woman who wanteth to make a name for herself!"

Turning to the company, he saith, "Egotism of this kind is to be condemned. Those that seek fame are under a delusion. They forget that everything is ordered by the Great Disposer of all things—the Supreme Being—and that all the credit is due to the Lord and to nobody else. It is the wise that say always, 'It is Thou, it is Thou, O Lord!' but the ignorant and the self-deluded say, 'It is I, it is I.'"

"The calf saith, 'Hamma or Aham (I).' Now look at the troubles caused by itself which saith, 'I,' 'I.' In the first place, the calf, sometimes, is taken into the fields where it is yoked to the plough. It is there made to work on from morning to

¹ Vairagya.

evening alike in the sun and in the rain. Its troubles are not yet over. It is very often killed by the butcher. Its flesh is eaten as meat. Its skin is tanned into hides. It is made into shoes. The sufferings of the calf in this state know no bounds. But that is not all. Drums are made with the skin, which is thus mercilessly beaten sometimes with the hand and sometimes with the drumstick. It is only when out of its entrails are made strings for the bows used for carding cotton that the troubles of the poor creature are over. And that is because it no longer saith, 'hamma' (I), 'hamma' (I), but 'Tuhum! Tuhum! (It is Thou, O Lord! It is Thou!)

*Parable of the Calf
and its Fortunes,
or the Self*

"The perfect liberation¹ of the soul is within the reach of him alone who, being convinced that God is the Disposer of all things, hath learnt the lesson of complete self-abnegation and absolute forgetfulness of 'I,' 'Me,' 'Mine.'

"The truly wise man is he who hath seen the Lord. He becometh like a child. The child, no doubt, seemeth to have an individuality, a separateness, of its own. But that individuality is a mere appearance, not a reality. The self of the child is nothing like the self of the grown-up man.

*The Self after
God-vision*

"He has seen the Lord and he is now a changed being.

"The steel sword hath no sooner come in contact with the Touchstone than it is turned into gold. It goeth on, no doubt, having the appearance of a sword, but it doth no harm to anybody. Our *ego* or self, if purified by the realization of God—if made pure by seeing God—cannot harm anybody.

"The self of the child is again like the face reflected in the mirror. The face in the mirror looketh exactly like the real face; only it doth nobody any-harm.

"The signs of one who has seen God are these:—His conduct is like that of a child. He sometimes looketh like an unclean spirit. He doth not care for his body. He seemeth to make no distinction between purity and impurity; for he seeth God in and through everything. Such a person looketh like a mad man, now laughing, now weeping, and the next moment talking to himself; now dressed like a gentleman and taking his only bit of cloth under his arm and thus going naked like a child. Lastly, he looketh like one who is brought to the state of an

Signs of God-vision

¹ Mukti.

insentient being—the condition of an inert, lifeless, material body¹.”

Master (to Pratap Majumdar):—Thou wentest to England and America. Tell me of your experiences.

Pratap:—Sir, the national characteristics of the English people may be summed up by one word, namely, the worship of what thou callest *kanchan* (gold). I must say, however, there are a few honorable exceptions. As a general rule, *Rajas* or worldly activity is the one thing everywhere. Much the same thing is observable in America.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ON WORK² WITHOUT ATTACHMENT

The Master thereupon saith, “The attachment to work which thou sayest is the chief characteristic of the English and the American people marketh all human communities. But remember, it is a mark of the earliest stage of life. Work for the sake of one’s own worldly goods—riches, honor, fame—is *degrading*. Worldly activity³ will only bring on increasing ignorance⁴. It will make thee forgetful of God and attached to ‘Lust and Gold⁵.’ Therefore the attachment to work that is observable in England and America—an attachment leading to spiritual degradation—is to be condemned.

“Thou canst not get rid of work, because Nature⁶ will lead thee on to it. That being so, let all work be done as it ought to be. If work is done *unattached* it will lead to God. Work so done is a *means* to an end, and God is the *end*.

“To work without any attachment is to work without the expectation of any reward or fear of any punishment in this world or the next.

“Work without attachment, however, is exceedingly difficult, especially in this age⁷. The fact is, one must have True Knowledge⁸ or Love⁹ of God. It is possible for the ideal man alone to live a life of work without attachment. Others get easily attached more or less to things of the world and they know it not.

“Hence it is our duty as ‘imperfect’ men to find out, if possible, the shortest path that leadeth to God—the end of our life. Let us do the duty that is nearest us. Let us bring down our work to a *minimum* by earnest prayer⁹ and self-surrender.

¹ Jadavat. ² Karmayoga. ³ Rajas. ⁴ Tamas. ⁵ Kamini and Kanchan. ⁶ Prakriti. ⁷ Kaliyuga. ⁸ Jnana. ⁹ Bhakti.

“Thus on account of the difficulty of work without attachment in this age, communion¹ by prayer, devotion and love—by the practice of Narada’s *Bhaktiyoga*—hath been enjoined as better adapted to this age than the communion by work or communion by the path of knowledge or philosophy.

Problem Solved for this Age

“Communion¹ by love (of God) will enable us to see God with far less difficulty than any other kind of communion.

“No one, however, can avoid work. Every mental operation is ‘work.’ The consciousness that ‘I feel’ or ‘I think’ involveth ‘work.’ What is meant by the ‘Path of Devotion²’ in its relation to work is that work is simplified by devotion, or love (of God).

Effect of Devotion² upon Work³

“In the first place, this love² of God reduceth the quantity of one’s work by fixing one’s mind upon one’s own ideal (i. e., God). Secondly, it helpeth one to work unattached. One cannot love the Lord and at the same time love riches or pleasure or fame or power. He who hath once tasted the drink prepared with the *ola* sugar-candy doth not care for that made with molasses.

“No greater mistake can be committed than to look upon work as the be-all and end-all of human life. Work is the first chapter of human life. God is the conclusion.

Work is not the End of Life

“On one occasion, Sambhu, a householder, said to me, ‘I should deem myself fortunate if I could build hospitals and dispensaries, make roads where there are none, sink wells for the good of the people in seasons of drought, set up schools and colleges.’ Thereupon I said to him, ‘It is all very well that thou shouldst do all these works. But canst thou do them unattached? If thou canst it will lead to God. Otherwise not.’ But to work unattached is exceedingly difficult. In any case, take care and do not confound the means with the end. Work is a *means*, if done unattached, but the *end* of life is to see God. Let me repeat that the means should not be confounded with the end—that the first stage on a road should not be taken as a Goal.

“No, do not regard work as the be-all and end-all—the ideal of human existence. Pray for Bhakti (devotion to God). Suppose thou art fortunate enough to see God. Then what wouldst thou pray for? Wouldst thou pray for dispensaries

¹ Yoga. ² Bhakti. ³ Karma.

and hospitals, tanks and wells, roads and serais? No, no, these are realities to us so long as we do not see God. But once placed face to face with the Vision Divine, we see them as they are—transitory things, no better than dreams; and then we would pray for more Light—more Knowledge in the highest sense—more Divine Love—the love which lifteth us up from a man to God, a love which maketh us realize that we are really sons of the Supreme Being,—of Whom all that can be said is that He existeth, that He is Knowledge itself in the highest sense, and that He is the eternal Fountain of Love and Bliss.

“Therefore, never lose sight of this Goal of Life that I have pointed out to thee. Never lose sight of the Ideal. In this connection I will tell thee a parable:—

A man was cutting wood in a forest, when he was accosted by a *Brahmacharin*. (A *Brahmacharin* is a holy man practising control over the flesh and preparing for the next stage of life—that of the householder or the ascetic.) The holy man said, ‘Go on ahead.’ The wood-cutter came back home

*The Wood-cutter and
the Brahmacharin ;
or “Go on Ahead”*

with his load of wood, wondering why the sage had bade him go ahead. Thus passed away some days. One day he was put in mind of the holy man’s words and he made up his mind that day to go farther on with a view to cut wood. What was his surprise to find that portion of the forest full of sandal trees! Of course, he brought cart-loads of sandal-wood to market and soon grew enormously rich. In this way again some days passed, when he was once more reminded of the injunction laid upon him by the holy man, *viz.*, ‘Go on ahead.’ So again did he form the resolution of going into the forest and of making a further advance. What was his surprise to find a silver mine close to the bed of a river! This he had never looked for even in his dreams. He worked at the mines and brought away tons of silver with which he made a splendid bargain. It is needless to say that after this he turned out to be one of the millionaires of the day. But once more after the lapse of some years did the holy man’s words come back to his mind. He thought within himself, ‘The holy man did not bid me stop at the silver mine but he told me to go on ahead.’ This time he went across the river and came upon a gold mine and finally on a diamond mine! Needless to add, that he grew as rich as the God of Wealth¹.

¹ Kuver.

“So go ahead, my children, and never lose sight of your Ideal! Go onward and never stop until you have reached the Goal. Reaching a particular stage, do not run away with the idea that you have come to your journey’s end.

“Work is only the first stage of the journey. Bear in mind that doing acts *unattached* is exceedingly difficult; that therefore the path of love¹ is better suited to this age, and that work, even if *unattached*, is not the end of your life but only a means to the end.

“So march on and never halt till ye have come up to the great Ideal of your life—the *seeing of God*.”

CHAPTER III.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE BRAHMA-SAMAJ AND THE ‘ONE THING NEEDFUL’

The next subject of this conversation was the schism in the Brahma-Samaj following upon the passing away of the spirit of Keshab.

Master (to Pratap):—I hear there is a difference between you and other members of your body. Amongst your opponents, as far as I have seen them, there are many, *Horay, Palla* and *Pancha* (men of ordinary-calibre).

With one of those bewitching smiles which made his face radiant with a sort of celestial glory, the Master pointing to Pratap said to the company present, “Ye see the conch-shells—Pratap, Amrita, etc., give a loud powerful sound. But there are conch-shells and conch-shells. Others there are that are not at all sonorous. They do not give a single sound.”

The company present all had a good laugh.

Referring to lectures given by members of religious bodies like the Brahma-Samaj and Hari Sabha, the Master saith, “One can form an estimate of the man from the lectures he delivereth. S. was lecturing as the preceptor of a certain Hari Sabha. In the course of his speech he said, ‘The Lord is totally devoid of sweetness. That being so, we must make Him sweet by lending to Him the sweetness, of our own nature.’ By sweetness he meant love and other divine attributes. When I came to this I was put in mind of the boy who said that in his maternal

*The Schisms in the
Brahma-Samaj*

*God is Love*²

¹ Bhaktiyoga. ² Raso vai sah.

uncle's house there were a good many horses. Of this the boy tried to convince his hearers by saying that a whole cow-house was full of horses. Of course the intelligent audience could at once see that cow-houses were not exactly the places intended for horses, that the youngster must have told a lie and that he had no experience or knowledge of horses.

"To say that God is devoid of Sweetness, Love, Joy, Bliss and other attributes, is an absurdity which proveth that the speaker is totally ignorant of what he is saying and that he hath never realized the Supreme Being, who is the Fountain of Eternal Love, Wisdom and Bliss."

Suddenly becoming serious, he turneth to Pratap and saith, "Thou art an educated and intelligent man. Thou art not light-hearted but grave and serious. Keshab and thou were like the brothers *Gour* (*Chaitanya Deva*) and *Netai*. Ye have had enough of this world—enough of lectures, controversies, schisms and the rest. Is it not so? Thy soul must be wearied by this time. It is high time now to have one aim—to give up thy attention to God alone—to plunge, to dive deep into the Immortal Sea of His Love."

*Love of God and
Renunciation*

Majumdar:—Yes, Sir, I see that is the one thing needful. No doubt of it. All that I seek is to keep Keshab's work alive.

Master (smiling):—Thou sayest indeed that thou seekest to keep Keshab's work going; well, wait a few days and thou shalt think otherwise.

*Man's Self-Delusion:
Confusion between
Egoism and Altruism*

A person lived comfortably in a hut built upon a rock. He had to work hard to get the hut built. A few days after there was a terrible storm. The hut seemed to reel on its foundations. In his anxiety to save it, he prayed to the God of Winds saying, 'Lord, be good enough not to pull down my hut.' The God turned a deaf ear to his words and the hut was about to come down with a crash. It now occurred to him that Hanumana was the son of the God of Winds. So he cried out, 'Do not pull down the hut, O Father, its owner is no less a person than thy own son, Hanumana!' But the storm blew on with as much fury as ever, and the hut was about to come down. In vain did he cry out over and over again, 'It is Hanumana's own house! It is Hanumana's own!' He then made a fresh appeal, saying, 'It is Lakshmana's hut! O God spare it!' Lakshmana being the brother of Rama, the Incarnation of God

and hero of the epic Ramayana. But Lakshmana's name carried a little weight as the name of Hanumana, and the hut was ready to come down with a crash; so the man cried out in the last resort, 'It is Rama's house, spare it, O it is Rama's house, spare it, O God of Winds!'

The God of Winds was inexorable and the hut began to come down with a crash. Seeing all his appeals had been made in vain, the man rushed out of the hut and cursed it saying, 'It is the devil's own hut!' (*Laughter.*)

Thou mayest be anxious to preserve Keshab's name. But console thyself with the thought that it was after all owing to God's will that the religious movement connected with his name was set on foot, and that if the movement has had its day it is all owing to that same Divine will.

Therefore dive deep into the sea. And the Master sang:

SONG

Dive Deep

1. Dive deep, dive deep, dive deep O my mind into the Sea of Beauty.

Make a search in the regions lower, lower down under the sea; you will come by the jewel, the wealth of *Prema* (intense love of God).

2. Within thy heart is the abode¹ of the God of Love. Go about searching, go about searching, go about searching! You will find it.

Then shall burn without ceasing the Lamp of Divine Wisdom.

3. Who is that Being that doth steer a boat on land—on land, on solid ground?

Says *Kavir*, "Listen, listen, listen; meditate on the hallowed Feet of the Lord, the Divine Preceptor."

Fear not. It is the sea of Immortality.

I once said to Narendra (*Vivekananda*):

'*Fear not*' *Majumdar* (interrupting):—Who is this Narendra?

Master:—Oh, there is a young man of that name. Well, I said to Narendra, 'God is like a Sea of Liquid Sweet. Wouldst thou not dive deep into this Sea? Suppose, my boy, there is a vessel with a wide mouth containing the syrup of sugar, and suppose thou art a fly anxious to drink of the sweet liquid, Where shouldst thou sit and drink?' Narendra said to me in reply that he should like to drink from the edge of the vessel, adding that if he chanced to come to a point beyond his depth he was sure to be drowned and thus to lose his life.

¹ Brindavan.

Thereupon I said to him, 'Thou dost forget, my boy, that if thou divest deep into the Divine Sea, thou shalt not be afraid of death or of any danger. Remember the Divine Sea is the Sea of Immortality. The syrup of this sea never causeth death but Everlasting Life. *Be not afraid like some foolish persons that you may 'run to excess' in your love of God.*'

What is the difference between Charity¹ and Self-love²? Charity is love extending to all and not confined to one's own self, family, sect or country. Self-love is attachment to one's own self, family, sect or country. Cherish the first, which is elevating and will lead you Godward. Self-love is ruinous to the soul and will only take you down-hill.

*Sectarianism, or
Charity and Self-love?*

What is Knowledge in the highest sense? The wise man saith, 'Oh! Lord, Thou art the sole Actor in this universe. I am only an humble instrument in Thy Hands. Again, nothing is *mine*. Everything is *Thine*. Myself, my family, my riches, my virtues are all *Thine*.'

*The Fruit of True
Knowledge*

'Thou and Thine' is True Knowledge³; 'I and mine' is Ignorance.

Work without Devotion⁴ to God hath in this age no legs to stand upon. First cultivate Devotion⁴. All other things—schools, dispensaries, etc., shall, if you like, be added unto you. First Devotion, then Work. Work, apart from Devotion, or love of God, is helpless and cannot stand.

*Charitable and other
Works*

Pratap made inquiries about the disciples. He asked whether those that came to the Master were getting better in the spirit day by day:

The Master said: "I place before them the ideal life of a maid-servant—a nurse—as teaching them how to live in this world.

"The maid-servant saith with reference to her Master's house, 'This is our house.' All the while she knoweth that the house is not her own, and that her own house is far away in a distant village. Her thoughts are all sent forth to her village home. Again, referring to her master's child in her arms, she would say, 'My *Hari* (that being the name of the child) has grown very wicked' or, 'My *Hari* likes to eat

*How to live:—or the
Problem of Life
Solved—especially for
the Householder*

¹ Daya. ² Maya. ³ Jnana. ⁴ Bhakti.

this or that thing,' and so on. But all the while she knoweth for certain that *Hari* is not her own. I tell those that come to me to lead a life unattached like this maid-servant. I tell them to live unattached to this world—to be in the world, but not of the world—and at the same time to have their mind fixed on God—the Heavenly Home from whence all come. I tell them to pray for the love of God (*Bhakti*), which will help them so to live."

After a short interval the conversation turneth on the agnosticism of Europe and America. Mazumdar saith, "Whatever people in the West may profess to be, none of them, as it seems to me, is an atheist at heart. The European savants do admit an Unknown Power behind the Universe."

*Agnosticism in Europe
and America*

Master:—Well, it is sufficient if they believe in *SHAKTI*,—the Power ruling the Universe.

Mazumdar:—They also admit the moral government of the Universe.

Pratap rising to take leave, the Master saith to him, "What shall I say? It is better that you should cease to have anything to do with all those things (schisms, controversies, etc.)."

RENUNCIATION (A PARTING APPEAL)

Carnality and Attachment to Gold, remember, keep men immersed in worldliness and away from God. It is remarkable that everybody has nothing but praise for his own wife, be she good, bad or indifferent."

Here Mazumdar left.

SECTION VIII.

October 1884

VISIT TO A HINDU PANDIT AND PREACHER

Place—College Street, Calcutta

Date—Rathayatra, 25th June, 1884, 4 P. M. to 6.30 P. M.,
the second lunar day of Ashadha (light fortnight)

THE MASTER IN SAMADHI

When Sri Ramakrishna had got into the carriage which was to take him to the house in which Pandit Sasadhar was putting up, he was again in *Samadhi*, that 'blessed and serene mood' in which the place of all sense-consciousness is taken by pure God-consciousness—a mood which he called his *abesh*. In this state the Yogi is carried away into the super-sensuous world.

It was about 4 P. M. It was drizzling a little when he set out from Ishan's house. The roads were covered with mud. The disciples followed the carriage on foot. They were eager to assist at what promised to be an interesting meeting. It being the day of the Car Festival, they found on their way children playing and blowing their pipes made of palm leaves. The Master's carriage drew up at the entrance door and he was warmly received by the host and his people.

Coming upstairs the Master met Sasadhar advancing towards him. He appeared to be a middle-aged man with a fair complexion and had a rosary of Rudraksha beads thrown around his neck. He came forward with a reverential air, saluted the Master, and led him into the parlor which was intended for his reception. The disciples and others all went after him and seated themselves as near him as they could.

Among the many disciples present were Narendra, M., Rakhai and Rama.

Master (smiling in his semi-conscious state and approvingly):—Very well, very well! Well, what kind of lectures art thou in the habit of giving?

Sasadhar:—Sir, I try to bring out the truths taught by the Holy Scriptures¹.

Master:—For this age², it is Communion with God by love, devotion and self-surrender, as practised by the

¹ Shastras. ² Kaliyuga.‡

Rishi Narada¹, that is enjoined. There is hardly time for doing the various works² laid upon man by the Scriptures.

Dost not thou see that the well-known decoction of the ten medicinal roots³ is not the medicament for fevers of the present day? The patient runs the risk of being carried off, before the medicine has time to take effect. Fever mixture is, therefore, the order of the day.

Look here. Teach them work⁴ if you like. But do so, weighing the fish minus the head and the tail. I tell people not to trouble themselves with long rituals like Sandhya* and the rest of it; but to say only the shorter form, Gayatri†.

Workers⁵ like Ishan are exceptions. Thou art welcome to talk of work to such people if thou must, and of conduct enjoined by the Scriptures.

*The Value of Lectures
to Worldly Men*

Your lectures cannot possibly make any impression upon those who are immersed in worldliness.

Is it possible to drive nails into a stone? Shouldst thou make an attempt to do so, the chances are that the nails would sooner have their heads broken than make any impression on the stone.

*The Nature of
Worldly Men*

The crocodile will in vain be struck with the sword or spear.

The mendicant's bowl⁶ made of gourd shell may have been to the four corners⁷ of India which a holy man is required to visit and still remain as bitter in taste as ever.

Therefore I say unto thee, to such men thy lectures shall prove useless. They are sure to remain as worldly as ever in spite of them.

*Experience for a
Religious Teacher*

But I dare say thou wilt become wiser with added experience. The calf is not able to stand upon its legs all at once. It droppeth down at first as it trieth to do so. But it is precisely in this way that it at last learneth to walk.

*The Effect of First
Love on the Power of
Discrimination*

It is not thy fault that thou canst not know the godly from the worldly-minded. When a strong wind bloweth it raiseth the dust and maketh it difficult for one to know one kind of tree from another, for instance, the mango from the tama-

¹ Naradiya Bhakti. ² Karmayoga. ³ Dasamul Pachan. ⁴ Karma. ⁵ Karmis. ⁶ Kamandalu. ⁷ Châr dhâm.

* Sandhya — divine service three times a day, laid upon the twice-born.

† Gayatri — a short text from the Vedas, the repetition of which leads to meditation on God, the Omnipresent Source of all energy and power.

rind. So in thee is blowing, for the first time, the strong wind of first love¹. Thou canst not know the godly from the worldly-minded. They are the same to thee.

*Giving up of Work
and Realization*

It is possible for him alone to give up all work who hath seen, hath realized, God.

The question is, how long should rituals² and other ceremonial work be practised? The answer is, the term of these is over as soon as there are tears visible in the eyes and horripilation³ at the sacred Name of God.

When thou sayest, 'Om Rama!' and when immediately tears stand in thine eyes, then know it for certain that the term of thy work is over. Then thou art at liberty to give up all rituals and routine exercises. Thou hast risen above work. When the fruit appears the blossoms drop off. The Love⁴ which realizeth God is the fruit. Work⁵ is the blossom.

When the daughter-in-law of the house is found to be with child, the mother-in-law taketh care that her household duties become less and less every day. When it is the tenth month with her she hath almost ceased to work.

Sandhya loseth itself in Gayatri. Gayatri loseth itself in Om, the sacred symbol in the Vedas for Brahman, the Absolute and Unconditioned. Om in the end loseth itself in *Samadhi* (pure God-consciousness).

The sound of the bell is symbolical of these states. Dong (or the sound of the bell) gradually loseth itself in Infinity. This symbolizeth the sound⁶ perceived by the Yogi as proceeding from the Absolute and being then lost in the Absolute.

In the same way Karma (religious exercises like the Sandhya) in the end loseth itself in *Samadhi* (pure God-consciousness).

Thus the realization of God cutteth short work.

The Master is talking of *Samadhi*, and once more his mood goeth through a remarkable change. A strange heavenly expression cometh over his sweet, radiant face. He loseth all sense-consciousness. Remaining speechless in this state for a time, he saith, as is his wont, 'Give me a little water.'

The call for water is, as a general rule, a sure sign of the Master coming down to the plane of sense-consciousness.

He then goeth on saying, "O Mother! It did please Thee to show me Ishwar Vidyasagar. This time again I said to

¹ Anuraga. ² Sandhya, etc. ³ Pulak. ⁴ Bhakti. ⁵ Karma. ⁶ Nadaveda.

Thee, 'Mother! I desire to see a Pandit' and Thou hast heard my prayer."

Turning to Sasadhara the Master saith, "My son, do add to thy strength a little. Go through the devotional exercises¹ a little longer. Thou hast hardly got upon the tree and thou dost expect to lay hold on a cluster of its big fruits!

The Necessity of Practice

The redeeming feature of thy conduct is that it cometh of a laudable desire to do good to others."

Saying this the Master boweth to Sasadhara and saith, "When I first heard thy name I asked people whether the Pandit was a mere scholar or a person who had attained discrimination² between the Real, i. e., God, and the unreal), in other words, a sense of the vanity of this world.

Learning without Discrimination

"A man of learning without a sense of the vanity of this world is of no worth whatever.

The Doctrine of Adesa — Commandment from God

"Preaching doth no harm if there hath been a commandment; if one hath received a commission from the Lord to preach the Truths of Religion.

(a) The Commissioned Teacher is Invincible

"Made strong by such a Commission the Preacher becometh one whom nobody can beat.

"One ray of light coming from the Goddess of Wisdom, my Divine Mother, hath the power to turn great Pandits (men of the vastest book-learning) into the veriest worms that crawl upon the earth.

"When the lamp is lighted, the insects that appear in numbers in cloudy weather wait not till they are called in. They are sure to rush upon the flame of the lamp without anybody bidding them to come.

(b) The Commissioned Teacher is known by his perfect indifference to organizations and his contempt for got-up meetings and popular applause

"A man with a Divine Commission doth not look out for an audience. It is the audience that looketh out for him. Such a person careth not to get up lecture-meetings and such things. People all must come to him of their own accord. His magnetic influence none can resist.

"Then Princes and Babus all flock to him and ask him, 'Lord, what wouldst thou take? Wouldst thou like to take these mangoes, these sweetmeats, gold, jewels, shawls?' and

¹ Sadhan. ² Viveka.

so on. I say to such people, 'Away with you! No! Excuse me, I do not want anything.'

(c) *The Master the
Ideal-Tyagi (or
Sannyasin) and Teacher*

Surely it is not for the magnet to invite pieces of iron to be drawn to it. These latter run to the magnet because they must.

Dost thou fear because such a teacher seemeth not to be *learned*,—seemeth not to be well up in the truths taught by the Sacred Books and other books?

(d) *The Commissioned
Teacher and the
Wisdom of Life*

Dost thou fear because he is not a Pandit (book-learned)? No! No! he never falleth short of the Wisdom of Life. He hath a

never-failing supply of Divine Wisdom—truths directly revealed—which rise superior to the wisdom taught by the Books. In that part of the country, (*i. e.*, where the Master was born and brought up) ye may often find people measuring grains lying in a heap. One man goeth on measuring with a standard measure. Another man pusheth the grains on to him as soon as he finisheth measuring the portion of the heap that is within his reach. Much in the same way the Divine Teacher receiveth his supply of Truths from the Fountain of All Wisdom, the Divine Mother. That supply is never used up.

Should it be the rare good fortune of a person to be favored with one side-glance of love from the Lord, such a person becometh blessed at once with Divine Wisdom enough and to spare.

Therefore I ask whether thou hast received any Commandment¹ from the Lord?"

Hazra (to the Pandit):—Oh, I dare say there must have been something of that kind. Is it not so?

Pandit:—No! I am afraid there hath been no such thing.

Host:—No Commandment. He is lecturing from a sense of duty.

Master:—What are lectures worth, if the lecturer hath not a good record;—a sufficient force of character derived from a Divine Commission? Some one said in the course of a lecture, 'Brethren, I used formerly to drink,' and so forth. This revelation only made the position of the lecturer worse, for, some of the people said to themselves, 'Look

at that fellow! What meaneth he by saying, "I used to drink?"'

¹ Adesha.

A retired Sub-Judge from Barisal once said to me, 'Sir, do thou go about lecturing? In that event I shall be glad to follow suit and gird up my loins.' I said, 'My dear Sir, listen to a story. There is a tank called Haldar Pukur in the village of Kamarpukur. People used to throw dirt about the edge of the tank water. Every morning abuses were showered upon the head of those that offended. But it was all in vain. The act was repeated the following morning and went on as ever. At last there was a notice put up by a peon of the Municipality, forbidding people to commit such acts. The effect of this authoritative notice was miraculous. There was no more any repetition of such nuisance.'

Therefore I say your lecturer must not be an ordinary man. He must be a person armed with credentials,—clothed with authority from the Most High. He must be one who hath received his Commission from Him.

A teacher of mankind must possess sufficient spiritual power. In Calcutta there are many veteran wrestlers¹ like Hanuman Puri. One must try one's strength on such men and not on the novices² in wrestling.

Chaitanya Deva was, as we all know, an incarnation of God. Well, what remaineth of his work now? How infinitely less valuable must be the work of him who is weak in spirit and hath received no Commission from the Lord?

Therefore I say (and the Master sang, intoxicated with the Wine of Divine Love):—

SONG

Dive Deep

1. Dive deep, dive deep, dive deep O my mind into the Sea of Beauty.

Make a search in the regions lower, lower down under the sea; you will come by the jewel, the wealth of *Prema* (intense love of God). (See page 154.)

Fear not, continued the Lord, at the end of the hymn, because I ask you to plunge, to dive deep into that Sea. Fear not. It is the Sea of Immortality.

'Fear not' I once said to Narendra, who is here present, 'God is like a sea of liquid sweet. Wouldst thou not dive into this sea? Just think of a vessel with a wide

¹ Pailwans. ² Patthas.

mouth containing the syrup of sugar, and suppose thou art a fly anxious to drink of the sweet liquid. Where shouldst thou sit and drink?' Narendra said that he should like to drink from the edge of the vessel, for if he came to a point beyond his depth he was sure to be drowned. Thereupon I said to him, 'Thou forgettest, my son, that diving deep into the Divine Sea thou needst not be afraid of death.' Remember, *Sachchidananda* Sea (the Divine Sea) is the Sea of Immortality. The water of this Sea never causeth death but is Water of Everlasting Life. *Be not afraid like some foolish persons that thou mayst 'run to excess' in thy love of God.*

From this Sea of Immortality drink the *Chidananda Rasa*—the nectar of Absolute¹, Everlasting, Knowledge and Joy.

Yes, first see Him, realize Him, in this way; then shalt thou hear His Voice. He will talk to thee and, if He so wisheth, will entrust thee with His Commission.

The Way to the 'Sea of Immortality.'
A Hope held out to all Religious Cults and Dispensations

Infinite is the number of ways leading to the Sea of Immortality.

It is immaterial *how* thou gettest into this Sea. Suppose there is a reservoir of nectar. It is open to thee to walk slowly to the sloping bank from *any* point, get to the nectar and have a drink. Thou gettest immortal in any case. Again, what doth it signify if one throwest oneself into the reservoir or is pushed into it by somebody? The result in either case is the same. Thou tasteth the nectar—the Water of Life—in either case. Thou becomest immortal.

The Master on Yoga or Communion

The ways being numberless, Jnana, Karma, Bhakti, all lead to God, other things remaining the same.

Yoga (communion with the Lord) is of three kinds:—

1. Jnanayoga. 2. Karmayoga. 3. Bhaktiyoga.

1. Jnanayoga.

This is communion with God by means of Jnana, (*Knowledge* in its highest sense). The Jnani's object is to realize *Brahman*, the *Absolute*. He saith, 'Not this,' 'Not this,' and thus leaveth out of account one unreal thing after another until he getteth to a point where all (*Vichara*) discrimination between the Real (*i. e.*, God) and the unreal ceaseth, and the Absolute (*Brahman*) is realized in *Samadhi*.

¹ Brahman.

2. Karmayoga.

This is communion with God by means of *work*. It is what thou art teaching.

Ashtangayoga or Rajayoga is Karmayoga, if practised without attachment.* It leadeth to communion through meditation and concentration.

The doing of duties by householders†—the doing them *without attachment*, to the end that God may be glorified—is Karmayoga.

Again ('Puja') worship according to the Shastras, (Japa) silent repetition of the Name of God, and other Karma of the kind is Karmayoga, if done without attachment, for the glorification of God.

The end of Karmayoga is the same, *viz.*, the Realization of God, Impersonal or Personal (Nirguna or Saguna Brahman) or both.

3. Bhaktiyoga.

This is communion by means of love¹, devotion and self-surrender. It is specially adapted to Kaliyuga, this age.

This is the Law² for the present age.

Pure work³ without attachment, as I have already said, is exceedingly difficult in this age (Kaliyuga).

*Difficulty of
Communion by Works* In the *first* place, there is, as I have already pointed out, hardly time in this age for doing the various works⁴ laid upon us by the Holy Books⁵.

In the *second* place, thou mayst form a resolution to work unattached, without expectation of any reward or fear of any punishment in this world or in the next. But the chances are that, knowingly or unknowingly, thou gettest attached to the fruit of thy works, unless indeed thou art already a perfect man.

The path of Absolute Knowledge or Communion by Philosophy is also exceedingly difficult in this age.

*Difficulty of
Communion by
Philosophy (Jnanayoga)* In the first place, our life⁶ in this age resides, so to speak, in food.

Secondly, the term of human life in this age is much too short for this purpose.

¹ Bhakti. ² Yugadharma. ³ Karmayoga. ⁴ Karma. ⁵ Shastras. ⁶ Annagata-prana.

* *Ashtangayoga* (of *Patanjali*) means *Yoga* with eight members or steps, *viz.*, *Yama* (control over thought, word, deed), *Niyama* (rules for conduct), *Asana* (control over the posture), *Pranayama* (control over *prana* or the breath of life), *Pratyahara* (introspection), *Dharana* (concentration), *Dhyana* (meditation), and *Samadhi* (God-consciousness).

† Self-regarding or altruistic, social, political, etc.

Thirdly, it is almost impossible in this age to get rid of the conviction¹ that the *self is the same* as the body,—which clingeth to us. Now, what is the conclusion which the *Jnani* must come to? It is this:—‘I am not the body, gross or subtle. I am one with the Universal Soul, the Being Absolute and Unconditioned. Not being the body, I am not subject to the necessities of the body—*e. g.*, hunger, thirst, birth, death, disease, grief, pleasure, pain, etc.’

One subject to the necessities of the body, and calling oneself a Philosopher² is like a person suffering from intense pain caused by a thorny plant. It scratcheth and teareth the hand and causeth it to bleed. But he nevertheless saith, ‘Why, my hand is not at all scratched or torn. It is all right.’

*Bhaktiyoga the
Yugadharmā and not
Jnanayoga or
Karmayoga*

Hence the path of communion³ by love, devotion and self-surrender to God is the easiest of all paths. It bringeth *Karma* (work) to a minimum. It teacheth the necessity of Prayer Without Ceasing. It is, in this age, the shortest

cut leading to God.

The meaning of this is that (1) Discrimination⁴ between God, the only Reality, and the unreal phenomenal universe or (2) the doing⁵ of Works, is far more difficult in this age than *Bhakti* as a method or path leading to God.

*Different Ways but
the Same Goal*

It is not meant that the *Goal* is different.

The Philosopher⁶, indeed, wanteth to realize God⁷ Impersonal. What is meant is that such a person would, in this age, do better to follow the method of the *Bhaktiyogi*. Let him love, pray, surrender himself entirely to God. The Lord⁸ loveth his devotee and will vouchsafe unto him even the knowledge⁹ of the Absolute if he hungereth and thirsteth after it.

The Philosopher will thus realize God, both Personal and Impersonal. *Only let him, in this yuga, follow the method of the Bhakta.*

The *Bhaktiyogi*, on the other hand, would be generally quite content with seeing, realizing, the Personal¹⁰ God. The

*Can the Bhakta attain
Brahmajnana?*

Lord would, however, make him heir of His Infinite Glories—grant into him knowledge of both the Personal and the Impersonal¹¹. Both

Jnana and *Bhakti* shall be his.

¹ Dehabuddhi. ² Jnani. ³ Bhakti. ⁴ Jnana vichara. ⁵ Karma. ⁶ Jnanayoga. ⁷ Brahman Nirguna. ⁸ Bhakta-vatsal. ⁹ Brahmajnana. ¹⁰ The Saguna Brahman. ¹¹ Saguna and Nirguna Brahman.

For doth not a person who manageth to reach Calcutta succeed in finding his way to the *Maidan*, the Ochterlony Monument, the *Museum* and other places, and know which is which?

The important thing is to be able to come to Calcutta at all.

Do but come to my Divine Mother and you will get not only Bhakti but also Jnana, not only Jnana but also Bhakti—not only see Her in *Samadhi* manifesting Herself in Forms¹ Divine but also realize Her as the Absolute² in *Samadhi*, in which all self in the devotee is effaced by my Mother and there is no Manifestation of Divine Forms.

The true Bhakta saith: 'Lord! work³ with attachment, I see, is dangerous, for just as a man soweth, so must he reap. I see, again, that work without attachment is exceedingly difficult. Save me from the first, Lord, for else I shall forget Thee. Deign to make less and less what work I have, until by Thy

Grace I see Thee and no work remaineth to be done. Till then, may it please Thee to grant that I may be blessed with that love, devotion and self-surrender to Thee which is the One Thing Needful. As for the little work that is left for my share, grown less and less by Thy Grace, do Thou grant that I may have strength to do it without *attachment*. But until I am blessed with the Vision Divine and thus realize the true end of life, grant that my soul may not be disposed to look about for fresh work—unattached though it be—unless indeed I receive from Thee Thy commandment to do Thy work.'

*The Bhakta's
Attitude towards
Karma: his Prayer*

Pandit:—Please, Sir, how far didst thou go abroad on pilgrimage?

Master (smiling):—Well, I did go to some places. Hazra went farther, and higher up to Hrisikeshya on the Himalayas. I did not go so far or so high up.

The vulture and the kite, do, indeed, soar very high, but all the while their looks are fixed on the charnel-pits where the carcasses of dead animals are thrown.

What is the good of visiting places of pilgrimage,—once thou art able to cultivate Bhakti (devotion to God)?

When on my pilgrimage I visited Benares I was surprised to see that the grass there was the same grass as here, and that there were the same tamarind leaves!

Pilgrimages, without love and devotion to God, carry no reward. With devotion within thy heart, it is not absolutely

¹ Sakara Rupa. ² Nirvikalpa. ³ Karma.

necessary that thou must visit the holy places. Thou art very well where thou art.

Love of God is the one thing needful.

The charnel-pit is the World—which is another name for 'Lust and Gold (riches, honors, fame, work with attachment, etc.)'

The vulture and the kite are they that talk big and try to justify themselves by the doing of works¹ enjoined by the Holy Books². All the while their mind is attached to the things of the world—riches, honors, sensual pleasures. etc.

Pandit:—That is true, Sir, such pilgrimage is like setting aught the jewel worn suspended on the breast of Vishnu the Second Person of the Hindu Trinity and going about searching for other jewels.

Master:—In order that thy teaching should take effect thou shouldst take into account the *Time Factor*. Unless, in the case of each individual, thou dost allow a certain space of time to go by, no teaching will bear fruit. Those that thou teachest will not, as a general rule, be able at once to profit by thy teachings unless their hour is come.

Spiritual awakening is very much a question of time. The teacher is a mere help.

Doctors are of three classes.

There is one class of doctors who, when they are called in, look at the patient, feel his pulse, prescribe the necessary medicines, and then ask the patient to take them. If the patient declines to do so, the doctor goeth away without further troubling himself about the matter. This is the lowest class of doctors. In the same way there are religious teachers who do not much care whether or not their teachings are valued or acted up to.

The second class of doctors not only ask the patient to take the medicine, but they go further. They reason with him in case he taketh it not. In the same way, those religious teachers who leave no stone unturned to make other people walk in the ways of Righteousness and of Truth by means of the arts of gentle persuasion must be said to belong to the next higher class.

The third and highest class of doctors will use force on the patient in case their kind words fail. They will go the length

¹ Karma. ² Shastras.

of putting their knee on the chest of the patient and forcing the medicine through his gullet. (*Laughter.*)

In the same way, there are some religious teachers who would use force, if necessary, on their disciples, with a view to make them walk in the way of the Lord. These belong to the highest class.

Pandit:—So there *are* religious teachers, like doctors, of the highest class. Then, Sir, why dost thou say the time factor must be taken into account?

Sri Ramakrishna:—There *are* doctors of the highest class. But, suppose, the medicine doth not get to the stomach. The doctors then, with all their zeal, are quite helpless.

It is necessary to choose fit vessels¹ as the receptacles for Spiritual Truths. I ask those that come to me, 'Hast thou got any guardian to take care of thee?' For, suppose, the father hath left any debts. Suppose, the would-be disciple hath no one in the world to look after him. Then it would be next to impossible for such a person to fix his mind upon God. Dost thou hear, my child?

*Fit Vessels to Receive
the Truth*

Pandit:—Yes, Sir, all. I am all ears.

The conversation then turneth on another subject, the Grace of God².

Master:—Once a number of Sikh soldiers came to the Temple. They had a meeting with me just before the Temple of the Divine Mother. They said, 'God is very kind.' I asked, smiling, 'Is it indeed so?' They replied, 'Why, Sir, doth not the Lord take care of His creatures, provide for their wants?' I said, 'The Lord is the *Father* of all. He *must* take care of His children—His own creatures. If *He* doth not, who else is there to take care of them? Surely it is not the duty of people of the "other quarter of the town" to come and feed God's own creatures!'

Narendra:—Then should *not* the Lord be called *Merciful*?

Master:—I don't *forbid* thee to call Him so. Thou art at liberty to call Him by that name. I only meant to say that *The Lord is our own.*

Pandit:—Priceless are these words!

Sri Ramakrishna (aside to a disciple):—Thou wast singing. But thy songs, this day, were to me tasteless as if from want of salt. I could not enjoy them. Yours was the condition of

¹ Patram. ² Kripa.

a person looking for a situation through the recommendation of the master of the family. Hence I could not keep listening to the songs, but left the place. The disciple blushed.

*Songs for Worldly
Objects*

The Master here asked for a fresh glass of water. He would not take the one already offered, which was therefore taken away. The Master, it appeared, looked upon it as unfit to be offered to the God in him—being made impure by the 'feverish' touch of some wicked man.

Purity

Pandit (to Hazra):—You, gentlemen, the Master's constant associates, must always be in the midst of exceeding joy.

Master (smiling):—This day I have had the rare pleasure of looking at the Moon of the Second (lunar day). I say Moon of the Second (lunar day) advisedly.

The Parting

Sita* said to Ravana, 'Thou art the full Moon and my Ramachandra is the Moon of the Second (lunar day).' Ravana was highly pleased until the sense was explained to him. Sita meant to say that the fortune of Ravana had reached its climax, and that now it must be on the wane like the full Moon. Not so the fortune of Ramachandra which had reached only the Second (lunar day). His fortune like the Moon of the Second (lunar day) was not on the wane, but must ever grow day by day. Ramachandra must increase, but Ravana must decrease.

Here the Master rising to depart, the Pandit and his friends bowed down before him. He then left the place, followed by his disciples.

* Sita, the chaste and devoted wife of Ramachandra, who is regarded as an Incarnation of God. She was 'stolen' by Ravana, king of Ceylon, who brought her to his capital, Lanka. Hence the war described in the epic, Ramayana, which ended with the destruction of Ravana and many of his people.

SECTION IX.

1884

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE TEMPLE (DAKSHINESHWARA)

Place—*Dakshineshwara Thakurbati, Calcutta*

Scene—*The Master's Room*

Date—*3d August, 1884, 2 P. M. to 9½ P. M.*

Present—*Balaram, M., Rakhal; Bauls* from Shibpur and visitors from Bhawanipur; Hazra; Adhar; Rama Chatterji, etc., etc.*

CHAPTER I.

The Master is seated on the lounge as usual with his face to the north. The western and the northern doors of his chamber look out on the sacred waters of the Ganges. The Bauls from Shibpur are seated on a mat spread on the floor of the room. They are singing hymns upon musical instruments—one of which was the well-known *Gopijantra* with one string, popularly called *Bong-bonga-bong*. They are seated with their faces towards the Master, *i. e.*, towards the west. Others of the company are seated with their faces to the south and towards the Master.

One of the songs hath a particular reference to the Six Lotus Wheels¹ marking the different stages of progress towards Union² with the Universal Soul.

At the end of this song, the Master saith:—

The six wheels mentioned in the Yoga system of the Tantras correspond with the seven mental planes mentioned in the Vedas.

*The Six Wheels and
the Seven³ Mental
Planes*

When the mind is immersed in worldliness, it maketh its abode in 1st, the anus⁴, 2nd, the sexual organs⁵, and 3d, the naval⁶.

In the 4th plane the abode of the mind is the heart⁷. The man is blessed with the Vision of Divine Glory⁸ and crieth out, 'What is all this! What is all this?'

In the 5th plane, the place of the mind is the throat⁹. The devotee talketh only on subjects related to God and getteth impatient if any other subject cometh up before him in the course of conversation.

¹ Shad-chakra. ² Yoga. ³ Sapta-bhumi. ⁴ Guhya. ⁵ Linga. ⁶ Nabhi. ⁷ Hridaya. ⁸ Jyoti. ⁹ Kantha.

* A sect of devout Hindus; lit. mad for the Lord.

In the 6th plane the mind is localized between the eyebrows. The devotee cometh face to face with God; only a thin glass-like partition, so to speak, keepeth him apart from the Divine Person. To him God is like a light within a lantern or the photograph behind a glass-frame. He seeketh to touch the Vision, but he cannot. His perception falleth short of complete realization, for there is the element of self-consciousness¹ retained to a certain extent.

In the last or the 7th plane it is perfect *Samadhi*. Then all sense-consciousness ceaseth and pure God-consciousness taketh its place. In this state the life of the Saint lingereth for twenty-one days, after which he passeth away. During these days he ceaseth to take any food. Milk, if poured into his mouth, runneth out and never getteth into his stomach.

The Master continueth:—

Some who may have got on to the seventh or the highest plane and have thus become lost in God-consciousness are pleased to come down from that spiritual height with a view to the good of mankind.

The Ego of Divine Knowledge They keep the *Ego*² (*I*) of Knowledge or, in other words, the Higher Self. But this *Ego* is a mere appearance. It is like a line drawn across a sheet of water.

Hanuman was blessed* with the vision of God both with³ form and without⁴ form. But he retained the *Ego* of a servant of God.

Such was also the case with the Saints—Narada, Sanaka, Sananda and Sanatkumara.

Here the question was asked whether Narada and others worshipped God as dualists⁵ and did not realize Him as God the Absolute.

The Master saith:—

Narada and others had attained the Highest Knowledge⁶. But still they went on like the murmuring waters of the rivulet to talk and to sing. This showeth that they too kept this *Ego* of Knowledge.

They were knowing ones⁷ and also devotees⁵; they talked and sang about the Lord with a view to the good of others.

A 'steam-boat' not only getteth to its *own place of destination*, but also carrieth numbers of people on board to the same place.

¹ Aham. ² Vidya. ³ Sakar. ⁴ Nirakar. ⁵ Bhaktas. ⁶ Brahmajñana. ⁷ Jnanis.

* Adhyatma Ramayana, etc.

Preceptors like Narada are like 'steam-boats.'

The highest teachers¹ may be divided into two classes:—

1st. Those² that declare the Supreme Being as the Formless One. Trilinga Swami belongeth to this class. Generally speaking, holy men of this class are comparatively selfish, so to speak. They care only for the liberation of their own soul.

*The Master on the
Highest Teachers¹ of
Mankind: the Higher
Self after Realization*

Those of the second class³ say that God is with Form as well as Formless, and that He manifesteth Himself to His devotees as a Being with Forms.

*The Master on
Himself— a Hint*

Have you ever seen a water-passage running over with the water of the river with which it is joined?

The passage hath sometimes no trace left, being entirely one with the river-water. But very often there may be noticed a slight movement in its water which proveth its separateness from the river-water.

Pretty much the same is the case with the teacher belonging to the second class. His soul becometh one with the Universal Soul. *Still* there is this *Ego* of Knowledge *kept on*— a slight trace of individuality to mark his separate existence from the Deity.

Again, such a teacher may be compared to a jar or pitcher of water when it is filled to the brim. At the same time its contents or part of its contents may be transferred to another vessel. The disciple is the second vessel. The pitcher filled to the brim indicates the perfect state derived from the Highest Knowledge⁴.

Thus the *Ego* of Knowledge is kept for the purpose of teaching others the saving truths of Religion.

Again, suppose a person diggeth a well. He is thirsty and drinketh of the water of the well. It is not unusual for such a person to keep with him the digging implements, *e. g.*, the hoe, the shovel, the spade, etc., for the sake of others who may want them for the same object. In the same way a teacher of the second class who may have drunk the waters of Everlasting Life and who may have thus quenched his spiritual thirst (*i. e.*, come to the perfection of Brahmajñana) is often anxious to do good to mankind. With this view he retaineth the *Ego* of Knowledge, the *Ego* of Bhakti, the *Ego* of Preceptor.

¹ Paramahamsas. ² Nirakar-vadi. ³ Sakar-vadis. ⁴ Brahmajñana.

Some persons eat mangoes and take away all traces of eating by wiping their mouth with a towel. These persons care only for their own selves. But there are others who are sure to share the mangoes with other people whenever they eat them.

This was precisely the mental attitude of the Gopis of Brindaban. They always desired to retain the power of *tasting* the Love of Sri Krishna. To them He was the Thing¹ to be enjoyed, *i. e.*, spiritually. They wanted to be the persons² enjoying. So sang Rama Prasad, 'I would much prefer to *eat* the sugar to *being* the sugar itself.'

It is a case of Involution and Evolution. Ye go backwards³ to the Supreme Being and your personality becometh lost in His Personality. This is *Samadhi*. Ye then retrace⁴ your steps. Ye get back your *ego* (Personality) and come back to the point whence ye started only to see that the world and your *ego* or self were involved in the same Supreme Being, and that God, Man and Nature (or the world) are mere identities, so that if ye hold to one of them ye realize the others.

Call with Bhakti upon His hallowed Name and *the mountain of your sins shall go out of sight*; much as a mountain of cotton will burn up and vanish if it but catcheth one spark of fire.

The worship from fear, *e. g.*, of hell-fire, is intended for the beginner. Some people talk of sin and sin only. Take popular Christianity and Brâhmaism. Now these Christians and Brâhmas as a general rule look upon the sense of sins as the whole of religion. Their ideal of a devotee is he who can pray, 'O Lord, I am a sinner; *deign to forgive my sins.*' They forget that the sense of sin marketh only the earliest and a lower stage of spirituality. There is yet a higher ideal, a higher stage of spirituality,—*viz.*, *the Love of God* as our Father or Mother.

People do not see the force of habit⁵. If thou sayest eternally 'I am a sinner,' 'I am a sinner,' thou wilt remain a sinner to the end of the chapter!

One who saith, 'I am bound⁶ to the world,' 'I am bound,' will go on to be in bondage indeed for ever!

But that man is free who saith, 'I am free⁷ from the bondage of the world; I am free. Is not the Lord our own Father?'

Such is the great force of habit.

¹ Rasa. ² Rasika. ³ Anulom. ⁴ Vilom. ⁵ Abhyasa. ⁶ Baddha. ⁷ Mukta.

CHAPTER II.

Then turning to some of the company present that were singing, he said, "Will ye sing songs which have for their burden the enjoyment by the human soul of God realized? I say, Rakhal—(this he said to one of his young disciples present) dost thou remember the song sung the other day at Nobin Neogi's house, *viz.*, 'Be intoxicated with the Joy of the Lord?'"

One of the company then said, "Sir, may we be favored with one of thy songs?" The Lord saith, "What shall I sing?—Well, I sing pretty much like yourselves. Very well, when the time cometh I shall sing."

So saying he remaineth silent for a while.

* * * * *

The first five songs that he sings are about Sri Chaitanya Deva and Sri Krishna, that is from the point of view of the Vaishnavas. Of the last three songs the burden is the God-¹ of the Universe. They were as follows:—

SONG I

The Devotee and Her Ecstatic Love² for Chaitanya Deva, the God Incarnate

1. The waves of the love of Gour come dashing against my body. The swell of His Sea of Love causeth the fall of the unrighteous: nay, the Universe itself goeth down.

2. I thought of stopping on the shore. But there is the alligator—the ecstatic love of Gour Chand which swalloweth me. Is there anybody that feeleth for me and will take me by the hand and drag me out of the water?

SONG II

The Devotee and Her Ecstatic Love for Chaitanya Deva

1. Come, O my friend, look on the fair form of Gour! Behold, it is the Lightning that has become one with the Dark Cloud*!

2. Here is a Man made of gold (so fair he is). The sea of his heart is moved incessantly into waves of tender feelings. The tenderness of his loving heart hath made his fair form broken³ in three different directions. So my mind hath been captured by the sight of Gour, especially of his bewitching glances.

¹ Kali. ² Prema. ³ Tribhanga.

* Krishna is the Dark Cloud; Radha is the Lightning. The two have been made into one, *viz.*, Gour Chaitanya.

3. The body of my Gour is rubbed over with mixture of curds and the red *alta* dissolved in water*. At the sight of this Fair Form my tender feelings of love¹ are stirred up. The maker of this Fair Form is Bhangad (Siva) and the architect is Radha.

SONG III

The God of Love; or 'Dive Deep'

1. Dive deep, dive deep, dive deep, O my mind into the Sea of Beauty.

Make a search in the regions lower and lower down under the sea; thou wilt come by the jewel, the wealth of *Prema* (intense love of God).

2. Within thy heart is Brindaban, the abode of God Who is Love. Search and look; search and look; search and look. Thou wilt find it.

Then shall burn, without ceasing, the Lamp of Divine Wisdom.

3. Who is that Being that doth steer a boat on land — on land, on solid ground?

Saith Kabir, 'Listen, listen, listen! Meditate on the hallowed Feet of the Divine Preceptor².'

SONG IV

The Mother of the Universe and the Difficulty of Realization

1. Is it given to everybody to be blessed with such Wealth as my Mother?

It is beyond the power of religious austerities ever practised by Siva to cause the mind to be immersed in the contemplation of Her hallowed crimson feet.

2. The wealth of princes, potentates and powers like the God³ of Heaven, is beneath the contempt of him who meditateth upon my Mother.

He is set afloat upon joy everlasting, once my Mother of the dark-blue color turneth back and looketh at him.

3. The King of Yogis³, the King of Ascetics⁴ and the God⁵ of Heaven meditate in vain upon Her hallowed feet — so difficult is it to realize them.

Kamalakanta is devoid of all virtues. But he still longeth for the vision of those *blessed feet!*

SONG V

The Mother of the Universe; Liberation⁶ and Love¹ of God

1. What a nice machine hath Mother of the dark-blue color made, what a nice machine hath Mother made — the Consort of the God of Eternity!

What splendid tricks is She playing in the machine which is but three and a half cubits in length! *i. e.*, (the body).

2. Herself within the 'machine,' She it is Who holdeth in Her hand the string which setteth it in motion; but the 'machine' saith,

¹ Bhakti, etc. ² Guru. ³ Siva. ⁴ Munis†. ⁵ Indra. ⁶ Mukti.

* *Alta* — round-shaped cotton leaves impregnated with lac.

† Ascetics who observe a vow of silence.

'It is I that am moving of my own accord.' It knoweth not who causeth it to move.

3. The 'machine' that hath realized Her will not be required to be a machine the next time. Mother Herself is bound to certain particular 'machines' by the string of Bhakti (love).

The Master is singing of the Mother of the Universe. At the end of the song, he is in *Samadhi*.

The eyes are fixed and half closed. The functions of the corporeal frame are suspended. Sense-consciousness hath left him, giving place to pure God-consciousness.

CHAPTER III.

REVELATIONS AFTER SAMADHI. THE MASTER'S SERMON

Returning a little to his senses, he talketh to the Holy Mother saying, "Don't trouble, O Mother! Come down to this place. Be still, O Mother.

*Pre-arrangement
by God*

"What is by Thee,—O Mother!—pre-arranged in the case of everybody, that alone shall come to pass! What shall I say to these people?"

"Nothing can be achieved in the path of spirituality without discrimination¹ between the Real (God) and the unreal or phenomenal universe or non-attachment² to riches, honors, sensual pleasures, etc.

How to Know God

"Non-attachment is of many kinds. One kind of non-attachment springeth from the acute pain due to worldly misery. But the better kind ariseth from consciousness that all worldly blessings, though within one's reach are transitory and are not worth enjoying. Thus, having all, he hath not anything.

"Everything resteth upon Time. For all religious awakening we must wait. At the same time the precepts of a religious teacher should be listened to. One may be put in mind of these precepts on a future occasion and then one would probably cry out, saying, 'O! I heard this from such and such person at such and such a time.' Another reason is,—our worldliness might gradually wear off as the result of our listening to these precepts from day to day. Our worldliness is like the intoxication caused by wine which goeth off gradually if doses of rice-water are taken by the drunkard.

*Religious Awakening
and the Time Factor*

¹ Viveka. ² Vairagya.

“The number of those who attain Divine Wisdom is very limited. So in the Gita, ‘Out of thousands only one doth strive for Knowledge; and out of a thousand such people striving for Knowledge only one succeedeth in reaching the Goal.’”

*Limited Number of
Seers¹ of God*

One of the company present, here quoted the text* in the Gita.

Master:—The more is a person’s attachment to the world the less is he likely to attain Divine Wisdom. The less his attachment the more is the probability of his getting such wisdom. Thus, wisdom may be said to vary directly as non-attachment to the world, its riches, its pleasures, etc., and inversely as attachment to the world.

*Divine Wisdom² and
Non-attachment*

Bhava is the state of being struck speechless at the thought of realization of the Supreme Being (of Whom the only things that can be predicated are Existence, Absolute Knowledge and Bliss). Bhava is the utmost point that can be reached by ordinary mortals.

Stages of Spirituality

Ecstatic Love³ of God is attainable only by a few. They are human beings with extraordinary original powers and entrusted with a Divine Commission. Being Heirs of Divine Powers and Glories they form a class of their own.

To this class belong Incarnations of God like Chaitanya Deva and their worshippers⁴ of the highest order, who are their ‘members.’

The two characteristics of this Love are, first, the forgetfulness of the external world and, second, the forgetfulness of one’s own body,—so very dear to one.

Bhava is like the unripe mango, Prema is like the ripe mango. This Love is like a string in the hands of the worshipper⁴ which bindeth God. The devotee holdeth the Lord under his control, so to speak. The Lord must come to him whenever he calleth out to Him.

In Persian books it is written that within the flesh are the bones, within the bones is the marrow, within the marrow is, etc., etc., and that last and innermost of all is this Love of God.

Krishna is called Tribhanga, i. e., broken in three different directions. It is only a soft thing that is capable of changing its form. So this triangular form of Krishna implieth that he

¹ Jnanis. ² Jnana. ³ Prema. ⁴ Bhaktas.

* Manushyanam Sahasreshu Kashchit Yayati Siddhaye.
Yatatamapi siddhanam kashchinmam veti tattvatah.

must have been softened in some way or other. The softening in this case is accounted for by this Love.

How to pray is the next question. Let us not pray for things of this world, but pray like the saint Narada. Narada said to Ramachandra, 'O Rama, grant that I may be favored with Bhakti (love, devotion and self-surrender) to the Lotus of Thy Feet.' 'Be it so, Narada,' said Rama. 'But will not thou ask for anything else?' Narada replied, 'Lord, may it please Thee to grant that I may not be attracted by Thy *Maya*, which fascinates the Universe.' Ramachandra saith once more, 'Be it so, Narada; but will not thou ask for anything else?' Narada replied, 'No, Lord, that is all I pray for.'

Knowledge varieth in degree and kind. There is first knowledge belonging to men of the world—ordinary mortals. This knowledge is not sufficiently powerful. It may be likened to the flame of a lamp which only lighteth the inside of a room. The knowledge of a devotee¹ is a stronger light and may be compared to the light of the moon which causeth to be visible things outside of a room as well as those inside of it.

But the knowledge of the Incarnation of God is still more powerful. It may thus be likened to a yet stronger light, *viz.*, the resplendent glory of the sun! Such light causeth to be visible the minutest things both outside and inside of a room. Nothing is problematic to Him. He solveth the most difficult problem of life and the soul as the simplest things in the world! His exposition of the most intricate questions in which man is interested is such as a child can follow. He is the Sun of Divine Knowledge whose light taketh away the accumulated darkness of ages!

Lastly, there is that unique composite light which may be called the Luni-solar Light—a light made up both of the light of the moon and of the light of the sun. To this composite light may be compared the unique Wisdom of Incarnations like Chaitanya Deva, who are marked alike by Wisdom and Love, strictly so called. It is unique like the Sun and the Moon appearing in the firmament at one and the same time.

The man immersed in worldliness cannot attain Wisdom Divine. He cannot see God. Doth the muddy water ever reflect the sun or any surrounding object?

¹ Bhakta.

*The Master indirectly
Describeth Himself.
Chaitanya Deva, owner
of both Divine Wisdom
and Divine Love*

*The Worldly Man
and His Hope*

Is there no remedy for this state of things? Is there no hope for the worldly man? Yes, there certainly is.

If ye drop a purifying agent, say, a piece of alum, into muddy water, the water is purified and the impurities all settle down upon the bottom of the vessel. Discrimination¹ of the Real (God) from the unreal (*i. e.*, the phenomenal universe) and non-attachment to the world are the two purifying agents. Thus it is that the worldly man ceaseth to be worldly and becometh pure.

The Six Steps leading to Realization of God

*First stage:—*The mixing² in good company, *i. e.*, the company of the holy.

*Second stage:—*Admiration³ for higher things, *i. e.*, things relating to the spirit.

*Third stage:—*Single-minded⁴ devotion to one's Ideal. The Ideal may be one's Spiritual Precdptor⁵. The Ideal may be the Formless.

The Ideal may be God Personal or any of His innumerable Manifestations. It may be one's tutelary God or Goddess. The worshippers of Vishnu have this devotion to their tutelary God, Vishnu or Sri Krishna. The Shaktas or the worshippers of Shakti (the Goddess that rules the Universe) have this *Nishtha* for Shakti, also known as Kali, Durga, etc.

*Fourth stage:—*The state⁶ of being struck speechless at the thought of God.

*Fifth stage:—*This state is intensified when the feeling of devotion reacheth the highest point⁷ after God-vision. The devotee sometimes laugheth, sometimes weepeth, like a mad man. He loseth all control over his body. *This stage is not attained by ordinary human beings who are not capable of conquering the flesh.* It is reached by Incarnations of God alone who appear in this world for the salvation of mankind.

*Sixth stage:—*Prema goes hand in hand with Mahabhava. Prema is the most intense Love of God after Realization and is strictly the Highest Stage of spirituality. The two marks of this stage are, first, the forgetfulness of this world; second, a forgetfulness of the self which includeth one's own body.

Chaitanya Deva who reached this stage was so much lost in the Love of God that he often forgot himself and forgot the identity of the places where he had been before. Observing a forest before him, he so far forgot himself as to think that it

¹ Viveka. ² Sadhu-Sanga. ³ Shraddha. ⁴ Nishtha. ⁵ Guru. ⁶ Bhava. ⁷ Mahabhava.

was Brindaban*. He looked at the sea while at Puri and took it for the Jumna. In this state he would throw himself into the sea and was on two or three occasions given up for lost by his friends and disciples. This stage leadeth the devotee to the Goal, *viz.*, to God. The devotee seeth God. He attaineth the End of Life. He is blessed with the Vision Divine.

After having delivered himself of this sermon the Master said to the company present, "If you have any question to put to me you are welcome to do so." But none present came forward to do so. So the Master went on saying:—

Knowledge¹ cannot be communicated all at once. Its attainment is a question of time. Suppose a fever is of a severe type. The doctor could not give quinine under such circumstances. He knows that such a remedy would do no good. The fever must first leave the patient, which depends upon time, and then the quinine would be useful. Sometimes the fever would go off without your having to give the patient quinine or any other medicine. Precisely the same is the case with a man who seeks for knowledge. To him religious precepts often prove useless so long as he is immersed in worldliness. Allow him a certain period for enjoyment of the things of the world; his attachment to the world will gradually wear off. This is exactly the time for the success of any religious instructions that may be given to him. Till then they would be as good as entirely thrown away.

Many come to me, and I have observed how *some* of them are anxious to listen to my words. But one or two of the company appear to be restless and impatient in my presence. They say to their friends in whispers, 'Let us go, let us go.— Well, if you mean to stay we had better go into the boat and wait for you.'

It is difficult to drive nails into a *pucca* wall (a wall made up of bricks and mortar). The head of the nails would be broken sooner than make any impression upon the wall.

It is idle to strike the crocodile with the sword. The chances are that the sword will not make a cut.

Therefore I say that the element of time is an important factor in all these matters.

¹ Jnana.

* Brindaban, — the land where Krishna incarnated Himself.

Spiritual awakening is very much a question of time. The teacher is a mere help.

The meeting then broke up.

Master (to *M.*)—The fact is, a great deal of all this desire for knowledge¹ or for freedom² depends upon one's Karma in one's previous incarnations.

Karma *Disciple*:—Yes, Sir, it is so difficult to understand one's *self*! We see the *self* only as it appears to us. Behind it there might be a hundred previous incarnations. We walk upon the floor of a house but we never stop to see how it was made and what various things are beneath it.

The Master smileth on the disciple and leaveth his seat. He cometh out into the verandah next to the western door of his room, and for a time looketh on the sun which is going down rapidly towards the horizon. He looketh on the holy waters of the sacred stream before him.

* * * * *

CHAPTER IV.

MASTER AND DISCIPLE

A Revelation in the Flesh: Scene—Panchavati

A disciple is walking alone along the *pucca* embankment of the Temple on the side of the Holy Mother Ganges. He is watching Balaram and others getting into a boat with a view to get back home to Calcutta. It being a day in midsummer, the sacred waters of the river are broken into waves. The day is drawing to its close. It is past five. The sky is cloudy and the clouds present a most charming sight, especially in the northern direction. The witness of the scene—the disciple—has before him in the foreground of the picture the Panchavati backed by a line of tall willow trees, with the silver stream flowing past on their right. In the background are the beautiful dark-blue clouds, and also the dark stream underneath.

The disciple is looking on this charming scene. Suddenly his attention is arrested by the Master coming on from the south in the direction of Panchavati, and those well-known willow trees.

¹ Jnana. ² Mukti.

As the Master smiled like a child five-years old and came up, the charming picture appears more than complete! There is the Universe on the one hand and the One Soul that on the other hand that reflects that Universe and sees it as it actually is. Yes, the disciple feels that in that Presence he is as near the solution of the Problem of Life as can be. It is this Presence which makes everything—the images of Gods and Goddesses—men, women, children—trees, flowers, leaves—every inch of ground in that Temple instinct with spirituality and full of the Joy of the Lord. Yes, true enough he feels that it is the God-man before him that has thrown an irresistible charm over everything in that wonderful place—over every object, divine or human, animate or inanimate—seen by the outer or by the inner eye—from the dust under his hallowed Feet to those Sacred Images worshipped in the Temple or perceived by looking within that other temple, the Body of Man, that veritable ‘Revelation in the Flesh.’ He feels like one spell-bound in that Presence!

Saith the Lord to the disciple: “Do thou expect a shower? Well, get for me the umbrella, wilt thou?”

He runs to the Master’s room and presently comes back with the umbrella. Thereupon the following conversation is held at the foot of the Panchavati.

Master (to the disciple):—Let me entrust thee with this commission; thou art to tell B. that when R. leaveth this place he must come and stay here for a day or two. Otherwise my mind shall be very unhappy. What sort of a boy dost thou find B. to be?

Disciple:—He is remarkably mild and gentle.

Master:—Is he *guileless*¹ or not?

Disciple:—To all appearance not perfectly *guileless*¹. But I think this may be explained. A person of a mild disposition keeps his thoughts and feelings to himself. He is never demonstrative.

By this time the Lord hath come back to his own quarters.

Before Hazra

A Doctor² is also present. This gentleman makes an excellent preparation of *Haritalabhasma* (calx of the sulphate of arsenic). Upon seeing him the Lord saith, “His medicine suits

¹ Sarala. ² Kabiraj.

me wonderfully. The man is a right man." Thereupon Hazra saith, "Quite so, Sir; but *samsara* (the world) is forced upon him. He cannot help it."

*Nabai and Cloth
Colored with Ochre*

Hazra commented rather severely on the ochre-colored cloth worn by old Nabai Chaitanya. A man¹ of the world to wear a *garua!* How shocking! The Master saith, "I really don't know what to say! There is, however, one consolation for me. I look upon all human beings,—in fact all creatures—as incarnations of the Deity. I see God evolved into all things, God manifest in everything—in man and Nature. I see God Himself hath taken these multifarious forms that appear before our eyes in this universe!"

Narendra

Hazra:—Narendra is once more involved in a lawsuit.

Master:—Yes, but he believeth not in the Goddess² of the Universe (Personal God with Forms).

Hazra:—Precisely; he saith, 'If I believe in Shakti I should be setting a bad example to those that would follow me.'

Master:—Well, what thinkest thou is the extent of the good that he deriveth from here (*i. e.*, from himself.)

Hazra:—Thou lovest him.

Master (to M.):—"Didst not thou meet him (Narendra) any of these days? Wilt thou just see him at his house! O, do bring him here along with thee in a carriage, wilt thou?" Then turning to Hazra the Master saith, "What thinkest thou of Bhabanath and his attachment to me? Is this not a case again of tendencies³ acquired in one's previous incarnations?"

Talking of H. and Latu and referring to their habit of incessant meditation⁴, the Master saith to Hazra, "What are all these? No end of meditation⁴! What sayest thou?"

Hazra:—Quite so. Had they been engaged in thy service, that would have been a different matter altogether.

Master (pleading):—Well, possibly, their period of discipline being over, somebody else will take their place*.

What thinkest thou of me? Dost thou not see that sometimes I have single-minded devotion⁵, to, say, the Goddess of the Universe, and sometimes not? Then I go in for all sorts of Gods and Goddesses and adore them with an equal degree

¹ Grihastha. ² Shakti. ³ Samskara. ⁴ Dhyana. ⁵ Nishtha.

* The Lord meant Hazra himself, who then prided on his '*Nishtha*.'

of devotion. Sometimes again I meditate upon God¹ the Absolute. I am sometimes a chaste wife and sometimes not. Is this not curious? Other people are actuated by a peculiar feeling of their own. For instance, the ruling feeling with one is the love of Krishna, of another is the love of Rama, of a third the communion with God the Absolute, and so on.

Hazra held his peace.

* * * * *

It was evening. After the usual prayers² and other religious exercises that are enjoined on the pious Hindu there was yet another meeting between the Master and the disciple above referred to.

The following dialogue then took place. The subject was the apparently contradictory systems of religious faith amongst the Hindus.

Disciple:—Lord, is this a contradiction, some amongst the Hindus holding that Sri Krishna is identical with the Mother of the Universe³ and others holding that Sri Krishna is God the Absolute⁴ and Radha is the Goddess who ruleth the Universe, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer?

Master:—The former view is that of certain scriptures⁵. Be it so, but there need be no contradiction; God is Infinite. Infinite are the Forms in which He manifesteth Himself! Infinite also is the number of ways leading to Him!

Disciple:—Oh, I see! The end in view is how to get on to the roof of the house. The means may be different. It may be, Lord, as thou often sayest, a single rope, a bamboo, a wooden ladder or a *pucca* staircase!

Master:—Quite so. *That thou seest this at once is due to the special Grace of God.* Without His Grace doubt⁶ is never cleared up. The fact is, our attitude with respect to God should be like that of Hanumana who said to Ramachandra, 'Lord, I care not for the phases⁷ of the moon or for the appearance of stellar constellations on particular days⁸. What alone I am concerned with is how to meditate upon Rama.'

*The One Thing
Needful. — Bhakti*

Suppose thou goest into a garden to eat mangoes. Is it necessary for thee, first, to count the number of trees in the garden, which may be many thousands, or the number of branches of those trees,

¹ Akhanda Sachchidananda. ² Nitya Karma. ³ Kali or Chit Shakti. ⁴ Atman. ⁵ Devi Purana. ⁶ Samsaya. ⁷ Tithis. ⁸ Nakshatras.

which may be tens of thousands, or lastly, the number of leaves, which may be hundreds of thousands? Certainly not. Thou shouldst at once, on the contrary, proceed to *eat*. In the same way, it is useless to enter into all sorts of discussions and controversies regarding God which would only cause a waste of time and energy. Instead of thus throwing away one's time, one's present and most important duty—the duty that is nearest to one—is to love God—to cultivate Bhakti or devotion.

Disciple:—I should greatly desire that my work in the world should become a little less than now. The pressure of work standeth in the way of one's giving one's mind to God, does it not?

Work in the World

Master:—Oh yes, no doubt, that is so; but a wise man¹ may work *unattached* and then work would not do any harm to him.

Disciple:—But that dependeth upon a tremendous power of will derived from the realization of God, *i. e.*, called forth by God-vision. First, the realization of God; then, work without attachment. Is it not so, Lord?

Master:—I must say thou art right. But the probability is that thou must have desired for these things in previous incarnations. Thy duty now is to pray without ceasing for Bhakti or Love of God so that the bondage of work shall gradually fall off.

Disciple (heaving a sigh):—It seemeth to me this is like locking the stable door after the horse hath run away!

Master:—Dost thou ever feel the Joy of the Lord?

* * * * *

Master:—Try to follow the precept², *viz.*, one should avail oneself that come naturally in one's way without one's having to put forth any efforts for the attainment of those things. Take no thought for things of that kind (saving against the rainy day, etc., etc.)

*The Joy of the Lord.
Take no Thought for
the Morrow*

Are people drawn towards me by the attractive nature of what I say? What do they think of me? What dost thou feel when thou lookest on me?

*What thinkest thou
of Me?*

Disciple:—Here I find in one and the same person the highest divine knowledge³, the intensest love⁴ of

¹ Jnani. ² Jadrichcha-lava. ³ Jnana. ⁴ Prema.

God, the highest renunciation¹ and withal a marvellous simplicity². This simplicity is what keepeth people back. The multitude turn away from such a simple and, what seemeth to them, such an ordinary man. But it is precisely this which causeth a select few to be drawn towards thee! To them the wonder is that it is possible for a person to keep up simplicity in spite of spiritual perceptions of a magnitude that riseth above all human comprehension! Men-of-war have passed through the river and still it looketh no better than a small creek or rivulet.

Master (smiling):—There is a Vaishnava sect among the Hindus, hailing from *Ghosh Parah*. They say thou canst not get at the *Sahaj* (the Pre-eminently-Simple, namely, God) unless thou hast thyself become *Sahaj*.

The Master on Himself.—A Hint

Have I any egotism³?

Disciple:—Yes, a little, and that little hath been kept with a view to the following objects: first, the preservation of the body; second, the culture of Bhakti, or devotion to God; third, the desire to mix in the company of devotees⁴; fourth, the desire to give instruction to others. At the same time, it must be said that thou hast kept all these after a good deal of *Prayer*. My idea is that the natural state of thy Soul is capable of being described only by the word *Samadhi*. Hence I say that the egotism that thou hast is the result of *Prayer*.

Master:—Yes, but it is not I that have kept it (this self)⁵; it is my *Divine Mother*!

Disciple:—The other day thou wast talking to Pandit Sasadhara about Narada and his self. Thou saidst, 'One hath to go to the Celestial Tree⁶ which granteth all desires and then to pray; the boons that one would receive would depend upon the kind of prayer that one maketh. God is the Celestial Tree.

Master:—Yes. But it lieth with my *Divine Mother* to grant the *Prayer*.

* * * * *

*The Master teacheth,
The World is Horrible*

Master:—Look here, B. saith, 'The world, Oh, how terrible!'

Disciple:—Oh that is, I am afraid, all hearsay. He hath no personal experience, boy as he is.

Master:—Yes, yes, that is so.

¹ Vairagya. ² Sahajavastha. ³ Abhiman. ⁴ Bhaktas. ⁵ Aham. ⁶ Kalpataru.

Master:—How free from guile is N.!

Disciple:—His very appearance is prepossessing. How attractive are his eyes!

*Teacheth Saralata
(guilelessness) and
Points out the Evils of
Marriage*

Master:—Not only the eyes, but taken all in all. At the proposal of his marriage he said to his people, 'Why are ye going to get me drowned? For, once married, it shall be all over with me.'

Later on the following conversation was held between the Master and disciple. Rakhai was present.

Master (laughing):—People say it is exceedingly delightful to enjoy the company of one's wife after the day's hard work is over. (*Laughter.*)

Disciple:—No doubt that is so in the case of those who look upon the wife as the greatest source of happiness. (*Aside to R.*) I am going through a cross-examination and the Master's questions are leading questions.

Master (laughing):—Mothers generally say, 'If I can but procure for my child the "foot of a tree" in the shade of which he is to take rest in the desert of this world, then my task is done.' That "foot of a tree" is said to be the wife! (*Laughter.*)

Disciple:—There are parents and parents,—mothers and mothers. Surely parents that are *mukta* (liberated from the bondage of the world) would not think of giving their sons away in marriage. If they do so, they must be *mukta* (liberated) indeed!

The Master only laughed. Here the rest of the company left the room.

Master:—What, thinkest thou, taketh place at the time of my Avesh?

Disciple:—Thy spirit, Lord, is then in the sixth Bhumi (plane) mentioned in the Vedas. Then thou comest down to the fifth plane when thou beginnest to talk.

*Avesh, — that Blessed
and Serene Mood in
which one is Blessed with
the Vision of the Divinity*

Master:—I am only an humble instrument in His hands. It is He Who is doing all these things. I do not know anything.

Disciple:—This wonderful self-abnegation! Hence it is, Lord, that all people are drawn to thee!

Disciple:—Thou saidst that Maya is attachment to one's own relatives and friends, but Daya is love extending to all mankind—even to all God's creatures. I am afraid I do not see this clearly enough.

Daya (Kindness to All)

Is it not the fact that Daya is a *pravritti* (i. e., a feeling which maketh a man cling to the world)?

Master:—Why, Daya is not a bad feeling. It is elevating and leadeth one Godward.

Disciple:—But is it not a fact that it belongeth to the *pravritti-marga* (i. e., the other way, which leadeth away from God)?

* * * * *

Disciple (humbly):—Sir, now I have a great desire to turn my exclusive attention to these things, and to this end should very much like that my work in the world should diminish.

The Disciple's Second Appeal

Master:—Oh yes, that is quite natural. I dare say the Lord will help thee.

Nirakar (Formless) or Sakar (with Form)?

Dost thou believe in *Nirakar* or *Sakar*—God with Form, or God without Form?

Disciple:—I go so far as the attributes. God hath attributes; so far I see clearly enough. But is it not a fact that it is impossible to think of the 'Formless' without the help of forms? Anyhow we must go through forms or images.

Master (smiling):—So thou seest, I lay stress upon one's meditating on personal God (God¹ with Form) as eminently favorable to the culture of Bhakti².

Disciple:—Revered Sir, is Pandit Sasadhar making any progress in this direction (i. e., in the path of Bhakti)?

Master:—Yes; but he is drawn more to the path³ of Knowledge by Philosophy. These men belong to a class of their own. They do not see that this way is exceedingly difficult.

No one spoke for some time. Was the Master all the while reading the Soul of the disciple humbly sitting at his feet and looking up for strength and guidance to his benignant face, smiling and beaming with the Joy of the Lord?

Master (encouragingly):—It is sufficient if one can give up the world from the mind.

Disciple:—This kind of teaching is, as it seemeth to me, intended for the weak. For men of the highest class it is *renunciation* in the strict sense of the word. They must give up the world not only from the mind but also outwardly.

Is not Outward Renunciation Absolutely Necessary

Master:—Thou hast heard all about Non-attachment⁴ that I was talking about.

¹ Sakar. ² Devotion. ³ Jnana-marga. ⁴ Vairagya.

Disciple:—Yes; I understand by Non-attachment not simply the want of attachment to things of this world. It is Non-attachment *plus* something. *That something is the Love of God.*

Sir, what is God-vision?

Master:—God-vision cannot be made intelligible to others. The state of things that cometh about may, however, be described *to a certain extent.*

What is to See God Thou hast no doubt been to the theatre to witness a dramatic performance. Before the performance hath commenced thou must have noticed that the people are very busy talking to one another on a variety of subjects—politics, household affairs, official business, etc. But the drop-scene goeth up and behold, mountains, cottages, rivers, men are suddenly presented to view! Instantaneously all noise, all conversation is at an end and each individual spectator is all attention to the novel scene that is being enacted before him.

Pretty much the same is the state of him who is blessed with God-vision.

Disciple:—Prema*, as thou hast said this day, is the string of love with which to bind the God of Love. With Prema (an intense love of God) one may be sure of

The World and Prema seeing God as soon as one calleth out to Him. *But the question is whether such Prema is within the reach of man of the world (Grihastha).*

The Lord was silent for a while.

* * * * *

Haripada

Disciple:—H. knows how to expound¹ the Puranas like a professional Hindu Pandit. He knows for instance how to describe the life of Prahlada like such a Pandit².

Master:—Oh, does he? The other day I noticed that his eyes were unusually worked up. Thereupon I asked him, 'Dost thou give thyself to excessive meditation?' He only held down his head. I said, 'Go not so far; thou must avoid extremes.'

It was about 9 P. M. Now entered Adhar Lal Sen, and a short while after there was a talk on the burning waters of

¹ Kathakata. ² Kathaka.

* Ecstatic Love of God.

Sitakund near Chandranath Hills in Chittagong. Tongues of flame were visible, it was said, from the surface of the water in the Kund.

Master (to Adhar):—How dost thou account for this?

Here one of the disciples said to Adhar, "It is phosphorus in the water, is it not?"

Adhar (to Master):—It burneth. The phosphorus is present in the water.

LOVE FOR THE DISCIPLES

Master (to Adhar):—There is Rama (Chatterji) here so kind. Otherwise there would have been nobody to call H. and others (*i. e.*, the disciples) to dinner. They are so deep in meditation¹.

The Master had thus a good word to say by word of introducing Rama Chatterji (the priest) to the favorable notice of Adhar, who was a Deputy Magistrate. Adhar often helped such men in a substantial way.

¹ Dhyana.

SECTION X.

1885

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE TEMPLE OF DAKSHINESHWARA, WITH NARENDRA (VIVEKANANDA) AND OTHER DISCIPLES

CHAPTER I.

THE MASTER IN SAMADHI

THE MASTER SHOWETH THE PATH OF DEVOTION (BHAKTIYOGA)

Sri Ramakrishna is seated on the lounge; in deep *Samadhi!*

The disciples and other devotees are seated on the floor, on which mats have been spread out. They all look on the Master. Amongst them are Mahimacharan, Rama (Datta), Manomohan, Nabai, M. and others. Later on has come in Narendra.

It is the first of March, Sunday, 1885; the full moon of Falgun. On this day, the festival of Doljatra is being celebrated.

The state of God-consciousness beginneth to leave the Master and he hath the power of speech restored to him. But his mind is still in the God-world!

The Master speaketh unto Mahimacharan saying,—“My dear Sir, do tell me about the need of Divine Love¹. Do tell me how the Love of the Lord is the One Thing Needful.”

Mahimacharan (quoting texts²):—A voice from heaven said to Narada who wanted to practise austerities,—

1. “If God is worshipped with devotion, what is the need for asceticism?”

If He is not worshipped what again is the need for asceticism?

If the Lord is realized within and without, what is the need of asceticism?

If He is not so realized asceticism would be of little avail.

2. Desist, O my child, desist from the practice of further austerities.

Go thy way at once to Siva—the Ocean of Divine Knowledge.

From Him do thou learn how to love the Lord. Such Love hath been spoken of by the worshippers of God the Preserver³—a Love that never faileth.

¹ Bhakti. ² Narada - Pancha - Ratra or ‘Five Nights with Narada,’ the holy sage.
³ Vishnu.

A love that like a bill-hook cutteth asunder the fetters of this world."

These words were heard by Narada when leading the life of an ascetic in the retirement of a forest.

Master:—This Love of God is of two kinds. First, the Love¹ which is enjoined by the Sacred Scriptures². We are to worship in a certain way or repeat the Name of the Lord so many times. All these belong to this kind of *Bhakti*. This is *Bhakti* according to the Law. It may lead to the Knowledge of the Absolute³ in *Samadhi*. The self is thus merged in the Universal Soul never to come back. This is the case with ordinary devotees.

The case is different with Divine Incarnations—the son of God and those that are His Own. Their Love for God is not made up of mere formulæ. It springeth from within! It wellet up from the Soul! Divine Incarnations (like Chaitanya) and those that are nearest to Him have within their reach Absolute Knowledge in *Samadhi* and at the same time may come down from that height retaining their self and loving the Lord as father, mother, etc. Saying, 'Not this,' 'Not this' they leave behind them the steps of the staircase one after another until they get up to the roof. Getting up there, they say, 'It is this.' But soon they find out that the staircase is made of the same materials—bricks, lime and brick-dust—as the roof itself. So they walk up and down, sometimes resting on the roof and sometimes on the steps of the staircase.

The roof symbolizeth the Absolute realized in *Samadhi* in which the self responding to the sense-world is blotted out. The staircase is the phenomenal world—the world of names and forms which after the roof hath been reached is realized as the manifestation, to human sense, of the Absolute.

Sukadeva was in *Samadhi* in which the self becometh one with the Absolute. Unto him the Lord sent Narada to ask him to read the Word of God before Rajah Parikshit. Narada observed that the holy sage was seated like a stock or stone, absolutely dead to the world of sense. Narada began to play upon the lute, singing and praising the Lord in four verses. The first verse caused the hairs of Sukadeva's body to stand on their ends; the second, brought tears into his eyes. Then he could see, realize, within himself, the Spiritual Form of the

¹ Bhakti. ² Shastras. ³ Brahmajnana.

Lord. Finally, he came down from his spiritual height and held converse with Narada.

Thus Sukadeva had both Transcendental Knowledge and Love for the Lord.

Hanumana realized God Without Form and God With Form and then passed his days in meditating upon a particular Form of the Lord, *viz.*, the Form of Ramachandra, this being a Form,—made of Spirit and Bliss Everlasting.

Much the same thing was with Prahlada and Narada. They realized the Absolute;—they realized, too, the Spiritual Forms of the Lord from a lower plane.

Prahlada realized, 'I am It' (God the Absolute). He also realized, 'I am Thy servant, Thou art my Lord.'

Narada passeth his days with his ecstatic Love for the Lord.

This Love¹ solveth the problem of life. So long as there is the self which saith 'I, I,' the problem for *me* is 'How to live?' Shall I be content with a sensuous nature responding to a world of sense. No, let this self be the servant of the Lord;—not the servant of the world and its so-called enjoyments! Thou art the Lord; I am, O Lord, Thy servant. Not the enjoyment of the world and its pleasures; but the enjoyment of Bliss Everlasting, the enjoyment of the never-failing Joy of the Lord!

Self or ego leadeth away from the Lord, but the ego of Divine Love,—the ego of Godward Knowledge—the ego of the child leadeth to God. Sankaracharya retained after *Samadhi* the ego of Godward² Knowledge for the purpose of teaching mankind.

The self or ego of the child is not attached to things of this world. The child getteth out of temper but soon, there is not a trace of anger left to him. It buildeth a play-house for the dogs; but presently forgetteth all about this. Its fondness for its playmates knoweth no bounds; but if it loseth sight of them for some time, it formeth new ties and forgetteth all about the old friends. The self of the child is thus unattached to anything. The self of Divine Love kept after a *Samadhi*, in which it becometh one with the Absolute, solveth the problem of life.

Another reason why Bhakti or Love for God should be cultivated by men in general is that the ego cannot be shaken

¹ Bhakti. ² Vidya.

*The Ego of Divine
Love and the Problem
of Life*

off. Ye may reason it away for a time, but behold, it cometh up again; ye cannot rid yourself of your self or ego which saith, 'I, I.'

The ego is like a water-jar, the Absolute is the Shoreless Ocean in which the water-jar is merged. Thou mayest reason that the Infinite or the Absolute is both within and without; but thou canst not shake thyself free of the water-jar so long as thou reasonest. The so-called Absolute is something relative to thee so long as thou reasonest. This water-jar that thou canst not shake off is the self or ego of Divine Love. So long as there is the water-jar or ego there are both the I and Thou. Thus 'Thou art the Lord, I am the servant of the Lord.' Thou mayest carry thy reasoning to the highest point but the self or ego still remaineth.

CHAPTER III.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA TEACHETH RENUNCIATION TO NARENDRA

Here Narendra cometh in and falleth down at the feet of the Master. He speaketh to Narendra, cometh down from the lounge and taketh his seat on the mats spread out on the floor. The chamber is by this time filled with the disciples and visitors from Calcutta and other places.

Master (to Narendra):—Art thou doing well, my boy? Is it true that thou art a constant visitor at Girish Ghose's house?

Narendra:—Yes, Sir, I do go to see him, off and on.

Girish is a new disciple, having joined the Master in October, 1884. The Master often speaketh of the greatness of his Faith—a Faith which, as he often saith, cannot be girt about with both the arms; and his longing for the Lord is even as intense as his Faith. At home he always meditateth upon God and is, as it were, drunken with the joy that the Lord alone can give. He is visited at his house by many disciples, especially by Narendra, Haripada, Narayan, Benode, and others. They have amongst them one theme alone for talk, *viz.*, the Master.

Girish is a man of the world—a householder. On the other hand, the Master seeth that Narendra will renounce the world to do the work of the Lord. Narendra will renounce 'Lust and Gold.'

Master (to Narendra):—Is it indeed true that thou goest often to see Girish Ghose at his house?

Well, one may wash ever so many times a cup which containeth garlic; but the smell of the garlic will not leave the cup. Boys who have not entered the world and have not touched 'Lust and Gold' are pure vessels—free from smell of any kind. Men that have been in the world for a long time are like vessels rubbed over with garlic.

They are again like mangoes pecked at and thus defiled by crows.

Again, young men who have not touched the world are like new earthen pots in which milk may be safely kept. On the other hand, worldly men are like earthen vessels in which milk was once turned into curds. In such vessels it is not safe to keep pure milk. The chances are that the milk will turn sour.

Knowledge or the Love of God taught to pure young souls is like the pure milk which can be safely kept in new vessels. If taught to men of the world it is in very many cases thrown away like the milk kept in vessels which once contained curds.

My dear boy, there are, indeed, worshippers amongst men of the world who seek for the Lord. They form a class by themselves. Their mind is given to God¹ and at the same time to the enjoyments² of the flesh. In the Ramayana it is mentioned that Ravana was a type of this class of men. He wanted the good things of this world as well as God. He married the charming daughters of the Devas, the Nagas, the Gandharvas, the Asuras; at the same time he attained God³ in the end.

In the Puranas it is mentioned that the Asuras were given to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures; at the same time they attained God in the end.

Narendra:—Girish Ghose now-a-days avoids the company of bad people.

Master:—In a certain place there were seated some *sannyasins*, when a young woman chanced to pass by. All continued as before to meditate upon God, except one person, who looked on her with a glance of his eye. This man who had been attracted by female beauty had been formerly a householder and was the father of three children when he became a *sannyasi*.

If you rub garlic with a liquid into a solution and put it into a cup for a long time, would it not be hard to make the cup

¹ Yoga. ² Bhoga. ³ Rama.

*The Ideal Man or
Sannyasin*

*The Imperfections of
the Householder
Devotee*

free from the smell of the garlic? Is it possible to make the *babuy* plant bring forth the sweetest mangoes? Of course it is possible for a person who possesseth occult powers to do this miracle. But it is not everybody that can attain these miraculous powers.

Yes, it is possible even for a man of the world to be pure like the young men who have not touched the world and seek God alone; and for the *babuy* plant to bring the sweetest mangoes. But the power of doing these miracles must come down from the Almighty; and nothing is impossible with God. How rare, however, is such a gift from Heaven!

The thing is, thou must give thy whole mind to the Lord.

But a man of the world, a householder,—oh, how he is troubled with many things! Hath he indeed time enough to spare for the Lord?

A certain man wanted a pandit, well-versed in the Scriptures;—through whom he could hear the Word of God recited and explained every day. A friend of his said to him, 'Well, I know such a pandit; he is exactly the man we want; but there is one difficulty as regards this man. He hath some lands under cultivation, which he hath to look after every day. There are four ploughs and eight bullocks always at work. Thus the difficulty is that he hath no time to spare.' The man who wanted a pandit, cried out, 'My friend, am I looking about for a learned pandit like the one thou hast in view—a pandit with ploughs and bullocks and arable lands to look after and no time to spare?' (*Laughter*). No, no; I am in quest of a pandit from whom I can hear the Word of God!

A certain king used to hear the Word of God every day recited by a learned pandit. At the end of the lesson for the day, the pandit used to say to the king, 'O, king, didst thou follow all this that I read before you?' To this question the Raja would only reply, 'My dear Sir, it is for *thee*, first of all, to understand the meaning of these holy texts.'

The pandit thinketh upon these words of the king every day upon his return home. 'Why doth the king,' thought he within himself, 'say to me every day, "Do *thou* first understand the meaning?"' Being a devout Brahman he felt an awakening of the spirit within himself in the course of a few days. He realized that the worship of the Lord alone is the one thing needful. Being sick of the world and its pleasures he gave it up. On the day he left his house in order to go into retire-

ment he sent a message unto the king, saying, 'O, king, I have indeed at last come to know the true meaning of the 'Word of God' (*i. e.*, give up everything for the sake of the Lord).

That being my idea of men of the world, thinkest thou I look down upon them? O, no. The Knowledge of Oneness telleth me that everything is but a manifestation of God the Absolute on the plane of sense. Thus do I realize that all women are so many forms in which the Divine Mother appeareth. Thus I revere all women alike;—be it a woman of the lower classes or an ideal wife who setteth an example to others of conjugal love and devotion.

Alas, I look in vain for customers who want anything higher or better than *Kalai* pulse! Everybody runneth after 'Lust and Gold!' Few do aspire for higher things! They are attracted by female beauty,—by money, honors, titles,—not knowing that the Blessed Vision of the Lord—the Divine Beauty—will cause the highest place, even that of the Creator, to appear as a thing not worth one's while to strive.

A certain person said to Ravana, 'Why canst thou not approach Sita assuming the form of Rama—her beloved husband?' Ravana replied, 'My friend, if I once behold Rama in the recess of my soul—if I once meditate upon this Divine Form—Tilottama and other beauties appear to me like ashes of the dead burnt at the Crematorium. After that I can spurn the high place of the Creator, not to speak of woman with all their charms.'

Verily these customers, every one of them, seeketh for *Kalai* pulse. It is given to pure souls alone, who have not touched the world, to love God alone—to have One Aim,—to have the mind fixed upon the Lord.

*The Service of the
World and of
Worldly Men*

(To Manomohan, a householder and a disciple):—I must say it, although thou mayest take offence, I did say to Rakhal, 'My child,

I should be better pleased to hear that thou hadst plunged thyself into the Ganges and hadst been drowned,—than if I ever heard that thou hadst been mean enough to be anybody's servant for the sake of money or other worldly goods!'

(Rakhal is a young disciple now staying with the Master. He hath married the sister of Manomohan.)

Turning again to Narendra the Master saith,—

A young Nepalese lady once came here in company with Captain (Vishwanatha). She played nicely on the *Eshraj* (a

kind of violin) and chanted the Name of the Lord at the same time. Her sweet voice drew quite a multitude into the room. Somebody asking if she had married, she replied with some sharpness, 'I am the handmaiden of the Lord! He is my Lord and Husband. Him alone do I serve and not any created being such as man is.'

With 'Lust and Gold,' always coming round about thee how is it possible to realize God? It is very hard indeed to live unattached in their midst. Hard is the case of the man of the world. In the first place, he is the slave of his wife; in the second place, he is the slave of the money, and in the third place, he is the slave of him whom he serveth for the sake of his living.

During the reign of Akbar there lived, in a certain forest near Delhi, a Fakir in a cottage. Many resorted unto this holy man. But he had nothing with which to treat with hospitality. He wanted money for this purpose and went up for help to Akbar Shah, who was known for his kindness to holy men. Akbar Shah was then saying his prayers and the Fakir took his seat in the prayer room. In the course of his prayers Akbar was heard to say, 'O Lord, do Thou grant unto me more wealth, more power, more territories.' At once the Fakir arose and was about to steal out of the room when the emperor beckoned unto him to be seated again.

At the end of the prayer, Akbar asked the Fakir saying, 'Thou didst come to see me; how is it that thou didst want to depart without saying to me anything?' The Fakir said, 'The object of my visit to Your Majesty,—well, I need not trouble you with that.' Akbar having repeatedly pressed him to say what he wanted, the Fakir at last said, 'Sir, many people come unto me to be taught, but for want of money I am unable to see to their comforts, so I thought it as well to come to Your Majesty for help.' Akbar thereupon asked why he had been departing without having told him the object of his visit. The Fakir replied, 'When I saw that thou wast thyself a beggar, begging of the Lord wealth and power and territory, I thought to myself, "Why shall I go a-begging of a person who is himself a beggar? I had better beg of the Lord Himself,—if, indeed, it is not possible for me to do without begging altogether!"'

Narendra:—Now-a-days, Girish Ghose thinketh upon these matters alone.

Master:—That is all right—as it should be. But why is it then that he calleth names? My present nature cannot stand such rudeness. When there is a thunder-clap, the grosser objects are not so affected by it. But the glass shutters move to and fro and make sounds! The *Sattva* element goeth to make my present nature. Hence it cannot stand noise and clamor. It was thus that my Divine Mother sent away Hriday who had latterly grown too rough for me.

(Smiling, to Narendra after a while):—Dost thou bear out what Girish Ghose saith (as to God being Incarnate in Man)?

Narendra:—He saith, indeed, he believeth in Divine Incarnation. His faith being so deep-rooted I thought it as well not to say anything the other way.

Master:—How great is his faith! Dost thou not think so?

The Master is seated on the mat spread on the floor. Close to him is M.; in front of him is Narendra; the other disciples and Calcutta visitors are seated round about. All look on the Master.

He is seated still for a while looking on Narendra with 'love unspeakable. He saith into him, 'My child, O! thou canst not attain the end of life without *Renunciation* of 'Lust and Gold!'

Saying this he becometh filled with Divine Fervor. He looketh on him with love and singeth:—

SONG

1. Afraid am I to speak the word unto thee; equally afraid am I,
—if I do not speak it.

The fear that ariseth in my mind is that I may loose thee,—yes, be robbed of thee, my wealth, my treasure!

2. Knowing well thy mind, we shall teach thee the holy Name that is to bring thee to the Beloved.

It is now for thee to get ready to receive that Name which enabled us on many an occasion to steer the ship safe to land.

* * * * *

The Master is afraid lest Narendra ceaseth to be his own—lest some man plucketh him out of his hand! Narendra is in tears as he heareth the Master singing.

A visitor who hath come to see the Master for the first time is seated near him and watcheth everything. He saith to the Master,—

Sir, if 'Lust and Gold' are to be given up, how should the householder, the man who hath a family to bring up, solve this problem?

Master:—Well, Sir, thou art at liberty to live with thy wife and children and do thy duty as a householder. What hath passed between ourselves doth not concern thee.

*The Problem of Life
for the Householder*

Mahimacharan, a householder who hath heard everything, sitteth speechless, holding his peace.

Master (smiling to Mahima):—Go on ahead. And halt not on the way. Go deeper into the forest, thou shalt get sandalwood. Go yet deeper thou shalt come upon a silver mine! Do not stand where thou art; but go on ahead. Yes, deeper still and thou shalt come upon a gold mine! Move on still further and thou shalt be placed in the midst of diamonds and rubies and sapphires! Yes, go on ahead.

Mahima:—We ought to move on indeed. But, alas, something holdeth us back,—and keepeth us from moving onward. Some unknown force holdeth the reins and pulleth us back.

Master (smiling):—Why, my dear Sir, let the reins be cut asunder by the sword of His holy Name! The 'Name' of the Divine Mother, the Consort of Eternity, is capable of cutting in twain the bonds of Death.

After his father left the world Narendra hath been put to great trouble. He hath passed through many a trial and suffering. The Master looketh on Narendra from time to time. He saith smiling to him with love and the light of sympathy beaming from his eyes,—'Hast thou already turned out to be a *Chikitsaka*, a physician of many years' standing?

The Master quoteth the proverb, saying—

"A *Vaidya* is a physician who had succeeded in killing a hundred patients.

A *Chikitsaka* is he who hath despatched a thousand at least unto eternity" (*Laughter*).

Narendra hath already enough of the bitter cup. Doth the good Master refer to this?

Narendra smileth and holdeth his peace.

CHAPTER III.

THE MASTER WITH HIS DISCIPLES

It is afternoon. The disciples and other devotees are walking about in the Temple Garden. The Master converseth with M. He talketh of the younger disciples.

Master:—Everybody except Paltu saith, 'I am getting on well with my meditation¹.' How is it that Paltu cannot do so and fix his mind on God?

M.:—He hath so many things to read for the examination. That probably standeth in the way of concentration.

Master:—What thinkest thou of Narendra? Is it not the fact that there is no guile in him?

M.:—Yes, that is so, Sir.

Master:—But he hath received of late several blows of the world.

M.:—Yes, the death of his father hath left his family almost helpless.

Master:—He hath to think a good deal about his family. Thus, the light within him is a little hidden under the shadows of the world.

This state of things, however, will not last long.

The Master now and then steppeth into the corridor where Narendra is talking with a Vedantist. He watcheth Narendra talking.

The disciples have come back into the chamber. The Master asketh Mahimacharan to recite a Sanskrita prayer from the Sacred Books.

Mahima quoteth* from *Mahanirvana Tantra* saying—

"In the lotus of my heart do I worship God the Absolute whom Hari (God, the Preserver) *Hara* (God, the Destroyer) and *Bidhi* (God, the Creator) all desire to know, and upon Whom the *Yogis* always meditate with a view to Realization.

He taketh away all fear that cometh of life and death; He is Absolute Existence and Intelligence;

He containeth within Himself the Seed of the Multitudinous Worlds."

The Master is deeply touched as these and other holy texts are being chanted by Mahima, who then proceedeth to recite a prayer to Siva composed

¹ Dhyana.

* Hridayakalamadhye, Nirvishesham, Niriham, etc., 3d Ullāsa.

by the great Vedantist reformer Sankaracharya. In it the Lord¹ of the World is asked to save the devotee from being drowned in the sea of the world. The world is also represented in this prayer as a place of misery—a deep, dense wilderness in which one loseth one's way and cannot find one's way out.

Now Mahimacharan is a man of the world and a householder.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Mahima):—Why sayest thou that the world is a well in which men are drowned, or that it is a deep, dense forest in which one must lose one's way? Why dost thou say it is a place of misery and nothing more? These epithets are all very good for a beginner. Surely they are quite out of place on the lips of him who clingeth to the Lord in weal and in woe. Away with all fear—when it is the Lord that guideth your feet! Well mayest thou then cry out like another devotee, also a householder:—

“Verily is this world a mansion of joy.

Let me pass my days eating, drinking and rejoicing.

Janaka, the royal sage, how great was his power? Was there anything in which he was found wanting—spiritual or temporal?

Ah! no, he did give his mind to God and at the same time drink out of his cup of milk!”

Fear of what? The Lord is thy Friend; hold Him fast and He will lead thee by the hand. Never mind that it is ‘a deep, dense forest overgrown with weeds and thorns’! Put on a pair of shoes and the thorns will not prick thy feet or cause them to bleed. Away with fear. In this play of ‘hide and seek’ touch the Holy Person of the Grand Dame, our Divine Mother, Who leadeth the play unattached. Once thou touchest Her Person thou art spared the necessity of taking any further part in this exciting play. Yes, thou shalt have no longer to run about excited and to be in bondage like the ‘thief’ of the play.

Janaka, the royal sage, thou knowest, wielded a couple of swords. One was the sword of True Knowledge, the other sword of Work. He who is expert in handling the swords hath nothing to fear.

* * * * *

The Master remaineth sitting on the lounge. M. is seated on the floor close to him.

¹ Siva.

Master (aside to M.):—What he hath said hath drawn my mind, as it were, away,—from lighter matters.

(The Master here speaketh of the first prayer chanted by Mahimacharan addressed to God the Absolute.)

Now they are singing forth the Name of the Lord and dancing with joy. The Master joineth the disciples. He is filled with deep devotional feelings and singeth and danceth with the devotees round about him.

The singing over, the Master saith to the disciples, "The chanting of the Lord's Name with love is the One Thing Needful; all the rest is of little value! Bhakti is the reality; all else is unreal!"

* * * * *

They are seated on the floor talking. Narendra and Rama (Datta) are engaged in hotly discussing a point with each other. Rama hath come to see the Master

Truth and Revelation after his recovery from a recent illness.

The Master watcheth them talking and raising their voice in the course of the discussions.

(Aloud to Rama):—Hold, thou art not perfectly restored to health!—Very well, go on softly and do not get excited.

(Aside to M.):—All this is not at all to my liking. I used to cry unto My Divine Mother, saying, 'O, Mother, one man saith, 'It is thus, it is thus,' another man saith, 'It is something else.' Reveal unto me, Good Mother, what the truth is!

SECTION XI.

March 1885

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT THE HOUSE OF BALARAM, A DISCIPLE,
WITH NARENDRA (SWAMI VIVEKANANDA), GIRISH,
BALARAM, CHUNILALL, LATOO, NARAYAN,
M., AND OTHER DISCIPLES

CHAPTER I.

Wednesday, the 11th of March, 1885, and 29th Falgun of the Bengali year, is the 10th day of the dark fortnight of that month. On this day Sri Ramakrishna has come in the house of Balaram, one of his disciples. He arrived here from Dakshineshwara at about 10 o'clock in the morning, and has had his dinner there.

Lord bless thee, Balaram! It is thy house which the Master hath chosen to make his chief 'vineyard' to-day! It is here that he hath bound devotee after devotee by the ties of divine love! It is here that he hath so often danced and sung the name of the Lord at the head of his disciples! It seemeth as if another Gouranga is setting up, in the house of his disciple Shribash, a fair for the 'buying and selling' of Divine Love.

How great is the Master's love for his disciples! There at the Temple of the Mother, alone by himself, he crieth like a child! He longeth to see them! Sleepless at night he saith to the Divine Mother, "Oh, Mother! deign to draw him into Thy fold! He is so devoted to Thee, poor boy! Oh how I long to see him! Mother, bring him here or take me to the place where he is." Is this the secret of his coming to Balaram's house so often? He saith indeed to everybody, "Balaram is a true Bhakta; he daily worshippeth the Lord¹ of the Universe, his household God; his offerings are therefore always acceptable." But whenever he cometh into his house he says to Balaram, "Go and invite my Narendra, Bhabanath, Rakhal; Purna, Narendra junior, Narayan and other disciples. Offering food to them is the same thing as offering it to God Himself. These indeed are not ordinary men. They are parts of the Divinity manifest in the flesh."

¹ Jagannatha.

It was at Balaram's house that there was so much dancing and singing at the time of the car-festival¹. Many a time have the devotees met here "at the Darbar of God's Love."

M. is a teacher in a neighboring English school. He had heard that Sri Ramakrishna was visiting at Balaram's house. Being a little free from work, he came down there at about noon to see the Master. He boweth down and saluteth his feet.

The mid-day dinner is over and the Master is in the drawing-room, taking rest. The young disciples are seated round him. From time to time he is taking out *cabab chinee* and other spices from a small pouch.

Sri Ramakrishna (affectionately to M.):—Thou art here! Is there no school to-day?

M.:—I have come directly from the school;—I have just now nothing of importance to attend to there.

A devotee:—No, Sir, he is playing the truant and has kept away from school. (*Laughter.*)

M. (to himself):—Ah me! It is, indeed, as if some Invisible Power hath drawn me to this place!

The Master then grew a little thoughtful. He then bade M. take his seat near him and talked with him on various subjects.

He saith to him: "Wring the wet towel here for me, wilt thou? and put the coat in the sun." Again: "My legs and feet are aching, wilt thou rub them softly a little?" M. doth not know how to serve the Master like a disciple. So the gracious Master teacheth him. M. eagerly sets about doing the Master's bidding. He stroketh his hallowed feet gently with the palm of his hands and fingers, while the Master teacheth him.

Sri Ramakrishna (to M.):—I say, M., what thinkest thou of this? For some days, a strange state of things hath been going on. It is now beyond my power to touch any metal. Once I put my hand to a metallic cup; dost thou know what came of this? I felt as

if the sting of some horned fish had been thrust into my flesh. The pain was very acute. Then, thou knowest, one cannot do without a wash-pitcher. So I thought of carrying it to the foot of the willow tree. I wrapped it in my towel and then tried to take it up. As soon as I touched it, the same acute pain came back. It was indeed terrible. At last I was forced to pray unto the Divine Mother, saying, 'Oh Mother, forgive

*Renunciation: or the
True Sannyasin*

¹ *Ratha-yatra.*

me this time; I will never do so any more.' Dost thou not think that this is a warning from Mother that I should stand apart absolutely from all sorts of enjoyments?

M.:—I dare say, Revered Sir, that is the true explanation.

Sri Ramakrishna (to *M.*):—N. junior often goeth to see me. Dost thou not think that his people will take him to task for this? Oh! he is a nice boy, so pure! The fact is he is absolutely free from carnality.

*Freedom from
Carnality and
Yearning for the Lord*

M.:—Yes, Revered Sir, he is indeed a young man of no ordinary calibre.

Sri Ramakrishna:—That is so. Furthermore, he saith, 'The word of God, if it once reacheth my ear, becometh stamped upon my mind.' Again: 'I used to cry for the Lord in my infancy. I was so much troubled at heart because I could not see Him.'

In this way the Master talked on about the young devotee, when one of the disciples cried out saying, "Well, Mr. M., when dost thou go back to school?"

Sri Ramakrishna:—What o'clock is it?

A disciple:—It is just ten minutes to one.

Sri Ramakrishna (to *M.*):—Thou hadst better go back; it is late already. Thou art on duty. (To *Latoo*.) Well, where is *Rakhal*?

Latoo:—He is gone—home.

Sri Ramakrishna:—Is it possible? How is it he did not see me when he left?

CHAPTER II.

IN THE AFTERNOON WITH DISCIPLES

After school *M.* calleth again. The Master, he is pleased to see, is seated in the midst of his disciples in *Balaram's* drawing-room. On his face is a sweet smile, the reflection of which was caught by the faces of the disciples. *M.* saluteth the Master's feet, who beckoneth unto him to be seated by his side. *Girish* (*Ghosh*), *Suresh* (*Mitra*), *Balaram*, *Latoo*, *Chunilall* and many other disciples are present.

Sri Ramakrishna (to *Girish*):—Thou hadst better argue the point with *Narendra*. See what he hath got to say.

*The Doctrine of
Divine Incarnation*

Girish:—*Narendra* says, 'God is Infinite. We cannot even say that all that we see or hear —is a part of God; much less God Himself.

A part of Infinity cannot be conceived.'

Master:—God is indeed Infinite. But He is Omnipotent. He may so order that His Divinity as Love may be manifest in the flesh and be among us as God Incarnate. Divine Incarnation is a fact.

Of course, one cannot make this perfectly clear by means of words. It is a fact to be seen and realized by the spiritual eyes. One must see God to be convinced of this.

By analogy we can at best faintly apprehend the matter. Suppose, one toucheth the horn of a cow, or her feet, or the tail, or the udder; would this not be the same as touching the cow herself? For us human beings the chief thing about the cow is the milk, which cometh from the udder. Well! the milk of Divine Love streameth to us from God¹ Incarnate.

Girish:—Narendra saith, 'Is it possible to know God, to hold the Divine Idea within the compass of our small, poor brain? God is Infinite!'

Master (to *Girish*):—That is indeed true. Who can know God? It is not given to us, nor is it required of us to *know* Him fully. It is enough if we can see Him—feel that He is the only Reality! It is enough if we can see God Incarnate.

Perception of the Infinite

A person, suppose, goeth up to the Holy River Ganges and toucheth the water. He would say, 'I have been blessed with the vision and touch of the Holy River.' Surely it is not required of him to touch the river from Hardwar to Gangasagar, from its source to the mouth! (*Laughter.*)

If one toucheth thy feet, surely that would be the same as touching thee.

A person walketh up to the sea and toucheth the water. Surely it is the same thing as touching the sea.

Fire is latent in all objects. In the constitution of wood it remaineth in a degree far greater than in other objects.

Girish (smiling):—I for my part am in quest of the *fire*. Therefore all that I care for is a place where I can get the *fire*.

Master (smiling):—Well! Wood as made by God has in it this element more than in other objects. Seekest thou God? Well, seek Him in man! His Divinity is manifest more in Man than in any other object. Look around for a man with a Love of God that overfloweth—a man who yearneth for God—a man intoxicated with His Love. In such a man hath God incarnated Himself.

¹ Avatara.

(To M.):—God indeed is in all things; only His Power¹ is more or less manifest in them. God Incarnate is God's Power (Divinity) most manifest in flesh.

Girish:—Narendra saith, 'It is beyond the power of word, thought or the senses to know Him—beyond the power of thought—beyond the reach of mind.

Master:—That is not quite so. It is true enough that the conditioned mind cannot realize Him. But He can be realized by the Pure Mind², which is the same thing as the Pure Reason³, which is the same thing as the Pure or Unconditioned Soul⁴. He cannot indeed be sensed by the finite reason or the finite, relative, conditioned mind, which hath a sensuous nature, and is thus marked by an attachment to 'Lust and Gold'. The mind may get rid of its sensuous nature, be purified by culture, and be once more free from all worldly tendencies, desires and attachment and thus be one with the Unconditioned Soul.

Was it not thus that the sages of old saw God? God, the Unconditioned Spirit they *saw* by means of the Purified Mind (the mind stripped of its sensuous nature), which they found to be the same as the *Atman* or the Unconditioned Soul within*.

Girish (smiling):—Narendra hath been beaten by me.

Sri Ramakrishna:—Oh no! On the contrary he saith, 'Girish (Ghosh) believeth in the Incarnation of God; his faith is firm as a rock; surely it is not proper for one to meddle with such a faith!'

Girish (smiling):—Sir, we are all talking away; our words flow like water, but thy M. here sitteth with his lips shut. What in the world doth he think of? Do be good enough to throw light upon this point. (*Laughter.*)

Master (smiling):—Beware of the following: (1) of him whose words flow like water; (2) of him the door of whose heart is closed to you; (3) of the devotee who shows off to the world his devotion by the Sacred Tulsi leaf stuck into the ear; (4) of the women who wears a long veil; (5) of the tank covered with scum, the cold water of which is so injurious to health. (*Laughter.*) I must say our M. here is no such thing—rather let us say, the depth of his soul has made him speechless. (*Laughter.*)

¹ Shakti, ² Suddha Manas. ³ Suddha Buddhi. ⁴ Suddha Atman.

* Compare Kant's Exposition of the Transcendental Reason or the Faculty of the Unconditioned.

Girish:—Sir, will you kindly repeat the proverb?

Chunilall:—Guardians of boys are beginning to talk about M.'s conduct as headmaster. Our friend N. junior is a pupil of his; so are Baburam, Narayan, Paltu, Purna, Tejchandra. The guardians complain that it is M. who bringeth these boys unto our Master; so that they neglect their studies. They hold M. responsible for all this.

Master:—Oh dear! Who is to put faith in all that they can say against him?

Just at this moment Narayan comes in and falls at the Master's feet. Narayan is of a fair complexion, 17 or 18 years old. He is a student and a beloved disciple of Sri Rama-krishna. The Master is so much attached to him that he sometimes crieth before the Divine Mother in his anxiety to see him. He looketh upon the boys as Narayana (God) Himself.

Girish (at the sight of Narayan):—Hallo! Who is it that sent thee word that the Master was here? M., I am afraid, is going to do for everybody! (*Laughter.*)

Sri Ramakrishna (laughing):—Hold: pray keep thy own counsel; people are already speaking ill of him (M.).

* * * * *

The conversation next turneth upon Narendra.

A disciple:—He doth not come to us now-a-days as often as he used to do before.

Master:—It is no wonder that he cometh not to us. Wonderful is the thought of bread and butter! It maketh even such a great poet as Kalidasa (writer of *Sakuntala*) lose his wits! (*Laughter.*)

Balaram:—He is a great friend of Annada Guha, grandson of the well-known Shiboo Guha. He always walketh with him.

Master:—Yes, they meet generally at the house of a friend of theirs who is employed in some Government office. They hold prayer meetings¹ as Brahmas there.

Balaram (smiling):—Brahmans generally say that Annada Guha is very conceited.

Sri Ramakrishna:—Pay no heed to what the Brahmans say. Thou knowest their ways: he who giveth good gifts to them is a good man; the rest of mankind are bad. (*Laughter.*)

¹ Brahma-Samaj.

CHAPTER III.

SINGING THE NAME OF THE LORD WITH DISCIPLES

Sri Ramakrishna expresses a desire to listen to the chanting of hymns. Balaram's drawing room is filled with visitors. Every one watches the Master, eager to listen to what falls from his lips and mark what he is going to do next. Tarapada is invited to sing. He sings a song describing the sports of the 'Shepherd of Men,' Sri Krishna.

SONG

1. Have mercy on my miserable self, Oh God¹, Thou who usedst to go about in the groves of Brindaban, Thou Charmer of the Mind, Thou who usedst to play on the sweet flute while Incarnate in Brindaban.

(Oh my mind, say, 'O Sweet Lord²,' say, 'O Sweet Lord.')

2. At Brindaban, Thou didst pass Thy³ days in boyhood, Thou didst kill the dragon, Oh Lord! Thou sayest 'Fear not' to the weary and heavy-laden that pray for Thy help in their trouble. How beautiful art Thou with Thy loving eyes looking askance and with the peacock's feather dancing on Thy forehead. Thou bringest joy unto the heart of the greatest⁴ of the lovers of God. It was Thou Who didst lift up the hill⁵ on Thy arm. It was Thou Who didst pull down the pride of Kamsa; it was Thou Who didst once enjoy the company of Thy great devotees, the Gopis, during that manifestation⁶ of the highest Divine Love, at Brindaban.

Oh Thou of the dark-brown color, so fair with wild flowers decorating Thy person!

(Oh my mind, say, 'O Sweet Lord,' say, 'O Sweet Lord.')

Sri Ramakrishna (to Girish):—What a charming song! Didst thou compose it?

A disciple:—Yes, Sir; he has composed all the songs in the drama called *Chaitanya-lila* (or the Lord Chaitanya walking amongst men).

Master (to Girish):—This song is grand! (To the singer.) Canst thou sing about Nitai (Brother, in the Lord, of Chaitanya)?

He sang about Nitai preaching the love of God taught by Chaitanya.

SONG

Ecstatic Love of God

1. Come those that want the love of God once taught at Brindaban by the most Beloved⁴ of the Lord.

¹ Keshava. ² Hari. ³ Kaliya. ⁴ Radhika. ⁵ Govardhana. ⁶ Rasa.

The high tide of that love floweth past and is not going to last for a long time! Have a care!

2. Do ye not see this love streaming out in a hundred different directions? He who wanteth it shall get as much as he pleaseth.

3. Sri Radhika is made of this love, pure and simple. She it is to whom it is given to deal out this love.

Now therefore say, 'O Sweet Lord¹, at the call of this love.

Oh! this love maketh one's heart intoxicated with the Joy of the Lord. It maketh it dance with this joy!

4. Say, 'O Sweet Lord' at the call of this love.

Oh come! Oh come!

The next song was about Chaitanya Himself.

SONG

Gouranga (Chaitanya) God-Incarnate

1. O Lord² of fair complexion, what divine idea brought Peace unto Thy life when Thou goest about in the guise of Gouranga?

Oh! Thou art immersed in the Sea of Divine Love!

That Sea hath been broken into waves by the strong wind of enthusiasm that is blowing. It is not too much to say that many will bid adieu to the honor of their families for Thy dear sake and join Thee!

(O Lord, Thou hast taken my mind!)

2. It was Thou, O Lord, Who usedst when Incarnate as Sri Krishna, to tend the cows at Brindaban! It was Thou Who heldst between Thy fingers that enchanting flute of yours which once took the minds of the Gopis!

It was Thou Who once raisedst on Thy arm the hill of Govardhan and thus kept Brindaban from destruction! O, it was Thou Who fellest at the feet of the Gopis to atone for the offence of wounding their dignity; and had the moon of Thy clear face swimming in tears of repentant love!

(O, Sweet Lord! Thou hast taken my mind!)

Everybody pressed M. to sing. M. is shy and asketh in whispers to be excused.

Girish (to the Master, and smiling):—Sir, we cannot with all our efforts make M. sing a single song! (*Laughter.*)

Sri Ramakrishna (annoyed):—He will no doubt show his teeth at school! Strange that all his shyness doth spring up at the time of chanting the Name of the Lord!

M. looketh blank and stupid for some time.

Suresh (Mitra), another disciple, is seated at some distance from the Master. Sri Ramakrishna smileth on him affectionately and pointeth to Girish.

¹ Hari. ² Gour.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Suresh):—Dost thou talk of the wild life that thou once livedst? O, here is one who is very much more than thy match! (*Laughter.*)

Suresh (laughing):—That is indeed true, Revered Sir! He is my *dada* (respected elder brother) in that respect. (*Laughter.*)

Girish (to Master):—I never paid attention to my studies in my boyhood. How is it, Revered Sir, that people do insist on calling me *learned* in spite of all this?

Sri Ramakrishna:—Mahima Chakravarti has gone through a pretty large number of the Sacred Books.

(To M.) Is it not so M.?

M.:—Quite so, Revered Sir.

Girish:—What dost thou speak about, Sir? Is it about *learning*? Then excuse me, Sir, I am not the person to stand in awe before it.

Master (smiling):—Dost thou know what *I* think of it? Books—Sacred Scriptures—all point the *way* to God. Once thou knowest the way what is the use of books? Then the hour cometh for the culture of the Soul in solitary communion with God.

A person had received a letter in which he was asked to send certain things to his kinsmen. He was going to order the purchase of the things when, looking about for the letter, he found it was missing! He searched for a long time. His people also joined him in the search. At last the letter was found and his joy knew no bounds. With great eagerness he took it up and went through its contents. They ran as follows:—‘Please to send five seers (ten pounds) of sweetmeats¹ and one piece of cloth.’ When he knew of the contents he threw the letter on one side and set forth to get together the things wanted.

How long then doth one care for such a letter? So long as one knoweth not of its contents. The next step is to put forth one’s efforts to get the things desired.

Similarly the Sacred Books only tell us of the way leading to God, *i. e.*, of the means for the realization of God. The way being known the next step is to work one’s way to the goal. Realization is the goal.

What is the use of mere book-learning? The Pandits (scholars) may be familiar with plenty of sacred texts and couplets. But what is the good of repeating them? One must

¹ Sandesh.

realize in one's soul all that is mentioned in the Scriptures. Mere reading shall not bring knowledge or salvation, so long as one is attached to the world, so long as one loves 'Lust and Gold.'

In the almanac it is recorded that the rainfall will reach 20 adas (measures of capacity). Wring the almanac but not a drop will come out! not a single drop! although thou mayst want it very much! (*Laughter.*)

Girish (smiling):—Revered Sir, what dost thou say about the almanac? Will not a single drop come out of it? (*Laughter.*)

Master (smiling):—Oh, the scholar will talk very big, but he will look down all the time from his high place upon 'Lust and Gold' or, in other words, on sensual pleasure and the 'almighty dollar.'

The vulture soareth high up in the sky but its looks are fixed on charnel-pits—places where the carcasses of dead animals are thrown. (*Laughter.*) Oh, they have a keen eye from their high place on those pits and carcasses below!

Master (to *Girish*):—Narendra is a young man of a very high order. He is in for everything:—singing, playing on musical instruments on the one hand, the study of the various branches of knowledge on the other.

Narendra
He possesseth the virtues of temperance and truthfulness and, what is more, is already beginning to know that God is Real, that things of the world are of a fleeting nature, and that one should not be attached to them. Many and various are the qualities that he hath.

(To *M.*):—Well! Dost thou not think he is very good?

M.:—Quite so, Revered Sir; he is, indeed, as thou hast described him.

Sri Ramakrishna (aside to *M.*):—Just look at his (*Girish's*) devotion to the Lord and in his faith in Him—which is as firm as a rock!

M. looketh on *Girish* with wonder. *Girish* hath been walking with the *Master* only for some days past. But *M.* seeth in him a familiar friend and brother—his own flesh and blood—one of the shining gems strung together with one and the same thread into a necklace!

* * * * *

Narayan said, 'Revered Sir, shall we not have the pleasure of listening to thy songs?'

Upon this the Master chanted the Name of the Divine Mother of the Universe in a voice that in its sweetness did capture the heart of every one present.

SONG

The Beloved Mother of the Universe

1. Oh my soul! do thou clasp to thy heart my Beloved Mother. Let thee and me alone have the privilege of looking on Her; Let Her be seen by none else, by none else!
2. The desires—oh get out of *their* way, my soul; and then let us enjoy Her Presence alone; only let us have the organ of taste for our sole companion to cry out unto Her, saying, "Mother, O Mother!"
3. There are the evil desires; there are those which point to us the path leading to worldliness; Oh, do not let them come near us! Let the eye of Wisdom that leadeth Godward keep watch and keep us from evil.

The Master then singeth another song as if he were placed in the position of the weary and heavy-laden men of the world, who bend under the weight of their trials and sufferings.

SONG

The Mother and Weary Children

1. Oh Mother¹! Thou art made of Bliss Everlasting; why then is it denied unto me?
2. My soul, O Good Mother! knoweth not anything but the lotus of Thy hallowed Feet.
Why then doth the Ruler of Death, the King of Justice, find fault with me? Tell me what answer to make to that dreaded King?
3. It was my heart's wish, O Mother! to repeat Thy sacred Name and go my way across this sea of the world. Not even in my dream had I the least idea that I should be drowned by Thee in this shoreless ocean.
Day and night, O Mother! Thou Consort of the God of Eternity! have I been repeating Thy sacred Name, which bringeth salvation unto Thy weary children. But alas! my endless troubles will never leave me; I only regret that if I am not saved no one else will ever take Thy Name.

The Master next singeth about the Joy of the Divine Mother, the Manifested Energy of the Absolute. He seeth with his own spiritual insight the Joy of the Mother, the Personal God (Who createth, preserveth and destroyeth) felt in communion with the Impersonal!

¹ Durga.

SONG

The Great Mystery! The Personal-Impersonal Ecstasy

1. In the company of the Absolute¹, O Mother, Thou art always immersed in sportive Joy.

2. Thou art deep drunk with the wine of that Joy. Thou reelst but lovest not Thy footing! The Absolute, the Husband, lieth down and moveth not*.

3. Thou standest on His Breast and lookest as if Thou hadst lost all control over Thyself.

4. The Universe quaketh under the weight of Thy Feet. Mad are Thy Looks as well as those of Thy Consort.

* * * * *

The disciples listen to the songs in deep silence. What striketh them is the change that hath come over the Master. He is beside himself with the Joy of the Lord—intoxicated with the Unbounded Bliss.

The song came to an end. The Master saith after a while, 'I am sorry I could not sing well to-day; I have caught cold!'

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE CLOSE OF DAY

It is evening. The shadows of Eternity have fallen on the ocean-breast, and on the deep dense forest, and on the summits of mountains that kiss the firmament on high. They have cast a gloom on the boundless expanse round about and on the solitary bank of the undulating river that sendeth forth the never-ceasing sound of its many waters. At the sight of this sacred, solemn gloom, little, puny man cannot help being in another state of mind. The sun, he was only a few moments back giving light to all nature, inanimate as well as animate! Whither is he gone? The question puzzles the child—a being who is new to the world! It appealeth no less to the holy man, for he hath the soul of a child. He feeleth that he is always in the presence and care of his Divine Mother. It is evening! What a miracle! And wrought by what a Wonderful Being! The birds come together and sing on the boughs of trees. Human beings too do the same thing—those amongst them in whom the spirit within has waked up. They sing the name of the Lord.

¹ Siva.

* Does this mean that we receive no message from the Absolute and that the personal side of God is the only actor before our eyes?

It is evening. The disciples would not leave their seats. With their heads upraised and their eager ears they listen to the sweet Name of the Lord chanted by the Master—sweeter, as repeated by him, than any they have ever heard before!

Yes, they have never heard another child calling out so sweetly to its Mother, saying, 'Ma, Ma!' It seemeth as if drops of nectar fall from the Master's lips. The infinite sky, the heaven-kissing mountains, the deep blue ocean, the boundless expanse, the deep, dense wilderness—what is the use now to go amongst them in quest of the Divine Father and Mother of the Universe? What is the use now of fixing one's attention on the 'cow's horns' or her feet or any other parts of her body? The Master hath spoken of the Udder of the Cow to-day—from which to draw the milk of Divine Love! Is it indeed given to me to behold the Vision of God-Incarnate in this very room? What else could have brought unto the hearts of the disciples—those that are weary and heavy-laden—the Peace that passeth all Understanding and the Joy that is of the Lord? What else could have made this vale of tears flow over with joy? Is it possible that the man before me is God-Incarnate? Whether he is so or not my mind and heart and soul are his own—to deal with just as he pleaseth! He is already the Pole-star of this enigmatical life! It is for me now to watch how in his great soul the Supreme Being, the Cause of causes, is reflected!

Thus did some of the disciples think within themselves. They felt they were blessed as they heard the Master chant the Name of the sweet Lord God¹, the Name of the Father Who taketh away all trouble, all sin and iniquity—and the Name of the Divine Mother.

The chanting of the names being over, the Master prayeth unto the Mother. It seemeth as if the God of Love hath taken a human body in order to teach man how to pray. Saith he, "Ma (O Mother), I throw myself upon Thy mercy—may the lotus of Thy Feet ever keep me from whatever leadeth Thy children away from Thee! I seek not, Good Mother, the pleasures of the senses! I seek not fame! Nor do I long for those powers which enable one to do miracles! What I pray for, O Good Mother, is pure Love² for Thee—love for Thee untainted by desires, love without alloy, love that seeketh not the things of

*The Master Teacheth
How to Pray*

¹ Hari. ² Bhakti.

the world, love for Thee that welletth up unbidden out of the depths of the immortal soul! Grant likewise, O Mother, that Thy child, bewitched by the fascinations of the world-system¹ may not forget Thee!—yes, forget Thee, entangled in this charming net of the world² that Thou hast woven under him, made of 'Lust and Gold!' O, grant that he may never be charmed into loving these! O, Good Mother, seest Thou not that Thy child hath none else in the world but Thee! O, I know not how to chant Thy Name! Devoid am I of deep devotion,—of knowledge, too, that leadeth unto Thee—devoid of genuine Love³ for Thee! O, vouchsafe unto me that Love out of Thy Infinite Mercy!"

This evening prayer—is it called for in the case of this God-Man?—for him who chanteth the Name of the Lord day and night?—for him out of whose hallowed mouth there floweth a never-ceasing stream of prayers unto the Most High? Is it then that the Master observeth these forms with a view to teach mankind how to live and pray?

* * * * *

Girish has invited Sri Ramakrishna to his house. He must come that very night.

Master:—Dost thou not think it will be late?

Girish:—No, Revered Sir; thou wilt come away as early as thou pleasest. As for myself I shall have to go to the theatre*—they have quarrelled amongst themselves and I shall have to make it up.

Going downstairs from the first floor he hath become like another being. He looketh as if he were lost in the thought of God; he looketh as if he has drunk deep! He is followed by his disciples Narayan and M. A little behind come Ram, Chuni and others.

Yes, lost! It seems as if sense-consciousness were beginning to leave him. Narayan comes forward to hold him by the hand lest he misses his footing. The Master seems annoyed.

A short while and he saith to Narayan with great tenderness, "If thou holdest me by the hand people will say, he is a drunkard; let me walk on without any help."

He crosseth the next turning at Bosepara just a little way from Girish's house. What is it that maketh him walk so fast?

¹ Maya. ² Samsara. ³ Bhakti.

* Girish was manager of the 'Star Theatre.'

The disciples are left behind! No one knoweth what Divine Idea hath found its way into his heart.

What is it that maketh him walk like a mad man? Is it because he is thinking of that Being Who in the Vedanta is said to be beyond the reach of word and thought? Just a little while ago at Balaram's house he declared that the Being is *not* beyond the reach of the Purified Supersensual Mind; that He may indeed be *realized* by the Pure Mind, which is the same thing as the Pure Reason,—which is the same thing as the Pure Soul! Or it may be that he is at the present moment beholding that Being as a Reality!

Is this realizing "Whatever is, is God?"

Ah! here is Narendra coming! Many a day hath the Master cried, saying, 'Narendra, Narendra, Narendra,' like one gone mad! But now Narendra is here before him and yet he exchangeth no word with him! Is this what people call *Bhava* (God-consciousness)—a state into which Gouranga (Chaitanya) is said to have been constantly thrown? Who is there to look through the mystery of God-consciousness?

He hath come up to the end of the lane leading to Girish's house. The disciples all walk after him.

Now he will speak to Narendra. Saith he, "Is it well with thee, my child? I had not the power to talk till now to thee." Every word that falleth from his lips is marked by tenderness.

He hath not as yet come up to the door of the house. All at once he stoppeth. He looketh at Narendra and saith, "One word—this is one of the two (the human soul) and that is another (cosmos?)."

Was he indeed looking on the soul and on the world? If so, in what light? He was looking on speechless!

One or two words have dropped from his hallowed lips—like some solemn texts from the Inspired Scriptures, the Vedas—like unto the blessed Word of God!

Or was it as if one had gone to the Shore of the Infinite Ocean and stood up there speechless, looking on the Boundless Expanse, and had heard one or two echoes from the Never-ceasing Voice that cometh up from the Eternal Deep?

CHAPTER V.

ALL ABOUT GOD INCARNATE

At the door standeth Girish. He hath come forth to meet the Master. The Master cometh up, the disciples coming after. At the blessed sight Girish falleth at his feet upon his face like a rod! The sight is indeed a blessed one and the disciples look on with awe and admiration.

Girish ariseth at his bidding. He receiveth on his head and person the dust of his hallowed feet. He leadeth the way to the drawing-room where the Master and the disciples take their seats. The disciples are eager to sit close to the Master. They long to drink the nectar of his words that bring Everlasting Life.

He is about to take his seat, when he findeth a newspaper lying by his side. Newspapers have to do with worldly-minded men and with worldly matters,—with gossip and with scandals. Hence they are unholy objects—in his eyes. He maketh a sign and the paper is put away. Upon this he taketh his seat.

*Newspapers and
Sri Ramakrishna*

Nityagopal boweth down and saluteth his feet.

Master (to Nitya):—Well! and then?

Nitya:—Yes, Revered Sir, I was unable to come to Dakshineshwara. I was out of sorts. There was pain all over the body.

Master:—Art thou keeping well now?

Nitya:—Not very well, I am sorry to say.

Master:—Thou hadst better remain one or two notes below the highest in the scale!

Nitya:—Company does not agree with me. They say of me all manner of things. That putteth me into a fright. At times I am quite free from fear and I feel the strength of the Spirit within me.

Master:—That is only natural. Who is thy constant companion?

Nitya:—Tarak. At times even he does not agree with the state of my mind.

Master: Nangta* used to say that he had at his monastery an ascetic who had acquired some miraculous powers. He used to go about with his eyes fixed on the sky. His companion Ganesh Gorgy left him and he became disconsolate!

* Nangta.—The Sannyasin (Tota Puri) who taught Vedanta Philosophy to Sri Ramakrishna for close upon one year.

By this time a change hath come over the Master. Speechless doth he remain for a while!

Getting back into consciousness he saith, 'Thou hast come, hast thou? Well, I am here too!'

Who will pretend to fathom this mystery? Is this the language of the Gods?

Among the disciples who sat at this occasion at the feet of the Master were Narendra, Girish, Ram, Haripada, Chuni, Balam, M., and many others.

Narendra doth not believe in the Incarnation of God. On the other hand Girish hath a burning faith that God incarnateth Himself from age to age in this world of ours. The Master wisheth that they should argue the point before him.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Girish):—I should like to see you both talking over the matter in English. (*Laughter.*)

They talked on,—not, however, in English, but in Bengali, mixed with one or two English words. Narendra saith, "God is Infinite, it is beyond our power to conceive Him by means of our poor intellect. God is in every human being. It is not the case that He is manifest only in one particular individual."

The *Master* (affectionately):—I quite concur He is in every object, in every human being; only there is a difference in the manifestation of Divine Energy in those objects. Sometimes the Divine Energy manifest in certain objects leadeth one away from God. It is then called Ignorance¹. When it leadeth Godward it is called Knowledge². Again, the Manifested Energy is greater in some "Vessels" and less in others. Thus it is that all men are not equal.

Ram:—What is the use of all this idle talk?

Master (sharply):—No, no, there is a good deal of meaning in all this.

Girish (to Narendra):—How dost thou know that God does not take a human body, and thus incarnate Himself?

Narendra:—Surely God cannot be realized by words or by the mind!

Master:—Quite so; not by the finite conditioned mind. But He can be realized by the Pure Mind stripped of its sensuous nature by means of culture. Then this very mind becometh the same as Pure Reason or the Faculty of the Unconditioned; which is the same thing as the Pure Unconditioned Soul³. In this wise did the Holy Sages⁴ realize the Pure Unconditioned Soul.

¹ Avidya. ² Vidya. ³ Atman. ⁴ Rishis.

Girish (to *Narendra*):—Dost thou not see that if God is not incarnate there will be none else to make all these things clear and solve all these problems? God incarnateth Himself and becometh man in order to teach what is True Knowledge, what again is True Devotion or the Love of God. Who else is there to teach?

Narendra:—Why! He will certainly teach me within my heart!

Master (affectionately):—That is indeed so. He will teach as Ruler of the heart within¹.

The discussion groweth warm. It turneth on matters too high for human comprehension. 'Infinite'—is it divisible? What doth *Hamilton* say as to the limits of human knowledge; and *Herbert Spencer*—and *Tyndal*—and *Huxley*?

Master (aside to *M.*):—I for my part do not like these things. God is beyond the power of reasoning. Something more: I see that *whatever is, is God*. What then is the good of reasoning about Him? I do actually see that *whatever is, is God*.

Master:—It is He Who hath become all these things! 'It is this and it is also that which seemeth to contradict this!'

The Saint Ramanuja and His Doctrine of Qualified Non-Dualism or Vishishtadwaitavada There is a stage at which the mind and the determinative faculty² are lost in the 'Absolute'—which cannot be conceived as made up of parts.' At the sight of *Narendra* my mind getteth lost³ in the Absolute;—what, pray, dost thou say to this?

Girish (smiling):—I hope, Revered Sir, thou dost not think that we understand everything else? (*Laughter.*)

Master:—Thereupon at the end of the *Samadhi* I must come down two notes at least below the Highest note in the scale before I can utter another word!

Vedanta has been explained by *Sankara*. Another point of view is that of *Ramanuja*, who putteth forward the doctrine of qualified non-dualism⁴.

Narendra (to *Master*):—Sir, may I ask what is meant by *Vishishtatwaitavada*?

Master (to *Narendra*):—There is this doctrine⁴, the view of *Ramanuja*; *i. e.*, the Absolute⁵ must not be considered apart from the world and the soul. The Three between them form into One—Three in One and One in Three!

Let us take a *Bel* fruit. Let the shell, the seeds and the kernel be kept separate. Now suppose somebody wanted to

¹ Antaryamin. ² Buddhi. ³ *Samadhi*. ⁴ *Vishishtadwaitavada*. ⁵ Brahman.

know the weight of the fruit. Surely it would not do now to weigh the kernel alone of the fruit. The shell, the seeds and the kernel are next all weighed with a view to knowing the real weight of the fruit. No doubt we reason at the outset that the all-important thing is the *kernel*, and not either the shell or the seeds. In the next place we go on reasoning, saying that the shell and the seeds belong to the same Substance* to which the kernel belongeth. At the first stage of reasoning we say, 'Not this,' 'Not this.' Thus the Absolute¹ is not-soul (not the finite individual soul). Again, It is not the world either. The Absolute is the only Reality, all else is unreal. At the next stage we go a little further. We see that the kernel belongeth to the same Substance as that to which the shell and the seeds belong. Hence the Substance from which we derive our negative conception of the 'Absolute' is the identical Substance from which we derive our conception of the final soul and the phenomenal world. Your 'Relative'² must be traced to that very Being to which your 'Absolute'³ must be traced. Hence, as Ramanuja saith, the Absolute is qualified by the finite soul and the phenomenal world. This is the doctrine of qualified non-dualism.

CHAPTER VI.

GOD-VISION

Master (aside to M.):—I do see that Being as a Reality before my very eyes! Why then should I reason? I do actually see that it is the Absolute Who hath become all things about us; it is He Who appeareth as the finite soul and the phenomenal world! One must have an awakening of the spirit within to see this Reality. How long must one reason or discriminate, saying, 'Not this,' 'Not this!' Why, so long as one is unable to see Him as a Reality. Of course it would not do for a person merely to say, 'I have seen beyond the possibility of a doubt that it is He Who hath become all.' Mere *saying* is not enough. By the Lord's grace the spirit must be quickened. Spiritual awakening is followed by *Samadhi*. In this state one forgetteth that one hath a body; one loseth all attachment to things of the world—'Lust and Gold;' one

¹ Brahman. ² Lila. ³ Nitya.

* Substantia—Spinoza's 'Ethica.'

liketh no other words than those relating to God; one is sorely troubled if called upon to listen to worldly matters.

The spirit whitin being awakened, the next step is the realization of the Universal Spirit. It is the Spirit that can realize the Spirit.

After the discussion was over, the Master saith to M., "O, I have observed there is a good deal of difference between the mere intellectual apprehension of God by reasoning or discrimination¹ and the realization by meditation² in solitude; and again between these on the one hand and the realization through His grace! If out of His abundant grace He maketh us realize what is God Incarnate, then all reasoning would be quite thrown away—it would need nobody to explain what is an Incarnation.

Let me make this clear to you. A person, suppose, is in a dark room. He rubbeth the matches on the side of the box and all at once a light is struck! If the Lord is gracious enough to strike the light for us and dissipate the darkness of ignorance, then it is that all doubts shall cease forever! This sort of disputation shall never carry us far.

Upon this the Master inviteth Narendra to be seated by his side. He maketh many kind inquiries about him and careseth him."

God the Absolute or Impersonal, and God Personal Narendra (to Master):—Why, Revered Sir, I meditate in solitude on the Divine Mother³ for three or four days together; but nothing hath come of it.

Master:—All in its good time; do not be impatient. Mother is not a different Being from God the Absolute. The Mother is the Personal side of God the Absolute. When thought of apart from His works the Supreme Being is called God the Absolute. Again, when we think of God as creating, preserving, and destroying, *i. e.*, in relation to His works, we call the same Being the Personal God, the Divine Mother*.

The same Being to Whom you apply the name of *Brahman* of the Vedanta, I call by the name of Mother.

God the Absolute or Impersonal and God Personal are the same, just as fire and its burning power are the same—in the

¹ Vichar. ² Dhayna. ³ Kali.

* Kali—Mother of the universe, the Consort of Eternity or the Absolute—the Personal God or God in His relations to the Conditioned.

sense that the one cannot be thought of without the other. If you postulate the Personal you must postulate the Impersonal; if you talk of the Impersonal you must already have taken the Personal for granted.

It is getting late. Girish must go out to the theatre—of which he is a manager. He saith to Haripada, “Be good enough, my brother, to call a cab;—I shall have to go to the theatre.”

Master (smiling to Haripada):—Mind, a cab, bring you must! Don't forget. (*Laughter.*)

Haripada (smiling):—No, Revered Sir. Am I not going on that errand? (*Laughter.*)

Girish (to *Master*):—I am afraid I must leave thee, Revered Sir, and go out to my place of business, the theatre, unfortunate that I am!

Master:—No! Thou must serve both parties. Janaka served God unattached to the world. He looked to the interests of both, this world and the next. He drank of the ‘cup of milk’ but did not forget the soul.

Girish:—I am thinking, Revered Sir, of giving up the theatre and of making them over into the hands of the younger fellows.

Master:—No, no; it is all right, as it is. You need not have any such idea. You are doing good to many.

Narendra (softly):—Just a moment ago he was calling him God-Incarnate! I suppose he must now leave his God-Incarnate to himself, be off to the theatre and mind his own business!

CHAPTER VII.

THE MASTER IN SAMADHI

The Master hath *Narendra* seated by his side. He fixeth his eyes on him. He moveth down to sit closer to him. *Narendra* doth not believe that God incarnateth Himself. But what doth that signify? The Master's love for him is as great as ever!

Touching his person the *Master* saith to him, “Dost thou feel that thy dignity hath been wounded? Be it so; we, too, are of the same mind with thee and feel for thee*.”

* These were words addressed by her companions, the Gopis of Brindaban, to Raddha, the greatest lover of God Incarnate, Sri Krishna.

Did the Master see with his inner eye that, after all, Narendra was right in declining to admit that God could incarnate Himself? Is He not our own Father and Mother? Why doth He not then strike the light in the inner chamber of the soul and give us the power of beholding the Blessed Vision as God Incarnate? Is not His own child justified in having a sense of wounded dignity upon being denied the inheritance of True Knowledge, which he may well claim to be his own by the right of birth?

(To Narendra):—So long as one goeth on questioning and reasoning about God, one hath not seen Him as a reality. Ye two were engaged in disputation. That, however, was not to my liking.

*Disputation and the
Realization of God*

How long may the noise last that is produced in a house where a feast is made, to which a large party is called? Why, so long as they have not commenced to eat. When dishes are served and the guests fall to, three-fourths of the noise is gone. Then the courses of sweet-meats—the more they are dealt out, the more doth the noise subside; when the turn cometh for the curds (the last course) one only sound is given, *viz.*, 'Soop-sup.' The feast over, the next thing for the guest is to go to sleep!

The nearer thou comest to God the less art thou disposed to question and reason. When thou comest up to Him, when thou beholdest Him as the Reality,—then all noise—all disputations are at an end. Then it is the time for sleep, *i. e.*, for enjoyment which cometh in *Samadhi*, in which one is in a state of communion with the Blessed Vision Divine.

Saying this, the Master gently stroketh Narendra's person, toucheth his sweet face and caresseth him, saying, 'Hari Om,' 'Hari Om,' 'Hari Om' (*i. e.*, God the Absolute).

Why is he doing all this? Does the Master behold the Vision Divine manifest in Narendra? Does he behold the Real Man in the apparent man before him? Is this the same as seeing God-in-man?

What a miracle passeth before the eyes of the disciples! Look on the Master, and see how his sense-consciousness beginneth to leave him! Look again, and see it hath left Him altogether! Is this the half-outer-consciousness spoken of about Gouranga (Chaitanya), God of Love-Incarnate at Nadia! Even now, the Master's hand continueth to rest on Narendra's body! Is he actually engaged in serving God (Narayana)

manifest in the man before him and touching his feet? Or, is he breathing into him the Inspiration¹, the Power, that cometh from above.

Look! Yet other changes come over the Master! Behold what he saith to Narendra with folded hands! "A song (do thou sing):—then I shall be restored—how else shall I be able to stand on my legs?—my Nitai!—O! He is deep drunk, intoxicated with the wine of Divine Love, the Love of Gouranga (God Incarnate),"

A short while and he is speechless again—speechless like a figure cut out of marble! *Drunk* with the joy of the Lord, the Master goeth on saying—

"Take care, Radha, lest thou fallest into the Jamuna, O! Thou mad with ecstatic love for Him Who hath incarnated Himself at Brindaban, the Lord Sri Krishna!"

Once more in deep *Samadhi!* getting back into sense-consciousness he repeateth portions of a well-known song—

O! my friend how far is that blessed Woodland (the land where is to be seen my own Beloved One)?

(Behold; here cometh the fragrance from the Blessed Person of my Beloved!)

("I am unable to take any step forward, Oh my friend!")

Now he hath lost all sense of the world—he doth not bear in mind anything or any person in his present state—Narendra is seated before him, but apparently he doth not see him. He hath lost all sense of time and space! The mind and the heart and the Soul have all become absorbed in God!

Behold, he standeth up saying, "Deep drunk with the wine of Divine Love, with love for the Fair Lord!" A few moments and he taketh his seat.

He saith, "Yonder is a light coming this way—but I cannot even now say which way the light cometh from." It is now that Narendra goeth on to sing.

SONG

God-Vision

1. Oh Lord! Thou hast blessed me with Thy vision and Thou hast sent away all my troubles—

A charm hast Thou thrown over my soul!

2. Beholding Thee as a Reality, the **Seven Worlds** have forgotten their grief!

¹ Shakti-sanchara.

Not to speak of my poor self so worthy of Thy Pity and Thy Loving Kindness!

Listening to the song the Master hath once more lost all sense of the outer world! His eyes are closed. His body and limbs—they move not! He is in a deep *Samadhi*.

* * * * *

The *Samadhi* is over. He exclaimeth, "Who is it that will take me home to the Temple?"

A child looking for a companion! Left alone, it seeth nothing but darkness round about.

It is getting late. It is the night of the 10th day of the dark fortnight in Falgun. The Master hath set his face to go to the Temple at Dakshineshwara. He is seated in the cab which will take him there. The disciples all stand up on either side of the carriage to see him off. Even now is he deep drunk with the joy of the Lord!

The cab rolleth away. The disciples look on for a few moments and then go their ways, each to his own home.

SECTION XII.

1885

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT SHYAMPUKUR (CALCUTTA) WITH THE DISCIPLES; AND ISHAN, DR. SARKAR AND OTHERS

CHAPTER I.

IS GOD WITH FORM OR WITHOUT FORM?

It is the fourteenth day of the light fortnight after Durga Puja; Thursday, 22d of October, 1885. The Master is at Shyampukur (a district in Calcutta) and is under the treatment of Dr. Sarkar and other physicians. This day, besides Dr. Sarkar, Girish (Ghosh), Islan (Mukhopadhyaya), M., and many other disciples and Bhaktas are present.

Sri Ramakrishna talks with a smiling face to everybody; Ishan, Girish and the Doctor take part in the conversation.

* * * * *

Doctor:—Knowledge (of God's works) maketh one speechless; his eyes are closed and he is in tears! Here cometh the Love¹ of God.

Sri Ramakrishna:—The Love¹ of God is a lady and hath access to the *zenana* (the inner apartments). Knowledge (derived by reasoning) can get only into the quarters reserved for men but cannot enter into Inner Apartments—the *Sanctum*—the Holy of Holies.

Doctor:—That is indeed true. But women of questionable character should not be admitted into the *zenana*,—for instance, women of the town. Hence the need for Knowledge. Every fool should not be allowed to get in because he saith, 'I love God.'

Sri Ramakrishna:—If a person is sincere and yearns towards God he will in the end realize Him; whether he knoweth Philosophy or not. If in his search after the Lord he cometh into a wrong path the Lord will lead him forth to the Goal, provided he thirsteth after Him. A certain devotee went out on a pilgrimage to Puri; but not knowing the way he went due west instead of south. In his longing to see the Holy Image he asked people which way he should go. They said,

¹ Bhakti.



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'Go thy way towards the south. Thou hast lost sight of the true path leading to the Temple.'

Doctor:—Well, the man in his ignorance did lose his way.

Master:—People talk of errors and superstitions, and pride themselves upon book-learning. But the sincere devotee findeth the Loving Lord ever ready to lend him a helping hand. It mattereth not that he hath been for a time walking along a wrong path. The Lord knoweth what we want, and in the end fulfilleth the desire of our heart.

*Is God with Form or
without Form?*

The question was asked whether God is with form or without form.

Sri Ramakrishna:—God is 'with form' as well as 'without form.'

A certain monk¹ went to the Temple of Jaggannath at Puri. He had doubts as to whether God is with form or without form. When he saw the Holy Image he desired to examine this. He passed his staff from the left to the right in order to feel if it touched the Image. For a time he could not see anything or feel with the staff! So he decided that God was without form. When he was about to pass the staff from the right side to the left it touched the Image! So the monk decided that God was both with form and without form.

But it is very difficult to realize this. He that is without form—how can he be with form? This question naturally ariseth in the mind.

Doctor:—He hath made forms; hence He is with form. Again, He hath created the Mind, which has no form. Hence, He, the Creator, is without form. Thus it is possible for Him to be both with form and without form.

Master:—Unless one seeth God one is not able to realize all this. For the sake of those that love the Lord, He manifesteth Himself in various ways and in various forms.

A dyer had his own way of dyeing cloths. He would ask the customer, 'In what color dost thou want thy cloth dyed?' If he said 'red' the dyer dipped the cloth in his tub, brought it out saying, 'Here is thy cloth deyd red,' Another wanteth his cloth dyed yellow. The dyer dippeth it in the same tub, bringeth it up, and behold, the cloth is dyed yellow. In the same way, when another color is wanted—blue or orange or violet or green—the same tub is used with the like result.

¹ Sannyasin.

A customer who was watching all this came up to the dyer and said, 'My friend, I am not fond of any one color. I desire to consult *thy* taste and should like to have my cloth dyed just as thou pleaseth. I want the color in which thou hast dyed thyself.' (*Laughter.*)

The Lord manifesteth Himself, as with form or without form, with particular reference to the need of the devotee. The manifested Vision is relatively true, *i. e.*, relatively to different men who are, in the first place, limited, conditioned beings, and, in the second place, placed in the midst of different things round about them. The Divine Dyer alone knoweth in what color He hath dyed Himself. Verily He is not bound by any limitation as to form or manifestations or the negation thereof,

A man said to his friend, 'My friend, I went to the foot of the tree up there and saw a beautiful animal of a red color.' His friend said, 'O, I have seen it, too. Thou sayest it is red. That is not the case, it is green.' The third man said, 'No, no, I saw it too, I saw it yellow.' Others testified that they were sure that the color was orange, blue, green and so forth. From words they were about to come to blows, when another man came in. He heard everything and bade them hold their peace, saying, 'Behold, I abide at the foot of the tree, and I know the animal very well. Every one of you is right; for it is a chameleon, which changeth its color every moment. It is now red, now green, now yellow, now blue and so on. What is more, I see that sometimes it is *colorless*.

He who hath left all for the sake of the Lord—who liveth under the tree of life and watcheth,—to him it is given to know what the Lord is like. He knoweth that the Lord manifesteth Himself in diverse forms to His devotees. The Chameleon,—now He is red, now yellow, now orange, now green!—and now absolutely devoid of color! He is the Omnipotent Being, Creating, Preserving, Destroying—possessed of Attributes the thought of which striketh us dumb. But that is only as He manifesteth Himself to Man. He is, again, the Absolute of Whom nothing can be predicated, like unto the chameleon which is devoid of all color!

Yes, He is both *with* form and *without* form, as thou sayest. Just think of a shoreless ocean. When it is very cold, the water near the surface changeth into ice. And the ice taketh

different forms in different places. But when the sun is up and shineth upon the ice, it melteth away.

The shoreless Ocean is God. The intense cold is the soft, cooling influence of Devotion¹ or the Love of God. The ice appearing under different forms is God, manifesting Himself, as it were, to the devotees under the cooling influence of his deep devotion. The melting away of the ice under different forms is the disappearance of the Spiritual Forms (in which the Lord manifesteth Himself) under the burning rays of the Sun of Knowledge Absolute realized in *Samadhi*.

Doctor:—When the sun is up, the ice indeed melteth. And what is more, the water changeth into invisible vapor. This we know from science. Dost thou not think, Sir, this will carry the analogy a little higher?

Master:—The meaning of the analogy is that reasoning as to the real and the unreal, we come to the conclusion that God the Absolute is Real and the phenomenal universe is unreal. The latter includeth all things that have name or form—material or spiritual. This is the conclusion of Vedanta Philosophy. Reasoning on this line and realizing in the *Samadhi* which followeth, the Knowing One saith, 'God is not a Person'—for that would be limiting God. Nothing can be predicated of God the Absolute. The conditioned self is effaced in *Samadhi*. Thus there remaineth nobody to predicate about the Absolute.

Hence Bhakti (the devotional feelings) is like the cooling light of the moon. Absolute Knowledge is like the sun with its burning rays. It is said that in the extreme north and in the extreme south there are seas where water changeth into masses of ice which stop the course of ships.

Doctor:—Thou seest, Sir, man hath his progress stopped in the path of Devotion¹ unaided by Reasoning.

Master:—His course, indeed, is stopped,—were you to carry the metaphor further on. But surely his progress is not stopped. The ice under different forms is the Lord Himself manifesting to the devotee under different forms. He realizeth God and none else. The form that he seeth is the reading of God in *Samadhi* through the medium of Bhakti. If thou likest the path of Knowledge or Philosophy better, thou mayest reason, 'The Absolute is the only Reality and the world with names and forms is unreal.' And thou mayest

¹ Bhakti.

realize this in *Samadhi*. The ice, under different forms, will then melt away under the powerful rays of the Sun of True Knowledge, leaving the Shoreless Unbounded Ocean for thee to realize!

* * * * *

CHAPTER II.

HOW TO CONTROL THE DESIRES AND PASSIONS

Sri Ramakrishna (to Doctor):—The following are some of the persons who do not get a knowledge of God:—

First, he who is proud of his learning; second, he who is proud of his wealth. Thou mayest say to such a person, 'There is a holy man in a certain place, wilt thou come to see him?' But he is sure to make excuses and say that he cannot come.

He thinketh he is too big a man to pay a visit to such a person.

"Pride cometh of Ignorance."

* * * * *

The question is how may Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger and other passions be controlled? Girindra Ghosh of Pathuriaghatta (another district in Calcutta) said, 'It is not possible for one to entirely rid oneself of the passions. Hence let us give them a different direction. In the place of sensual pleasures let the object of our desire be God Himself. Let us enjoy the ecstasy of Divine Bliss. Let us be proud that we are the sons of God—the servants of the Most High. Let us be proud of having believed in the Name of the Lord and say, "I have taken His hallowed Name and I am already free from sin, free from bondage, and I care not for salvation. The things of this world are not, indeed, mine—money, honors, my family and the rest—but the Lord is mine and those that love the Lord."'

Do I covet riches and titles? No, what I covet most and long for is the Vision Divine.

In this way the six passions may be turned Godward.

Doctor:—It is hard to control the passions. They are like restive horses. They must have their eyes covered by blinders. In some cases their eyes should be entirely shut out from the outside world to keep them (the horses) from stumbling or going astray.

Master:—Should one be blest with God-vision, one's passions are unable to do evil.

Perfect men like Narada, Prahlad, do not need any such blinders being drawn over their eyes. The child who holdeth the father by the hand and walketh in the field along the balk doth, indeed, run the risk of letting go his father's arm and falling into the ditch. It is quite otherwise with the child whose arm is held *by* the father. Verily he never falleth into the ditch.

Doctor:—It is not right for the father to hold the child by the hand. That would stand in the way of self-help.

Master:—Those that have seen God have rid themselves of the lower self. They act with their higher self, which is one with the Lord. They feel that it is not they who help themselves but the Divine Mother. All their strength cometh from Him. Apart from the Divine Mother they are good as non-entities. The child feeleth strong only in the presence of its mother.

Doctor:—Unless one covers their eyes the horses will not move a single step. Is it possible to realize God, unless one's passions are kept under control?

*Path of Divine Love,
the Path of Knowledge
and Discrimination*

Master:—Thou speakest of the Path¹ of Knowledge or Discrimination. Yes, that path, also, leadeth to God. The Knowing One saith, 'One must be first pure if one desireth to see God. One must first control one's passions. First Self-Discipline, then Knowledge of God.'

There is another path leading to God—the Path² of Devotion. Once there is in the human soul the love of God, once the chanting of His holy Name filleth the devotee with joy, no effort is needed for the control of the passions. Such control cometh of itself.

Is a man troubled with grief in a mood to enter into a quarrel or to join a feast or to give his mind to sensual pleasures?

Doth the insect which appeareth in the rainy season seek darkness once it hath seen the light?

Doctor (smiling):—Yes, it doth not;—it is rather ready to rush upon the flame, and die if need be.

Master:—No, that is not so; the true worshipper of God meeteth not death like the insect. The Living Light to which the devotee is drawn doth not burn and cause death. It is

¹ Jnanayoga. ² Bhaktiyoga.

like the light coming from a gem, shining yet soft, cool and soothing. It burneth not but giveth Peace and Joy.

The Path of Knowledge leadeth, indeed, to God, but it is very hard. It is easy enough to say with the Knowing One in so many words and to reason thus:—'I am not the body or the mind or the determinative faculty²; I am not subject to disease or grief or want of peace; I am above happiness and misery; I am not subject to the organs of sense;—my true Self is God³, of whom the only thing that can be predicated is Absolute Existence, Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Bliss Everlasting.' It is easy to say all this but hard to realize.

The hand is torn and scratched by the thorns; it is bleeding; surely it lieth not in one's mouth to say, 'Why, my hand is not at all torn, nor doth it bleed, and nothing is the matter with me!' One must actually burn in the flame of Knowledge the thorn of Ignorance which leadeth away from God and causeth all the ills that flesh is heir to.

Many think that Knowledge (of God) cannot be attained without the study of books. But higher than Reading is Hearing; higher than Hearing is Seeing (or Realization). Hearing from the lips of the preceptor maketh a greater impression than the mere reading of books. Seeing maketh the greatest impression. Better than reading about Benares is hearing about the place from the lips of one who hath visited it; better even than hearing is seeing Benares with one's own eyes.

At a game of chess the onlookers can tell what is the correct move better than the players. Men of the world think they are very clever; but they are attached to things of this world—money, honors, pleasures, etc. Being actually engaged in the play it is hard for them to hit upon the right move. Holy men who have given up the world are not attached to it. They are like the onlookers at a game of chess. They see things better than the men of the world.

Doctor (to a disciple):—Had he (Sri Ramakrishna) only read books he could not have attained such wisdom. Faraday communed with Nature and could thus discover many scientific truths. Mere book-learning could not have placed such knowledge within his reach. A close observation of Nature helped him a great deal. Mathematical formulæ only throw

¹ Jnanayoga. ² Buddhi. ³ Sachchidananda.

*Difficulty of the Path¹
of Knowledge*

*Book-learning and
Divine Wisdom*

the brain into confusion and stand very much in the way of original research. This gentleman here (*i. e.*, the Master) is so wise because he is a child of Nature.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Doctor):—There was a time when I lay down on the ground at the foot of the Panchabati in my yearning for the Divine Mother. As I lay down I used to cry and pray to my Divine Mother for more Light, saying, 'O Mother, letters have I never known; do Thou grant that it may be given unto me to know and to realize that which is attained by those¹ that work unattached without looking for the fruits of their actions; also to know and to realize that which is attained by Yogis by means of concentration², and lastly, to know and to realize what the Knowing Ones³ know by means of discrimination.'

Books have I never read. It is my Divine Mother Who hath revealed unto me these things and many more things!

Ah me! What a state of ecstasy it was! In such a state sleep leaveth one.

And the Master sang forth:—

SONG

1. My sleep hath been broken. I am not going to sleep any more.
Any way I am now awake.

I have given back sleep unto Thee, O Mother.

And sleep have I lulled to sleep forever.

2. An excellent theme have I got to think upon.

From the Land where there is no night

Hath come unto me a Citizen with that theme.

Worship⁴ at stated hours by day or by night hath for ever become barren unto me.

* * * * *

I have never read the books. But see how people make much of me! That is because I chant the holy Name of my Divine Mother.

Sambhu Mallik used to speak of me, saying, 'Here is Santiram Singh quite able to beat anybody although sword or shield he hath none.' (*Laughter.*)

The conversation next turned on the performance of a play by Girish (Ghosh) called the Life of Buddha. The Doctor had been invited by the author. He had been very much pleased with the performance.

¹ Karmis. ² Yogis. ³ Jnanis. ⁴ Sandhya.

Doctor (to *Girish*):—It is most wicked of you to draw me to the theatre every day.

Sri Ramakrishna (to *M.*):—I can't make out what he saith.

M. (smiling):—The *Doctor* saith that the play hath proved to be a great attraction for him.

CHAPTER III.

Sri Ramakrishna (to *Ishan*):—He (the *Doctor*) believeth not in Divine Incarnation. What hast thou got to say to him on this matter?

*Doth God Incarnate
Himself as a Human
Being?*

Ishan:—Sir, what shall I say? To question and reason on such matters is what I do not like.

Sri Ramakrishna (sharply):—Why, wilt not thou say the right thing, if necessary?

Ishan (to *Doctor*):—It is our pride which causeth the want of faith. *Ramachandra* was a human being only in appearance. In reality He was the Supreme Being. Out of His body hath come forth the Infinite Universe. with the boundless Firmament, the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, the deep, blue Ocean and the snow-capped Mountains!

Sri Ramakrishna (to *Doctor*):—This much is hard to understand. How can the human being (the Divine Incarnation) who appeareth to view with all his limitations be the same as the Infinite, Eternal, Supreme Being. One who hath realized God knoweth that God the Absolute appeareth to us as the phenomenal Universe—as Man and Nature. He *appeareth* as Man with his limitations; but really He hath no limitations. For instance, it cannot be said of Him that because he hath taken a human shape He is not outside of that shape. He may be here and at the same moment He may be elsewhere. One who hath seen God seeth all this, and believeth. The ordinary man with his ounce of reason cannot see this. Can a water-pot with a capacity to hold only one seer of milk ever hold four seers?

Hence in these matters one must put faith in the words of those who have seen God. Such men only meditate upon God. If thou seekest legal advice, wilt not thou consult lawyers that are in the profession? Surely thou shalt not take the advice of the man in the street?

Ishan (to Doctor):—May I ask why thou thinkest that God doth not incarnate Himself as a human being? It was only a moment ago thou didst admit that God may be with Form as well as without Form, and say that nothing is impossible with God.

*Criterion of Truth:
Science of Phenomena
or Science of Realities?
Physical Science or
Transcendental
Perception?*

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling):—My dear Sir, the fact is such a thing is not declared in his books on science. It is not set forth there in so many words that God may come down into this world as a human being for the salvation of mankind. That being so, how can he believe? (*Laughter.*)

Let me tell you an amusing story. A friend called upon a person and reported to him saying, 'Hav'n't you heard the latest news? Well, I was yesterday passing along the street when down came with a terrible crash the house belonging to the Mukherji's.' The person to whom this was told cried out, 'Is that so? But let me consult the newspaper and see if this is true.' He read the newspaper, but there was nothing about the coming down of the house. Upon this, he coolly said to his friend, 'I can't put faith in your words. It is not so stated here.' His friend replied, 'But I saw it with my own eyes!' The man still would not believe, and said, 'Well, there is nothing said in the newspaper about it; how can I believe it?' (*Laughter.*)

People do not see that science dealeth only with conditioned knowledge. It bringeth no message from the Land of the Unconditioned. Such message hath been brought by holy men who have seen and realized God, like the Rishis of old. It is they alone that are competent to say, 'God is thus and thus.'

The Doctor is speechless and maketh no remark.

Girish (to Doctor):—Thou must confess that Sri Krishna was God Incarnate. I will not let thee regard Him as a *man*. Thou must say that He was either God or a Demon.

Sri Ramakrishna:—Verily one must be free from guile like the child in order to have such faith in God. The Lord is far away from the duplicity of the world. Worldliness (love of money, honor, sensual pleasures), bring on doubt and scepticism;—and the pride of learning, the pride of wealth and the rest.

(To the disciples):—He (the Doctor) is, however, free from guile.

*Childlike Simplicity
and Faith in God*

Girish (to Doctor):—Dost thou not think, Sir, that it is not given to man of double part to attain knowledge?

Doctor:—Certainly; that is indeed impossible.

Sri Ramakrishna:—How childlike was Keshab (Sen)! Well, once he went into the Temple. At about four in the afternoon, he was going round to see the guest-house attached to the Temple; he asked if the guests including holy men and poor men, were soon going to be fed. Like a child he had no idea that it was late in the day and that the guests for that day had already had their dinner at noon. Knowledge relating to God keepeth pace with faith. Where there is little faith it is idle to look for much knowledge. The cow which cometh to be over-nice in matters of eating is not liberal in its supply of milk. But the cow to whom all kinds of food are welcome—herbs and leaves and grass—husks and straw—and eats them up with great appetite, giveth an abundant supply. Her milk cometh down from the udder into the pail in torrents. (*Laughter.*)

Faith like that of the child is the one thing needful. Such faith leadeth one to God. Mamma hath said pointing to a stranger lad, 'He is thy dada (brother).' At once the child hath believed and the lad is to him sixteen-anna-dada—one's mother's son in the strict sense of the word!—Again mamma hath said, 'There is a hobgoblin in that room.' The child is absolutely sure that there is such a terrible being in that room.

He that believeth like the child receiveth the grace of God. The calculating intellect of the world weigheth things with an eye to worldly loss and gain. Man's limited reasoning seeth not far enough. It hath no right of entry into the land of the gods. It is faith—the faith of a child—which leadeth you forth into that land.

Doctor (to the disciples):—It is, however, not right for the cow to eat up all sorts of things. I once had a cow which went in for all sorts of food. I was taken very ill. I was at a loss to account for my illness. At last I came to know that the root of all this evil was the cow, which had been eating the refuse of corn and such-like things for some days. (*Laughter.*) The result was that I had to go up to Lucknow for a change. I got well, but at the cost of Rs. 12,000 (*roars of laughter*).

Well, it is not so easy to see the relation between cause and effect. In the family of the Pikepara Babus a child seven months old was taken ill with whooping-cough and I was

called in for treatment. I tried my utmost to trace the disease to its cause, but in vain. At last it came to my knowledge that the ass which supplied the milk for the child had got drenched in the rains!

Sri Ramakrishna (to disciples, laughing):—Behold the man! Isn't it as if somebody saith, 'My coach hath been to the foot of the tamarind, a tree which beareth sour fruits, and I have thus got acidity.' (*The Doctor and others all laugh.*)

Doctor (laughing):—The captain of a ship had a bad headache. The doctors on board held a consultation and had a blister applied to the side of the ship! (*Laughter.*)

Sri Ramakrishna (to Doctor):—The company of holy men is always needed for one who seeketh God. A man of the world is always subject to a chronic disease. Holy men should be consulted as to the remedy. Merely hearing them as they teach is not quite enough for one's purposes. The medicine must be taken into the system and strict rules should be observed in matters of diet.

Doctor:—Yes, it is the diet which, more than anything else, causeth the patient to be healed.

Sri Ramakrishna:—Doctors are either first class, second class, or third class. Holy teachers are like doctors, divided into three classes.

The third class doctor feeleth the pulse and saith, 'Thou must take the medicine.' He then goeth away, not caring whether the patient taketh his advice or not.

The second class doctor reasoneth with the patient and useth soft words to induce him to take the medicine.

The first class doctor is ready, in case the patient heareth not his words, to put his knee on the chest of the patient and force the medicine down his gullet! (*Laughter.*)

Doctor (laughing):—Under certain kind of treatment the doctor need not use force and put his knee across the chest of the patient. For instance, homœopathy. (*Laughter.*)

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling):—That is true; but the patient need not be afraid even if such a doctor useth force and putteth his knee across his breast.

Renunciation of 'Lust and Gold' hath been laid down only for those¹ that lead a monastic life. Monks must not so much as look at the pictures of

*The Strict Discipline
of Monastic Life*

¹ Sannyasin.

women. Even the *thought* of spiced pickles causeth the mouth to water—not to speak of the sight or the touch of those dainties!

But this hard rule is not meant for men of the world like thee;—it is indeed purely for monks. For thy part thou mayst go amongst women with a mind unattached and fixed upon God. That thy mind may be thus unattached and fixed upon God it is meet that thou shouldst often retire into solitude—such a place which is away from either men or women—a place where thou mayst be left absolutely to thyself, praying to the Lord with a yearning heart for True Knowledge—a place where thou mayst abide for at least three days, if not more, or for at least one day if not for three.

Thy plan again as a married man is to live with thy wife as brother and sister after one or two children are born to thee, and then pray to the Lord without ceasing that both husband and wife may have strength to live a life of spirituality.

* * * * *

Girish (smiling to Doctor):—My dear Sir, thou hast been staying on here for three or four hours! I wonder when thou art going to see thy patients. (*Laughter.*) If thou goest on in this way thou mayst ruin thy practice.

Doctor:—Talk not of practice or of patient! Your Paramahansa will make me lose my all! (*Laughter.*)

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling to Doctor):—Behold there is a river called *Karmanasha*—which meaneth that which putteth an end to all work. If thou takest a plunge into that river thou shalt run a great risk. After the bath thou shalt lose all power of doing any work whatsoever. (*The Doctor and others all laugh.*)

Doctor (to M., *Girish* and other Disciples):—My friends, do regard me as your own; not as a professional man, whom you wanted for his advice, but as your own flesh and blood.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Doctor):—Let me tell thee one thing. It is possible to have a love for God which is pure and selfless. Blessed is he who hath such love for the Lord! Prahlad had such a love. A devotee of this class saith, 'O Lord, I pray not for wealth or fame, pleasures of the flesh or for any other blessings that the world can give. Do Thou grant that I may love Thee with a love which seeketh not the things of the world, but Thee alone.'

*Pure¹ Selfless Love
of God*

¹ Ahetuki.

Doctor:—Yes, Sir, I often see people bowing down before the image of Kali. These worshippers all seek some worldly object;—some pray for a means of living; some for the healing of some disease, and so forth.

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Doctor (to Sri Ramakrishna):—It is not right for thee, ill as thou art, to hold converse with anybody. Of course, thou must make an exception in my favor. (*Laughter.*)

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling):—Wilt thou be good enough to see that I am healed? Thou seest how I cannot repeat and glorify the Name of the Lord!

Doctor (smiling):—What is the need for repeating His Name? Meditation¹ is quite enough for our purposes.

Sri Ramakrishna:—What dost thou say? Thou wantest me to be narrow and one-sided? I eat my fish dressed in five different dishes—fish in curry, fish fried, fish with tamarind, cutlet, *pillau*, and so forth. I long to worship the Lord in as many ways as I can, and still my heart's desire is not fulfilled! I long to worship Him with flowers and fruits and other offerings; to repeat His sacred Name by myself; to meditate upon Him; to chant His hymns; to dance in the Joy of the Lord!

Doctor:—Well, Sir, I too do not like to be narrow and one-sided.

Master:—Amrita, thy son, doth not believe in Divine Incarnation. Well, it mattereth not. Those that believe that God is without form will see Him,—as well as those who believe that He is with form. The two things needed are Faith and Self-surrender. Man is liable to error at every step. In any case he cannot hope to be absolutely free from error. Dost thou want to put four seers of milk into a water-pot which can hold only one seer?

But thou must cry unto the Lord with a longing, yearning heart,—whether thou believest that God is with form or without form. The Lord is the Ruler of the soul within, and shall grant thy prayer if thy cry goeth forth unto Him out of the inmost recesses of thy heart.

Yes, and whether thou believest that the Lord is with form or without form. The cake made with candy will taste

¹ Dhyana.

equally sweet whether it be straight or oblique when taken up into the mouth. (*Laughter.*)

Amrita, thy son, is a nice lad.

Doctor:—Oh he is a disciple of yours!

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling):—There is not a fellow under the sun who is my disciple. On the contrary, I am everybody else's disciple. All men are sons of God,—servants of the Lord. I too am a son of God and His servant. Uncle Moon is everybody's Uncle! (*Laughter.*)

(The Master here referreth to one of the popular folk-tales current in Bengal, which speaketh of the moon as the maternal uncle of everybody.)

SECTION XIII.

October 1885

THE MASTER AT SHYAMPUKUR, CALCUTTA, WITH HIS DISCIPLES

Sri Ramakrishna with Narendra (Vivekananda), Sarat (Saradananda), Kali (Abhedananda), Rakhal (Brahmananda), M., and other Disciples at Shyampukur, Calcutta

CHAPTER I.

It was about half past five in the afternoon on Tuesday, 27th of October, 1885. The great national Durgapuja festival had been celebrated only a few days back. It was so difficult for the disciples to join the festivities with their whole heart. How could they rejoice when the Master was suffering from a serious malady? The Temple of Kali at Dakshineshwara, where he ordinarily resided, was not within easy reach of Calcutta physicians. So the Master had been staying for the last three months at Shyampukur and was now under the treatment of Dr. Sarcar. The hint thrown out by the Doctor that the disease was past all human remedies, proved a heavy blow to the poor disciples. It was so hard to believe that the Blessed One was soon to leave them like orphans thrown adrift upon the wide world, scattered abroad like sheep having no shepherd. It was so distressing to think that the days of rejoicing, coming one after another, which they had passed with him had been numbered. They shed tears in solitude. Hoping against hope they yet prayed for his recovery. They served him body, mind and soul, nursed him, attended to his smallest wants day and night. To the younger disciples, headed by Narendra (Vivekananda), this great unique service of the Master led the way to the great renunciation of the world of which they are the most glorious examples in the present day. For, was not Sri Ramakrishna their living Ideal, a unique example before their very eyes—who had given up the world and its so-called pleasures for the sake of God?

Strange, that in spite of the serious illness, people poured in to see, if only to catch a glimpse of, the god-man of whom they had so much heard. They felt that verily it was peace and

joy to come into the presence of Sri Ramakrishna. 'Oh how kind, how loving!' was the universal observation. Anxious for the welfare of the meanest among them, he would talk to them of God—of his heavenly Mother—in the midst of intense physical sufferings! At last the physicians left a strict injunction with the disciples not to allow people to see him and engage him in conversation. Dr. Sarcar, who would stay with the Master for hours together (sometimes six hours, seven hours) would say to him, 'Take heed how you talk to anybody; the only person you may talk with for a length of time is myself,—in whose favor you may thus make an exception.' The fact was that the Doctor had been charmed with his company as well as with words 'sweet as honey' that proceeded out of his mouth.

Besides Vivekananda and the Doctor there were present on this particular occasion, Girish Ghosh, the great Bengali dramatist and poet; Doctor Docouri, Narendra junior, Rakhal, M., Sarat, and many others.

The Doctor felt the pulse and prescribed the necessary remedies. There was then, for a while, a talk with reference to the course of the disease; after which the Master took the first dose as directed.

Dr. Sarcar rising to depart said to Sri Ramakrishna, who was talking to Shyam Basu, 'Now that thou hast got Shyam Basu to talk to, wilt thou allow me to bid thee good-bye?!

Sri Ramakrishna:—Wouldst thou like to hear some songs?

Doctor:—I should like very much;—but thy feelings would be terribly worked up, and thou wilt shoot up into all sorts of antics. One's feelings must be kept under control.

The Doctor took his seat once more. Narendra (Vivekananda) poured out his charming melodies to the accompaniment of the *tanpura* and the *mridanga* (musical instruments).

He sang:—

SONG

God and His Works

1. Wonderful, infinite, is the Universe made by Thee! Behold, it is the repository of all Beauty.

2. Thousands of stars do shine—a necklace of gold studded with gems! Innumerable are the Moons and the Suns!

3. The earth is adorned with wealth and corn; full indeed is your Storehouse. O Great Lord, innumerable are the stars which sing 'Well done, Lord!' 'Well done!' They sing without ceasing.

He sang again—

SONG

The Mother of the Universe

1. In the midst of the dense Darkness, O Mother! breaketh forth a flood of Light, Thy wealth of formless Beauty. To this end is the Yogi's meditation within the mountain cave.

2. In the lap of Darkness Infinite and borne on the sea of great *Nirvana*, the fragrance of Peace Everlasting floweth without cessation.

3. O Mother¹! Who art Thou, seated alone within the Temple of *Samadhi*, assuming the form of the Great Consort of the Lord of Eternity and wearing the apparel of Darkness? The Lotus of Thy feet keep us from fear! In them doth flash the lightning of Thy Love for Thy children. In Thy face made of spirit doth shine Thy loud, loud laugh.

Doctor (to *M.*):—It is dangerous to him—this singing! It will work upon his feeling with serious results!

Sri Ramakrishna (to *M.*):—What saith the Doctor?

M.:—Sir, the Doctor is afraid lest this singing work upon thy feelings and bring on *Samadhi*.

Sri Ramakrishna (to the Doctor, with folded hands):—No, Oh no; why should my feelings be worked up? I am very well!

But as soon as these words were uttered the Master, who was already losing sense-consciousness, went right into deep *Samadhi*. His corporeal frame became motionless! The eyes moved not! He sat speechless like a veritable figure of wood or stone! All sense-consciousness had ceased to be! The mind, the principle of personal identity, the heart, had all stepped out of their wonted course towards that One Object, the Mother of the Universe!

Again did Narendra pour out of his sweet charming throat, melody after melody.

He sang:—

SONG

The Lord, My Husband

1. What a charming Beauty is here! What a charming Face! The Lord of my soul hath come to my (humble) abode!

2. Behold! the spring of my love is running over (with joy)!

3. O Lord of my soul! Thou Who art made of love alone, is there any riches that I can offer Thee? O, accept my heart, my life, my all, yes, Lord! my all deign to accept!

And yet again:—

¹ Kali.

SONG

Nothing Good or Beautiful Without the Lord

1. Gracious Lord, what comfort can there be in life, if the Bee of the Soul is not lost in the Lotus of Thy Feet for evermore!

2. What is the use of countless heaps of wealth if at the same time Thou the most Precious of all Gems art not kept with care!

3. The tender face of the child I do not wish to look at, if on that face, beautiful like the moon as it is, I cannot see (the image of) Thy Loving Face.

4. What a thing is moonlight! It would indeed appear to be made of darkness absolute, if when the outward moon appears in the heavens the Moon of Thy Love riseth not also (in the firmament of the soul) at the same time.

5. Even the holy attachment of the chaste wife would be full of impurities, if the gold of her (human) love is not set with the (priceless) gem of Thy Love Divine.

6. Lord, scepticism about Thee, the offspring of infatuation, is like the never-ceasing bite of the poisonous snake.

7. Lord, what more shall I say to Thee! Thou art the (priceless) Jewel of my heart, the Abode of Joy Everlasting!

Listening to the song—specially to the portion referring to the chaste wife and the child, the Doctor cried out, 'Ah me! Ah me!!'

Narendra sang again:—

SONG

The Ecstatic Love of God

1. O! how long shall I have to wait for the appearance of that madness of love for God, when having nothing else in the world to wish for, I shall chant the name of Hari (God) and there shall flow from my eyes a stream of love-tears!

2. When shall my life, my mind, be made pure? O when shall I go forth on pilgrimage to the *Brindaban* of love! When shall the darkness of my eyes be driven away by the collyrium of Knowledge Divine.

3. When shall the iron of my body be turned into gold at the touch of the Divine Touch-stone! O when shall I see the vision of a world made up of God alone!

4. When shall my desire for doing good works be a thing of the past? When shall my sense of caste and family distinction be gone? O, when shall I be placed beyond fear, anxiety, and the feeling of shame? When shall I be free from pride (and slavish obedience to custom)?

5. With the dust of the feet of Bhaktas (true lovers of God) rubbed all over my body, with the scrip of renunciation placed over my shoulders, O when shall I drink the water of ecstatic Love¹ with the palm of both my hands from the River² of Divine Love?

¹ Prema. ² Prema Jamuna.

CHAPTER II.

THE ABSOLUTE

In the midst of the songs Sri Ramakrishna hath come to himself again. The music came to a close. Then followed that conversation which was charming alike to the learned and the illiterate, to the old and the young, to men and to women, to great men and to little men! The whole company sat mute and looked in silence on his divine face.

Is there any trace now of that serious illness from which he is suffering? Joy is there on the face radiant with celestial glory!

Turning to the Doctor Sri Ramakrishna began the conversation:

Sri Ramakrishna:—Do give up shyness, Doctor. One should not be shy in taking before others the Name of the Lord, or in dancing with joy while chanting His sweet Name. Do not care what people will say. The following proverb is very edifying—

“Shyness, contempt and fear—
These three remaining one cannot be perfect.”

The shy man saith, ‘I am such a big man!’ If this findeth its way into big people’s ears what would they say? O! what a shame if they say, ‘Doctor, the poor fellow hath been dancing. He must have lost his head!’

Doctor:—That is not my line at all. I don’t care what people may say.

Sri Ramakrishna (smiling):—On the contrary, thou dost care for it very much. (*Laughter.*)

*The Realization of the Absolute*¹ Get to the other side of both Knowledge² and Ignorance³. Ignorance is the knowledge of many things—the knowledge of diversity without the knowledge of Unity, without the knowledge of the One God. The egotism due to erudition proceedeth from Ignorance. The conviction that God is in all objects—that there is Unity in variety—is called Knowledge of Oneness. Knowing Him intimately is Realization⁴.

Suppose your foot is pricked with a thorn. Well, you want a second thorn to take it out. When the first thorn is taken out you throw away both. So, in order to get rid of the thorn

¹ Brahman. ² Jnana (Knowledge of Oneness). ³ Ajnana (ignorance as to God, or knowledge of many things). ⁴ Vijnana.

of Ignorance, you bring in the thorn of Knowledge. Then you throw away both Ignorance and Knowledge with a view to the complete Realization of the Absolute. For the Absolute is beyond Knowledge as well as Ignorance.

Lakshmana once said to his Divine Brother, 'O, Rama, is it not strange that a God-knowing man¹ like Vashishtha Deva² should have wept for the loss of his sons, and would not be comforted?'

Thereupon Rama replied, 'My good brother! bear in mind that whoever possesseth relative Knowledge of Unity (God) must at the same time have relative Ignorance also.' He is not in the nature of things free from Ignorance as to God, for Knowledge and Ignorance in this case are as correlatives. For a knowledge of Unity in the universe presupposeth a concurrent knowledge of diversity. One who feeleth the existence of light hath also a feeling as to the existence of darkness.

The Absolute is above Knowledge and Ignorance, beyond sin and merit,—good works and bad works,—cleanliness and uncleanness—as understood by the limited faculties of man.

With this Sri Ramakrishna repeated the following song of Ramaprasad:—

SONG

The Science of God-vision

1. Come, Oh my mind! let us go out for a walk; Oh, thou shalt pick up four fruits at the foot of that Kalpa tree, my Mother³ the Consort of Eternity.

2. Thou hast two wives, Attachment (which leadeth thee to the things of the world) and Non-attachment (which leadeth thee Godward, away from the things of the world). Now, when thou dost go out for a walk, take Non-attachment along with thee as thy companion.

Non-attachment hath a son called discrimination⁴ (of the Real from the unreal). Thou must ask this young man any question relating to God, the Absolute.

3. The off-spring of Attachment, the first wife, thou must try to bring to reason, taking care always to be at a safe distance from them.

If they refuse to listen to reason, thou shouldst, Oh, my mind, cause them to be drowned in the Sea of Knowledge.

4. When shalt thou sleep in the chamber of heaven with cleanliness⁵ and uncleanness⁶ both by the side!

For, as soon as these co-wives are made friends, thou wilt see my Mother of the dark-blue color (the Mother of the Universe)!

5. Keep good works⁷ and bad works⁸, the two goats, fastened carelessly to a post.

¹ Jnani. ² Rama's preceptor and a holy sage. ³ Kali. ⁴ Viveka. Thus Vivekananda lit. means the Bliss of Discrimination. ⁵ Shuchi. ⁶ Ashuchi. ⁷ Dharma. ⁸ Adharma.

Then sacrifice them with the Sword of the Highest Knowledge¹, thus giving liberation to them both.

6. Thy father, Oh, my mind! is Egotism and thy mother is Ignorance; both of whom thou must send away.

If ever thou feelest drawn towards the pit of Infatuation², then hold on to the prop of Patience.

7. Prasad saith, "Oh, my mind! in this way wilt thou be able to render account to the Destroyer (the Lord of Eternity)."

In this way wilt thou be entitled to be called 'my darling,' 'my pet;' 'the god of my father,' and a 'mind after my mind.'

Shyam Basu:—Sir, may I ask what remaineth after thou hast thrown away both the thorns as thou callest them—Knowledge and Ignorance?

*God the Absolute is
Above and Beyond
Speech and Mind*

Sri Ramakrishna:—Well, what remaineth, as thou sayest, is the Absolute—called in the Vedas³, the Unchangeable, the Absolutely Pure, the Absolute Knowledge. But how shall I make it clear to thee? Suppose somebody asketh thee what is the taste of clarified butter⁴. Is it possible to make the matter perfectly clear to him? The utmost that one may say in reply to such a question is, the taste of butter is precisely like the taste of butter! (*Laughter.*)

A girl who was unmarried once said to a friend, 'Thy husband is come, do tell me what sort of joy thou feelest whenever thou meetest him?' Thereupon the married girl said, 'My dear, thou wilt know everything when thou hast got a husband of thy own; how can I make it clear to thee now?'

In the Puranas we are told that the Mother of the Universe incarnated Herself as the daughter of the presiding god of the Himalayas. Just after She was born the King of Mountains was blessed with the vision of the various manifestations of the Omnipotent Mother. Then, said he, 'Oh, Mother! let me see God the Absolute, about Whom there is so much in the Vedas.' The Child Incarnate thereupon said, 'Father, dost thou wish to see God the Absolute? Well, in that case thou must live in the company of holy men—men who have given up the world. Then only can I fulfil the desire of thy heart. What It is, cannot be told in words.'

A person hath well said, 'All things, with the sole exception of God the Absolute, have become defiled like leavings of food.' The idea is, that Sacred Scriptures of the world, having been read and recited with the aid of the tongue, have

¹ Jnana. ² Moha. ³ Nityasuddha-bodha-rupam. ⁴ Ghee.

got defiled like the food thrown out of the mouth. But there hath been as yet in this world no created being who hath been able to express by word of mouth the nature of the Absolute. Thus the Absolute is not defiled¹ by mouth, so to speak.

There is joy unspeakable in the company of the Lord. Word proceeding out of the mouth cannot tell of it. He alone knoweth who hath felt it.

CHAPTER III.

BOOK-LEARNING AND EGOTISM

Addressing the Doctor, Sri Ramakrishna went on saying, "Unless one getteth rid of egotism, one cannot look for the wisdom of life.

"Then shall I be free
When 'I' shall cease to be."

'I' and 'mine' make up Ignorance. 'Thou' and 'Thine' make up Knowledge. The true devotee saith, 'Lord, Thou art the only active Agent. I am only a passive instrument in Thy hands! I act as I am made to act by Thee. Thine are all these riches, the house, the family, everything! Nothing is mine. I am only a servant. Mine is only to serve according to Thy bidding.'

Strange that conceit must have a hold on those who have anything to do with books. Tagore had a talk with me on God. He said to me, 'Sir, I am quite aware of all that thou sayest. I have read them in the books.' Well, thereupon I said to him, 'My dear Sir, a person who hath visited Delhi, doth not make much of his travels and say, "I have been to Delhi," and brag of it. A Babu (a well-to-do and highly respectable gentleman) doth not himself say, "I am a Babu."' (Laughter.)

Shyam Basu:—Sir, Mr. Tagore has a great respect for Thee.

Sri Ramakrishna:—My dear Sir, how shall I describe the vanity of a woman of the sweeper caste who was serving at the Temple at Dakshineshwara? She had a jewel or two on her person. This, I suppose, had filled her with vanity; so she once cried out at the sight of the persons crossing her way, 'I say, get out of the way, you people!' (Laughter.)

¹ Uchhishta.

Such was the sweeper woman. It is needless to speak of the vanity and the conceit of other and bigger people!

Shyam Basu:—Sir, on the one hand, we are told that man is punished for his sins; and on the other hand that God is the Actor, created beings being humble instruments in His hands. How shall I make these two things agree?

*Sin and Man's
Responsibility*

Sri Ramakrishna:—To see how thou talkest like 'a gold merchant'¹—who weigheth things with his delicate balance!

Vivekananda:—What the Master meaneth to say is that thou art talking like one who hath a calculating turn of mind.

Sri Ramakrishna:—I say, Podo! eat these mangoes! What is the use of thy counting how many hundreds of mangoe trees there are in the garden, how many thousands of branches, how many tens of millions of leaves, and so on? Thou art here to eat the mangoes! Do eat them and go thy way.

To Shyam Basu: Thou hast come into this world as a human being, with a view to attain God by means of religious works. Thy duty is to try thy best to acquire love² for the Lotus of the Feet of the Lord. Why trouble thyself about this and that and a hundred other matters? Would philosophical discussions make thee wiser than before? Dost thou not see that four ounces of wine are quite capable of making thee intoxicated? That being so, there is no use thy calculating how many barrels of liquor there are in the saloon, drinking to intoxication being thy only object!

Doctor:—Quite so, Sir. What is more, the liquor in God's wine-shop is beyond all measure! It can never be used up.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Shyam Basu):—Furthermore, why dost thou not execute a power of attorney in favor of the Lord? Let all thy cares and responsibilities rest on Him. A person of high character, suppose, is entrusted by thee with certain duties. Surely, such a person is not capable of doing thee wrong. The question whether a sinner will be punished hereafter or not may well be left to *Him*.

Doctor:—It is He alone Who knoweth what He is going to do. Human calculation cannot go far enough. The Lord is above and beyond all human calculation.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Shyam Basu):—How very fashionable this sort of talk hath grown amongst you, Calcutta people! They speak of the absence of the principle of equality in

¹ Suvama-varnika. ² Bhakti.

God's dealings with man! Why should God, they complain, make some people happy and others unhappy! These fools only see God's nature to be the same as their own.

Hem used to come to the Temple at Dakshineshwara in company with his friends, the Janbazaar Baboos. Whenever he had occasion to meet me he used to say, 'Well, Mr. Bhattacharya, there is only one thing worth having in this world, viz., honor. Is it not so?' *Very few see that the end of human life is to see God.*

Shyam Basu:—Sir, we hear a good deal of the 'astral' body² that we possess, the subtle body¹ as known from the gross² body. Can any person show that my double (the subtle body) actually leaveth the gross body with a view to go elsewhere.

Sri Ramakrishna:—A true devotee would not care to show thee all this. He careth not the least whether some fool will regard him with respect or not. The having some big people about him is the last thing that he wishes for.

Shyam Basu:—Wilt thou please say, Sir, how dost thou know the subtle body from the gross body?

Sri Ramakrishna:—The five elements make up the gross body. The subtle body is made up of the *manas* (the Ruler of the senses), the *buddhi* (the determinative faculty), *ahamkara* (the egoism or the sense of I) and the *chitta* (the feelings). The inner body which feeleth the Joy of the Lord is called the 'Body of Ecstasy' or the *Karana sharira*. The *Tantras* call it *Bhagavatitanu* or the body derived from the Mother of the Universe. Beyond all these is the *Mahakarana*, the Great First Cause—the Unconditioned—which cannot be expressed by words!

The Gross Body, the Subtle Body, the Body of Ecstasy and the Great Cause or the Unconditioned

CHAPTER IV.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

Sri Ramakrishna:—What is the use of merely listening to lectures? The great thing is practice³.

Thou sayest the words *siddhi*, *siddhi* (hemp leaves) repeatedly. Will that make thee drunk? No; thou must swallow a little of it.

There are threads of various numbers, No. 40, No. 41, and so on. Well, thou dost not know one number from another

¹ Sukshma sharira. ² Sthula. ³ Sadhan.

unless thou art in the trade. It is by no means hard for those in the trade to know a thread of a particular number from that of another number. That being so, I say, do practise a little. That done, it would be easy for thee to have correct ideas as to the gross body, the subtle body, the *Karana* (the body made of Joy) the *Mahakarana* (the Great Cause as the Unconditioned).

When you pray, ask for Bhakti, devotion to His Lotus Feet. After Ahalya* was made free from the curse called down upon her by her husband, Ramachandra said: 'Do ask for a boon from me.' Ahalya said, 'Oh Rama! If Thou wilt give me a boon, do Thou grant that my mind may ever be on Thy Feet, which are beautiful like the Lotus. O, I may be born amongst swine, but that will not matter!'

For my part I pray for love¹ alone to my Divine Mother.

Putting flowers upon Her Lotus Feet, with folded hands, I prayed saying, 'Mother, here is ignorance, here is knowledge, Oh! take them; I want them not; grant that I may have pure Love alone. Here is cleanliness of the mind and the body; here is uncleanness; what shall I do with them? Let me have pure Love. Oh! here is sin, here is merit; I want neither the one nor the other. Let me have pure Love alone. Here is good, here is evil, Oh! take them! I want none of them! let me have pure Love alone. Here are good works, here are bad works, Oh! place me above them; I want them not. Grant that I may have pure Love alone.'

If thou takest the fruit of good works, thou must take the fruit of bad works also. If thou takest the fruit of merit thou must take the fruit of sin also. Knowledge of the *One*² implieth a knowledge of the many, *Ajnana*. Taking cleanliness³ ye cannot get rid of its opposite, uncleanness. Thus a knowledge of *light* implieth a knowledge of *darkness*, the opposite. A knowledge of *unity* implieth a knowledge of *diversity*.

Blessed is that man who loveth God! What mattereth it if he eateth the flesh of swine? On the other hand, let a man live upon sacred food†; but if he is attached to the world and doth not love God then —

¹ Bhakti. ² Jnana. ³ Shuchi.

* Ahalya — wife of the great sage Gautama. She was a devoted wife, but the villainy of her seducer, who personated her husband, made her unchaste. Hence the curse; the effect of which was, it is said, that she was turned into stone. The touch of Ramachandra made her human once more.

† Havisya — rice cooked with clarified butter, etc., and offered to the Deity.

Doctor:—Woe unto him! What good shall he gain? I may be permitted to put in a word here. Buddha once ate swine's flesh. What do you think was the immediate result? Why, colic. Now the poor man took to opium as a remedy. Ye know what is the secret of 'Nirvana' and all such nonsense—the man remained stupefied with opium, and in such a state had no sense-consciousness. This was your so-called 'Nirvana!'

This from the Doctor on the doctrine of *Nirvana* taught by Buddha gave rise to roars of laughter. The conversation went on—

Sri Ramakrishna (to Shyam Basu):—To lead the life of a householder is by no means wrong. But take care that thou workest without attachment, with thy mind always pointing to the Feet of the Lord. Suppose a person hath got a carbuncle on the back. Now this man talketh as usual. Perhaps he attendeth to his daily work. But pain constantly putteth him in mind of the carbuncle. In the same way, although thou art in the world thou shouldst turn thy mind constantly to the Lord.

A woman secretly carrieth on an intrigue with her lover. Live in the world like the woman, doing thy many duties, with thy soul secretly yearning for the Lord. She thinketh of her lover all the time that she doth her household duties.

(To the Doctor): Dost thou follow this?

Doctor:—Having never had such feelings as those of the woman, how can I follow?

Shyam Basu:—My dear Doctor, excuse me, but thou dost follow a little, dost thou not? (*Laughter.*)

Sri Ramakrishna:—More especially as he hath been in the business for a long time. Is not that so? (*Laughter.*)

Shyam Basu:—Sir, what dost thou think of Theosophy?

Sri Ramakrishna:—The long and short of the matter is that people making disciples belong to an inferior order of men. Again, those that seek for powers also belong to an inferior class; such powers, for example, that of getting across the river Ganges on foot or of reporting here what another person is talking about in a far country. It is by no means easy for such people to get pure love (Bhakti) for the Lord.

Shyam Basu:—But, Sir, the Theosophists seek to put Hinduism once more on a firm basis.

*The Worldly Man
and Work Without
Attachment*

Theosophy

Sri Ramakrishna:—That may be. Well, I am not well posted as to their views or doings.

Shyam Basu:—Questions like the following are dealt with in Theosophy: What regions is the soul bound for after death—the lunar sphere or the stellar mansions, and so forth?

Sri Ramakrishna:—I dare say. But let me give thee an idea of *my* way of thinking. Somebody put it to Hanuman, the great lover of God, 'What day is it of the lunar fortnight?' Hanuman replied, 'My dear fellow, excuse me. I know nothing about the days of the week, the day¹ of the lunar fortnight or the stars of telling of one's destiny on a particular day. That is not my line. I meditate on God and God² alone.

Shyam Basu:—Sir, the Theosophists believe in Mahatmas. May I ask whether thou holdest that Mahatmas are real beings?

Sri Ramakrishna:—If thou carest to take my word for truth, I say 'Yes.' But wilt thou be good enough to let these matters alone? Come when I am better. Do but have faith in my words, and I will see that thou findest peace. Dost thou not see I don't take either money or clothes or any other thing. In some theatrical representations³ respectable visitors are expected to encourage the actors by money-gifts during the acting. *Here* people are not called upon to make such gifts. This is why so many come here. (*Laughter.*)

(To the Doctor): What I have got to say to thee is this—but do not take offence!—Thou hast had enough of the things of the world—money, fame, lectures and so on. Now give thy mind a little to God, and come here now and then. It is good to listen to words relating to God. Such words light the soul and turn it to God.

CHAPTER V.

INCARNATIONS OF GOD

A short while after the Doctor stood up to say good-bye. But Girish came in and the Doctor was so glad to see him that he took his seat again. Girish stepping forward saluted the Lord and kissed the dust of his hallowed feet. The Doctor watched all this in silence.

Doctor:—So long as I am here Girish Babu will not be good enough to come. He must come just as I am about to go away. (*Laughter.*)

¹ Tithi. ² Rama. ³ Yatras.

There was then a talk about the Science Association and the lectures delivered there. Girish took an interest in these lectures.

Sri Ramakrishna (to the Doctor):—Wilt thou take me one day to the Association?

Doctor:—My dear Sir, once thou art there thou wilt lose all sense-consciousness—at the sight of the glorious and wonderful works of God—the intelligence shown in those works—the adaptation of means to end!

Sri Ramakrishna:—O indeed!

Doctor (to Girish):—Do everything else, but pray do not worship him as God. By so doing you are only bringing ruin upon such a Holy Man!

*Worship of the
Spiritual Preceptor*

Girish:—Sir, there is, I fear, no help for it. He who has enabled me to get across this terrible Sea¹ of the World and the no less terrible sea of scepticism,—O, how else shall I serve such a person? There is nothing in him that I cannot worship.

Doctor:—I myself hold that all men are equal. A grocer's child was once brought in to our place for treatment. Its bowels moved. Everybody put up the ends of their cloth to their nose. I did not. I sat by the child for half an hour. I do not put up the cloth to my nose even when the scavenger passes by with the tubs on his head. No, that is for me impossible. The sweeper is by no means less a human being than I am. Why shall I look down upon him? As to this holy man here, do you think I cannot salute and kiss the dust of his feet? Look here—(*the Doctor salutes and kisses the dust of the Master's feet.*)

Girish:—Oh, Sir, the angels of heaven are saying, 'Blessed, blessed be this auspicious moment!'

Doctor:—You seem to think that saluting one's feet is something like a marvel! You don't see that I can do the same in the case of everybody. (*To a gentleman seated near.*) Now, Sir, oblige me by allowing me to salute your feet. (*To another.*) And you, Sir. (*To a third.*) And you, Sir. (*The Doctor salutes the feet of many.*)

Vivekananda (to the Doctor):—Sir, we look upon the Master as a person who is *like* God. Let me make my idea clear to you. There is a point somewhere between the vegetable creation and the animal creation where it is difficult to say

¹ Samsar samudra.

whether a particular thing is a vegetable or an animal. Much in the same way there is a point somewhere between the man-world and the god-world where you cannot say with certainty whether a person is a human being or a god.

Doctor:—Well, my friend, matters relating to God cannot be explained by analogy.

Vivekananda:—I say not *God*, but *God-like man*.

Doctor:—You should not give vent to feelings of reverence like that. Speaking for myself, no one has been able, I am sorry to say, to judge *my* inward feelings. My best friends often regard me as stern and cruel. Even you, my good friends, may beat me some day with shoes and turn me out.

Sri Ramakrishna (to the *Doctor*):—Now, don't *Doctor*! These people love thee so much! They watch and look for thee like ladies come together in the bride-chamber looking for the coming bride-groom! (*Laughter*.)

Girish:—Sir, everyone here has the greatest respect for you.

Doctor (sorrowfully):—My son—even my wife—looks upon me as hard-hearted—and for the simple reason that I am by nature loath to give vent to my feelings.

Girish:—In that case, Sir, don't you think it would be better to throw open the door of your mind—at least out of pity for your friends. You well see that your friends do not understand you.

Doctor:—Shall I say it? Well, *my feelings are worked up even more than yours*.

(To *Vivekananda*): I shed tears in solitude.

Doctor (to *Sri Ramakrishna*)—Well, Sir, may I say that it is not good that you allow people during *Samadhi* to touch your feet with their body?

*The Teacher¹ and
the Atonement*

Sri Ramakrishna:—Surely thou dost not say that I am conscious of this?

Doctor:—You feel that that is not a right thing to do, don't you?

Sri Ramakrishna:—What shall I say as regards the state of my mind during *Samadhi*? After the *Samadhi* is over I sometimes go so far as to ask myself, may this not be the cause of the disease that I have got? The thing is, the thought of God maketh me mad. All this is the result of madness. There is no help for it.

Doctor (to disciples):—He expresses regret for what he does. He feels that the act is sinful.

¹ Guru.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Vivekananda):—Well, thou hast great penetration. Do explain it all to him.

Girish (to Doctor):—Sir, you are quite mistaken. He is by no means sorry that his feet touch the persons of the *devotees*. No, it is not that. His body is pure, sinless; purity itself. He is good enough, in his anxiety for their spiritual welfare, to allow his hallowed feet to touch the body of the *devotees*. As a result of his taking their sins upon himself, his own body, he sometimes thinks, may be suffering from disease. You may think of your own case. You were once taken ill with colic, as you once told us, as the result of hard study. Well, did you not at that time express your regret that you had sat up reading till very late hours at night? Does that prove that reading till late hours at night is bad? The Master may be sorry from the point of view of a patient. He is by no means sorry from the point of view of a Teacher from God anxious for the welfare of humanity.

The Doctor was rather put out of countenance and hung down his head.

Doctor (to *Girish*):—I confess I am beaten. Now give me the dust of your feet.

(To Vivekananda):—This matter apart, I must admit the acuteness of his (*Girish's*) intellectual powers.

Vivekananda (to Doctor):—You may view the question another way. You sometimes devote your life to the task of making a scientific discovery—and then you do not look to your body, your health and so forth. Now, the knowledge of God is the grandest of all sciences; is it not natural that the Master has risked his health for this purpose, and may be, has ruined it?

Doctor:—Religious reformers without a single exception,—Buddha, Jesus, Chaitanya, Mahammad,— all were at the end filled with egotism. They all declare, 'What
Incarnations of God I say—that alone—is absolutely correct; nothing else!' How shocking!

With this the Doctor stood up to depart.

Girish (to the Doctor):—Sir, don't you think you are running into the same error? You point out they were egotists all,—all of them, without exception, egotists! You find fault with them and, don't you think, the same charge may be laid at your door?

The Doctor was silent.

Vivekananda:—We offer to him worship bordering on divine worship.

SECTION XIV.

March 1886

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AT COSSIPORE GARDEN WITH NARENDRA (VIVEKANANDA), RAKHAL, M., GIRISH, AND OTHER DISCIPLES

CHAPTER I.

DIVINE INCARNATION FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE THAT LOVE THE LORD

Sri Ramakrishna is staying with his disciples in the garden at Cossipore. He is lying very ill in the large room upstairs.

It is evening. Narendra (Vivekananda) and Rakhal are gently stroking his feet with the hand. Mani is also seated near the Master, who beckoneth unto him to join in the service. Mani relieveth one of the two brothers and gently stroketh the feet of the Master.

It is Sunday, 14th of March, 1886; second Chaitra, the ninth day of the light fortnight of Falgun. It is the Sunday after his Birthday Anniversary, which came off on the preceding Sunday at the garden. Last year the anniversary was celebrated with great rejoicings at the Temple at Dakshineshwara. This year the Master is very ill and his disciples are sore troubled in spirit. God indeed was worshipped as usual on that day and the usual offerings were made to him. But there was no feast made in which the public could take part.

The disciples are all present in the garden watching and nursing their beloved Master. Our Holy Mother is also here, —night and day is She engaged in the blessed service of Her Lord. Most of the younger disciples are here. They have practically left their homes and have thrown themselves heart and soul into this noble work—that of ministering unto him —of whom they have learnt the true meaning of their life in this enigmatic world.

The older disciples, many of whom have entered the world, come to see the Master almost every day. Some of them will come here to stay for two or three days together at a time.

He is very ill to-day. It is midnight. The garden and the house have bathed in the moonlight. But the heart of the disciples knoweth no peace, for it is feared that he, who hath

solved the Problem of Life for them, is about to leave this world!

It is perfect silence on all sides. All nature is still,—save for the murmuring sound of the leaves which slightly move in the gentle breeze of spring that bloweth from the south. In the midst of this stillness is the Master, lying down in his chamber upstairs, restless, sleepless! One or two disciples are seated near, watching. At times he seemeth to fall asleep. Or is it that he hath passed into that blessed state of communion¹ in which the mind remaineth unmoved in the midst of the greatest sorrow and sufferings?

M. is seated by his side, speechless, bewildered, at the sight of sufferings unspeakable,—a sight which will rend the heart of the most hard-hearted. At the bidding of the Master, he cometh still nearer. He saith to M., in broken words, “Lest thou and thy brothers here shall go about weeping, I do suffer so much!—if ye all say, ‘Thy sufferings of the flesh are terrible—let the body be given up’—if ye will say it—then this body may be laid aside!”

M. is speechless and looketh bewildered!

It is the moment of agony with the disciples; their heart is rent asunder. He who is their Father, their Mother, their Leader, their Protector, their Master, their All, speaketh these words! What are they to say in reply? ‘Is this another Crucifixion?’—thinketh one of them to himself. ‘Another sacrifice for the sake of mankind and specially for the sake of those who in the absence of their Shepherd will be like so many scattered sheep?’

* * * * *

It is the dead of night. The Master getteth worse! Is there no help?

A message is sent to Calcutta friends. Dr. Upendra and Kaviraj Navagopal come up with Girish from Calcutta at the dead of night.

The disciples are with the Master. He seemeth a little better.

He saith, “The sufferings are of the flesh; that is as it should be—for the body is made of the five elements,—yes, it cometh from matter.”

Turning to Girish, he saith—“What dost thou think I always see in this state? Well, it is the spiritual forms of the Lord.

¹ Yoga.

Many and various are those forms! Amongst them do I behold this form here; in which too the Lord hath manifested Himself."

(By 'this form' the Master meaneth his own form.)

CHAPTER II.

GOD-VISION BY SRI RAMAKRISHNA

It is between 7 and 8 the following morning; Monday, 15th of March. The Master hath rallied a little. Softly talketh he with the disciples. He is seated, reclining on pillows. At times he expresseth his thoughts by means of signs.

Narendra, Rakhal, M., Latoo, Sasi, Gopal (senior)—are seated before him.

The disciples sit mute; their heart knoweth no peace. They call back to their mind the state of the Master overnight and look grave.

Master (to M.):—Knowest thou what I see? I see Him as All. Man and other creatures,—they appear as veritable figures skin-bound,—with the Lord within,—shaking the head or moving the hands and feet!

*God Manifesteth
Himself as Man and
Nature*

I had once a like perception:—One Substance I felt had taken the forms of the Cosmos with all living creatures! like a house of wax, with gardens, roads, men, cows, and the rest, all made of wax and nothing but wax!

I see, I realize, that all the three come of one Substance,—the victim to be sacrificed, the block for sacrifice, and he who cutteth down the victim for sacrifice.

Doth the Master say that he offereth himself as a sacrifice for the sake of mankind and that it is the Lord that manifesteth Himself as the victim for sacrifice?

Saying this the Master crieth out in a feeble voice, "Ah me! Ah me! What a Vision!"

The state of God-consciousness once more! The Master hath departed from the sense-world! The state of ecstasy is not good for him; so think the disciples. But they know not what to do.

He hath again come to the world of the senses. He saith, "Now I am free from suffering of any kind. I am as well as ever."

The disciples see that he hath passed into a state which is beyond joy and grief, happiness and misery.

Latoo hangeth down his head which resteth on the palm of his hand, as he watcheth the Master with a sorrowful heart.

The Master lifteth up his eyes and looketh on the disciples. His heart overfloweth with the unspeakable love that he beareth towards his darlings—a love that the world cannot give!—a love that passeth all human understanding.

Rakhal and Narendra! How he doth fondle them! He stroketh their face and caresseth them as if they were children five years old!

A short while after he saith to M. in a sad tone,—“Were it given to this body to stay on in this world for a few days more, the souls of many people would have been waked up!”

With these words he remained silent for a time. He continueth, saying,—

“But it hath been ordained otherwise!”

The disciples wait for his next words. The Master saith again,—“Yes, such is not the will of the Lord; here is one in whom there is no guile, one that knoweth no letters; and people may take advantage. He may give away God’s best gifts to those that are not worthy and know not the value of devotional exercises, in this money-getting, sense-loving age.”

Doth the Master mean that the Son of God, the Divine Incarnation, is the Embodiment of God’s Love for Mankind and that the world cannot be kept going if every human being that liveth and will beget children knoweth God and accepteth His Son?

Rakhal (affectionately):—Do speak to the Lord, Sir, so that thy body may abide in this world for some time.

Sri Ramakrishna:—The Lord shall do His Will.

Narendra:—Thy will hath become one with the Will of the Lord!

The Master holdeth his peace as if thinking within himself.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Narendra, Rakhal and others):—Well, nothing cometh of my speaking to the Lord about it. His Will shall be done.

I now see that I and my Divine Mother have become one once for all. Radha said to Krishna, ‘O, Beloved, abide thou within my heart and appear not any longer in thy human form.’ But she soon yearned to see Krishna in human form. Her heart struggled and panted after the Beloved. But the

Lord's Will must be done, and Krishna did not appear in human form for a long time.

Rakhal (aside to the disciples):—Master speaketh of Chaitanya.

M. (to himself):—One with his Divine Mother! One with the Undifferentiated! Now it is so hard for him to continue as a separate Personality! The Son merged into the Mother! Is this the meaning of the Master?

CHAPTER III.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BEYOND

The disciples sit still. The Master looketh on them with affection. He putteth his hands upon his heart and will speak.

Sri Ramakrishna (to Narendra and other disciples):—Here (*i. e.*, within myself) there are two Persons. One is the Divine Mother—

The disciples wait for the rest of his words.

He continueth—

One is the Divine Mother, the other person is his devotee. It is the second person who hath been now taken ill. Do ye understand this?

The disciples sit still and do not utter a single word.

Sri Ramakrishna:—Alas! To whom shall I speak all this? And who is there to understand me?

A short while and the Master continueth—

The Lord cometh with His disciples as a Divine Incarnation. He taketh a human body. His disciples go back with him to the Divine Mother.

Rakhal:—Therefore, thou must not go before us and leave us behind.

The Master smileth—with love unspeakable, beaming from his eyes! He saith on—

A band of *Bauls* cometh into a house all on a sudden;—they chant the Name of the Lord and dance with joy! That done, they leave the house at once! As abrupt in going as in coming! And the people know them not!

The Master and the disciples smile. *Bauls* are a sect of Hindus who renounce the world and are filled with the madness of Divine Love.

The Master continueth—

Taking a human body one cannot avoid suffering.

I sometimes say to myself, "May the Lord grant that I may not be sent unto this world any more!"

But there is one thing to be taken into account. The rice and *dal* to be had in one's home ceaseth to interest one if one cometh to be called to the Lord's Feast.

M. (to himself):—Doth the Master mean that the Son of God¹ Who is the Embodiment of God's Love is ever fond of abiding with His own, *viz.*, those that love the Lord, the Lord alone? The Ambrosia that He distributeth at His Feast, is it not the Love of the Lord?

Master:—He taketh the human body for the sake of the pure souls that love the Lord alone.

The Master looketh on Narendra with ineffable tenderness!

Master (to Narendra):—A pariah² was carrying the flesh of slaughtered animals in baskets suspended on each side of the yoke fitted to his shoulders, when he met Sankaracharya (the Hindu saint and reformer) passing by after bathing in the holy waters of the Ganges. It chanced that he touched the person of the holy man. Sankara got offended and cried out, 'Thou hast touched me, sirrah!' He replied, 'Lord, neither have I touched thee, nor hast thou touched me!' Do thou reason with me and say whether thy true Self is the body or the mind or the determinative faculty⁵, and tell me what thou art truly. Thou knowest that the true Self is not attached to any of the three ingredients with which the Cosmos is made, *viz.*,—

*The Master Teacheth
Narendra the Path to
Knowledge³ and to
the Love⁴ of God*

1. Love⁶, Renunciation, etc., which lead to God.
2. The principle⁷ of activity which leadeth to action.
3. Ignorance⁸ which turneth one away from God.

The Absolute,—dost thou know what It is like? It is like the air, which carrieth the odors, be they good or bad, but remaineth unattached to the odors.

Narendra:—That is indeed true, Sir.

Master:—The Absolute is beyond all attributes,—beyond whatever is connected with the world-system⁹.

The world-system either leadeth Godward or away from God¹⁰. 'Lust and Gold' lead us away from God. Knowledge, Renunciation, Devotion lead to God. Sankara never parted with the latter. He kept on the *Ego of the Preceptor!* Thou

¹ Avatar. ² Chandala. ³ Jnana. ⁴ Bhakti. ⁵ Buddhi. ⁶ Sattva. ⁷ Rajas. ⁸ Tamas. ⁹ Maya. ¹⁰ Vidya and Avidya.

and the others here feel concern for me;—this concern cometh out of the latter and it leadeth to God.

If one taketh the help of that part of the world-system which leadeth to God, one may realize the Absolute¹. Reaching the roof some like to come up and down the staircase;—they retain the Love of Personal God after realization of the Absolute. They do so for giving an example of themselves to mankind; and also enjoying the sweetness of Divine Love and the company of those that love the Lord.

Narendra and other disciples do not say a word; but sit still.

Doth the Master think of and point to himself,—as he teacheth Narendra?

*Narendra and
Renunciation*

Narendra:—There are people who get very much annoyed with me, as I point out the need for Renunciation.

Master (softly):—One *must* renounce,—give up the world for the sake of the Lord.

The Master looketh grave,—gently toucheth his own person and draweth the attention of Narendra and other disciples, saying, “Suppose, there are two things in a line one after the other, in such a way that ye cannot get at the second object without putting the first and nearer object on one side. In that case if ye want to take the second and more distant object must ye not put the first object on one side?”

Narendra:—Precisely so, Sir!

Master (softly to Narendra):—When thou seest everything as the manifestation of the Lord, canst thou see anything but the Lord. Is there any world² or family left,—standing by itself?

Narendra:—Assuredly not. *The world must be renounced!*

Master:—If thou seest the Lord alone, surely thou canst not see anything else,—one’s family and kinsmen² and so forth!

But one needeth to give up from the mind. Those that come here,—none of them is of the world.

(Smiling): Some among them chanced to have a fancy for women. (Rakhal, M., and others smile.) That is all. They are in the world but not of the world. Their desire to enjoy the company of women hath been fulfilled and they can now give their whole mind to God.

¹ Brahmajnana. ² Samsara.

NARENDRA AND HIS HEROIC SPIRIT

Tenderly doth the Master look upon Narendra. He is filled with joy as he casteth his eyes upon him. He turneth upon his disciples and saith, 'It is a marvel!'

Narendra (smiling to Master):—What is a marvel, Sir?

Master (smiling):—The progress that is being made towards Renunciation.

The Master meaneth the renunciation by Narendra.

Narendra and other disciples hold their peace and look on the Master.

Here Rakhal speaketh.

Rakhal (smiling to Master):—Narendra is now beginning to understand thee well.

The Master smileth and saith,—

Yes, that is so. What is more, I see there are many more here who are beginning to understand. (To M.) Is not the case?

M.:—Yes, Sir, that is indeed quite true.

The Master looketh for a time on Narendra and M. He beckoneth to Rakhal and other disciples, pointing to them. First he pointeth to Narendra and then to M.

Rakhal seeth his meaning and speaketh.

Rakhal (smiling to Master):—Thou meanest, Sir, that Narendra hath the spirit of a hero, while M. hath the spirit of a Sakhi (a lady friend). (*Laughter.*)

(By Sakhi Rakhal meaneth one who like the Gopis of Brindaban worshippeth the Lord of the Universe as the Bridegroom.)

The Master smileth.

Narendra (smiling):—M. here is a man of few words—and shy; is it thus that thou callest him a Sakhi?

Master (smiling to Narendra):—Well, what thinkest thou is the nature of my feelings?

Narendra:—Why, Sir, thou art everything! A hero who hath cut his way to the Reality with the sword of Discrimination and with a strength which the world cannot give! Thou hast the feelings of a Sakhi too—love unspeakable, the ecstasy of Divine Love which is called up by the Divine Lover alone. Thou art a hero, Sakhi—and everything else—in thy yearning for the Lord!

A REVELATION

The Master hath all his feelings stirred up. He layeth his hand upon the heart and speaketh.

Master (to Narendra and other disciples):—**I see—I realize that all things—every conceivable thing—cometh out of this!**

He asketh Narendra by signs, 'What dost thou understand?'

Narendra:—Every conceivable thing, *i. e.*, all created objects come out of Thee!

Master (rejoicing to Rakhal):—Seest thou how he understandeth?

He asketh Narendra to sing. Narendra will renounce the world and is filled with the spirit of Renunciation. He singeth—

SONG

Transitory is human life like the drops of water that have found their way into the petals of the lotus.

Hence the need for the company of holy men that have renounced the world.

One instant spent in their company doeth duty as a boat with which to go across the Sea of the World.

Here the Master interrupteth Narendra, saying, 'What is it that thou singest? These are common-place—and meant only for the beginner.

Narendra now singeth of the Lord as the Divine Lover whom the devotee longeth to see.

SONG

1. O, my friend! whither is gone the Divine Lover of *Braja*¹? Dost thou not see that separation from Him will kill me?

2. Plain daughter of a milkman that I am, He hath forgotten me and hath made the acquaintance of others more handsome than myself! Who did know, my dear friend, that a Lover so tender, so Divine, would go about in quest of personal charms?

3. Fool was I to have forgotten myself at the sight of His heavenly beauty and to have held his feet fast to my (throbbing) bosom! O, now I must consign this body to a watery grave in the *Jamuna*; or do thou get me poison and let me thus put an end to a miserable existence!

4. Or let me have some creeper from the woods to fasten round my neck; let me thus die by hanging to a young *Tamal* tree (dark-brown like Him);

¹ Brindaban.

Failing all this let me repeat night and day the sweet name of the Beloved, *Shyam*¹, *Shyam*, *Shyam*, *Shyam*, and stop not until this miserable body ceaseth to exist.

The Master as well as his disciples are all deeply touched with the sweetness of the song. Tears of Love Divine stand on the eyes of the Master and of Rakhal.

Narendra is filled with ecstasy, places himself in the position of a Gopi of Brindaban (a female lover of the Lord) and singeth again.

SONG

O My Beloved! O Beloved Mine!

What do I say to Thee, O what do I say?

(Foolish woman that I am and never a favorite of Fortune.)

Thou art the Mirror to be held by my hands. Thou art the Flower for my head!

O, I shall make Thee a Flower, wear Thee among my hairs!

I shall hide Thee, hide Thee, O my Beloved, under the braided hair:

Worn under the hair no one shall find Thee!

O, Thou art the cooling collyrium for the eye.

Thou art the betel leaf (chewed with nuts and sweet, fragrant spices) for the mouth:

I shall make Thee, O my Beloved, my *Shyam*, collyrium for the eyes and thus wear Thee!

They shall think I have painted my eyes with the dark-brown pigment and shall not find Thee!

Thou art the cool fragrant Sandal Paste for the body and the Necklace for the neck!

I shall cool, O my Beloved, my body, mind and soul with Thee, my dark-brown Sandal Paste!

And I shall make Thee my Necklace and wear Thee round my neck and on my bosom and next to my heart.

To the body Thou art the Life! To the house Thou art the One thing that one cannot do without.

To me, O my Beloved, Thou art verily as wings are for the bird, — as water is for the fish!

¹ Sri Krishna.

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N. B.—The writer of the Gospel is anxious, God willing, to go on with the narrative in the succeeding volumes.

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7	37,	" " " " " "
8	18,	'o' should be 'to.'
17	16,	'Goose-house' should be 'Goose-tank.'
48	9,	'forthnight' should be 'fortnight.'
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52	5,	'boyond' should be 'beyond.'
58	11,	'Gunas' should be 'Guna.'
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68	30,	'effacement' should be 'effacement.'
69		marginal note, 'Parinamavada, and the' should be 'Parinama- vada, the.'
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236	18,	'Universe. with' should be 'Universe, with.'
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244	25,	'good-bye?!' should be 'good-bye?'

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