

The Master Said

A collection of Paramhansa Yogananda's sayings and wise counsel to various disciples



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PARAMHANSA YOGANANDA

"The Lion of God"

Photograph taken at his last birthday celebration, January 5, 1952, SRF headquarters on Mt. Washington, Los Angeles, California.

FOREWORD

Who can be called Master? No ordinary man, surely, is worthy of this spiritual title. But now and then there appears on earth one of that noble lineage of God-realized souls of whose existence the Master of twenty centuries ago hinted: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do."

Men become Masters through discipline of the little self, or ego; through elimination of all desires save one – the desire for God; through singlehearted devotion to Him; and through deep meditation, or communion of the individual soul with the Universal Spirit. Only that man whose consciousness is unshakably established in the Lord, the sole Reality, is rightfully called "Master."

It is the hope of the Master's disciples that this little book will inspire many hearts with a deep desire for God.

Paramhansa Yogananda, the Master whose words are lovingly recorded here, was a teacher whose spiritual magnitude can scarcely be comprehended by those who have not explored the same realms of divine consciousness. From Africa to Alaska, through his teachings and such writings as *Autobiography of a Yogi*, *Whispers from Eternity*, and numerous other books, he ignited the spark of love for God in the hearts of men.

A college education and many years of spiritual training in his native India, under the Spartan discipline of his own spiritual teacher or guru, Swami Sri Yukteswar, prepared Yoganandaji* for his mission in the West. With a love for God that fired his soul with unceasing zeal, Paramhansaji was undaunted by the darts of mistrust and prejudice that sometimes met his efforts; and surely and steadily, through his lectures and his writings, he awakened sleeping souls in every nation of the globe and brought them where his own heart lay – at the feet of God.

Through his life and teachings he proved the precepts of original Christianity and original Yoga to be identical, and wove them into a unified message – the message of Self-Realization. This was his mission, which began in 1920 when he was invited to Boston as a delegate to a Congress of Religious Liberals. He established the Self-Realization Fellowship, through which he brought a teaching so practical, so abundant, that it stirred a spiritually sluggish world to its very depths. Into the confusion of creeds and dogmas he brought the harmony of one divine truth that all men may share.

Here was a man who set aside family attachment to serve the larger family of truth-seekers throughout the world, a man who was not afraid to live Christianity and to

* See glossary

demonstrate that those who sincerely and deeply love God, no matter what their professed creeds, are one in spirit – equal in the favor of the Infinite Lord.

For those who seek the path of renunciation that he himself trod, Paramhansa Yogananda founded colonies where monks and sisters work, study, and meditate, ever striving toward that perfection in living which the scriptures and all men of God have taught.

But one is less concerned here with the historical facts of the Master's life than with the shining reflections of his myriad-faceted nature, in which one facet gleams with greater brilliance than all the rest – his utter, sincere, and boundless love for God. Sparkling beside it is his loving understanding of and compassion for all mankind.

An account such as this, compiled by the Master's disciples, might be deemed prejudiced, but the following true incident from Paramhansaji's life illustrates the loving reception given him by all men of goodwill and understanding, regardless of creed.

Paramhansaji was traveling in the United States, and stopped one day to visit a monastery. The brothers received him with some apprehension, noting his dark skin, long black hair, and ocher robe – traditional garb of monks of the Swami Order. Thinking him a heathen from some godless land, they were about to refuse him an audience with the abbot, when that good man entered the room. With beaming face and open arms, he approached and embraced Paramhansaji, exclaiming, "Man of God! I am happy you have come."

In a similar creedless spirit, the disciples of Paramhansa Yogananda present this collection of his words, garnered from treasured diaries and cherished memories, that the reader may share in some measure the joy of instruction at the feet of a Master.

The Master Said

When the chapel at SRF headquarters was redecorated, the idea of having a perpetual candle, lit by Master, was suggested.

And the Master said, "I would like to feel that the light of devotion for God I have lit in your hearts will be eternal. No other light is necessary."

"Master, Dr. Lewis was your first disciple in this country, wasn't he?"

The Master answered, "That's what they say."

Seeing that the questioner was a little bit taken aback, he added, "I never say that people are my disciples. God is the Guru. They are His disciples."

Some people seem to defy progress itself, preferring their own well-worn ruts of thought and activity. The Master said, "I call such people psychological antiques. You must not be a psychological antique, so that when you die the angels say, 'Oh! This is an antique coming. Let us send him back to earth!'"

Some of the disciples, caught up in the whirl of activity, were neglecting their meditation.* Seeing this the Master said:

"Do not say, 'Tomorrow I will meditate longer. Tomorrow I will do this and that.' You will suddenly find that a year has passed by without your having done anything you intended. Instead say, 'This can wait and that can wait, but my search for God cannot wait.'"

A disciple with a logical turn of mind was inclined to argue with the Master. And the Master said, "You must not argue with me, for in your reasonable thought you will miss much truth. You must with faith be always in tune with what I say or ask you to do. You will find better results, and blessings."

* See *Kriya Yoga* in glossary

In answer to disciples and others who cannot understand how it is possible to combine meditation and activity in one path the Master often explained, “Be calmly active and actively calm.”

With the rapid growth of the organization* he had founded, the Master saw some of the monks and sisters becoming more and more deeply engrossed in the work, and he cautioned them, “Never be too busy to sing to the Lord inside, ‘Thou art mine; I am Thine.’”

“Does working for God and not for self mean it’s wrong to be ambitious?” inquired a disciple.

And the Master said, “No, you must be ambitious for God. If the will is weak and your ambition is dead, then you have lost life already. But you must not let ambition produce attachment. If you seek things for yourself, that is destructive; if you seek things for others, that is expansive; and if you seek to please only God, that is freeing to the soul.”

One man, although deeply attracted to the Master, would not listen to his advice, but the Master said of him, “I cannot be angry, for I see that God is in his heart. He makes many bad mistakes, but he is good and God knows that. If he would let me I would lead him to God, but nevertheless he will get there in time. He is a Cadillac stuck in the mud.”

When a friend criticized the use of advertising to spread the Self-Realization teachings, the Master said, “If Wrigley can use ads to make people chew gum, why shouldn’t I use ads to make people chew good ideas?”

* Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF).

Another time the Master said:

“God was the first advertiser. He hung the moon and the stars in the sky so that people would know He is there”.

A skeptical caller told the Master, “I have always believed in God but it has never done me any good”.

And the Master said, “Belief is good if it inspires you to practice the truths that caused you to believe. But belief must be converted into experience. Then you have faith, and that is when God can do you good!”

Warning the disciples against the company of evil people, the Master said, “You cannot be around either a rose or a skunk without being affected by it. So it is best to associate only with human roses”.

A disciple had the unpleasant habit of often telling to others his own doubts about God. To him the Master said, “It is serious enough when you are bad, but when you talk about it and influence others to be bad, the divine Law will punish you severely”.

Pointing out the folly of bad company, the Master said, “Peeling garlic or squeezing a rotten egg leaves unwanted smells on the hands, which will then require a lot of washing.”

A disciple questioned, “What value have books?”

And the Master said, “Books are meant to inspire the devotee, to encourage him to a greater zeal for God. But the mistake comes when he reads dead books – those without God in their pages, and when he reads too much, never practicing the good things he learns. Over-study produces vanity, false satisfaction, and what I call intellectual indigestion.”

In talking to a group of rather procrastinating young disciples the Master said, “You must routinize your life. God created routine. The sun shines until dusk and the stars shine until dawn.”

On the subject of brotherhood the Master said, “God is trying to evolve the art of high living by expressing His truth through a combination of particular civilizations, mentalities, and nationalities. No nation is complete in itself. An emulation and collection of the best in all nationalities will supply us with the best information on the art of living. It is important to note that all the great saints attained the best in all civilizations, and manifested the highest ideals embodied in all true religions.”

A student once confided to the Master that he feared he could not continue on the spiritual path because his bad habits were so strong it wore him out fighting them. “I’m too caught up in mistakes to make any progress,” he said sadly.

And the Master said, “Will you be better able to fight tomorrow than today? You have to turn to God some time, so isn’t it better to do it now? Just give yourself to Him and say, ‘Lord, naughty or good I am Thy child. Thou must take care of me.’ If you keep on and don’t stop trying you will change. A saint is a sinner who never gave up.”

To a young devotee seeking his advice the Master said, “The world creates bad habits in you, but the world will not stand responsible for your actions springing from those habits. Then why give all your time to the world? Reserve even an hour a day for actual scientific soul-exploration. Doesn’t the Giver of the world itself, of your family, money, and everything, deserve one twenty-fourth part of your time?”

The Master often stressed the need for balance between activity and meditation on the spiritual path. “When you work for God, not self, it is just as good as meditation. The work helps your meditation and meditation helps your work. You need the

balance. With meditation only you become lazy, and the senses become strong. With activity only the mind becomes restless and you forget God.”

Cautioning some of the disciples against losing their spiritual balance, the Master said, “Duty to the body must not contradict duty to the mind; and duty to the mind must not contradict duty to the soul. Remember, if you do your duty to the soul, body and mind will benefit too, but if you neglect the soul, then body and mind will suffer no matter what you do.”

The familiar Bible quotation, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me,” the Master explained thus: “Christ is seeking to enter the doors of your devotion, but you have latched them with your restlessness.”

The Master, encouraging his students to follow God’s laws for the care of the body as well as the soul, once said, “The body is the link between our higher and lower nature, the cart that carries within it the essence of all we may be – in fact, all we shall be eventually.* Why not speed up the transition through proper diet and other health measures?”

One disciple, greatly distressed because a fellow-disciple seemed to be making greater spiritual progress than he, complained to the Master about God’s seeming lack of cooperation with his own efforts. And the Master said:

“You too much keep your eyes on the platter instead of on your own dish, thinking of what you didn’t get instead of what has been given you.”

* God has equipped the body of man, alone among His creatures, with the secret spinal centers whose awakening (by yoga or, in some cases, by intense devotional fervor) confers divine illumination. The Hindu scriptures therefore teach (1) that a human body is a precious gift, and (2) that man cannot work out his salvation except in physical encasement. He will reincarnate on this earth again and again, until he is a Master. Only then will the human body have fulfilled the purpose for which it was created.

To a student who complained that he was too busy to meditate the Master succinctly remarked, “Suppose God were too busy to look after you?”

One of the students overheard someone criticize the Master and was very displeased. He told the story to the Master, who said, “One does not do good without being criticized. But what of it? Those who love God don’t take their eyes from Him. In pleasure and pain, sickness and health, success and failure, they are unshaken. That is how you must be. What is said won’t affect what I am unless I am weak and let in the negative thoughts of criticism. You see, it is not others who make us suffer, but ourselves. Why listen to negative things? You are concerned with God.”

The Master was returning late one night to Mount Washington,* after a visit to his desert retreat. Seeing a quiet park as he passed through a small town, he asked that the car be stopped, and then requested everyone to get out and take a little exercise. A number of passers-by were obviously curious about the little group taking its exercise at such an odd hour, and the exercisers felt slightly uncomfortable at being a part of this exhibition. But the Master said, “They think it is unusual only because *they* don’t do it.”

A man and his wife came to the hermitage to make the Master’s acquaintance. While there the man said, “I like your teachings and your words are very practical. But are you a Christian?”

And the Master said, “Didn’t Jesus say, ‘Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I say?’ Today there is ‘churchianity’ and Christianity. Going to church on Sunday and being a devil the rest of the week is heathen. But keeping God in the heart all the time and doing what Christ taught – that is being a Christian. It is for you to decide whether or not you think I do that.”

“You are very hard to understand, Master!” a disciple remarked. And the Master said, “There is no need for you to understand me. Follow me. Everyone reads commentaries on Christ, but who does what he told us to do?”

* See glossary

“Master, are you for or against the use of ceremonies to influence people?” a student inquired.

And the Master said, “Some ceremony is all right to make the people think of God. But if there is too much, everyone forgets what it is all about.”

To the congregation of the Self-Realization Fellowship* Church at San Diego the Master once said: “Let the church cathedral remind you of your own cathedral within, where you should go in the dead of night and in the dawn. There you can listen to the mighty organ music of Om,* and hear in it the sermon of divine wisdom.”

The Master, always open-handed, ever giving away that which was given him, surprised the disciples one day by saying, “I don’t believe in charity.” Noting the amazed looks on the faces of those about him, he added, “It enslaves people. But to do things for people that will help them to help themselves is important and is greater than any material charity.”

Counseling the disciples against too much visiting, the Master said, “Don’t mix with people too closely. The desire for companionship is in reality the soul’s desire for companionship with God. But the more you seek to satisfy that desire outwardly, the more you will lose of divine companionship. Friendships that are not rooted in love for God only make men restless and dissatisfied.”

The Master had talked for a long time about creation and why God started it. He explained in detail the reasons for life and the complexities of the delusion of matter. The disciples had not been able to follow him into the realms of divine understanding, and showed their perplexity. Seeing this, the Master said:

* See glossary

“This life is a master novel, written by God, and the human mind goes crazy trying to understand it. That is why I tell you to meditate more. Enlarge the cup of your receptivity and then you will be able to hold the ocean of infinite wisdom.”

Two disciples, angry with one of their brothers, took their lengthy and unjust complaints to the Master. He listened in silence and when they were through he said, “Change yourselves.”

A student who was dissatisfied with his station in life complained to the Master that he thought God should have given him a better role in the cosmic drama. Why, was his complaint, should some people have to play inferior parts?

And the Master said, “It is absolutely impossible to have a play if every one of the players is the star.”

After pointing out a disciple’s error, the Master said, “You must not feel sensitive because I correct you. It is because you are winning all the time that I show you the way of self-discipline. I bless you every day for a glorious future in good. I use so much caution lest you get used to mechanical habits and forget to make daily the deep, thirsty, supreme, conscious effort to reach God.”

Good advice was given all mothers when the Master said:

“Train the will of your children. When they become self-willed about something that is right, don’t call them bad. Don’t curtail their freedom, but give suggestions with love and understanding of their own little desires. If you try to save time by beating them, you will lose time. Reason with the child and then say nothing. Let him get his own little hard knocks and he will then understand. He will learn much sooner.”

(The Master’s disciples have often observed that he followed his own advice with children of all ages, helping them to develop their own wills and understanding of their individual capacity to accept and follow. He seldom admonished a person twice; rather, he reasoned with the “child” and then said nothing. The wisdom of his instruction has many times been proved through those disciples who perfectly follow it.)

A visitor once asked the Master, “Why, if yours is a church of all religions, do you place such special emphasis on Christianity?”

And the Master answered, “Because that was the wish of Babaji.* He wanted me to interpret the Christian Bible and the *Bhagavad Gita*,* and to show the basic unity between the Vedic and the Christian scriptures. That’s why I was sent here.”

A disciple who did not have much devotion came to the hermitage. Every time the Master saw him he would say, “Get devotion! You must have devotion. Remember what Jesus said: ‘Father, thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.’”

Some time later this disciple was with a group of others visiting the Master at his desert retreat. It was near Christmas time, and the Master, taking some toys out of a box, began playing with them. After enjoying them for a time, just like a child, he asked this intellectual disciple how he liked them. The disciple was still trying to get over his surprise but he said, laughing, “They’re fine, Sir.”

The Master then quoted, “Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Explaining how the soul breaks through the imprisoning walls of dogmatic belief and body-consciousness, the Master said:

“Just as confined water rushes out in all directions when the walls that hold it are broken, so also the consciousness of man spreads out when the embankments of bigotry and restlessness are broken, expanding into the omnipresent consciousness of Spirit.”

A group of disciples were walking with the Master on the lawn of the Encinitas* hermitage, which overlooks the ocean. It was very foggy and dark. Someone remarked, “How cold and gloomy it is!”

And the Master said, “This is what death is like to the worldly man. He steps from this world into what seems like a heavy mist. Things are not clear to him and he feels

* See glossary

* The SRF World Brotherhood Colony at Encinitas, California, founded by Yoganandaji in 1937.

afraid, he feels lost. But the spiritual man who is attuned to God goes consciously into His light.”

Explaining death the Master said, “Death teaches us to be in love with Divine Love only, and not to be attached to the caravanserai of flesh in which Divine Love temporarily resides. If we love souls, we must not try to keep them near us for our pleasure and comfort. If we really love them, we will continue to love them, particularly when they are taken away from us to advance on their path toward soul freedom, or when they are called to rest in the bosom of the Father.

“In the sorrow of separation from their loved ones, fools cry for awhile and then forget, but the wise find the impulse to seek their lost love in the heart of the Eternal. What we lose in finite life we must seek in the chamber of Infinity.”

Looking at the stars glimmering overhead while he enjoyed an evening stroll with some of the disciples, the Master said: “How many tiny stars you are – stars of atoms! If your life force were suddenly released you would cover the whole sky. Some great saints, when they die, see their life spread over all space. It is a beautiful experience.”

Two of the disciples were discussing their spiritual progress with the Master while enjoying the sunshine. One said, “My desire for God is very great.” And the Master said:

“That is the greatest blessing, to feel His pull on your heart. When that desire comes it is His way of saying, ‘Too long you have played with the toys of My creation. Now I want you with Me – come home!’”

One of the disciples asked the Master, “Is it good to believe blindly?”

And the Master said, “There are two kinds of doubt, destructive and constructive. Destructive doubt is habitual skepticism. People who have this mental habit never do anything to find out the truth.

“On the other hand, constructive doubt is intelligent questioning. It isn’t good to have arbitrary disbelief without investigation, for this kind of doubt is the static on your mental radio that causes you to lose the program within.”

“How can God, the unmanifested Absolute, appear in visible form* to the devotee?” a disciple asked.

And the Master said, “If you doubt, you won’t see; and if you see, you won’t doubt.”

A disciple asked, “Why is there so much suffering in the world?”

And the Master said, “There is a reason for suffering – to keep us from learning too much of others and not enough of ourselves.”

Speaking of how quickly one can be released from the delusion* of the world, the Master said, “Here you are, crying about the body and about all your sorrows; then the Divine Mother* comes and slaps you, and you are awake from this terrible dream. Every soul, sooner or later, has that experience.”

“Life is a great dream of God,” the Master stated to the disciples. One of them inquired, “If it is only a dream, then why is pain so real?”

And the Master said, “A dream head struck against a dream wall causes dream pain. A dreamer does not realize the falseness of a dream until he awakens. So the dualities of the Cosmic Dream cannot be known until a man wakes up in God and ceases to dream delusion.”

A devotee was struggling, with apparent lack of success, to overcome the weaknesses of his human nature. To him the Master once said, “I don’t ask you to overcome delusion. All I ask is that you *resist* it.”

A sister of the Order* complained of a lack of devotion: “It is not that I don’t want God, but I don’t seem to be able to direct love to Him. What should one do, who like myself is experiencing a ‘dry’ state?”

* See *Divine Mother* in glossary.

* See glossary

* See glossary

And the Master said: “One should not think that he hasn’t devotion, but should work to get it. Why should you be upset because God isn’t always showing Himself to you? Think how long you have ignored Him! Meditate more, and go deep, and follow the rules. By changing your habits you will awaken consciously the memory of His wondrous Being, and knowing Him, there is no doubt that you will love Him.”

Musing upon the types of people who seek God, the Master said, “There are three classes of devotees: believers, but not churchgoers; believers who attend church and are satisfied; and those who must *know*.”

To devotees the Master often said, “One song you must constantly hum, unheard by any: ‘My Lord, I will be Thine always.’”

The Master once asked one of the monks, “What keeps the earth from shooting out into space, away from the sun?” The disciple answered, “The power of gravity in the sun, Sir.” The Master then queried, “Then what keeps it from being drawn back into the sun?” and the monk replied, “That’s its centrifugal force, Sir, which makes it want to keep shooting out into space, away from the sun.”

The Master smiled significantly. Much later the monk recalled the conversation, and realized that the Master was speaking in allegory of God and man.

In warning a student about the dangers of desires, the Master said, “They are the greatest enemies of man and he cannot appease them. Have one desire only, for God! You will see that gratifying the senses does not satisfy desire because you are not the senses. They are only your servants, not your Self.”

“What is the best prayer?” a disciple inquired. The Master said:

“Just say to the Lord, ‘Please tell me Thy will.’ Don’t say, ‘I want this and I want that,’ but ask what He wants for you. You will see that you get much better things when He chooses for you.”

The Master saw that one of the monks still retained many desires for material pleasures, and he said:

“Desires are dangerous. They never cease unless curbed. Desires should be converted into the desire for God alone. Then only can one find happiness.”

A new student, eager to circumvent the trial of this terrestrial sphere, was told by the Master, “The Divine Physician is holding you in the hospital of delusion until your disease of desire for material things is cured. When you are well He will let you go to the Cosmic Home.”

Two disciples came and the others thought they were wonderful, but the Master was reserved. When they went away, the Master said, “You were looking at what they did, but I was watching their minds. Outwardly they were following the rules, but inside they were running wild. Good conduct will not last long if the mind is not purified.”

As the Master and the disciples sat near the fireplace in the hermitage drawing room, talking of spiritual things, the Master said, “Picture two men. On their right is the valley of life, and on their left is the valley of death. Both are men of reason, but one goes right and the other goes left. Why? Because one uses his power of discrimination rightly and the other misuses this power.”

Master was severely chastising some of the disciples for a lack of efficiency in the performance of their duties. All were feeling very sad, and then the Master said, “I do not like to scold you all for you are so good. But when I see a speck on a white wall I want to remove it.”

For the good of the disciple the Master sometimes used fiery speech, although within he ever remained calm and loving. One of the monks, badly stung by the Master's words, thought ruefully that he must surely be completely forsaken.

Some time later he received a note from the Master saying, "No matter what you do, my blessings will always be the same, but as I told you, I will never cooperate with your mistakes."

A television set was given to the Master. It was set up in a room where it could be used by all the disciples. They were going there more and more frequently until the Master counseled them:

"You had better not seek diversion until you have found God. Until then seeking diversion means forgetting Him. Learn to love Him first. Then it doesn't matter what you do, for He will never leave your thoughts."

One of the disciples was faithful and prompt in performing whatever tasks were given him by the Master. But for others he would do nothing. By way of correction the Master said, "You must serve others as you serve me. Remember, God dwells in all. Don't neglect any opportunity for pleasing Him."

When the Master gave some dietary advice to a student, the latter pooh-poohed it, for despite his wrong eating habits he had always enjoyed good health. Nevertheless the Master cautioned him:

"When you overeat it seems very good, and you experience only the pleasure of it, but after a period of time that bad habit will bring illness."

"You must be deep," cautioned the Master. "As soon as you allow yourself to become restless, all the old troubles start over again – sex, wine, and money."

Every Christmas, disciples and students gathered with the Master at Mount Washington for a long meditation, which usually lasts all day and into the night. During the Christmas meditation in 1948 the Divine Mother appeared to the Master,

and the devotees heard him conversing with Her. Many times he said, with a deep sigh, “Oh, You are so beautiful!” He told many of the devotees present Her wishes concerning their lives. Then suddenly he said, “Don’t go! You say the material desires of these people are driving you away? Oh, come back! Don’t go away!”

The Master was asked the difference between the evil and the worldly person, and he said:

“Most people are worldly. There are few who are really evil. ‘Worldly’ means being foolish and staying away from God because of ignorance; such people don’t know any better. But ‘evil’ means deliberately turning the back on God. Not many would do that.”

A disciple expressed his disgust for a criminal whose cruel misdeeds had been much played up by the newspapers.

And the Master said, “I am sorry for the man who is sick. Why should I hate the man who is evil? He is sick too.”

A student deplored the fact that news of the world’s evil always seemed predominant, and the Master said: “Evil spreads with the wind. The power of truth travels against the wind.”

About man’s equality in the eyes of God, the Master said:

“The diamond and the charcoal lying side by side enjoy the same quantity and quality of the sun’s rays, but until the charcoal becomes clear like the diamond, it cannot reflect the sunlight. So, the ordinary person who is spiritually dark cannot be compared to the person who has expressed the light of God.”

The Master was trying to encourage a disciple by pointing out the ways of attaining communion with God, but the disciple, dubious as to his own ability, said, “But Sir, you are a Master!”

And the Master said, “All souls are equal. The only difference between us is that I made the effort. I showed God that I love Him, and He came to me. Love is the magnet from which God cannot escape.”

Another disciple said, “Though I sit and try to meditate I do not have the devotion to penetrate my own restless thoughts and go within. I can only term it a lack of devotion.”

In reply the Master said, “Sitting in the silence trying to feel devotion may well get you no place. That is why I have given the techniques of meditation. Practice them and you will tie the mind to God. When you do *Kriya** the consciousness is raised and you easily feel the love of Spirit.”

When a certain very restless student told him that she was not any closer to God than when she started attending church, in spite of the fact that she never missed a Sunday, the Master said:

“If I tell you that an orange is good, and that it is sweet, and how it grows, it doesn’t follow that you *know* about the orange. You have to eat it yourself. It is the same with truth; you have to experience it. I can only arouse your appetite. Why don’t you get busy and take a bite?”

To a disciple how repeatedly asked the Master to give her God-consciousness, yet did nothing to prepare herself for such a state, the Master said, “Great doctors of souls can inspire heavenly truants to retrace their footsteps Godward, but the actual walking back to the divine home must be done by the error-stricken souls themselves.”

An earnest new student, expecting overnight results as if by magic, was disappointed to find that after a week’s effort at meditation he could detect no sign of God’s presence within.

And the Master said, “If you don’t find the pearl with one or two divings, don’t blame the ocean – blame your diving. You have not dived deep enough.”

* See glossary

One monk was devoted, but careless of following the rules of hermitage life. When He wondered why he was not progressing, the Master said:

“I have given you the instructions for finding God, but I cannot follow them for you. You individually have to make love to God. Keep your mind on Him all the time, and when you are working, think all the while that you are doing it for the Lord. Always it should be ‘God, Christ, Guru; God, Christ, Guru.’

“Some who come here only talk and joke all the time, and play the organ. Well, they won’t get God! It isn’t just living here. You have to make the effort. Each one of you must stand alone before God.”

The Master said: “Free yourself from changing moods. They are caused by indulgence in sense-pleasures, followed by satiety and disgust. *Maya* or the mental state of delusion is characterized by the pairs of opposites. The man of self-control is free from alternations of pleasure and pain.”

When he observed that one of the monks had lapsed into a mood the Master gently said, “When the thorn of misery is in the flesh, take it out with the thorn of meditation.”

A disciple permitted himself to have a downcast mood one evening over what seemed, at the time, something very important. He got over it, however. Several days later, the Master came downstairs to go out. He saw the disciple standing there, happy by this time, and said, “No more moods, now! How else will you be able to help others?”

In speaking of the limitless realms of the mind the Master said, “The mind is like a miraculous rubber band that can be expanded to eternity without breaking.”

To help a student get his airplane of thought off the ground, the Master told of this little experience: “Once I saw a big pile of sand, and a very little ant crawling on it. I thought to myself, ‘The ant must be thinking at this moment that it is scaling the Himalaya Mountains!’ No doubt it was the Himalayas to the ant, but not to me. So, a million of our years may be only a couple of years in the mind of God. We must think of everything in terms of Eternity! Space!”

“Men turn to evil,” the Master once explained, “in the absence of true joy.”

“We cannot go against God’s will. Each human being has to perform a certain duty and he cannot get away from it. But we can realize: ‘Thou art the Doer. Make me Thy willing instrument.’” The Master was holding a discourse with his disciples. “But how,” asked one of them, “can we know that we are acting as true instruments of the Divine Will?” And the Master said, “All you can do is the best you know how. God wants from us the continuity of effort, and that we should not run away from our duties.”

“I predict that you will make a good editor,” said the Master to a disciple, “if you don’t get big-headed.” The devotee, who had been struggling for some months to overcome this fault, said, “I hope I don’t, Sir.” “That’s right”, replied the Master. “Egotism is the death of true knowledge.”

About forgiveness the Master said, “I used to think Christ was very lenient when he said to forgive our enemies seventy times seven. I thought, ‘Nobody would do that!’ But when I prayed to God for further light, He said to me: ‘How many times, O Man, do I forgive each of you daily?’”

Gazing one Sunday morning at the masses of flowers that decorated the church, the Master said, “I thank you for the flowers. God is always pleased to receive flowers because He Himself is beautiful, and He created beauty in the flowers so that they

would speak of Him. More than anything else in nature they reveal Him. Through the windows of flowers God peeks His shining face. He says, 'Seek Me behind the fragrance of the rose.' And yet He otherwise remains silent. He shows His beauty but doesn't reveal that He Himself is hidden there."

"I wish I could have faith, Master," one man commented. And the Master said, "Faith has to be cultivated, or rather uncovered within us. It is there but it has to be brought out. If you watch your life you will see where He has been working through it and your faith will be strengthened. The trouble is, too many don't look for Him. They take things for granted."

In urging some of the young devotees to have full faith in God and never give up seeking Him, the Master said:

"When I was a very little boy I once wrote in a letter to God all the things I wanted to say to Him, and addressed it, 'God in Heaven'. Each day I waited in tears for the postman, and I was very angry when the answer didn't come at once. But finally one day I saw a great light – and every word of my letter was answered, in my native Bengali language! God answered because I refused to give up."

Two ladies used to leave their cars open when they parked. The Master once said to them, "You should take precautions and leave it locked."

"What's the matter with you?" they cried, "Where is your faith in God?"

"I have faith," the Master answered, "but this is not faith you are exercising; it is carelessness."

But they went on, leaving the car in the charge of their impractical "faith." One day, when they had left many valuables in the car, thieves came and stole everything.

And the Master said, when they told him, "You must have faith, but don't expect God to protect you if you ignore all His laws of reason and caution. Have faith, but be practical and don't tempt others."

"It is so difficult for me to make friends! If only I could overcome that handicap!" exclaimed one of the Master's students.

And the Master said, “Choose your company carefully, and when you are with them mix sincerely, but always maintain a little distance and reverence. Never be too familiar with people. It is easy to make friends, but to keep friends you must follow this rule.”

Cautioning two of the young disciples who were attached to each other and seldom mixed with others at the hermitage, the Master said:

“It is bad to be attached to just one of a few individuals, excluding everyone else. This inhibits the growth of divine friendship. You must extend the boundaries of a growing kingdom of your love. Scatter your love everywhere to the God in everything.”

One evening as he sat talking with his spiritual family of monks and sisters, the Master said, “Possessions mean nothing to me now, but friendship is everything. In true friendship you can catch a glimpse of the Friend behind all friends. That is why you must never be false to a friend or betray anyone. To do so is one of the greatest sins before the tribunal of God.”

The Master was asked, “Why does God give us our families if He doesn’t want us to be attached to them?”

And the Master said, “God created the family to take your love from your little self and place it in others. Then he started friendship to broaden your consciousness more. But that is not the end. You must go on expanding that selfless divine love until it encompasses all people and all beings, everywhere.”

Interested in the growth of the Master’s church, a disciple made a great to-do over the attendance. And the Master said:

“I don’t want to keep my temple as a shopkeeper does his shop, watching to see which customers come in. If anybody does come, wonderful! but my friendship is given unconditionally to all, whether or not they believe in me and my teachings.”

The Master and a disciple were discussing a dearly loved friend, and the Master said:

“Friendship is God’s love shining through the eyes of your loved ones, calling you home to drink His nectar of all difference- and selfishness-dissolving unity. Friendship is God’s trumpet call, bidding the soul destroy the partitions that separate it from all other souls and from Him.”

“I can’t believe in free will when I see the inequalities of poverty and riches, stupidity and intelligence,” one of Master’s students declared.

And the Master said, “When God sends us out from Him as souls we are all equal, but then comes the delusion. When we get caught in the things of the world we forget our divine identity. We think we have no free will. It is true that your will is bound by habits, desires, and environment, but if you choose you can break these chains. Turn toward God and you will see your will becoming free. Though the drama of life is governed by a cosmic plan, man has the freedom to change his own part.”

When the Master first came to America he wore the Indian dress, and his hair was long around his shoulders. Someone, fascinated by what was to him a strange sight, inquired, “Are you a fortune-teller?”

And the Master said, “No, I tell people how to mend their fortunes.”

A man seeking spiritual guidance came to the Master. He sadly explained: “Though I want to find God and though I feel the urge to give myself to hermitage life, I don’t want to lose my freedom.”

And the Master said, “When you haven’t God you are not free, for you are guided by a thousand whims and habits. But when you tune your will with the wisdom-guided will of one who knows God, then you find the real freedom. Freedom is not doing what desire says, but what the soul says. It is being loosed from habit.”

A student found it difficult to conceive that the spirit of God dwells within the flesh, but the Master said, “Just as ashes, glowing red, reveal the fire behind, so your body reveals the Spirit to me.”

“You must have blind faith in God,” said the Master to a disciple who endeavored unsuccessfully to understand the divine plan. “Don’t depend on reason – that is where Satan* tricks you.”

The spirit of forgiveness was typical of the Master. Reflecting on the conduct of some foolish disciples who had left the hermitage, he said:

“If my child falls from the top of a building, and when I rush to pick him up, starts shooting at me, I leave him to himself. But if he falls, even after I have warned him, and then cries for my help, I will run to help him and forget that he disobeyed me.

“Some people leave here and say that we do not live the life – because they themselves did not live it! But some leave, and then come running back to me for help. I do everything I can for them.

“That doesn’t mean I condone their actions, but when there is sincere desire to be good, I help. Someone came to me crying and saying, ‘Why did I ever leave?’ I said, ‘Wasn’t this a paradise compared to the outside?’ ‘You bet it was,’ he said, and cried so long I started crying with him.”

The Master was berating a disciple soundly for something foolish he had done. The disciple finally said, “But you will forgive me, won’t you, Sir?” And the Master said, “Well, what else can I do?”

Ever watchful lest disciples fall into the delusion of complacency on the spiritual path, the Master told a devotee:

“After you reach *nirbikalpa samadhi** it is impossible ever to fall again. But until you reach that state you are not safe. One disciple of a great Hindu master was such a great soul that his master used to hold him up as an example for all to follow. “But one time this disciple came to his master and said he knew a woman devotee whom he

* See *Maya* in glossary.

* See glossary

was helping. They were meditating together, and so on. His master looked at him and said, 'Sadhu, beware!' But the disciple said, 'Oh, I will be all right.'

"Well, delusion caught him. A little bad karma came out, and he ran away with the woman. But after a time he came back and said, 'I am sorry'. He was all right then. But you see, even saints can fall, until they reach the highest state of God-communion."

On another occasion Master was speaking of a great saint who fell from the spiritual path through the misuse of spiritual powers. "He later realized his mistake," the Master explained, "and returned to his disciples. In the end of life he was a fully liberated soul."

Upon hearing this story one of the disciples said, "But Sir, how did he rise again so quickly? When you fall after reaching such a high state, isn't the punishment much more severe than when you fall in ignorance? I should think he would have to wait a long time." Smilingly the Master shook his head. "God is no tyrant. After tasting nectar, if you go and eat stale cheese, you quickly become dissatisfied. You throw the cheese away and cry for nectar again. God won't refuse you, if that is what you want."

A certain disciple had feelings that were easily hurt. Because of this, the Master was always especially kind to him. One time he was introducing him to someone, and said, "This is my baby, I call him that because I am babying him." Looking at the disciple he asked smilingly, "You don't mind if I call you that, do you?" "O no, Sir", replied the disciple. "That's good," said the Master gently. He gave to each devotee the particular treatment that was best calculated to encourage his spiritual growth.

The Master once told a group of disciples: "If anyone tells you, 'I am God', you know he isn't telling the truth. But we can all say, 'God has become me'. What else are we made of? Before He created there was nothing but Him, and from Himself He made all the souls."

During a discussion of spiritual subjects one of the new disciples requested that the Master tell him what God is. The Master said:

“God is Bliss, which means the He contains within Himself all love, wisdom, and joy. He can manifest in any way that He pleases, and He is both personal and impersonal. If you want Him to come in a form He can, but He can also come as a great light, or as the rolling sound of the Holy Ghost.* The greatest thing is to feel that Bliss in which everything else is contained. That is a different and far higher state of consciousness than any the ordinary man has ever known.

“But how can I tell you with words what God is? That which is boundless will not be chained with speech. You have to meditate; only then will you know what He is.”

Once during a lecture the Master said, “Why should God surrender Himself to you? You who work so hard for money and so little for God! The saints tell us that if one day and one night, or three days and three nights, you continuously pray for God, He will visit you. But He won’t do it if you permit duties to interfere. If, in the dead of each night, you pray to God one hour with sincerity, in time He will come to you.”

Two of the disciples were struggling to arrange some very heavy furniture. The Master sat reading some letters that had just been brought to him. He seemed not to notice the noise and confusion about him, nor the obvious difficulty the disciples were having in fitting a too-large couch into the small, overcrowded room. Only once did the Master look up and inquire, as though recognizing their presence for the first time, “Are you having trouble?”

Too weak to speak, and surprised by his detachment, they nevertheless managed faint smiles. The Master went back to his letters.

The disciples thought, “How perfectly Master is exemplifying God’s aloofness from His creation!”

But the next day, the Master was all praise, and to everyone he said, “I don’t know how they managed, but they didn’t complain, just kept on working. And how nicely it is arranged! That is what God watches to see – how we will do His work.”

And the disciples thought, “And so it is with God. He is aloof from the disturbance of creation, but ever has His eyes upon the devotee.”

* See glossary

“Sometimes we mortals are prone to think that God forgets us,” commented a visitor. “He certainly keeps His distance.”

And the Master said, “What do you mean? It is man who keeps the distance. Who seeks God? He won’t come when our mental temples are filled with the idols of restless thoughts and desires. Even so, He sends His enlightened sons to remind the lost ones of their divine heritage, but hardly anyone hears them. God is constantly busy helping people and stimulating their progress to spiritual ends.”

One of the disciples complained that meditation was difficult because God seemed so far away, and the Master said, “He only seems distant because your thoughts are busy with other things. You must set the mind on Him. Then you will find God ever with you, a God who will talk in the language of men, a God whom you will see templed in every flower and shrub, in every blade of grass, and in every thought that passes through the mind. Then you can truly say, ‘I am free. I live in the body but I am not attached to it. My wings are the wings of light. I am the gossamer of Spirit.’ And what joy will consume your being!”

“Destroy all desire – get rid of the ego; all this sounds very negative to me, Master. When I get through with this, what will I have left?”

And the Master said, “Everything. You will be wealthy in Spirit. You will have ceased to be a beggar standing at the door and will be one with the Father. That is not a negative state. When you get there you can come and go from life at will. And you can have anything you want at will.

“But observe the saints. Those who know God aren’t interested in using their powers to acquire things. It is so difficult to explain, because nothing else can be compared to it. You must have the experience.”

Of God’s importance in the life of man the Master said, “He remembers you though you remember Him not. Who do you think is holding this mud ball in the sky? Who makes the trees and flowers grow? He digests your food and keeps your heart pumping, and it is He alone who directs the regeneration of the body cells. If He forgets creation all will be gone, but see how few remember Him!”

Reminding the disciples of the importance of seeking God first, the Master said, “Most people are preoccupied with material things. They want God only because they want to ask Him for a thousand dollars. God knows that. He does not come until you surrender to Him every desire; until you say, ‘Father, guide and control me.’”

Addressing his remark to a group of disciples, the Master said, “I know that if I had nothing, in you all I have friends who would do everything for me. And you know that I would do the same for you. We are looking at God in each other. That is the most beautiful relationship.”

Speaking of God’s love for man the Master said:

“God is just as much a beggar as we are. He is begging for our attention. The Master of the Universe, who has everything – suns, moons, stars, worlds – quivering at the glance of His being, is begging for our love. He is running after the devotee and He is begging for the devotee’s love. He is saying, ‘Won’t you give Me your love? Will you seek Me? Do you like Me better than all the things I have made for you?’

“But the devotee says, ‘I am too busy now. I have work to do. I can’t look after You.’

“And the Lord says, ‘I will wait.’”

The Master always stressed the necessity for absolute sincerity with God, and on one occasion he said:

“God can never be bribed by the size of the congregation in a church, nor by its wealth, nor by well-planned sermons. God visits only the altars of hearts that are cleansed by tears of devotion and lighted by soul-stirring love.”

Explaining the devotee’s reward in inwardly perceiving the all-pervading Lord, the Master once said, “He whom I sought without I find as the Fountain of all nature’s forces within me. Just behind the walls of darkness I perceive Him in the silence.”

A disciple expressed the desire to please the Master, and the Master said, “I shall be happy knowing you are happy with God. What will you do when I leave this earth? Be anchored in God; He will never fail you.”

To a group of disciples prone to gossip the Master said, “Avoid speaking negative things. Why look at the drains when there is beauty all around? You could take me into the most perfect room in the world and still I would be able to find fault with it.

“But isn’t it better to enjoy its beauty? If we concentrate on the bad side we lose sight of the good. Doctors say that millions of terrible germs pass through our bodies, but because we know nothing about them we don’t worry about them. So we should be with evil and negative things. For when we look at that side long enough, we take on its qualities. And when we look at good, we take on good.”

Overhearing some gossip, the Master said, “Those who love gossip remind me of a certain little bat. The birds and animals were fighting, and the bat was in between. When the birds were winning the bat sided with them, and when it looked as though the animals were winning the bat sided with them. Finally, when the birds and animals called a truce, the first thing they decided was to kill the bat.”

To a disciple who was prone to gossip the Master once said:

“You must not gossip about others. Don’t be inquisitive. As soon as you are inquisitive about others, others will be inquisitive about you. And you don’t realize how rumors spread! Give a lie a twenty-four-hour start, and it often becomes immortal.

“We once had a man here who started a false rumor about someone else. As soon as it got to me I started a false rumor against him. At last he heard about it, and very indignantly he came to me and said, ‘Look what this person and that person are saying against me!’ I said, ‘You don’t like it, do you?’ He said, ‘Of course not!’ Then I told him, ‘Now you know what somebody else felt like when you started a false rumor against him.’ He was so astonished! I went on, ‘I want you to know that I started that rumor myself, to teach you a lesson. Now don’t gossip about anybody any more.’”

Master often said: “Just reflect, when you feel like gossiping, how much you would dislike to have others gossip about you. God has given each one the privacy of his own thoughts, that he may correct himself. It is the heart that God watches, not the outward actions of a person.”

The Master was expounding the evils of gossip, and he told the disciples, “My guru Sri Yukteswar used to say, ‘If it isn’t something I can tell everybody, I don’t want to hear it.’”

The Master was indeed the meekest of the meek so long as those around him were sincere, but when the need for correction arose he could be like steel. Once when a disciple, having seen the soft side of the Master, took advantage of it and neglected his duties, Master scolded him severely. Seeing the amazement in the disciple’s eyes at his unexpected discipline, the Master said, “We get along fine until you do unreasonable things. Then I remember my position and have to correct your faults.”

A man meeting the Master for the first time asked, “One of your students told me that you are his guru. What did he mean?”

And the Master said, “‘Guru’ means one who leads from the darkness of ignorance to the light of wisdom. Such a spiritual teacher, knowing God, has but one desire – to implant the love of Him in others. He shows the devotee that God alone is the goal of life and tells him how to get there. It is not I who am the guru – God is the only guru – but God has made me His instrument.”

Disciples deemed it a privilege to render service to the guru, who labored unceasingly for their welfare. To two monks who had performed some small courtesy for him the Master said, “You are all so kind to me with your many attentions.” A disciple hastily replied, “O no! It’s you who are kind to us, Master!”

And the Master said, smiling sweetly, “God is helping God. That is His drama.”

The disciples were listening eagerly one evening in the main hall of the Encinitas hermitage as the Master talked, far into the night, about God. They often remember how he said:

“I am here to tell you about that which I enjoy every day. For He walks with me; He talks with me; He thinks with me; He plays with me; and I feel Him in my joy. Everything I do is for Him. I am His servant. I say to Him, ‘Lord, why should I worry when Thou art with me? I am just Thine instrument to help Thy children. What Thou bringest to me is Thy responsibility. I will not interfere with Thy plan for me by harboring any desires of my own.’”

Reminding the disciples of the need for good company, the Master said, “This simile should be remembered: milk cannot float on water, but the butter that is churned out of it can. Similarly, a man whose childhood has been spent in churning the butter of Self-realization from the milk of his mind is able to remain in the world, active for God, without getting mixed up with worldly desires and attachments.”

After praising a disciple the Master said, “When you are told you are good you must not relax, but try to become better. To be better means more happiness for yourself and for those who think of your welfare.”

The Master constantly stressed the importance of good company and right action. “Every good action,” he would say, “is like a pickax that digs into the soil of consciousness and brings forth the fountain of God’s joy.”

A student expressed surprise that a bad person who decides to be good should thereafter encounter difficulty, but the Master explained, “The man rolling down hill finds no resistance, but as soon as he wants to climb up he meets with great resistance.

So it is with the man who is sliding into evil; he does not find resistance until he tries to reverse his direction and climb the hill of virtue.”

“Sir, give me the grace of devotion,” asked a disciple. But the Master said, “You are saying, ‘Give me the money, so I can buy what I want.’ But I say, ‘No! First you have to *earn* the money. Then I will give it to you so you can buy the thing you want!’”

The Master was speaking at some length of the terrible world situation, and how certain nations were keeping the rest of the world disrupted. One of the monks said, “But, Sir, isn’t that a part of God’s plan?” And the Master said, “Yes, I know. There has to be a villain on the screen so that we will learn to love the hero. But now we are speaking in the human, not the divine, way.”

A disciple came to the Master one evening and said, “Master, what letters we are getting from the people in Germany – such sincerity and devotion!” The Master replied with quiet understanding: “Yes, they have been hurt; that’s why. All those wars and troubles over there. What they need is *Kriya*, not atom bombs. Well, maybe I will send you there some day. There is a great work to be done.”

Talking about the close relationship between humility and true greatness the Master said, “The greatest man is the one who is the least, and the servant of all. The real leader is that one who has learned to follow and who doesn’t idolize his job as leader. Those who want praise and approval from the people don’t deserve our admiration, but he who serves all has a right to sit on the throne of our hearts. Isn’t God the servant of all His children, and does He beg praise? No. He is too great to be moved by it.”

The Master, after a talk with an egotistical visitor, observed:
“The waters of God’s mercy-rain cannot gather on the mountaintops of pride, but flow into the valleys of humbleness.”

“I never could believe in heaven, Master,” commented a disciple “Is there truly such a place?”

The Master said, “Indeed it exists! Those who have loved God and placed their attachment in Him go there when they die. On that plane whatever one thinks will be manifested. The body is all shimmering light. There are colors and sounds that earth knows nothing about. It is a very enjoyable place; but even the experience of heaven is not the greatest state. The greatest is to go beyond all manifestation and be one with Spirit.”

To a woman in ill health the Master said, “When health is lost, something is lost; but when you take your attention away from God, you have lost everything.”

Not one to let the past excuse the present, the Master said, “Habits can be changed in a day. Habit is nothing but the concentration of the mind. You are concentrating one way. Just concentrate another way and habits will be changed.”

One of the Master’s students had made a serious error, and was lamenting, “I have always formed good habits. It seems incredible this should have happened to me.”

And the Master said, “Your mistake is this: you rely too much on your good habits. They tell you what to do when you get into a situation that is familiar, but they don’t guide you when a new problem comes up. That is where discrimination comes in. You must learn to choose the right course even in situations you have never before experienced.”

When a certain student became ill the Master advised her to see a doctor. One of the disciples questioned, “Why did you not heal her yourself?”

And the Master said, “Those who have that power from God use it only if He tells them to do so. Sometimes the Divine Mother knows it is wiser for Her children to have the experience of suffering. True healing must come with the uprooting of

spiritual ignorance, the cause of every disease. And those who expect such healing should be ready to live in accord with God's law. No real healing can take place if the person continues to make the same mistakes and thus brings back the disease."

Unable to comprehend the mystery of what lies beyond, a visitor to the hermitage expressed his doubts about the hereafter.

And the Master said, "You are here only for a little while. You must realize that you are a divine traveler. Do not tie yourself to the limitations of mortal thought, but remember the vastness of the Spirit that dwells within you."

Explaining how the devotee attracts spiritual help according to his own desire, the Master often said, "In response to your little desire, God sends you books and teachers. But when the desire for God becomes very great, He sends a guru through whose wisdom and tangible presence He teaches you.

"Many truth-seekers, owing to the varying degrees of intensity of their spiritual urges, intermittently draw the attention of the Heavenly Consciousness within them, but only those few are chosen to enter into Cosmic Consciousness who merit such an invitation. One's earnest, sustained interest in truth and in God is shown through a practice of deep meditation and spiritual living."

A stranger talking to the Master for the first time said, "You seem to believe in Christ, but I thought all Hindus were heathens!"

And the Master said, "Most Christians call the Hindus heathens, and although you may not know it, the majority of the Hindus call the Christians heathens. But the saints of every faith bow to the God within one another."

After a visit with some scholarly students, the Master said, "These intellectuals read all the scriptures and become spiritual victrolas. They do not know the sermon they sing, as the victrola doesn't know what it is playing. Gaining a theoretical knowledge of truth by superficial reading of the scriptures, they reap only the harvest

of pride, self-sufficiency, scorn, and argumentativeness – never true God-realization. That is why I tell you all to read less and meditate more.”

During one of his lectures the Master said, “My Master used to say that intelligence is like a sharp knife; you must know how to use it. You can cut your own throat with it, or somebody else’s; or you can use it to lance the boil of ignorance.”

The Master was engaged in discussion with a student who was well versed in scriptural lore but sadly lacking in spiritual perception. Trying to dissuade him from following the cold path of intellect, the Master said:

“A mule carrying a pack of gold feels only its weight; it does not know how to use that gold for its own personal benefit. Similarly, a theoretical philosopher who carries a bag of the gold of wisdom in the back of his mind does not profit by his inner burden.”

A certain disciple who depended strongly upon his intellect had been working hard to develop devotion. The Master, feeling that he had made notable progress, smiled lovingly at him and said, “Keep on with your devotion. Look how dry your life was when you depended on intellect!”

Welcoming a new student into the Fellowship the Master said, “This is not a path for the idle. Indeed the idle never find God until they change! God doesn’t help those who think He should do all the work. He helps those who act intelligently and say, ‘Lord, it is Thou who art acting through me.’”

Settling a dispute between two students the Master said, “Mankind has only one real enemy – ignorance. Let us all work together for its destruction, helping and cheering one another along the way.”

A visitor spoke disparagingly of India's so-called idol worship, and the Master quietly said, "When you are sitting in the church and you close your eyes and think of all the things you should have, you are worshiping the idols of materialism and God knows it; but, if there is a stone image in the church, and in it you see and worship the living Spirit of which it is the symbol, God accepts that worship!"

A visitor to the hermitage asked Master indignantly, "How can you profess to be a Christian and tolerate the worship of gods?"

And the Master said, "That I would never condone! But if I see a beautiful tree and suddenly my heart tells me, 'God is there,' then I bow to worship Him. And where isn't He? Could anything exist without that supreme Intelligence to hold it together? The man who loves God sees Him in all people, in all things, and every rock becomes an altar. When God commanded, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me,' he meant that we should not put money, duties, friends, and family, and other perishable things of the world on the throne of our hearts. That is where *He* belongs."

A disciple was excusing his lack of spiritual progress on the grounds that he had difficulty in overcoming his faults. Intuitively perceiving a deeper cause, the Master said, "God doesn't mind your faults. He minds your indifference."

A disciple argued that if he practiced introspection, he would not need a guru to tell him his faults and how to correct them.

But the Master said, "Introspection is a wonderful mirror, but greater than that is to see your image in the flawless mirror of a wise man's mind."

The Master was leaving Mount Washington to keep an appointment, but the stopped for a moment to talk to one of the monks. The great guru said:

"It is a good idea to keep a mental diary. Before you go to bed each night, sit for a few minutes and review your life. See what you are becoming. Do you like it?"

“The greatest trouble is egoism – consciousness of individuality. The changes that happen to your body affect you. But why be affected? You are not this body. Everything is Spirit. In the play of life the Lord had to create the *appearance* of individuality. Can you tell me why this is a tree, and why you are a human being? If all people on earth saw that there was only one Essence in everything, painting the scenery, directing the play, acting the parts, they would quickly get tired of it. There has to be activity and variety to keep the show going. It has to seem real. That’s why this individuality.”

The Master was mildly scolding a young disciple who, though devoted, had an uncontrollable urge to play pranks on others. Life to him was one continuous comedy. His merriment, welcomed at times, often prevented other devotees from serenely keeping their minds on God. The Master finally said, “You have devotion, but you are always joking and keeping the others rollicking. You must learn to be more serious.”

The disciple, sincerely regretting his restlessness, said, “I know it, Sir, but my habit is so strong; how can I change without your blessing?”

The Master solemnly assured him: “Well, my blessing is there. God’s blessing is there. Only your blessing is needed!”

All saints, each in his own way, have voiced agreement with these words the Master said: “Judge no one save yourself. Clean your own mental house. Seeing you, others will be inspired to do their own housecleaning.”

“Do you believe in the divinity of Jesus?” asked a woman who had just heard a lecture by Master on the glorious ministry of Christ.

And the Master said, “If I didn’t would I talk about him? But the truth is this: Jesus never said that he was the only son of God. He told those who would do his will that they would become one with the Father even as he is. Wasn’t that why he came to earth, to remind all people that God is their Heavenly Father, and to show them the way to go back to Him?”

A man lamented to Master that things were going badly for him, and ended by saying, “It must be my karma.* I just don’t get any place.”

And the Master said, “Then you must make greater effort. Forget the past and trust more in God. Our lives are not predestined by Him or even by what we have done, though they are *influenced* by what we have thought and by the activities in which we have engaged. If you are not happy with the way life is turning out, then change the pattern. I don’t like to hear people sigh and ascribe present failure to the errors of the past. That is being spiritually lazy. Get busy and weed the garden of your life.”

A certain person to whom Master had given *Kriya Yoga* told a disciple that he never practiced it. His sober explanation was that he simply tried to hold on to the joy that the first few *Kriyas* had given him. This story was told to the Master one day, in the course of a conversation on *Kriya*. Smiling at the man’s spiritual nearsightedness, the Master said, “That is like a hungry man refusing food, saying, ‘O no, thanks. I am trying to hold on to the feeling of satisfaction that the meal I had last week gave me.’”

“What must I do to find God, Master?” asked one of the new disciples.

And the Master said, “You must love God as the drowning man loves breath, as the miser loves his money, as the lover loves the beloved, as the devotee loves his religion. When you love God that way He will come to you. Every little leisure from activity plunge yourself into God; talk to Him. He is the nearest of the near – the dearest of the dear.”

The Master once said, “Those who love God are my true brothers and sisters. The ignorant I pity; the proud I avoid; but those who love, not themselves, but my Father – I am glad to be with them.”

Of God’s love the Master said, “God understands when everyone else misunderstands you. He is the Lover who loves you always, no matter what your mistakes are. Others love you for a while and then forsake you, but He never forsakes

* See glossary

you. God is seeking your love. He won't punish you if you don't give Him your love, but you punish yourself. 'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.'"

Describing the saint's love for God, the Master said, "The saint is like the compass – no matter which way you turn the compass its needle always points toward the north. So the yogi loves God. No matter what you do to him his mind is always on the Lord, and his soul is constantly humming: 'My God, Thou art more loving than all loved ones!'"

One evening the Master was reminiscing. "When I was a boy," he said, "some friends tried to persuade me to go with them to a temple to see a beautiful statue of Kali,* but I said, 'No, you go. I'll stay here.' They couldn't understand, because they knew I was a devotee of Kali. But I worshiped the real Kali inside. I didn't need to go and see something that reminded me of Her. While they worshiped Her in the temple, She came to me in my room, in all Her beauty. I shall never forget that day!"

"Why doesn't God do something to those who blaspheme His name?" inquired a student who took pains to keep "on the good side" of the Lord. The Master pointedly replied:

"God is moved neither by insincere prayers and praise, nor by ignorant atheistical outbursts of denial. Such He answers only through law. Hit a stone with your knuckles, eat sulphuric acid, and the laws of God answer. Break His laws of life and, according to His law, the punishment of suffering comes. Think rightly, behave rightly, and the reward of harmony and inner peace comes. But love God unconditionally, and then *He* comes!"

"But, Sir," pleaded a disciple, "I didn't know that what I did would cause M.....
... unhappiness."

* See glossary

And the Master said, “Even though we unknowingly break a law or hurt someone, we have all the same broken the law or hurt the person.” He added: “Egotism misdirect us. Saints do not act unwisely, because they have forsaken their own egos.”

An important key to the meaning of life is brought out in these words of the Master’s:

“God has sent you here for a purpose. Are you acting according to that purpose? You are on a divine mission. Why not realize how tremendously important that is, and how the desires of the limited ego are an obstruction to the attainment of your highest Goal?”

A student was discussing with the Master the mystery of why most people are born with no recollection of a previous existence, and die without any foreknowledge of a future existence. And the Master said:

“Life is like a great chain in the ocean of God. If you pull the chain out of the ocean you see only the middle part. The beginning and the end are inside the ocean. So, you are seeing only the middle part of the chain of life. The past and the future are all in the great ocean of God.”

A disciple said, “Master, I love everyone.”

The Master said, “You should love only God.”

On another day the Master asked the same disciple, “Do you love others?”

The disciple replied, “I keep my love only for God.”

The Master then said, “You must love all with that same love.”

The baffled disciple inquired, “Sir, what is your meaning? First you say that to love all is wrong; then you say that it is wrong to exclude anyone.”

Then the Master said, “You love the personality of people, and that is bad. But if you truly love God you will see Him in every face, and then you will know what it is to love all. Do you see that it is not the forms we must adore but the God who is within everyone?”

To illustrate the connection between the life energy and the body, the Master made the following analogy:

“God made us angels of energy, encased in solids – currents of life dazzling through the material bulb of flesh. But we concentrate upon the frailties and fragility of the bulb, and forget to feel the immortal, indestructible properties of the eternal life energy within the changeable flesh.”

The Master was wont now and then to give minor and seemingly inconsequential duties to the disciples. When one of them neglected such a small chore, thinking it unimportant, the Master gently chided; “Adherence to little things gives us strength to adhere to those difficult determinations that require more strength.”

A visitor expressed the opinion that the universal wisdom of the saints and masters was a sort of special dispensation from God, but the Master said, “That some people know less than others is not due to God’s limiting the flow of His power through man, but to man’s not allowing God’s light to pass through.”

Looking at his large spiritual family, the Master would often say, “Divine Mother sent me all these souls that I might drink the nectar of Her love through many hearts.”

A devotee was leaving the hermitage, but he said to the Master, “No matter where I am, I will always follow you and meditate.” But the Master said, “No, you won’t, because your place is here. If you give in to evil you will forget good.” But the devotee left, and pretty soon he forgot his resolution to meditate and be loyal. “Because evil has its power,” the Master explained, “and if we side with it, it will hold us.”

“I used to laugh a lot when I was a boy,” said the Master, “and the saints welcomed my laughter, because they saw it was soul-mirth. Disciples of one saint* I visited were annoyed, however, because I laughed in front of their master. So one

* Bhadury Mahasaya, “the levitating saint,” whose friendship with Yoganandaji is described in chapter 7 of *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

time he said to me, 'I understand, but it is offending them. Don't you think perhaps you shouldn't laugh quite so much?' Then I said, 'But after all, you know, it's from God.' 'That's true,' he replied. 'Well, all right, you laugh if you want to.'"

The Master was giving advice to a monk for tuning in with God during his sermons:

"Meditate first, very deeply. Then hold the calm you feel and think of what you are going to say. Write down your ideas, including one or two good stories, because people like that, and finish with a story from our studies.* Then put it away and forget it. When you talk, ask the Spirit to flow through you. Remember only a few salient points of your outline. That way you will draw your words from the inner source of Spirit, and will not speak from the little self."

A minister of another church came dejectedly to see the Master. "I am so confused!" he exclaimed.

"Then why do you preach?"

"Because I like to," said the minister.

Then the Master said, "You should learn to meditate. Didn't Christ say the blind cannot lead the blind? If you haven't God yourself, how will you be able to give Him to others?"

Long summer evenings often found the Master engaged in spiritual discussion with the disciples on the porch of the Encinitas hermitage. On one such occasion the talk turned to miracles, and the Master said:

"People always want miracles. But my Master was very strict on this point. He told me, '*Bring them the love of God.* Don't draw them through a display of spiritual powers.' I could walk on fire and fill every auditorium with curiosity-seekers, but what good would that do? See the stars and clouds, and the ocean; see the mist on the grass. What miracles compare with these? But still people don't love God."

* See glossary.

“How could Jesus change water into wine, Master?” a disciple asked. And the Master said, “Those who know that life is like a motion picture can do anything. I want you always to remember this idea: If an operator is projecting a picture on the screen from the booth, you see on the screen the hero, the villain, and all the setting. But the operator can dematerialize the whole show just by putting his hand in front of the light.

“Life also, you see, is a play of light. Jesus was sitting in the booth of Eternity, from which he could see that everything is made of vibrating energy. Being one with the very Power that controls all vibration, it was nothing for him to direct one vibration to change into another. You are limited by the law of relativity, but if you would become one with the Power that has commanded the different vibrations to take different forms, you could do anything. Christ himself said, ‘He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.’”

To a doubting disciple the Master said, “Don’t doubt, or God won’t keep you here.* So many look for miracles. But the great ones who have God never show the powers He has given unless it is His will. People don’t see that in humble obedience to His plan lies the greatest miracle.”

“It seems unfair that we have to suffer from mistakes we didn’t make intentionally,” groaned one of the disciples.

And the Master said, “Our ignorance doesn’t change God’s laws. If you strike a brick wall with your fist, even accidentally, you get hurt. It isn’t that the brick wall wants to hurt you; it is the law. We have to learn to be careful. We have to know the laws of the universe and follow them. But when we are always restless, thinking about material things, we keep stumbling; and every time we get hurt.”

“Don’t you believe in marriage, Master?” questioned a new student. “You often talk as though you were against it.”

And the Master said, “Marriage today is usually marriage of the emotions. It is mostly for sex attraction and money. I am against that. Real marriage is made when two people unite to help each other toward God. It must be mostly friendship. Woman

* i.e., in the SRF hermitage

is motivated primarily by feeling and man by reason; marriage is meant to balance these qualities. When it is true marriage, I am not against it, but because young people get such poor training these days, there aren't many real soul unions. So I say, seek God first – then if you marry you won't make a mistake!"

"I have always had the desire to seek God, Master, but I want to be married. Don't you think I can still find God?" asked a student.

And the Master said, "In modern life a young person who prefers to have a family first, thinking he will seek God afterward, is guilty of a grave error. Owing to the lack of early training in a hermitage of discipline – which practice was once observed in India – the man of today finds his senses and desires uncontrolled. When in the natural course of events he enters the householder's state, he becomes so overburdened with duties, trying to maintain a family by running after the dollar, that he usually forgets to say even a tiny prayer to God."

Once the Master attended a church where the choir sang specially for him. When the music ended the choirmaster and the group came to him and inquired, "Well, how did you like it?"

"It was all right," the Master said.

"Oh! Then you didn't like it?" they questioned further.

"I didn't say that, but don't ask me any more. You won't like what I shall tell you."

"We insist. Please tell us why you didn't enjoy the music."

Then the Master said, "As far as the technique was concerned, it was perfect, but you didn't know to Whom you were singing. You were only thinking how much I would be pleased with the music. The next time, sing to God, and not to me nor to anyone else."

A student with a scientific turn of mind asked the Master, "Does creation go through a process of evolution?"

And the Master said: "Evolution is a suggestion of God in the human mind, because actually everything that is going on is going on in the present.

In the mind of God there is no evolution, as there is no change in the beam of light that is instrumental in manifesting all the transient scenes of motion pictures. The Lord can turn the motion picture backward or forward, but everything is really happening now."

A guest asked, “Do you distinguish between yourself and your followers?”

Master: “How can you say the wave that is closer to the ocean is different from the waves that are far from the ocean? Both are waves. But one is closer to the ocean.”

Guest: “Then there is a difference in evolution at least.”

Master: “That much is true. Some play more with desires and delusion. But liberated beings no longer play, except with God.”

Guest: “Is there any end to evolution?”

Master: “No, no end. You go on until it becomes endless, until you achieve endlessness.”

“In God, everything is going on in the present. The movie can be turned backward or forward in time, but it is all being shown in the present tense. When you can learn to be happy in the *present*, then you have God.” The Master was having a profound discussion with some of the monks. A disciple spoke up, “Very few are living in the present, then, Sir. Isn’t that true?”

And the Master replied, “That’s right. Most are living either in the past or in the future.”

To a disciple who was going away “to the hills” to be with God, forsaking all material duties, the Master said, “Your spiritual life will be ruined, for your mind is not yet ready to concentrate on God. It will run all the time to movies and parties, even though you are in a cave. Right action, coupled with deep meditation, is the better path.”

A good illustration of man’s relation to Spirit was given when the Master said, “As the ocean can exist without the wave, but the wave cannot exist without the ocean, so Spirit can exist without man, but man cannot exist without Spirit. We are the waves on the bosom of the Ocean.”

A visitor asked the purpose of meditation. And the Master said:

“Day by day, as you learn to meditate, a new awakening will come – a new, living relationship with God will be established. The mist of silence and mystery that hangs over everything will slowly vanish before the dawning light of your mental and devotional search for God.

“The blue sky will speak, saying, ‘Look! Here He is, spread all over my bosom.’ The flowers will say, ‘Behold His smile in us.’ The dumb stones will declare, ‘See! He is sleeping in us.’ The trees will whisper, ‘He is dreaming in us.’ The birds will say, ‘He is singing in us.’ Your soul will say, ‘He is throbbing in me.’ Your inmost feelings will say, ‘He is awake in thee now, whispering songs of His love everywhere.’”

“Meditation,” the Master often said, “is the missing link between religion and realization, church and God, man and God, soul and Spirit.”

A disciple was having difficulty getting results from meditation. “Master”, said he, “I keep trying and trying, but I never get anything. Am I not trying hard enough?”

The Master shook his head, “You are trying too hard,” he said. “You are using too much will. It becomes nervous. Just be natural. As long as you are *trying* to meditate, you will not be able to, just as you cannot sleep if you are trying to *will* sleep. Will should be used gradually, otherwise it may become detrimental. That’s why it is better in the beginning to emphasize relaxation.”

The Master was sitting in the car early one autumn evening, talking to the monks. He paused during his conversation to remark, “Isn’t it rather hot today?”

Hesitating because they knew he had it in mind to give them some money for ice cream, the men said: “Well, it *was*, but it really isn’t now, Sir.”

There was a pause, and other conversation. The Master then said, “You’re *sure* it isn’t a bit warm this evening?”

Laughing, the monks replied, “Well, it is if you say so, Sir!”

The Master then said, decisively, “I can’t keep money and I won’t! Here! Take some money for ice cream. I like having money only so that I can give it away.”

The Master was always deeply concerned for the happiness of the masses as well as that of his immediate students and disciples, to whom he often pointed out: “It is foolish to expect true happiness from material things, for they are powerless to give it.

Yet many millions of people die of broken hearts trying vainly to find in material things that comfort which only God can impart.”

A visitor, very much impressed by the Master’s *Autobiography*, said to him, “How good it is that you came in this time to America. People are more prepared to receive you, after all the troubles the world has gone through.” “Yes,” the Master agreed. “Fifty years ago they would have been indifferent.”

To a woman whose wants and need were inseparable in her mind the Master said, “You must learn to know what is necessary for your life, and not to seek so many extra things. I always have faith that whatever my needs are, God will take care of them. And I have been very careful to discriminate between needs and unnecessary ‘necessities’.”

“Master, you tell us not to pray for things, but to pray to God to reveal Himself. Should we never ask for our needs?” one of the monks inquired.

And the Master said, “It is all right to tell the Lord that you want something, but it is much greater to say, ‘Lord, I know that Thou dost anticipate my every need. Sustain me according to Thy will.’”

If you pray hard for a car, and put your will behind it, you will receive it. But maybe that isn’t the best thing. Sometimes God denies our little prayers because He wants to give something better. Trust more in Him. Don’t you think that since He created you He can sustain you?”

Speaking of the way in which God fulfills all needs the Master said, “Once when I was deeply concerned for the welfare of the organization and no one knew what to do, I prayed very deeply. The Divine Mother came and told me, ‘I am your stocks and bonds; I am your securities.’ And right away what was needed came.”

One of the sisters inquired, “Guruji, if you could set time back to the point where your Master asked you to undertake organizational work, would you be glad to consent, knowing what you know now?”

And the Master said, “Yes, it teaches unselfishness.”

Occasional comments of an unsettling nature had led some of the disciples to wonder how long the Master would remain on earth. “Sir,” said one, “When you are gone will you still be as near as you are now?”

And the Master said, “To those who think me near, I will be near.”

The Master was talking about the founding of the Self-Realization Fellowship:

“It was my wish to hide from the world and be with God only, but my Master said to me, ‘Do you want the whole *channa** for yourself? Could you or anyone else achieve God-contact if generous masters had not been willing to convey their knowledge to others? Why should you not start busy hives full of spiritual nectar?’

“And so I am glad to serve you all, but if ever I see that your minds are away from God, then I would rather leave it all and sit under the trees, lost in His presence. It is the need of truth-hungry men for guidance that brings to this world those who have found God. And so I work for you. It pleases me to be the servant of all.”

The Master was discussing plans for the further expansion of the Fellowship with some of the monks of the Order. He was much pleased with their suggestions for organizing the work, but cautioned them against putting the organization before the teachings:

“Remember, the church is the hive, but God is the Honey. You must not be satisfied with telling people things – you must show them how to experience God for themselves.”

* A substantial Indian food (cheese made of fresh curdled milk).

The Master was reminiscing one evening about the peaceful days in the hermitage of his master, Sri Yukteswar, in sharp contrast to the activity that awaited him over here. “Master used to tell me about all the responsibilities of organization I would have some day,” he said. “Then I would laugh and say, ‘You don’t have to rub it in! I know all about it.’”

The Master had requested that two of the disciples follow a certain course of action, but they had not done so, much to their own misery. When they came to see him with the resulting problem, the Master said, “You see only the surface of things. I see all sides, so you shouldn’t contradict me. I have lived the life of each one of you, and I know exactly what you are feeling – what you will do. That is why you have come, to receive my guidance. When you don’t listen, then the troubles come.”

Warning the disciples to be neither attached to pleasure nor fearful of pain, lest their minds dwell on these things and lose the thought of God, the Master said, “We must not be frightened by the dreams of bad experiences nor attached to the beautiful dreams of happy experiences. Then we shall wake up and see that all these were just light and shadows played upon the cosmic movie screen.”

After praising a disciple for his good work the Master said, “Don’t get a ‘swelled head’. Remember always that it is God in you. You are not the doer. He is.”

Seeing that one of his students was unduly impressed by the praise of certain acquaintances, the Master said, “It is better to seek real friends who don’t flatter you and who will not condone your faults. Be with those who are sincere and you will see reflected in them the presence of God.”

A devoted Hindu student asked the Master what prayer would most quickly draw the Divine Beloved to him.

And the Master said, “God wants only the gems of prayer lying deep in the mine of your own heart.”

Once when talking about racial prejudice the Master said, “God is not pleased to be insulted when He wears His dark suits.”

A visitor to the hermitage questioned the Master, “Do you feel that your teachings helps people to be at peace with themselves?”

And the Master said, “That’s right, but that is not my central teaching. It is best to be at peace with the Creator.”

As the Master was departing from Mount Washington in his car, he stopped for a while to talk with some of the monks. They discussed spiritual matters in general for some time, and then the Master said, “Whenever you see wrong in the world, remember, it’s wrong with you. When you are right, everything is right, because you see God there.

Perfection is inside.”

There was a disciple who constantly pestered Master with phone calls at all hours of the day and night – collect, usually, when they were long distance – and with coming uninvited to see him.

Of this person the Master once said, “He is a most peculiar individual, but his heart is with God. In spite of his faults he will get there, because he won’t let God alone until he does!”

Master was exclaiming one time about people’s foibles, which make it so difficult for a man of realization to change them: “People are so skillful in their ignorance!”

Recognizing a tendency toward procrastination in one of the disciples, the Master said, “You must not look to the future to meditate long, for the future will never come. That false expectation is the way of *maya*.^{*} Think of God and feel His bliss while working for Him and His children; that also is meditation.”

^{*} See glossary.

“What an odd person G..... is!” exclaimed a disciple. Several others fell to talking about the peculiarities of different people. But the Master said, “Why be surprised? After all, this is just God’s zoo.”

“What a job you take on your hands when you work with people!” exclaimed the Master. “The rose in the vase looks beautiful, but one forgets all the work that went into making it beautiful. And if a rose takes work, how much more work does it take for a beautiful human being!”

“Sir,” a wondering disciple once asked, “how is it that some masters seem to know more than others?”

“Impossible!” the Master replied. “Not those who are fully liberated. They know everything. But the thing is, they don’t always show it. They have to blunder through this show of God’s as He wants them to; but inside they know.”

A devotee once asked the Master: “Can you tell just by looking at a person how spiritually advanced he is?” The Master quietly replied, “At once! But I don’t talk about it. He who says he knows, he knows not; and he who says he knows not, he knows not. But he who knows, he knows. I see inside, because that’s my job.”

Explaining why so few have realized God, the Master said, “As a small cup cannot hold an ocean within it, no matter how willing it may be to do so, similarly the cup of limited human consciousness cannot contain the universal Christ Consciousness no matter how desirous of it is of doing so. But when, through meditation, one enlarges the periphery of his consciousness to omniscience, he can hold the universal consciousness present in all atoms (Christ Consciousness) within his own. That is what is meant by ‘received him’ in John’s statement, ‘As many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God.’ According to Jesus, all devotees who can actually realize their souls as one with Christ Consciousness can be called the ‘sons of God.’”

A student told the Master, “When I’m older and have seen something of life I shall renounce all for God. There is too much I want to do now.”

When he had gone the Master laughed and said, “He will be like the man whose wife left him, and whose house burned down, so that he lost all his money and possessions. Looking at the ruins he determined to ‘give up all’ and look for God. The Lord is not much impressed by such ‘renunciation.’ The student who just left here will not be willing to ‘renounce all’ until he has nothing left to renounce! He still thinks ‘things’ are wealth.”

Pointing out that renunciation is a positive rather than a negative action, the Master said, “It is wrong to think of it as a sacrifice. Rather it is an investment. Who wouldn’t spend a dollar to make a hundred, and why wouldn’t we spend the dollars of our lives to purchase eternity? Remember, it isn’t a giving up of anything except misery.”

A would-be disciple from another part of the country arrived at the hermitage one day. When the Master saw him for the first time, he said, “Some have repented the error of their ways and have come and stayed. You have to improve greatly inside before you take the step. I would go slowly, and think it over very deeply. Before you plunge you must prepare. But every good thought – that what you do is for God – is the beginning of salvation.”

“I understand you have two kinds of members,” said a visitor, “those who live in the world, and renunciates who live in the hermitage. Which way is better?”

The Master replied, “Well, some love God so deeply that nothing else matters. That is why they become renunciates. It is more pleasing to God if you work for Him, instead of having a job in the world, working for yourself and your family.”

When a student wavered between the path of renunciation and a long-desired career, the Master said, “Everything you are seeking is waiting for you in God.”

On a certain occasion, when the monks and sisters petitioned him for the privilege of putting aside Western dress and wearing robes, the Master said, “It is not what you wear, but what you are inside that matters. Make your heart a hermitage, and your robe the love of God.”

The Master often varied the type of training he gave to different disciples, but certain rules he insisted should be attended to strictly, and he said, “I have rules but they are necessary for the devotee in the beginning. When you follow them, you see that you master your whims and bad habits.”

During a discussion on religion the Master once said, “Science and philosophy differ from true religion in that science and philosophy are more theoretical; they teach, for example, the external nature of the atom. True religion teaches you how to become the atom.”*

“You can say all you wish about matter not existing and pain being a thing of the mind, but when you are mixed up in it, it surely seems real,” a student said ruefully. And the Master said, “Not everyone can say that matter doesn’t exist, because it does for the majority.

Remember, that alone is real for you which you can manifest in your own consciousness. The thing is this: Don’t dwell on your limitations. Keep reminding yourself that you are God’s child. Meditate. Then you will reach that state where you will experience the truth that only God exists, that He is the one Reality.”

Some disciples who had formed the habit of using their free evenings and weekends unwisely came to the Master one day, saying they wished to take a trip.

And the Master said, “You are becoming restless and wasting too much time. You have come for God and now you are cheating yourselves by forgetting the goal. It is

* i.e., the essence of any truth can be known only through experience.

bad to be always seeking diversion. Love Him and you will see what you have been missing.”

On another occasion when some disciples approached him and expressed the desire to visit some friends for a weekend, the Master said:

“It is not good to go places too often. The mind becomes leaky like a sieve and will not hold the waters of God-perception. Has going places brought you contact with the Infinite? It is my duty to warn you when I see that you are turning in the wrong direction. But do what you will.”

A monk, taken away from almost indispensable duties at Mount Washington to perform some other work, was worrying within about his neglected responsibilities. The Master noted the monk’s inner turmoil and said, “This is your responsibility now. I go by the orders of the Supreme Boss ‘up there.’ He is the One to whom you are answerable. You must feel free. He could tell me right now, ‘Come home!’ and I would drop everything – organization, buildings, work, people – everything, and do His word. Because running this world is His job. He is the Doer, not you or I.”

To a discouraged devotee the Master said, “From now on you must never say that you are not progressing. Don’t be negative. To be negative is a verdict of punishment against yourself. When you say, ‘I can’t find God,’ remember, you have pronounced that verdict against yourself. Nobody else is keeping God away from you.”

A certain student was given to unremitting self-examination for signs of spiritual progress. The Master said to him, “If you plant a seed and dig it up constantly to see if it is growing, it will never take root. You have to take care of it, but do not be so curious!”

On a similar occasion the Master said, “You should not look for a spiritual blossom every day. Sow your seed. Water it with prayer and good actions, and when

the sprout comes, busy yourself keeping it healthy. Weed it of doubt, indecision, and laziness, and then some morning you will behold the flower of realization.”

A disciple said sadly, “It seems that I shall never reach God,” but the Master said, “You are a wave of the Ocean. Now you are playing on the surface and the storm has caught you, but the Ocean is all the time pulling – pulling. You have to go back.”

Someone asked, “How is it that a saint can take on himself the suffering of others?”

And the Master said, “If I see that someone is going to hit you I can step in front and let the blow fall on me. That is what the saints do. They perceive the effects of people’s bad thoughts and actions coming to hit them, and they step in front to protect them. Because they are filled with the energy of God they can survive blows that would kill an ordinary man.”

One of the disciples said, “The suffering of many saints was so terrible. How wonderful God must be to have held their attention through it all!”

And the Master said, “When one is in that state of God-communion, nothing destroys his peace. He sees that the body is in agony, and when he steps his thoughts down into it the pain is horrible; but he can rise above the sensations and stay in God if he wants to.

However, most saints suffer consciously to set for their disciples an example of how strong God makes those who love Him.”

The Master was taking his evening exercise with some of the monks. One of them inquired about a certain saint.

Disciple (to Master): “It was the saint that appeared before you some months ago, here in Encinitas.”

Master: “I don’t remember.”

Disciple: “It was out in the garden, in back, Sir.”

Master: “Well, so many have come there. I often see them.”

Disciple: “How wonderful, Sir!”

Master: “Wherever a devotee of God is, there His saints come.” He paused a minute or two and went on exercising. Then he stopped and said, “Yesterday I wanted

to know about the life of a very great Indian saint. I was meditating on my bed, and he materialized beside me. We sat there side by side, holding hands, for the longest time.”

Disciple: “Did he tell you about his life?”

Master: Well, in the interchange of vibration I got the whole picture.”

The Master loved this story:

“There was a devotee who was sitting before the image of his guru*, throwing flowers on it. His concentration became so deep, he saw the whole universe contained in himself. He stopped and cried, ‘Oh, I have been putting flowers on another’s picture, and now I see that I, untouched by the body, am the Sustainer of the universe! I bow to Myself!’ And he began throwing the flowers on his own head. Oh! When my Master told me that story I was so thrilled I went into *Samadhi*.”*

One of the disciples was sensitive to a fault, particularly about being corrected, so the Master said, “Why should you mind being corrected? Is that not what I am here for? My Master used to criticize me in front of everybody, but I wouldn’t complain because I knew he was healing my ignorance. Now I am so strong that no one can affect me by his words. That is why I tell you plainly when there is a blemish. Otherwise, there will always be a sore spot and everybody will rub it.”

Correcting a disciple, the Master saw that he had struck home and said, “When the body is well it doesn’t mind a massage, but when it is sick even the slightest touch is an agony.

So, when the body of your ego is healed of ignorance you will not mind what anyone says, but until it is, the massage of correction will continue to pain you.”

One of the disciples, though seemingly intent upon the Master’s words, let his thoughts stray. When saying good night to the monk the Master said to him, “It is good to tie the horse lest it run away. The mind is like the horse.”

* See glossary

The monk's eyes filled with tears and he left the room, but Master called him back, saying, "Do you mind my words? If so, I will not correct you."

"No, Sir," the disciple replied.

"You should not be sensitive to correction. I speak only to help you. Others won't say when you are wrong for they are not truly interested."

"Truly, Sir, I did not mind what you said. It was my own thoughts that distressed me."

"Ah," said the Master, "That is it."

The disciples were enjoying a picnic with the Master on the hermitage grounds. The Master said, "How much better this is than wasting time running to parties and movies and being with restless people. We have our peace and we are very rich to be so happy. That is what God wants, that we should live more simply."

One of the sisters was loudly exclaiming against the necessity for suffering. "God must be very unjust to give such pain to the world," she supposed.

And the Master said, "We cannot say that Divine Mother is cruel, because to Her there is no good or evil – only pictures of light and shadow. Our suffering comes when we identify ourselves with the pictures."

The Master and some of the disciples were in the car hastening to keep an appointment, when far ahead they saw a small figure that was soon observed to be an old man with pack on back, trudging sadly down the hot, dusty road. The Master asked that the car be stopped, and then called the man to him and gave him some money. As the car once again moved down the highway, the Master said, "How terrible! See how lucky we are to ride when such an old man walks. Think of the world and its surprises. You must get away from it. If that man had God, then he would not suffer, for in God all is the same – endless, matchless, ever-new Bliss."

The disciples were discussing with awe the sufferings endured by the great saints, but the Master said, "What of it? When the wisdom-dinner from the plate of life is eaten, you can break the plate or keep it – it doesn't matter. The body means nothing when you know God."

Many regard suffering as a requisite of sainthood. Another school of thought contends that if saints really commune with God, who is perfect, they should manifest freedom from suffering. Of these different conceptions the Master said:

“Some think a saint should suffer all the time. Others think he should have a perfect body. But the saints manifest what God wills. They don’t conform to public opinion. Look at Saint Francis! His disease was killing him, yet he healed lepers. Jesus raised the dead, but suffered himself to be crucified.”

“Why,” asked one of the sisters, “do some people despise saints?”

And the Master said, “Evil people hate the light and worldly people are satisfied with the ups and downs of life. Neither want to change and the company of a saint makes them uncomfortable. They may be compared to a man living many years in a dark room. Someone comes and throws on the light, and so much sudden brilliance seems unnatural.”

“What exactly is the soul’s relationship to Spirit?” asked a disciple.

“I will give you an illustration,” said the Master. “Under a gas burner there exists one large undivided flame, but that flame, or pilot, going through the burner’s many holes, becomes divided and many. Conversely, all the little flames can be withdrawn into the one big flame by turning the control switch.

“So God, the great Pilot Flame, appears to be many, running through the openings of countless brains and bodies as individually different souls. And God likewise can at will withdraw all souls into Himself.”

When a student had difficulty in picturing God as both one and many, the Master explained: “The moon reflected in many pots of water appears as many moons. So also God, reflected in the waters of various minds and bodies, appears as many souls.”

Again, “The dynamo of a city can be compared to God, and all the lights of that city, sustained by the dynamo, can be compared to the souls. When a bulb blows out, its light returns to the dynamo. When a human body dies, its light goes back to the spiritual dynamo, God. When a fresh bulb is put on in place of the one that blew out, that same light shines again. Likewise, when a fresh new embryo is adjusted to that

particular disembodied soul, then the same seemingly extinguished light of life of the disembodied soul shines again.”

Often during his lectures the Master declared, “I prefer a soul to a crowd, but I love crowds of souls. You who come here must seek God. What I tell is to inspire you individually to follow Christ and the masters. Too many know the whole Bible but can’t live a line of it. I don’t want any of you to be that way.”

“Master, you often say that we must all go back to God. Please tell us how this comes about,” said one of the disciples. And the Master said:

“The soul cannot find its lost happiness in material things, thought it seeks comfort in them. The soul, having lost its contact with God-Bliss, tries to satisfy itself with pseudo pleasures of the senses; but the soul of even the most worldly person is inwardly conscious of its lost supernal Bliss, and that is why it can never remain satisfied for long with temporary sense pleasures only, no matter how alluring they may be. The worldly man goes on searching for his lost happiness in God by flying from one sense pleasure to another. At last, when he suffers from satiety, he begins to seek God-Bliss within, where alone it can be found.”

Explaining the state of the soul in the worldly man, the Master said, “The soul is clouded over with matter and material instincts. Like a caterpillar in a cocoon, man is surrounded by his silken, clinging, temporarily sweet prenatal and postnatal tendencies. He must cast them off and spread the gorgeous, delicate wings of his hidden soul before the silkman Death gets him.”

“Master, can a soul really be lost forever?”

“Impossible! The soul is a part of God. How can you destroy God?”

While talking with a group of typical American businessmen and their wives, the Master said, “Don’t think so much about material security. And when God gives to

you, help others. That is what I have done, and I have never been left out. Three times I have given away everything, and it has come back to me even without my wanting it. Then I give it away again to help others.”

“Isn’t what you teach about controlling the emotions very dangerous? From all I hear, suppression is the cause of mental maladjustment, even leading to physical illness,” remarked a student.

And the Master said, “Suppression is very bad. It is holding the thought that you want something, but doing nothing to get it. Self-control means channeling the energy and the thought away from wrong desires by applying it to right thoughts and actions. Those who dwell on evil hurt themselves, but those who put it out of their minds by thinking good thoughts and performing good actions spare themselves untold suffering and misery.”

Long ago one of the disciples said to Master, “Don’t forget, blood is thicker than water.”

And the Master said, “Blood may be thicker than water, but Spirit is finer than blood!”

Once, after giving a severe scolding to a disciple the Master said, “So sorry I had to mend you so much. I do it only because I want you to be perfect in the eyes of God, gurus, and myself. I am always kind to you within, even when I correct you.

“You must never resent or be discouraged by my scoldings. I say what I do only to make you stronger in the future. You have a spiritual mountain with you now for your protection, but when that mountain will be gone, you will have to stand alone.”

The Master had found it necessary to scold one of the disciples for a serious error, but he sighed and said, “I can handle people best with love. I just wilt when I have to handle them in other ways.”

Asked to define Self-realization, the Master said, “Self-realization is the knowing in all parts of the body, mind, and soul that we are now in possession of the

omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it may come to us; that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God's omnipresence is our omnipresence; that He is just as much a part of us now as He ever will be; and that all we have to do is improve our knowing.”

Feeling that he had failed in a difficult test of God, and filled with remorse, a disciple was reviling himself disgustedly, but the Master said, “Never call yourself a sinner. That is a desecration of the image of God within you. Rather remember that you are a child of God. Pray to the Divine Mother, ‘Naughty or good, I am Thy child. Receive me.’”

A visitor enjoyed a lively discussion with the Master, and was deeply impressed by his meaningful interpretations of the Bible. Summing up, the Master said, “All true scriptures have a threefold meaning. In other words, they deal with the three factors of human existence – the material, the mental, and the spiritual. Hence they serve all men, and are beneficial to the body and mind as well as to the soul.”

On another occasion the Master said, “True scriptures are wells of divine water that can quench the spiritual thirsts of man.”

Always wrapped up in the thought of God, and endlessly working for Him and His children, the Master now and then remarked, “I forget my body so much these days that I have to ask others if I have eaten.”

Looking intently at one of the disciples, the Master said, “Always remain in the Self. Only come down from that consciousness to eat or talk a little bit if it's necessary. Then withdraw into your Self again.”

The Master's conversation was ever lively with stories and similes. Speaking of the spiritual path he once said, "I see the spiritual path as a race. Some are sprinting; others are going along slowly. Some are even running backwards!"

And on another occasion, "The spiritual path is like a battle. The people are fighting, and many are wounded – with the bullets of desires."

A certain student's work required that he meet the public a great deal. To him the Master said, "Emulate the diamond in your dealings with people. Brightly reflect the light of God's love."

A disciple who was inclined by nature to be rather sad attempted to overcome this trait by imitating the gaiety of her more lighthearted sisters. But the Master said, "Don't try to put on others' nature or frivolity. Concentrate on God and look for His smiles within; then you will see His smiles everywhere."

Congratulating one of the young disciples on his good grades in school, the Master said, "My lifelong wish for you will be that as you go through the school of life you get all 'A's' – in manifesting the highest physical, mental, and spiritual qualities – from the Headmaster of the Universe."

This good advice for anyone following the spiritual path was given to a young disciple:

"Be careful of too many distractions. Decline invitations to gatherings of a worldly nature. Seclusion is the price of greatness.

"Waste time with none but God; then time will not be wasted. Now is the time for earning God; later comes the time for sharing God with all. 'If thy hand offend thee, cut it off' – relinquish all obstructing activities.

"Ever plunge your soul into the Infinite, before and after and while performing actions. Constantly think of Him no matter how the compass of activity keeps turning. Hold the needle of your attention ever pointing to the north – to His presence."

The Master usually insisted on silence among those around him, and once explained, “Through the gorge of silence the geyser of God’s bliss perpetually shoots up and flows over the soul.”

Filled with the joy of God himself, the Master ever strove to implant in his students and in everyone he met the same divine bliss, that they too might share it. “Every time you see sad faces,” he said, “shoot some buckshot of your vitality-spreading smiles there. As soon as you find a sorrowful heart, shoot into it sympathetic smiles and kind words. Every time somebody’s heart of sorrow is pierced with the bullet of your smile, you have ‘hit the bull’s eye.’ Every day have target practice by shooting smiles into the body of sadness. Remember, you must kill sorrow at sight. Dispatch the blues with the blade of wisdom.”

Realizing the burden a saint assumes to help others, a student once suggested that the Master would undoubtedly be glad, when the time came, to leave this earth and never return, but the Master said:

“As long as one soul-brother is crying by the wayside, I shall return to ply my boat and bring others to the shores of the Father’s abode. Why not? Why should I want to enjoy freedom while others are suffering? I couldn’t enjoy that infinite beatitude, knowing that others are suffering even as I would be if I was not liberated.”

“It is beautiful to think that God loves all equally,” said a visitor, “but it doesn’t seem just somehow that He should care as much for the sinner as for the saint!”

“Is the diamond less valuable,” replied the Master, “because it is covered with mud? God sees the soul. He knows we are not our mistakes.”

Rueful chuckles were often heard when the Master made the following analogy for his lecture audiences:

“In India the donkey is used for carrying laundry. Seeing a mud puddle, he balks and dumps the pile of clean laundry into it. His master beats him with all his might, and puts the clothes back on the donkey. Off they go. The donkey is perfectly docile

for a time. But as soon as they come to another puddle, down goes the whole load again! Beatings, repeated again and again, in no way strengthen the dumb donkey's memory.

“And so it is with the sensual man. Though beaten with remorse, fatigue, and disgust, and with all the ills that come from sexual overindulgence; though vowing never again to waste his energy so foolishly; when the next opportunity comes to him, he behaves once more like the donkey, and the faded memory of former beatings must be refreshed by a new one!”

The Master had for some time given unstintingly of his time to disciples and truth-seekers. He sought respite in the solitary peace of the desert, and when his car arrived and the motor was shut off, the Master drank in the vast silence and said, “Wherever there is a well, there the thirsty people gather. But sometimes the well likes to be unfrequented for a change.”

Affirming his steadfastness in the spiritual path, a disciple said, “It's not easy, Sir, but I'll go on to the end of life.” And the Master replied, “That's the spirit. The wave cannot leave the ocean anyway. It can protrude more or less from the ocean-bosom, but it is still part of the ocean, and has to go back at last.”

Instructing a few devotees on the rules of the spiritual life, the Master said, “Remember, it is the Divine Mother who tests you through sex, and it is She who blesses, when you pass Her test. As soon as the first thought of sex arises, that is the time to banish it. It seems tempting now, but once you are out of it, you will see it as the greatest delusion.”

A disciple came one evening to the Master with what he thought was good news. “We have a new boy for the print shop, Sir!” Indignantly the Master replied, “Why do you tell me that? First teach newcomers our spirit, then think where they will fit in. I never ask people what they can do. First I see the spiritual side.”

“Believe me, Sir,” said the abashed disciple, “I do too. Maybe I didn't say it, but in my heart I meant it. This new boy said to me, ‘I'm so glad you all pray with such devotion here.’”

The Master nodded approvingly. “That's what I wanted to hear.”

“Sir, will I ever leave the spiritual path?” inquired a doubt-filled disciple.
“How can you?” the Master replied. “Everyone in the world is on the spiritual path.”

Someone once asked, “Which do you consider the most spiritual place in America?” And the Master said, “Well, I have always considered Los Angeles to be the Benares* of America.”

One evening the Master was expounding the delusive nature of this world. During the discourse he said:

“The senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch are all separate suggestions of God. I can disconnect them one by one. And then I see that this is all a movie of God, true not only to sight and sound but also to smell, taste, and touch. As a child I used to practice for hours, disconnecting the senses one by one as I sat in meditation, then bringing them back again, until I had full control over their suggestions.”

Pointing out the futility of striving for the temporary satisfactions of the world, the Master said, “Act only for God. All that you do consider done for Him, and all that you possess consider His.

Then He will heal your blindness and you will see Him everywhere, and you will also see that there is no separation between your life and His omnipresence.”

A disciple, ardently desiring to follow the path, had come to the hermitage when he was not yet of age. His mother, suddenly regretting the permission she had given him, forced him to leave. He vowed he would return as soon as he became of age.

But to his happy surprise, when the time arrived that he could legally come, his mother readily gave her consent. Shortly after his return, the Master said, “That’s

* The ancient city of Benares has countless hallowed religious associations. Lord Buddha, Lord Shankara, Kabir, and other illumined masters preached there to multitudes. Lahiri Mahasaya spent most of his life there. It was in Benares that Yoganandaji met his great guru, Swami Sri Yukteswarji.

good, that you have her good will. Without it you should still have come,* but with it is even better.”

A young man who contemplated entering the spiritual path told the Master, “There are still so many things in the world that I enjoy, and yet I know that I’ll find happiness only in God. I think it will be difficult for me to give up pleasures.”

And the Master said, “The little child thinks it’s fun to play with mud pies, but when he begins to grow up it doesn’t satisfy him any more. When you grow up spiritually you won’t miss the false pleasures of the world.”

To students who desired sense pleasures the Master said, “You are thinking this world is a bed of roses, but it is filled only with stink weeds. That is why I want you to get out of it.”

One evening after the disciples had had a deep meditation with him the Master said, “The temple of God is within your soul. Enter into this quietness, and sit there in meditation with the light of intuition burning on the altar. There is no restlessness, no searching or striving there. Come into this temple that was not created by man. Come into the silence of solitude and the voice of God will talk with you, and you will know that the invisible has become visible – the ‘unreal’ has become real.”

A prominent businessman paid a call on the Master and as soon as he was introduced, he said, “I am disgustingly healthy and disgustingly wealthy.”

And the Master said, “But you are not disgustingly happy, are you?”

The man conceded the point and became a student.

The Master said of Truth, “It is what exists even though no one believes it, while theory has to be supported by thoughts and words. If you go against truth even in ignorance, you will get hurt.”

* To seek God is man’s highest duty. Jesus said: “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” (*Matthew 10:37*)

“What is right, Master, to tell the truth and hurt someone’s feelings – perhaps even endanger a life, or to tell a little white lie?” a student questioned.

And the Master said, “Facts don’t make truth. Truth is much deeper. Before you speak, discriminate: ‘Will what I say do some good?’ If it won’t, then it isn’t truth. What doesn’t help another is better left unsaid. And it is even right, if you see someone looking for another person in order to fight with him, to point your finger in the wrong direction and say, ‘He went that way.’ Maybe by the time they find each other, both will have cooled their tempers.”

An arrogant intellectual sought to trap the Master in complicated conversation. Recognizing his intent, the Master said, “Truth is never afraid of questions.”

A disciple had caused someone else a great inconvenience by revealing something that need not have been told. When scolded for it, he gave as his excuse that he wanted to be honest and tell the truth.

The Master said, “Of all things! Suppose somebody came to me with the Bible, the *Gita*, and other great scriptures in his hands and said, ‘If I tell you something, will you promise on these bibles not to reveal what I have told?’ And I said, ‘O yes, I promise faithfully.’ And he then said, ‘Well, I have just put a rattlesnake in John’s bed!’

“Would I say, ‘Oh, I have promised. I mustn’t tell John anything now?’ Which is worse: to break a promise, or to let somebody get killed when I could have stopped it? Of course I would tell him! Imagine, causing someone serious trouble and then saying you only wanted to be truthful!”

A new student thought to assimilate the Master’s teachings through deep study alone, and eagerly looked forward to teaching others.

The Master drily remarked, “The perception of truth must be a growth from within. It cannot be a graft.”

Of temptation the Master said, “I weighed Thee and temptation, and I found Thee more tempting than temptation itself.”

The Master had Thanksgiving dinner with the disciples, after which he gave a talk. In closing he said, “Be careful what it is you are thanking God for. If it is for things, then you are wrong, for the things – wealth, health, friends, and success – are tests.

He wants to see if you love Him more than them. If He sees these satisfy you He will never come. But rather thank Him because you see His hand behind the gifts, and say in your heart, ‘Father, because Thou hast given them I appreciate them, and I shall use them to please Thee. But I am not attached, for my mind is roaming over the sea of Thy joy.’”

The Master ever encouraged students to seek the experience of God’s presence felt as the joy in meditation, rather than to strive for visions and other spiritual phenomena. Above all, he advised seeking God for His own sake, rather than for His gifts of diverse experiences.

To a student who sought the latter he said, “Don’t look for experiences in meditation. The path to God is not a circus!”

Musing about a disciple who had always caused enough trouble for twenty, but who had deep devotion in spite of his wild ways, the Master said, “He is like a mouthful of hot molasses – too hot to swallow, but too sticky to spit out.”

To a talkative disciple the Master said, “Too much speech signifies lack of depth. Of course, extreme dearth of speech makes one’s companions impatient. However, I prefer the deep river of God-communion and bliss hidden beneath the sands of seclusion and the desert of scant speech.”

Explaining the Trinity to a group of disciples, the Master said, “We can say that God the Father, who exists in the vibrationless state beyond creation, is the capital that ‘backs’ creation. The Son, or intelligent Christ Consciousness permeating all creation, is management. And the Holy Ghost, the great vibration from which everything in creation is made, is labor.”

A discouraged student whom circumstances had buffeted badly began to lose faith in God and said to the Master, “What is the use? The Divine Mother does not seem to pay any attention to my prayers.”

And the Master said, “The moment when the Divine Mother beats you the hardest is the time you should cling most tenaciously to Her skirt.”

While talking with a group of students who were having lunch with him, the Master said, “It is better to be rich in your thoughts than to depend on money and other securities which make you think that you are rich when you are not. Remember that the wealth of mental happiness securely acquired can never decrease in value as do stocks and bonds.”

The Master’s interest in the character training of youth was keen. “The rich,” he once said, “make a bad mistake in leaving their vast wealth to their children. It is good to help them some, but they should be told to make their own way in life. Giving them a fortune often debauches them. It is better to give them only enough money for a good education and to get them started in some work that interests them.”

Talking with visitors about the world situation, the Master said, “Power on earth will perish; the power of God will last forever.”

The conversation one evening turned, as indeed it did many evenings, to the war in Korea. One disciple asked the Master, “Do the American soldiers in Korea get bad karma for shooting the enemy soldiers?”

The Master replied emphatically, “If they *like* killing, they do, but if they fight without hatred, conscious that they fight for Divine Mother, there is no bad karma. This is a holy war; the villain must be defeated or the whole world will be enslaved.”

One of the Master’s students was called into the army and was reluctant to face the severe test. In saying goodbye to him the Master said, “Even in war you can be with

God. Keep telling the mind that you are fighting to liberate the world from the blackness of tyranny.”

After the boy had gone, some of the disciples were sadly talking about it, and the Master quietly said, “Though he is away he is with me.”

“This teaching,” the Master often said, “has been sent to show you how you can follow the scriptural injunction to ‘be in the world but not of it.’”

To describe the futility of the worldly life the Master said, “It is just like stopping a leak. You patch up one place and another place leaks. The worldly life is most tiresome. It is nothing but patchwork living. Always patching up the sorrows and troubles of life, only to have them leak out somewhere else.”

Encouraging one of the monks to be more positive in his thinking, and thus to become more receptive to the blessings of the Divine Mother, the Master said, “It is a great error for you to identify yourself with your weakness. Recall the memory of good things so that you become more and more close to the realization of your native goodness and oneness with God.”

“How can I know God’s will?” a would-be student asked the Master. And the Master said:

“God talks through the channel of true devotees. If your desire for spiritual enlightenment is great He sends a guru to you. Through devotion to this channel you can find God. Such a channel turns your thoughts to God and shows you the way to spiritual independence. The discipline of such a Master frees your will, never enslaves it. So it is good to tune in to the channel. It is nothing to the channel whether you are tuned in or not, but it makes all the difference in the world to you.”

To a student who appeared to be hopelessly enmeshed in bad habits the Master suggested, “Try to develop ‘won’t’ power, if you haven’t enough ‘will’ power.”

Two new disciples were working in the desert retreat, digging a swimming pool. The Master was there, working on his writing. The disciples were unused to such hard work, though their hearts were willing. The Master must have noticed the strain, however, for one unusually hot day he came out and began to shovel alongside the disciples. One of them said, “It’s hot work, isn’t it?” The Master looked a little stern and said, “It is good work.”

Stopping by a field of daisies at the Encinitas colony to watch disciples pulling weeds from among the blossoms, the Master commented:

“These weeds are visible and we can see to pluck them, but the weeds in each one’s mind are more difficult to pluck. This can be done only by the Divine Gardener, with the help – and desire – of the individual. See that the garden is filled only with thoughts of God – this will come with more meditation and by attunement with the guru. Do not waste your time on trivialities that will be taken away from you – even your body!”

“See how good it is to work for God.” The Master was addressing a devotee whose willing cooperation and service had gone a long way toward changing many of his old, bad habits.

“God gave us selfishness to see whether we would work for Him or for ourselves. It’s all for God anyway, only He doesn’t let us see that.”

When a disciple lamented that hermitage responsibilities were seriously shortening her time for meditation, the Master said, “Do your work with the thought of God, and pray, ‘Lord, where Thou hast placed me, there Thou must come.’ And give the nights to Him. That is His plan, that in the day we perform duties and at night dive deep in the ocean of meditation. Then there will come a time when there is no separation of the two, and day and night you will swim in the Infinite Joy.”

Master ever labored to cure the devotee of attachment to anything but God. He once said to a group of students: “You are guests of this earth, but have made

undesirable guests of yourselves by monopolizing a small portion of it as your very own. It is ‘my home,’ ‘my wife,’ ‘my husband,’ ‘my children,’ and so on.

But as soon as the body drops, everything vanishes. You are not the body. There is no longer your family, your house, your money! Why can’t you learn that lesson before death? Why wait?”

“When you allow other interests to take precedence in your life they form a sort of crust over the soul that prevents you from realizing God,” the Master explained. “Right action and meditation will gradually dissolve that crust until you can at will communicate with God. You must do your utmost to reach that state. That is the real kingship – control of self.”

Master once explained the connection between Spirit and matter in the following way: “Spirit vibrated into matter; hence, both Spirit and matter exist. Matter, however, does not exist in the way that it appears to us. It exists as we see it owing to the delusive force of *maya*, which makes the indivisible Spirit seem finite and divisible to all appearances. Matter has existence in the same delusive way as does a mirage in the desert.”

Master once described the state of true yogic “inaction” as follows: “I am apart from it all. When I perform an action it is like writing in water. No mark remains in the water.* That’s what my consciousness is like when I am active.”

Master once paraphrased a comment of Sri Yukteswar’s to a new disciple: “Some think that to join a religious organization is as much cause for sorrow as a funeral, but instead it may mean the funeral of all sorrow!”

* i.e., no karmic record is kept. Only a Master is a free man – free from karma, the inexorable law that holds the unenlightened man accountable for all his thoughts and actions. In urging Arjuna to fight on the battlefield, Lord Krishna assured his disciple that no karma would follow him if he acted as God’s agent, i.e., without egoistic consciousness.

The devotee's right attitude in time of trial was explained as follows by the Master: "One who has dedicated himself to God endures great hardships cheerfully and rejoices at every moment, recalling His kindness. He realizes that just as a doctor cures his patient by cutting his festering sore and removing its putrescent matter, so does the Lord, with an eye to their welfare, sometimes apply the knife of hardships to His patients and thus cure them. His seemingly cruel treatment is really full of mercy."

Master often told the story of a man who put a hundred-dollar bill in the collection plate and then was chagrined that his prayers were not answered.

"I said to him, 'You wanted to buy the most expensive gift of all – the One, the dust of whose feet contains millions of universes – for a hundred dollars and a little prayer!'"

Master considered the performance of duty of the highest importance to Self-realization. He once said, "Perform little duties very well. Do you know you may have been using only five or six percent of your attention in your vocation? You ought to use one hundred percent concentration in doing your work henceforth. All good work is God's work, if you perform it with the divine consciousness.

Only work done with a purely selfish motive is material. In earning money, always think that you are doing so for your fellow beings, even if you have no family. Destroy the false division between material and spiritual work. All work is purifying if done with the right motive."

These words of Master's to disciples have a universal application: "Don't be one-sided. Lead a scheduled life and grade your duties. Right duty consists of the work that you do with pleasure and a sense of privilege, and not with the constrained feeling of paying a debt. Consciousness of spiritual and moral duty should predominantly reign in your mind, above all other duties. Intellectual duty is superior to material duty, but material duty is very important, and should be supplemented with social, patriotic, and international duties."

Master often encouraged the devotees with this thought: "Again and again have I heard the Lord reply after I had approached Him and said, 'I am nothing. How could I

mentally stand before Thee? Come into the little broken temple of my mind.’ And He said, ‘Not one of My children do I love less than I love the Christ.’ That was enough for me. Then I knew that I had a place in the heart of God – that I was not forsaken.”

For those who think that saints enjoy their blessed reward as a result of some partiality on God’s part the Master had a good answer: “God chooses those who choose Him.”

The Master always urged everyone to start *now* in his search for God. “Remember, every day lost leaves you that much farther from God.”

“Everything else will pass away,” the Master often said. “You must become anchored in the Infinite, where you can stand unshaken amidst the crash of breaking worlds.”

Master once told a group of devotees, “God never demands that you decide in His favor. Why? Because He says, ‘If you love Me you will follow Me.’ He will try you to the limit, will almost seem to push you away. But the clever devotee says, ‘No, Lord, I want Thee. There is only one thing I pray for: that Thou wilt never send me the test of obliviousness to Thy presence.’”

A man once complained to the Master that he could find no work. But the Master said, “To say you have no job is error. Shake up the whole world to find your work, and don’t give up until you find it.”

Master once reminded certain students who were blindly living on the theory and not the experience that creation is a dream, “The difference between the fanatic and the scientific student is this: the fanatic denies everything as a dream, but the student

realizes that even if you are in a dream you will suffer dream pains! He adopts scientific methods to awaken from the dream.”

Regarding chanting the Master once said, “The ideal is to chant first aloud and then mentally until your thought, like a plummet, goes deeper and deeper and touches the bottom of perception; then your thought and the sound become one with the feeling in the chant.”

“A song that is born out of the depths of true devotion to God and that is continuously chanted, audibly or mentally, with ever-increasing deep devotion until response is consciously received from Him in the form of communion, ecstasy, and boundless joy, is a spiritualized song. Such songs, like live matches, produce the fire of God-contact whenever they are struck on the foundation stone of devotion.”

Late one afternoon Master called one of the disciples, asking her to wait in the small library until he was ready to see her. It was a hot day, and she was wearing a dress with a stiff tight belt. To increase her comfort she unfastened the belt. When the Master summoned her, it was with these words: “Gunny sack, come here!” Amused at her new name, the disciple hastened to greet her guru. With a twinkling smile the Master said, “I called you gunny sack because I saw that you had on the brown dress, and your belt was hanging.” As there had been two closed doors between herself and the guru, the disciple understood that he meant he had seen her with his inner vision.

The Master was sitting in the living room at the desert retreat one evening, dictating and discussing with a small group of disciples how all creation is the result of the Cosmic Vibration, or Holy Ghost. One of the disciples brought Master a special parsley drink that she had made. He took a sip and then made a face. “What’s the matter with it? It tastes like rat!”

“It is the same as I always make it, Sir, and you usually like it,” replied the abashed disciple.

Master drank a few more sips. “It tastes just if you had dragged a rat through it,” he insisted. “Here, take it away.”

By this time the other disciples were convulsed with laughter, for sitting under the Master's chair, where he could not see it, was a tiny field mouse.

The Master turned again to the disciple who was holding his drink, and took it once more. After another swallow he asked in a puzzled voice, "Is it a special manifestation created by the Holy Ghost?"

This promise of the Master was directed to every person who sought his help: "Not one soul that comes to me in sincerity shall go away empty-handed. Those who are in tune with me find Him that sent me."

Master's birthday party was drawing to a close. Since there were over two hundred guests and disciples who wanted to receive the Master's blessing before leaving, each one had to wait his turn in line. One of the older disciples found herself close to the end of the long queue. Standing for many hours during the course of the evening had caused her knees to feel wobbly. Many devotees, oblivious of all except the Master's blissful presence, stopped before him for conversation and advice. The hours went by; the line slowly shortened.

When the older disciple's turn came at last, the joy of being in her guru's presence was momentarily overshadowed by the painful prospect of kneeling. As she approached the Master, his beautiful eyes, ever alight with divine love and understanding, looked into hers. Gently he said, "Don't try it."

Master had taken some of the disciples with him on a long tour of antique shops to make inquiries about certain fixtures for one of the churches. It was 9:30 p.m. when he gave the driver instructions to turn for home. None of the company had had supper – some had even missed lunch – and while Master was still in one of the shops they had been discussing their empty stomachs.

After driving only a short way in silence, the Master said, in a voice sparkling with fun, "Start looking for drive-ins. You all are wondering, 'Is he going to feed us?'"

The individual's influence on the universe as a whole was clearly pictured when the Master said, "Nature's calamities are occasioned by the sum total of the multitudinous wrong human thoughts. Every event in nature is the outcome of the

thoughts of man. We are all indissolubly linked together and bound up in a common fate. Our thoughts help to bind or liberate the world at large.

“Everywhere we see God’s thoughtfulness for us. He gave us hunger – and food to satisfy it. We find all the forces of nature – the earth, the sun, the wind, and water – working together to yield our food. The more spiritually civilized we grow the more we will control nature. The servant nature rebels and makes trouble when the master of the house of civilization sleeps.”

Master’s teachings ring with the call to action – the call to step forward and to something to right the wrongs most people deplore in speech but do little in actuality to correct.

“It is easy to talk of universal sympathy and understanding, but we must demonstrate it in our lives too. The talk of the parlor and the pulpits must be put into practice in the rugged outdoor life of the everyday world. It is only by active sympathy toward our brothers and sisters who are in distress, through the wicked plots of others or through their own error, that will bring a better condition of society – not by persecution in the name of the law to satisfy man’s satanic instincts for gossip and revengefulness.

We must remember Jesus’ warning, ‘Judge not, lest ye be judged.’”

Master included this gem of good advice in one of his lectures:

“The Satan of the spiritual path has claws of bad habits with which he tightly holds his victims to the rut of sense pleasures, away from the joys of eternal life. Do not be tempted by this Satan to forget God and your daily meditation. On the altar of prayer and meditation, lay your offering daily to God, and soon the Satan of bad habits will have no power over you. Before your strength, his hold will weakly relax. There is hidden strength within you to overcome all obstacles and temptations. Bring forth that indomitable power and energy!”

Master clarified the meaning of the path of renunciation with these words:

“Outward renunciation of sense-enjoyments without a corresponding inward renunciation develops hypocrisy and a greater, though suppressed, attachment to material life. Outward renunciation is only helpful when the inward desire for sense-pleasures is satisfied by finding greater pleasure in God. Renunciation is not an end itself. It is not a method of self-torture. We should forsake goals of smaller

consequence when they stand in the way of our acquiring more lasting spiritual happiness. Jesus renounced his temporary earthly life to enter into the life everlasting.”

During an interview with President Coolidge the Master said, “Mr. President, it is only spiritual understanding among all nations that can bring lasting peace. If the navy is scrapped and the machine guns are destroyed, that will not stop war, for the people still would fight if their weapons were but stones.”

During an interview with newspapermen Master prescribed the following rules as a good daily regimen for all: “Morning and evening sit in introspective silence thinking of your most important engagement with the soul within. Exercise fifteen minutes. Walk thirty minutes. Study one hour. Meditate one hour and a half. Smile from within all hours.”

A warning to every devotee lies in these words of the Master: “Material entanglements, sweet and mysterious, keep us dreaming so that we forget to wake up before the dream of life vanishes into the Infinite. When you have ample time, steadiness, good health, and determination, do not let wavering suspicions and doubts be walls in the way. They have to be dynamited by faith.”

Master considered cheerfulness of the greatest importance, and often counseled: “Be prosperous by smiling no matter what happens. Do not be afraid to sell the bonds of smiles when the market of happiness is low. Keep smiling while planning and acting for success, and your smiles will fetch priceless treasures in the end. Wise, persevering activity with unfading smiles brings sure success.”

Knowing the value of intense, devotion-filled prayer, Master often spoke about it. On one occasion he said, “Watch yourself when you pray. Silently but strictly keep a keen eye on the truant child of your attention. Let it not run away, beyond the precincts of the temple of your devotion. It is better to hold your attention by your own prayers that blossom in the garden of your heart.

The mind likes fresh-grown thoughts of God instead of artificial flowers of others' prayers. God loves heart-made prayers better than book-made ones. When He does not respond, it is often because He is offered these imitation flowers of others' dry prayers.

The bestowal of prayer-flowers with indifference, absentmindedness, cold formality, or lack-luster devotion is not the way to claim His attention.”

A disciple was deeply disappointed in having been left at home when a certain little journey was made by the Master and a group of disciples. In talking it over later the Master remarked, “It is just the visibility.” The disciple understood him to mean that in reality there was no separation at all between the guru and true devotees. It was merely the human illusion of time and space that gave rise to the grief.

Many were curious to know Master's age. He counseled the disciples: “Say to yourself: ‘I have no age. I was born before the atoms were born. I was before the stars. I was the ocean, I shall be many waves of the sea. My age is eternity. I am immortal. I am Spirit.’”

Two of the disciples were accompanying Master on an errand. They had been in several stores, and finally reached a certain shop. When they entered, a woman came forward to wait on them. Master said, “You need money, don't you?” The astonished woman replied, “Yes, how did you know?”

And the Master said, “God told me,” as he handed her some bills.

Master explained the correct way to use healing affirmations: “Always affirm with intelligence and devotion, until your thought goes consciously through the subconscious mind into the superconscious mind. The greatest healing you should seek is the healing of spiritual ignorance, so that you will never go back to the old ways of life.”

When the Master was leaving Boston, during his early days in America, to spread the teachings throughout the country, one of his students remarked: “I am afraid I will be helpless without your spiritual guidance, Sir.”

The Master replied, “Don’t depend on me. Depend on God.”

Many years ago the mother of one of the Master’s students suffered a severe stroke. The doctor told the family she might live only until morning.

The Master was in Cuba at the time, but the student mentally called on him for help. His mother lived. A few months later this student paid a visit to the Master. The subject of the mother’s health was brought up. The Master commented, “Well, the Lord has spared her life for quite some time.”

The student inquired if she would be with them much longer, and the Master said, “If she lives four months we must be satisfied.”

Just four months later to the day she passed away.

A student in whose home the Master was staying was faced with a serious financial problem – so serious it might have meant the loss of a fortune. He told the Master about it and observed that the Master remained perfectly calm. The next day the situation was corrected.

In thanking the Master the student remarked, “How is it, Sir, that you remain undisturbed under such conditions? I wish that *I* could feel the same peace and serenity.”

The Master looked at him intently and said, “Remember, the same Father who protects me, protects you. He is our common Father.”

Urging the devotee away from trust in sense testimony alone, the Master said, “Our senses do not tell us the whole truth – that, for instance, the electrons in a small pencil could explode a skyscraper, or that the energy released from the electrons constituting a human body could explode a part of Mt. Everest.

If our senses conveyed the whole truth to us, we would see the earth not as solid, liquid, and gaseous, but as rivers and glaciers of electrons. Each speck of dust would appear as a rolling mass of light.”

With such words as these the Master would lead the devotees into a new state of consciousness, a deeper understanding of life: “The vast universe is nothing but an ocean of energy lying about us; high overhead as rivers of the milky way, twinkling stars, solar systems; beneath our feet as solid earth. The physical body with its ethereal thoughts, the sparkling lakes, heaving oceans, sky, air, and fire – all are but the vibrations of the same Cosmic Energy.

Yet the senses differentiate and tell us the delusive story that the solid hurts us, the liquid drowns us, the fire burns us, the sky does not hold us, and the gas chokes us.”

Master once defined self-control: “Self-control is a tremendous thing – a power little known in the world. When you have so much power over yourself that food could be placed in your mouth and still you wouldn’t taste it, or when the mind gains supreme control over sexual desire, so that it means nothing to you, that is real self-control.

Few people have it. Until you understand what that control means, you are just a victim of life, not a victor.”

Man places so much importance on time, but the saints know that all is a part of the eternal Now. Master once said, “These few years of your life are just so many seconds compared to the eternity before you were born and the eternity ahead of you after death. You were casually thrown into one country for a brief period, but you are a perpetual inhabitant of your true country, Eternity.”

Addressing a group at one of the churches the Master said, “You are not here just to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner – and die. Remember, you are a channel of the Master of the Universe! You are not a prince of darkness. You are a Prince of Light! You are made in His image, and unflinchingly you must seek Him. What is the use of doing anything without wholeheartedness? Give Him a real soul-call and you will see that He cannot resist you. Shake the ether with your appeal!”

“If you find your thoughts carried away, little by little, as prisoners of temptation, then you should train your armies of self-control. Seek good company, take right care of the body, and keep your thoughts busy with wonder and bliss of God.”

“Behind every rosebush of earthly pleasure there is a rattlesnake of misery.”

“You must *know* God. The time for knowing has come!”

“Many were the friends of Christ at the table, but few there were with him at the cross.”

“Our hearts are the beads and divine love is the thread of God’s rosary.”

“Love must be the dictator of the world.”

“In the house of God there must be no divisions.”

“To tell a person, no matter how evil he is, that he is evil, is to throw more mud on the gold of his soul.”

“Don’t expect to go to heaven unless you carry a portable heaven within your heart every day.”

“Be a smile millionaire, scattering everywhere the riches of your smiles.”

“The soul cannot be confined within man-made boundaries. Its nationality is Spirit; its country is Omnipresence.”

“There is too much living in the land of make-believe – trying to keep up with the Joneses.”

“Ordinary religionists are like stars; they cannot give much light. But a saint is like the full moon, illuminating everything.”

“I killed Yogananda long ago. No one dwells in this temple now but Him.”

“I am not interested in those whose spiritual ardor flares up like a straw fire, only to die down quickly. I am interested in those who will last in the path of Self-realization and who solely and steadily love God.”

“The world is not our own. Our kingdom is heaven, and when we know God we own all things, even as He does.”

“Do not grieve because you do not see light or images in meditation. If you go deep into the perception of bliss you will find there the actual presence of God. Seek the Whole, not a part.”

“God sleeps in the minerals, dreams in the flowers, awakens in the animals; but in man* He *knows* He is awake.”

“During activity hold on to the feelings of peace and bliss that you experience during meditation. That is being a true introvert.”

“Renunciation within, unselfishness, and meditation are the only way to God.”

“The Lord wants to take you out of this terrible turmoil of life. That is the one thing He wants, because He loves each one of you. God does not want you to suffer. Your salvation is a personal matter between God and you.”

“Whatever you tell your mind, that you become. It is your adamant will that will give you victory. It is better to have a strong will than a perfect body. The more you emphasize the mortal, the more mortal you will become. The more you emphasize the Spirit, the more you will become spiritual.”

“For me there is one wish – the wish of God.”

“We must do everything for God. Rise above likes and dislikes, for when these waves of desires disappear from the lake of your mind, you will behold the undisturbed image of Spirit within.”

* i.e., the divinely awakened man. “The human body was not solely a result of evolution from beasts, but was produced by an act of special creation by God. The animal forms were too crude to express full divinity; the human being was uniquely given a tremendous mental capacity – the ‘thousand-petaled lotus’ of the brain – as well as acutely awakened occult centers in the spine.” (*Autobiography of a Yogi*, p. 178)

“Introspection develops you more than reading, but you still cannot get everything by thinking. You can receive the ocean of wisdom only by meditation.”

“It isn’t what you are doing, but what you are inside. God has to be pleased.”

“March on rapidly. There is little time. And in this short season of life the richest harvest of God’s consciousness should be reaped.”

“Who is it that makes you love? God. Therefore, who deserves your love? God. Without Him no love is real, because God Himself is love.”

“God’s omnipresent electric energy is flowing into your body all the time, but you are not conscious of it. Realize that you are living directly by God’s grace and that every other power would fail without the power of God.”

“Every human faculty, like a tender plant, can be nourished by the waters of definite healthful exercise.”

“When people are hungry they feed themselves, but when they go into the house of God, they often expect someone else to do the praying for them.”

“A sunny mentality contains the ultra-violet rays that kill all mental bacteria. Don’t shut out the rays by a glassy look.”

“Follow not the dictates of this dreamland, for dreams will turn into nightmares. Break this dream delusion by waking in God and you will be safe forever.”

“Don’t be possessed by your possessions.”

“Spend your efforts in judging yourself and you will spend them profitably.”

“Systematize and schedule your engagements. Let none, especially your bad habits, sway or influence your judgment. Let the secretary of your true judgment arrange your life’s daily itinerary.”

“All actions that lead the mind of the doer away from sense enjoyment to soul enjoyment are considered proper actions.”

“No matter what your impulses dictate, let nothing sit on the throne of your heart but God. If you love this creation of God’s more than Him, you will be disillusioned. God first, God in the middle, God last.”

GLOSSARY

BABAJI: Guru of Lahiri Mahasaya (who in turn was the guru of Swami Sri Yukteswar, who in turn was the guru of Paramhansa Yogananda). Babaji is a deathless avatar, living secretly in the Himalayas. Glimpses of his life are given in Yoganandaji's *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

BHAGAVAD GITA: Hindu Bible; the sacred sayings of Sri Krishna (compiled millenniums ago by the Sage Vyasa).

DIVINE MOTHER: "That aspect of the Uncreated Infinite which is active in creation is referred to in Hindu scriptures as the Divine Mother," Yoganandaji wrote. "It is this personalized aspect of the Absolute that may be said to have 'longings' for the rightful behavior of Her children and to answer their prayers. Men who imagine that the Impersonal cannot manifest in a personal form are in effect denying not only Its omnipresence but also the possibility that man can commune with his Maker. The Lord in the form of the Cosmic Mother appears in living tangibility before Her true *bhaktas* (devotees of a Personal God)."

The Lord manifests Himself before His saints in whatever form each of them holds dear. "A devout Christian sees Jesus; a Hindu beholds Krishna, or the Goddess Kali, or an expanding Light if his worship takes an impersonal turn."

HOLY GHOST: *Om* or *Aum*, the Amen, the all-pervading sound emanating from Cosmic Vibration – the voice of all creation, or of God. It can be heard through practicing the Self-Realization method of meditation.

GURU: The spiritual preceptor who introduces the disciple to God. The term guru differs from teacher, as a person can have only one guru but may have many teachers.

KALI: Mythological Hindu Goddess, represented as a woman with four hands. One hand symbolizes nature's creative powers; the second hand represents the cosmic preservative functions; the third hand is an emblem of the purifying forces of dissolution. Kali's fourth hand is outstretched in a gesture of blessing and salvation. Through these means She calls all creation back to Her soul. The Goddess Kali is a symbolization of the Divine Mother (*q.v.*)

KARMA: The universal law of cause and effect that operates in man's life to bring him the lawful results of his good and bad actions.

KRIYA YOGA: An ancient science developed in India for the use of God-seekers. Its technique is referred to and praised by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* and by Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*.

MAYA: Cosmic illusion; literally, "the measurer." *Maya* is the magical power in creation by which limitations and divisions are apparently present in the Immeasurable and Inseparable.

Yoganandaji writes in *Autobiography of a Yogi* (3rd ed., New York, p. 284n.):

"It must not be imagined that the truth about *maya* was understood only by the *rishis* (Hindu sages). The Old Testament prophets called *maya* by the name of Satan (lit., in Hebrew, 'the adversary'). Satan or *Maya* is the Cosmic Magician that produces multiplicity of forms to hide the One Formless Verity. The sole purpose of Satan is to divert man from Spirit to matter. Christ described *maya* picturesquely as a devil, a murderer, and a liar. "The devil ... was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it' (*John 8:44*)."

MOUNT WASHINGTON CENTER: The international headquarters of Self-Realization Fellowship in Los Angeles, California. The sixty-room headquarters is the home of resident monks and sisters of the Self-Realization Order. The site covers twenty-five acres of city property.

NIRBIKALPA SAMADHI: The highest or irrevocably God-united stage of *samadhi*. The first or preliminary stage (characterized by trance or bodily immobility) is called *sabikalpa samadhi*.

OM: See *Holy Ghost*.

ORDER: The monastic Self-Realization Order founded by Paramhansa Yogananda.

PARAMHANSA: A religious title, signifying one who is master of himself. It can be bestowed on a disciple only by his guru. *Paramhansa* literally means “supreme swan.” The swan is referred to in Hindu scriptures as a symbol of discrimination.

SADHU: One who pursues a *sadhana* or path of spiritual discipline; an ascetic.

SAMADHI: Superconsciousness. *Samadhi* is attained by following the eightfold yoga path, in which *samadhi* is the eighth step of final goal. Scientific meditation – the right use of yoga techniques anciently developed by India’s sages – leads the devotee to *samadhi* or God-realization. Just as the wave melts in the sea, so the human soul realizes itself as Spirit.

SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP (SRF): A non-profit, nonsectarian, religious and educational organization, founded in America in 1920 by Paramhansa Yogananda. Its affiliate in India is Yogoda Sat-Sanga Society (YSS), founded in 1918 by Paramhansa Yogananda.

STUDIES: The teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda, compiled in printed form and sent to members of the Self-Realization Fellowship.

YOGA: Communion with God through the practice of scientific meditation. The oldest text on the sacred science is Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*. Patanjali’s date is unknown, though some scholars assign him to the second century B.C.

YOGANANDAJI: The monastic name of Yogananda is a combination of two words: *yoga*, union with Spirit, and *ananda*, bliss. The name thus implies bliss through yoga-union with Spirit.

“Ji” is a suffix denoting respect that is often added to names in India. Paramhansa Yogananda is therefore occasionally referred to in this book as Paramhansaji or Yoganandaji.