



SAD VANI

A collection of the teaching of
SRI ANANDAMAYI MA

as reported by

BHAJI (J. C. Roy)

Translated by ATMANANDA



SHREE SHREE ANANDAMAYEE SANGHA
Bhadaini, Varanasi

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PREFACE

Sad Vani, the first collection of the teaching of Sri Anandamayi Ma to appear in print, was published in the Bengali original and also in an English translation by Ganga Charan Das Gupta in 1935, about two years before Bhaiji passed away. (The Shree Shree Anandamayee Sangha came into existence only in 1950).

When Mataji left Bengal for Dehradun in June 1932, Bholanath and Bhaiji were her only companions. During the following two or three years Bhaiji had a unique opportunity to listen to Mataji's words of wisdom. In those days Mataji would immediately become silent if anyone tried to take notes while she was talking. Therefore, Bhaiji would write

down afterwards what he had heard Mataji say. Thus *Sad Vāni* is Mataji's teaching couched in Bhaiji's language.

However, the devotees who knew Bhaiji are in agreement on the fact that of all the men and women who have come in contact with Mataji, Bhaiji was the person who understood her best and who had succeeded in effacing his ego in Mataji's service. For this reason we may be confident that what he passed on as Mataji's teaching could hardly be coloured by his own beliefs or points of view.

Mataji often declares that she has no particular opinion, no ready-made answer for any particular question. "As you play the instrument, so you hear the sound," she says, referring to her own utterances in reply to queries. In other words, she responds perfectly to the level of the person to whom she addresses herself, to his grasping power and

his needs at the moment. Bhaiji was a man of profound depths and a very serious and sincere seeker after Truth. It seems obvious that he must have known "how to play the instrument" and that he was bound to receive very generous response.

Mataji's teaching is completely universal, without any bias whatever. Men and women professing any religion or none, belonging to any class, caste, race or country can derive great benefit from her advice which is intensely practical.

Every human being is potentially a seeker after Truth. Mataji never tires of repeating again and again that the supreme duty, the real calling of every man and woman as a human being is to realize his Self, to realize the One manifested in all. Among the countless hosts of different creatures of the universe, the human being alone is endowed with the

capacity to become aware of his own Divinity, to know THAT which lies concealed within all the infinite forms and shapes and modes of being.

Sad Vāni has appeared in several editions in Bengali, Hindi, Gujerati, and in a French translation by Jean Herbert under the caption *Aux Sources de la Joie*. The English version has been out of print for many years. From July 1970 to January 1972, it appeared by instalments in *Ānanda Vārtā*, our quarterly journal, in a new translation. It is now made available in the form of this small book, which will no doubt be greatly welcomed by seekers all over the world. May it shed light on their path!

April 1973

The Publisher

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FOREWORD

There is nothing in the world that can be called new. Revolving ceaselessly on the wheel of time, the old appears again and again clothed in ever new forms. This is even more obvious concerning the dissemination of Supreme Wisdom (*Parama Tatwa*). Time after time, expressed in many different ways, there have been numerous attempts throughout the ages to proclaim the Eternal Truth of the ONE in the many. This ancient Truth (*Satya*) has ever purified and enlightened the human mind. To this category belongs the teaching set forth in the '*Sad Vani*'. May it bring Supreme Joy to all its readers !

Sri Sri Anandamayi Ma, at whose Holy

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Feet I sat, listening to her words collected in this small book, has said : "The search after Truth becomes easy for one who can be completely one-pointed and firmly concentrated under all circumstances, no matter what path may have been chosen." It is well to remember this. That to which the mind is attached, ever appears delightful to man.

Bhaiji



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In the field of action, people's minds become crippled by the lack of freedom to proceed in their own way. The same is true in the sphere of religion. If the aspirant does not find scope for a wide extension of his search in keeping with his individual temperament, his efforts will stagnate in narrow grooves. The path that has been chosen must be pursued with great vigour in order that purity of mind and heart may be developed. When the goal is ever before one as a living reality, all that is needful will come of its own accord.

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To be attracted means to become transformed. Whenever you feel drawn to anything, be it a person, an object, or an idea, you have to sacrifice something of yourself. In the exact degree that you give up, so will you receive. This is an axiom of life. To gain everything without letting go of anything is never possible for the simple reason that two things cannot at the same time occupy one and the same place. That is to say, without sacrifice nothing can be achieved. The more the heart becomes filled with the love of God, the fainter will grow the appetite for material enjoyments. The moment you become charmed and there-

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fore transformed and inspired by Him, your mind will be stilled. True, it is not possible to be fascinated by Him unless His pull is felt from within ; yet a determined effort to ever look forward to this experience is essential. As a business man always keeps himself informed about the market rates, so should one constantly remain occupied with spiritual enquiry and investigation.

3

In the midst of limitation, if one line of approach is selected and steadily pursued, the bonds of limitation will fall away as soon as one becomes fully concentrated on the Goal. Then the One will stand

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revealed as the many, and the many as the One. In order to be blessed with the power to reach Infinity, one must begin by labouring within the finite.

So long as one is identified with the body, it is necessary to submit to the rules and prohibitions set forth in the Sacred Texts. This requires patience and endurance. Nature, although itself in constant flux, never accords help to anyone in his restlessness,

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Ten Stages on the Path :

First of all the desire to find God is conceived.
Second : one begins to hanker after him
restlessly.

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- Third : the eagerness for union with Him
grows overwhelming.
- Fourth : one resorts to all kinds of clever
devices to reach the Goal.
- Fifth : there is intense yearning to soar up
into the heights of divine contem-
plation.
- Sixth : tears of longing for the Beloved
are shed in great profusion.
- Seventh : one wants to swim in the ocean
of Bliss.
- Eighth : day and night God's name is
repeated in order to realize Him.
- Ninth : forgetting oneself and awakening of
great love for God.
- Tenth : the search is over, Self-realization
is attained.

Five

Without experiencing the anguish inherent in the mechanism of life in the world, the desire to become acquainted with the Great Mechanic (*yantri*)* Who causes the cosmic machine to revolve does not arise in the human heart. Disease, grief, privations, remorse and the like, are very necessary for man. Just as fire burns away all dross and rubbish, so the three-fold suffering (*tritāpa*) purges man's heart from all impurity, and results in a growing single-mindedness in his search after Truth. When he becomes deeply conscious of his weakness and tor-

* A play upon words : *Yantra* machine and *Yantrana* anguish.

mented by the thought of his undesirable impulses and distressing characteristics, when afflictions like poverty, bereavement or humiliation make him feel his life is futile, then and then only does he develop real faith and religious fervour, and becomes anxious to surrender himself at the feet of the Supreme Being. Suffering should therefore be welcomed. Never does the soft moonlight appear more soothing than after the scorching heat of a summer day.

You all say : "I want to find God, I want to find God." But are you really seeking Him with your whole heart and mind, with your whole being ? Just watch

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and you will see ! If you are in dead earnest you are bound to find Him. Do you know by what signs a true seeker can be recognized ? If you pine for Him as a shipwrecked traveller longs for the shore, as a bereaved mother yearns for her child ; if you desire Him with such eagerness you will find that He is with you every second, day and night.

You pray to Him for the good things of this world, and this is why He bestows on you riches, family, friends, position and so on, which make you forget the real treasure. Seek Him solely for His own sake and you will certainly find Him.

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There is nothing in this universe that may be treated with disregard or contempt. He acts His Divine Play in infinite ways, through infinite forms, and in an infinite variety of settings. Without appearing as the many, how can this Play be staged ? Do you not see how light and darkness, joy and sorrow, fire and water, are inextricably linked together in one unbroken chain ? Remember that spiritual endeavour must be coupled with purity of heart. To the extent that we harbour unkind or narrow thoughts, we increase the cause of evil in the world. What necessity is there to pay attention to what others have or have not ? Far better be intent on your own

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improvement. If you can develop inner beauty, and enshrine Him, the ever Beautiful, in the glorious temple of your heart, you will then be able to perceive beauty in everything.

8

People who come to see me, sometimes say: "I hope my visit is to not putting you to any inconvenience?" It is because they wish to keep apart from me that such questions come readily to their lips. Just ask yourself whether this sort of consideration enters your mind when you wish to see your father, mother, brother or sister? You feel at ease in their loving company, and even should your visit cause them

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some inconvenience, they will not notice it. If you understand that this body belongs to you all, such hesitation will not arise in your mind when you come to me. Wherever you go at any time, go with your whole heart and soul, and nobody will seem a stranger to you. Whenever you feel like it, come and see me. It is a great joy to see all of you who are manifestations of the One Joy Supreme.

9

Since everything in this universe is the creation of the one Great Father, all are kith and kin. Just as the sons and daughters of one large family choose a dozen different professions whereby to earn their livelihood,

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just as they settle and build homes of their own in a dozen different places, so all human beings, although one in essence, are grouped in various ways and under various denominations, according to the demands of their multifarious lines of activity.

For the cure of the ailing body many systems of medicine exist, such as Allopathy, Homœopathy, Ayurveda and others. Each person makes use of the method that is best suited to him. Equally, to cure man of the diseased condition that causes the perpetual recurrence of birth and death, there are elaborate prescriptions to be found in the *Śāstras* and many rules and regulations to be learnt directly from sages and saints, yet all have the same purpose. The diverse paths followed by Hindus, Moham-

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medans, Vaiṣṇavites, Śāktas, etc., all ultimately lead to the threshold of the Eternal.

At the entrance to a railway station there is much agitation and noise, much pushing and jostling ; but once the correct platform has been reached everyone's destination has been settled.

10

The Master and the servant, though separate embodiments, are essentially one. When the Master in His infinite mercy descends into a physical body, He becomes the servant. Just as there can be no servant without a master, so also the master is dependent on his servant. Thus there is an eternal mutual relationship between the

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two, so much so that the one cannot exist without the other. The master is the sole object of the servant's self-dedication. On the other hand the master relies entirely upon the servant for service. The One Who in His fulness, in His totality is the Master, He Himself when appearing in division becomes the servant; in other words, the servant is but a partial manifestation of the Master.

You boast so much of doing service. This is just idle talk. The real servants were Hanuman, Garud and others like them, who identified themselves so wholly with their masters that they had no longer independent existences. Complete subjection of oneself in service, is what is required. He who is incapable of unreservedly offering

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to his Lord his all — his wealth, family, friends, mind, heart and body — cannot claim to be recognized as the Lord's true servant.

11

This world may be likened unto a drum with only one player. The rhythms it gives forth depend on His Will.

When *kirtana* is performed, have you not noticed how many people dance and sing to the rhythm of the music? But do any give a thought to the instruments or their players? Those who pass their days on this earth in happiness which is only a tiny fragment of the real Joy, are not interested in knowing Him, the Source of all de-

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light. Seek Him Who is the Fountainhead of everything. This is real *tapasyā*, this is real *sādhana*.

12

One often hears people say that while living the life of a householder it is impossible to make spiritual progress. Is this quite true? How many opportunities are offered to a householder for practising religion in daily life! Parental affection, the fondness between brothers and sisters, the love between husband and wife, the reverence and devotion of children for their parents, the companionship between relatives and friends, the blessings of dependants and of the poor and suffering, are all

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potent aids towards a life that ultimately aims at Self-realization. Think it over and you will understand! Tossed about incessantly between the ordeals and pleasures of family life, the spirit of renunciation sometimes awakens in man together with a desperate yearning for God: Where this is so, the householder has a better chance even than many an anchorite who has left home and family.

13

What is the good of saying: "I want to turn my mind to the Eternal but I am unable to do so." When anyone in your home has just an ordinary illness or indisposition, no matter how preoccupied you

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may be, you at once consult a doctor and run here and there for remedies ; or if anything goes wrong with your worldly affairs, think of the amount of trouble you take to put it right ! But when you find a difficulty in concentrating on God, you at once give up, fold your hands in your lap, saying : "I cannot", and wait for His Grace. Does this befit a karma yogin ? if once you rouse yourself to enthusiasm, you will be able to concentrate well enough. You spare no pains to make your body healthy, strong and beautiful ; if you try equally hard to educate your mind, you will see how wholehearted, how fervent your aspiration grows. Merely to sit down and philosophize will not take you anywhere ; it is necessary to apply theoretical

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knowledge in practice and to engage in *sādhana*. To be one-pointed in all you do, will of itself teach you the secret of how the goal can be attained through action.

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Restlessness, agitation, doubt, and the like are certainly objectionable ; yet it is the search for happiness that lies at their root. Like a child, thoughtlessly flitting here and there, not discriminating between good and evil, the mind ever seeks joy. But the evanescent pleasures of this world that come and go, cannot hold the mind for long. Loving attention and reprimand are both necessary for the education of a child. In a like manner the mind has to be trained. By

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frequenting the company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, by harbouring only pure and noble thoughts and emotions, by listening to religious discourses, and by reading books of wisdom, will be provided the right sustenance for the mind, inwardly as well as outwardly. Gradually you become free from all worries until at last you find your rest in the Supreme. On the battle field one has to lay stress on the means of self-defence rather than on provocative attack. Similarly one should take special care to keep oneself protected within the entrenchment of discrimination and intelligent reasoning re-inforced by consecrated activities that make the mind God-centred, so that the outer enemy in the form of craving for sense pleasures may not

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be able to intrude. The mind is its own friend or foe, the mind itself has to destroy its own ignorance. The easiest and most effective means for purging the mind is to associate with saints and seekers after Truth and to ceaselessly invoke the Name of God.

15

People seek only outer opportunities and conveniences. They fail to realize that so long as they are merely concerned with success and failure they simply remain on the surface of things. Unless one looks within and without simultaneously, God cannot be found. The body, worldly possessions, one's home and people belong to

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the external ; meditation on the Self and the endeavour to let one's thinking be permeated by Him are inner processes. To run after physical and mental comforts will only strengthen attachment to external pleasures, and rust will collect inwardly. This is why life after life has to be spent in cleansing the mind from all accumulated dross and impurity. So long as one cannot make a clean sweep of outer attractions, one should at least aim at directing one's attention within as well, by seeking the Essence of things, and meditating on Him, who is Bliss Eternal.

Gradually the glorious moment will dawn when one's whole being will be united in single-minded contemplation and the inner and outer welded into one.

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You are given to much discussion about *sattvic* food. For this body *sattvic* food means to nourish oneself with divine thoughts and emotions and to abide in the awareness of Truth or God. If once a day you eat perfectly pure food but remain engrossed in worldly thoughts all day and night, of what use can *sattvic* food possibly be to you? Within the mortar of the mind, pound the medicine of God's name or of Self-enquiry with the honey of pure aspiration and partake of it. In this way the opportunity for right diet as well as the necessary ingredients for making it effective will be provided from within.

At all times let your objectives be noble,

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give your whole attention to your work ; your mind and body will then develop the qualities you are trying to create by *sattvic* food.

Anything taken in through the senses is food, therefore be watchful and see that you do not become addicted to what you absorb into yourself. Strive always to keep your appetites under control.

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Essentially there is only one inner Call, but the different religions have devised different methods to make man aware of it. Once a man awakens to it there is no more need to cry out again and again. Truly speaking it is not you who call Him, but

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He who calls you. Just as in the hushed silence of night the sound of distant temple bells and conches can be clearly heard, even so, when through intense and undivided devotion to Him the hunger of the senses is stilled, His call will find response from your inmost depths and reverberate through your whole being. Then and then only will true prayer spontaneously flow from your heart. This divine Call is bound to come to everyone for *Śiva*, the Eternal Spirit, has resolved Himself into *jīvas*, sentient beings, and every creature has to become reconverted again into *Śiva*. Just as water freezes into ice, and ice melts into water, so this play of transformation of *Śiva* into *jīva* and *jīva* into *Śiva* goes on and on through eternity.

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In this world one cannot afford to ignore anyone. Every human being has a claim to some measure of respect and support from every other. No one should think that he is of greater importance for the maintenance of order in the universe than anyone else. Without a ruler a country cannot be governed, on the other hand there can be no ruler without subjects. Each one is progressing continually on the path of action that has been assigned to him by the Creator. Therefore, to consider oneself great and others small because of any merit or position of prestige one may have acquired, is a serious mistake. Rather than regard this vast universe as a conglomeration of

countless particles, look upon it as one indivisible cosmos, and all distinctions between high and low will then disappear. A man who respects himself will have even more respect for others. Without respect reverence cannot develop, and without reverence love will not awaken; when love is wanting the Lord of Love recedes into the far distance and will be difficult to find.

All creatures are fundamentally one, for the whole universe is a manifestation of the One. A man who hears the word 'Himalaya' without having actually set eyes on the mighty range, will be under the impression that it is but a single mountain,

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whereas once face to face with the Himalayas he will realize that they consist of hundreds upon hundreds of peaks, stretching over hundreds of miles, with millions of trees, animals, birds, insects, with streams and waterfalls. Similarly, the farther one advances or the deeper one penetrates on the path of *sādhana*, the more clearly will be perceived the One revealed in the many and the many in the One. In actual fact we are always with the One, but distracted by the many we forget Him. Step by step we learn to walk, mouthful by mouthful we satisfy our hunger; single letters are composed into words, groups of days form a month, and months added together constitute a year.

You often say: "There is only the One-

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Without-A-Second." This is indeed a fact, for in this universe there is nothing except the One. The world is made up of sense perceptions. Although each one of the five senses reveals a different facet of the immensity of Creation, yet their endless movement originates from the One, and they again find their rest in Him. Their whole significance lies in giving expression to the One. With the one goal before you, try to focus your whole attention on one form, one perfume, one contact, or one sound, and you will eventually come to see that everything is contained in this one. Thereupon you will realize that the One appears as the many and that in very truth the many are the One; you will know that nothing whatsoever exists outside of the One.

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So long as speech has to be employed, use your words sparingly. Listen and try to assimilate what others say, and only when necessity demands utter a few words measured out in homoeopathic doses, as it were. Have you not noticed that where large quantities of allopathic medicine fail, a few drops of homoeopathic medicine sometimes work wonders. What is the hidden motive behind talkativeness? Is it not to display superiority or erudition or else to defeat someone by argument? The force of action is much greater than mere words. Superficial conversation and discussion will not take you far. Practise self-introspection and calm the passions of the heart, and you

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will see how little inclination there is then for talk.

At all times gaze into the heights and keep on mounting. If you aim at what is low, you will sink down into the nether-world. Accustomed to take the even, easy road, you have almost lost the ability to aspire after the sublime. Although you are in the habit of seizing opportunities as they present themselves at every moment, you fail to use this faculty in the right direction. Make a sustained effort to aim at the highest, and if your eyes cannot always remain turned towards the sky, you can surely at least keep them fixed straight

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ahead. The courage to climb upwards comes through enterprise and perseverance. You often complain that the body is willing but the mind does not co-operate, or else that the mind is quite active but the body lags behind. When this is so, you will have to set to work with untiring energy, or your downfall is inevitable. Courage is required in whatever one does; courage itself is power.

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Try always to spend as much time as you can in the open air, keeping the body as bare as is practicable. Gaze to your heart's content at the lofty mountains or

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on the wide ocean, and your words will be frank and free. If you cannot do anything else, at least peer at the open sky whenever you have the chance. Little by little the rigid knots that make up your shackles will be loosened, and you will find yourself becoming freer. A fully awakened consciousness functions only through an untrammelled mind and body. To be fettered is to be crippled.

You brought nothing into this world but your naked body, and one day you will have to depart stripped of everything. If during the short period that lies between birth and death you are burdened with too many possessions and luxuries, it will be very painful to leave them behind. Keep your body light and your mind will be light.

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When both body and mind are light it is easy to attain to Liberation.

23

Why do you accumulate wealth and possessions? In order to maintain yourself and your family. And for whom does the family exist? If you give a straightforward reply, you will have to admit that it is for yourself. But if you ask, "What is this self?", you will find no answer and your intelligence can take you no further.

"Who am I?" Once you sit down and ponder seriously over this question, you will soon discover that all the book learning that you have crammed into your brain in school and college, and all the practical

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experience you have gained in active life, are not of the slightest help in solving this question. If you want to discover the origin of the sense of "I and mine" you will have to alter the whole course of your thinking, and give your undivided attention to the search after Truth. Whenever the mind starts wandering, it must be firmly brought back to concentration upon the source of the "I". This is the means by which to arrive at Self-realization (*Ātmā darśana*).

24

When at daybreak a *vairāgī* (itinerant ascetic) goes from door to door chanting the name of 'Hari', thousands may hear it, but how many have really listened? Why

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is that? Most people have the power of hearing, but the majority are so captivated by the melodies of the world that they will not easily give ear to devotional songs. The only way to counteract this is *japa* (regular repetition of one of God's Names, anything from 10 to 10,000 times), or else to devote some time every day to prayer or meditation, the search for the Self, *satsang*, the singing of God's praises, religious discourses, or any other practice of the kind. In this way the mechanism of body and mind will by and by become attuned to the vibrations of religious music and be able to appreciate it. Without regular practice no science can be mastered. Similarly, sustained effort is necessary for those who aim at Self-realization. This should be borne in

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mind. Just as a watch has to be wound every day, so the winding of the machinery of the mind with the key of divine contemplation at least once daily, will greatly assist in purifying one's thinking.

25

Do not pay attention to the faults of others. It blurs the vision, defiles the mind, and adds to the load of the world's sin. Therefore try to see only the bright side of things in whatever you perceive. It is the good and beautiful which are true and living, whereas the bad and ugly are only the shadow of what really is. Nobody ever wishes to be bad. When you seek

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the company of others, remember you are out to find the good and beautiful. Truly, if you are simple and sincere inwardly as well as outwardly, your heart will be pure and full of joy, and your intelligence and reason sound and accurate. Then you will find good everywhere and nothing will appear to be evil. God alone is perfect ; no person can be free from defects. By making a practice of seeing the good qualities in others, the same virtues develop in yourself, for as you think so you become. In fact it gives much greater satisfaction to appreciate the merits of others even than to dwell on one's own worthiness. To take pleasure in thinking of one's own excellence will only inflate the ego and magnify the faults and frailties of others.

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He only who lives consciously, that is to say in Self-awareness, deserves to be called a human being. Without being truly a human being first, one cannot become a superman. By following the social and moral laws, human qualities are gradually developed, after which, when one becomes interested in the spiritual quest and the mind has been purified by divine contemplation, one may go beyond illusion and grow into a superman. The endeavour to fulfil his real want is characteristic of man ; to be established in his true being is the mark of the superman. Man's task is to satisfy his want by awakening to his true nature ; the superman's task to become

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perfected in his true being, which implies renunciation and all-embracing Love. First of all try to be a real human being.

27

The Supreme is Joy itself. This is why the goal of life for all sentient beings is Joy (*ānanda*). At all times give and receive happiness, hear and see the delightful; thus you will be able to live blissfully. Gloom is the token of death, none in the entire universe welcomes it. If dejection does steal into your heart, drive it away by force. Say to yourself: "Why should I, who am a scion of Joy Supreme, feel downcast?" Does a rich man's son ever exhibit his poverty? Even though his parental wealth

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may have been lost, he will rest content in himself, for he knows that he is the offspring of a distinguished family. And you, whose inner treasure is quite intact—ought you to pass your days like beggars? Can anything be accomplished without keeping one's backbone erect? Do you not see with how much energy the people of the West talk and act. They have put their heart and soul into securing the material welfare of the world, and all affluence and every comfort is in the palm of their hands. For ever banish from your heart anything in the nature of fear, anxiety or despondency. Where joy, enterprise and diligence are, there the Supreme Energy (*Mahāśakti*) itself is present. Learn to see God in all worthy undertakings of mankind. If you

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can do this, you will pass from the material world of karma to Reality, the Brahman, which is identical with the realization of Supreme Bliss (*Paramānanda*).

28

Since one cannot see oneself with one's own eyes, one should listen eagerly when others point to one's mistakes. This is an aid to self-scrutiny; whereas hearing one's praise does nothing but harm. The attitude of the majority of people is exactly contrary to this: they like being praised but greatly fear censure. As a result they remain dependent on praise and blame throughout their lives and in consequence suffer frequent frustration. In worldly life it is neces-

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ssary to be mindful of praise and blame. But on the spiritual path, unless one becomes indifferent to both, one cannot remain firm and steadfast. In order to progress inwardly, one must concentrate on the one Goal, in other words, become absorbed in the One. Therefore it is imperative to cultivate activities and states of mind that promote one-pointedness, and to withdraw as far as possible from all external distractions.

29

One of God's names is *Chintāmani* (fulfiller of desires). At first men turn to God because He fulfils all desires, but by and by they become so absorbed in the con-

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templation of Him that there is no room left for any other thought, that is to say, they become infused with the divine Presence. One must pine for God as keenly as the miser craves for wealth, as the childless longs for a son. Throughout life's journey keep Him first and foremost in your thoughts and He will become your sole aim. If anyone can thus enshrine Him in his heart, He will take all burdens off His devotee and give him freedom to contemplate exclusively the Divine. There have been numerous instances of this, not only among saints and *sannyāsīs* but also among men of the world. Even beasts, birds and plants are within the pale of His Mercy. Laying all cares at rest, take shelter in Him with a tranquil mind. Keep your kite flying

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with the string held firmly in your hand; the wind will of itself seize it and carry it soaring into the sky.

30

Whenever you have the chance, laugh as much as you can. By this all the rigid knots in your body will be loosened. But to laugh superficially is not enough: your whole being must be united in laughter, both outwardly and inwardly. Do you know what this kind of laughter is like? You simply shake with merriment from head to foot, so that one cannot tell which part of your body is most affected. What you usually do is to laugh with your mouth while your mind and emotions are not involved.

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But I want you to laugh with your whole countenance, with your whole heart and soul, with all the breath of your life. In order to be able to laugh in this way you must have implicit faith in the power of the Self and try to bring the outer and inner parts of your being into perfect harmony. Do not multiply your needs, nor give way to the sense of want, but live a life of spotless purity. Making the interests of others your own, seek refuge at His feet in total surrender. You will then see how the laughter that flows from such a heart defeats the world.

31

Each of the five fingers of the hand has its own peculiarity; each part of the

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body has its own function, high or low; the teeth may at times well bite the tongue; but since the whole of it is your own body, you accept all its ways and take great pains to look after every part of it. In the same manner, try to regard as your own every person you contact. By making this a habit you will in due course come to feel that everyone in the universe is part of you. To abolish the distinction between 'I' and 'you' is the sole purpose of all spiritual endeavour.

32

By degrees reduce all external diversions, such as going to see people and superficial conversation. Otherwise these will

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become obstacles on your way to God-realization. The One resides in the sanctuary of your heart ; if your sight and hearing are turned outward, how can you become aware of His presence? Real worship is of the heart. Outer rites and ceremonies are only a small part of it. As a mother fondles her ailing baby in her lap, so have we in the initial stages of our *sādhana* to hug the Divine close to our breast as we would do with a sick infant. If at the time of prayer and meditation you are unable to calm yourself and to forget your worldly activities and cares, you will not get any living experience of God. Just as when listening at the telephone you focus your attention wholly on hearing, so also when you meditate must you rally all your

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senses to one point in order to intensify your power of concentration.

33

Man is the image of God. To be born in a human body is the highest type of birth. Nowhere in the world can be found such a wealth of hidden treasures as in the domain of the human mind. Like a pearl-diver one has to plunge into the inmost depths of one's being and be at work day and night in quest of those precious jewels. Kindle the inner flame and let it illumine your life and the world. This is the supreme purpose of human striving.

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To speak means to float on the surface* ; unless the mind remains on the surface, words will not come. So long as one is immersed in the depths, there is not even the possibility to talk ; but as soon as one comes up to the surface, speech will issue forth. This is why language cannot always fully express one's feelings and ideas. One can often hear people say : "I am unable to put into words what I feel". Does this not show how limited and imperfect human language is ? It cannot even convey the little you understand, how

* In Bengali *bhasa* means language and *bhasa* to float.

much less the enormous amount that lies beyond your ken ! Try to learn the science of using and understanding the hidden language of the heart and you will be able to accomplish everything without words.

In whichever direction you may turn your gaze you will find One Eternal Indivisible Being manifested. Yet it is not at all easy to detect this Presence, because He interpenetrates everything. As a King is known by his majesty, as fire is known by its heat, so the Unmanifest reveals Himself through the world of manifestation. The analysis of the substance of all created things, if carried sufficiently far, will lead to the discovery

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that what remains is identical and equally present in all creatures : it is He, it is That, which is styled as Pure Consciousness (*chetanā*). In the laboratories of universities and hospitals and in many other places all over the world, research of various kinds is being carried on and new theories are constantly evolved. If you carefully think over these, you will see that they only go to prove the existence of the One Allpervading Being. If in the midst of the diversity of the world of appearances you make a sustained effort to do all your work as a faithful servant of the Almighty Father of the Universe, love and devotion for Him will awaken in your heart. As the confining prison walls of the ego are broken down, you will become more and more

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SAD VAVI

persistent and wholehearted in your pursuit of Reality. Then all the manifold pictures you perceive will merge into one single picture and all your divergent moods and sentiments will be engulfed in the one great ocean of Bliss.

36

In order to become pure white, one must make one's mind a blank or else lose oneself in the immensity of the All. Whiteness is the result of a complete reflecting of the combination of all colours ; thus the formless is white. In order to be snow-white one must be straight and simple. Endeavour to be as white as milk, both inwardly and outwardly, by abiding in the stronghold of truth and sincerity. Then, not

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only will you yourself be happy, but also become a source of happiness to all who contact you. Renunciation implies immaculate purity and sincerity. If you live in the world, free from pride and selfishness, people will vie with one another in providing for all your needs. At the same time your ideal way of working and your spirit of dedication will serve as an example wherever you may be. In these days of material pleasures and luxury, uprightness sanctified by renunciation is sorely needed. Perfect renunciation is in very truth perfect enjoyment.

37

If you can make your life like a running stream that swiftly and steadily flows to-

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wards its goal without ever halting, not only will no impurity of any kind be able to accumulate within you but even other people will be cleansed by your presence. Fire flares up high into the sky yet there is a point beyond which the flame cannot retain its own nature and is converted into smoke. But the current of ceaselessly flowing water is so powerful that, undeterred by the trees and rocks without number which get in the way, rivers and streams traverse thousands of miles until they arrive at their final destination. If you want to attain to Truth, you must, as a river, keep on advancing indefatigably with great singleness of purpose.

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From every creature in the world something or other can be learned. In this sense everybody is everybody else's Guru. But the Supreme Guru is He who guides man in his search of God or Truth. When, as a result of meditation and *satsang* a person begins to yearn for God, He Himself appears to him embodied in the form of the Guru. A true disciple is one who by complete surrender at the Guru's feet comes to realise Who the Guru actually is. The disciple must devote himself to the service of the Guru and always obey His orders implicitly. The Guru's grace and benediction stream down on the head that bows low before Him. The more one-pointed and the

humbler the disciple grows, the quicker will develop his capacity for progress.

Another word for son is "*ātmāja*" self-begotten. On the spiritual path, as soon as the relationship between Guru and disciple has become indissoluble, it is appropriate to call the disciple the real son, *ātmāja*, of the Guru.

If you wish to become a chieftain you need along with your sword and shield the strength and capacity to use them. You clamour so insistently for self-government (*swarāj*). When you are inwardly ready for *swarāj*, you shall certainly have it. On a foundation of ethics and morality build up

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a life of religion and righteousness (*dharma jīvan*); keep God first and foremost in all your undertakings. In this way you will be filled with Divine Power (*Mahāśakti*), and then, who will be able to interfere with your independence? When you have no mastery over yourself, how can such a vast multitude of subjects be ruled? If you become monarch in the kingdom of the mind, earthly government will automatically fall into your hands. In truth, the world rests upon *dharma*. *Dharma* is the very life of the world.

40

Medical students have first of all to make a detailed study of the skull, the

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bones, and the different organs of the human body. This is done with the help of models which they dissect and investigate in various ways. Likewise, in order to learn the first steps of the science of spiritual life, all kinds of practices and rites are necessary. The physical and mental discipline that these outer observances provide, usually serves as an aid to the inner Quest. In order to get to know what lies within, it will not do to ignore what is without; for behind the semblances of the world the Supreme has concealed Himself. This universe may also be called a reflection of the One who is ever wakeful. Do not let the fleeting pleasures of the world entice you; endeavour to abide in Him, the Supreme Dweller of the heart.

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Many people say : "I do not like the clangour and agitation that are characteristic of *kirtana*. I prefer to sit quietly in a solitary place and meditate." As a matter of fact, if in solitude you can obtain communion with God, it is excellent. But watch and note carefully whether your mind is seeking God or wandering away among the perplexities of the world? If you take no notice of the boisterousness of the *kirtana* but concentrate on God's Name ; if you do not listen to the various tunes and to the rhythms of the drums and cymbals, but let yourself be wafted away at the final note of the music, you will become aware that a contemplative mood has spon-

taneously awakened in you. For the average person it is most important to raise the vibrations of his physical body in order to be able to penetrate into subtler levels of consciousness. Bring together your friends and relations whenever you can and unite with them in singing God's Name or His praises ; or, if this is not possible, visit places where religious music is being performed. By chanting God's Name regularly and repeatedly, you will get into the right mood for *kirtana* and by engaging in *kirtana* you will become more and more disposed to practise *japa*, meditation and contemplation. To be effective, all worship must be carried out with faith and regularity ; *kirtana* also should be practised with a similar attitude. It will be very good if those who take part

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can keep in tune and rhythm. Invoke the Presence of Him Whose name you are chanting, otherwise it will be merely a musical pastime instead of *Nāma Kirtana*.

42

We do not know one another, He alone knows us all. Stand near a mountain and you will observe how earth, rocks, trees, roots, creepers are interlaced in such a way as to give the impression that if one of them gets loose and falls off, the whole conglomeration will follow. But does this happen? The mountain to which they belong has hugged them all to its bosom and holds everything in its place. When an earthquake or a similar catastrophe shakes

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the mountain, no particle of it will remain unaffected. In the same way, though you may think you have built up and are holding together family, society, civilization and so forth, in actual fact He alone is the Great Preserver who controls the fabric of life. Hence to know Him is essential. To know Him means to know all and thus to be freed from the conflict of want.

43

Merely to cry out : "Give me power, give me strength !" is not sufficient to make one grow strong. How numerous and varied are the devices and contrivances in a hospital for giving relief and encouragement to patients. Yet can the pangs of an inner disease ever be

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cured by outer expedients? Relief must come from within and for this everyone has to depend largely on his own efforts. Live according to the precepts of the *Śāstras* and the sages; then, when the time is ripe, power and strength will develop from within. Those who lack a sense of duty and firmness of character look to others for help and energy. When you are able to manage all your worldly affairs on your own, why should you be in need of vigour just at the time of prayer or meditation? With great faith and patience concentrate while engaging in spiritual exercises, and power will automatically awaken. However, should you feel quite unable to proceed, examine the causes for your incapacity and eradicate them with a grim resolve. Otherwise you will

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only go on multiplying unnecessary obstructions within yourself and then expect some external power to come to your rescue and take you in tow. Is such a thing possible? A great deal of energy is required by a horse or an engine to force carriage wheels to revolve over an uneven track. Similarly, to wrench the mind away from its attachment to sense pleasures, it has to be directed towards spiritual interests and preoccupations by a determined effort of will.

44

First of all it is necessary to become acquainted with Him whom you wish to invoke. Constantly think and talk of Him, look at His pictures, sing His praises or

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listen to sacred music, visit places of pilgrimage, seek solitude or associate with the Holy and Wise, so as to become familiar with Him. When this has been achieved, you may call Him "Father" or "Mother". Some relationship of this kind has to be established with Him, because people of the world do not feel affinity unless their bond is defined in such a manner. You are accustomed to ties of kinship in worldly life, this is why you have to bind yourself by some sort of relationship in the religious field as well. Even though at the start you may not feel deep devotion, learn to invoke Him unceasingly and with perseverance by repeating His name or by any other method, until gradually He will fill your heart. However, prayer, meditation, alms

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offered in His name, and so forth, are necessary even after the bond of love has been forged, so as to keep it unimpaired. In this way the awareness of Him will become your second nature and never leave you to your last breath. This is what is termed communion with God.

45

If someone says: "How will my people get along without me?" it only proves that his attachment to his family is as strong as ever. Really speaking nobody is indispensable to another. It is simply not true that one can be at ease only when a certain person is by one's side and becomes reduced to helplessness without him or her.

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Where such a condition prevails, rather than uselessly appealing to others for support, one must through self-introspection discover the source of one's weakness and try to bring into play one's own inner strength. No one likes misery and suffering, but to work out for oneself a way of release from their grip does not seem to occur to people. From the cradle to the grave man lives his life in a most haphazard manner. For fear of the burden that a family represents, many avoid marriage, but whether this brings them contentment is difficult to determine. In this imperfect world nothing can give perfect peace. Therefore, throughout life's journey, it is absolutely imperative to seek shelter in Him alone. This should be man's sole ambition, his one supreme and ultimate goal.

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46

So long as there is coming and going there will be birth and death. He who is jubilant at the birth of a child, must be prepared for tears of grief at the time of death. While everything in life is uncertain, it is an undeniable truth that every man must die. To end this ceaseless coming and going there is only one expedient: the realization of the One Supreme Being. Unless through *sādhana* the mind becomes purified and absorbed in Him, one cannot enter His Kingdom of Peace. The path to this Kingdom is strait and perilous like a Himalayan mountain track. Yet, braced by their overwhelming desire for the vision of the deities, so many men and women decrepit with

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age and infirmity accomplish on foot the tedious journey to the famous places of pilgrimage. Not heeding the difficulties of the steep climb they trail on day after day, without food, without rest, harrassed by the severe cold. Equally intense must be the earnestness and patience of those who are out for the Vision of the Self (*Ātmā-darśana*).

47

Accept as Divine Dispensation all work that comes to you in the natural course of events and carry it out joyfully. Verily, everything in the world is achieved by will-power. If by determination and endurance someone can bring his ideal to life, his actions will be inspired. Such a worker is

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backed by Divine Power. Follow one ideal and make a habit of referring everything to God. By consistently pursuing the highest Good, this practice will become your second nature and even if heterogeneous thoughts arise, they will not be able to disturb you. The formation of good habits is the only means to counteract indolence and negligence in the performance of one's duties, for man is a slave to habit. The great interest everyone is taking in the welfare of the world at large has also been acquired by practice in previous lives. Although it takes time to build up a good habit, one must never lose heart, but keep on with firmness and perseverance. It is a fact that spiritual exercises performed with regularity even for a short period daily, gradually

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create an ardent longing for God. The cultivation of sincerity and purity is an indispensable prerequisite to Self-realization.

48

The dual process of breaking-down and building-up is inherent in the movement of time (*kāla*); but *Mahākāla*, the great God who sits enthroned above Time, is perfect as the One Whole Being and perfect as manifested in the Many. Therefore, creation and destruction are equal to Him and because of this equality He is the Fountain-of-Goodness and the object of worship of the happy as well as the care-worn. Without creation there can be no destruction and vice versa. Consequently both are unavoidable in the

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round of earthly existence. But we, shut up within our shells like prisoners, have become limited and narrow-minded and we cannot transcend the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. At the birth of a son we shout for joy, and if he dies we shed bitter tears. If for a moment we can forget the ties of flesh and blood, the distinction between father and son will disappear. In actual reality there is neither father nor son: He alone, the One, is embodied in all appearances, everywhere.

49

Whenever you have to accept anything from others, take only just as little as you actually need; but when you are the giver, try your utmost to satisfy fully the person

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who receives. Widening your shrivelled heart, make the interests of others your own and serve them as much as you can by sympathy, kindness, gifts and so forth. So long as one enjoys the things of this world and has needs and wants, it is necessary to minister to the needs of one's fellowmen. Otherwise one cannot be called a human being. Whenever you have the opportunity, give to the poor, feed the hungry, nurse the sick. But if you are incapable of doing anything else, you can at least cultivate goodwill and benevolence towards all and pray for their welfare. Forgetting your body, try to concentrate on the Self and do service as a religious duty and you will come to know by direct perception that the person served, the one who serves and the act of service

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are separate only in appearance. At the root of service lies renunciation ; so long as there is a desire for personal happiness, craving for enjoyment or the expectation of a reward, real service is impossible. These three kinds of desire must be relinquished by him who would serve God. Service can be rendered by body, mind or speech. Start with any one of these and adhere to it faithfully ; it will in time carry you to the confluence of all three in the ocean of complete self-dedication.

50

That which calms the breath,* lays at rest all conflict and doubt and awakens a

*A play upon words : Śvāsa breath, Viśvāsa faith. The prefix "vi" expresses negation.

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quiet confidence in man's heart is called FAITH. Faith always goes together with reverence and truthfulness. The faith that is based on the opinions of others or on belief in the law of cause and effect will serve its purpose only in material pursuits. Genuine faith emerges from within by fixing one's mind on the Supreme Being. One's consciousness thereby becomes centered in truth and a deep serenity enters the heart and infuses one with great strength and indescribable peace which is unaffected by the whims of fortune. All spiritual endeavour is based on faith ; thus faith is the first necessity. One's search for the Unknown, the Unfathomable, has to start with faith and reverence. There is no other means by which to embark on the quest after Ultimate Truth.

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51

He who is perfect and holy, endowed with greatness and all virtues, is alone fit to be the ideal ; from this point of view no other ideal exists except God. Nevertheless, for the practical purposes of the active as well as the spiritual life, each one should let himself be guided by the example of some saintly person. Teaching obtained from Scriptures can never influence the imagination as powerfully as a living ideal ; in other words, such inspiration as may be drawn from what one perceives with one's own eyes can never be had from what is known merely by inference or speculation.

First of all one has to decide which path one will take and then choose one's

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ideal accordingly and follow it. If by some special good fortune one is able to contact a real Sage or Saint and has the privilege of living in His presence, one must develop desirelessness and serve Him devotedly, and by His grace and benevolence try to elevate oneself. If you ever keep before you the essence of all ideals which is God Himself and carry out faithfully the teachings of the Holy and Wise, the road to attainment will be made smooth.

52

All men hanker after peace but it occurs only to a very few that unless HE awakens in our heart, nothing at all will bring perfect peace. Neither through wealth nor through

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family, position or fame can peace be won, for these, as all earthly things, are subject to constant change like day and night: they come and quickly flee away. This is why it is so important to gather wealth which cannot be destroyed and when gained will once for all blot out desire. This wealth is none else but God alone whom we do not know although He dwells in everybody's heart. When, through *Śatkarma* (spiritual exercises and the service of God) the darkness that clouds our consciousness is made to dissolve, He stands revealed in His bewitching beauty: thus will be ushered in the reign of perfect peace.

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53

Have you ever observed children at play? They start their game with great enthusiasm and buoyancy: how friendly they are, how affectionate! But before their play draws to its close, a difference of opinion over the question of victory and defeat has involved them in such bitter quarrelling that they first abuse one another, then come to blows and finally run home in tears. Worldly people, although grown-up, behave in a very similar manner. No sooner have they earned a little money than they go in for luxurious living with parties, entertainments and society life. For a short while they thoroughly enjoy themselves. But by degrees, with advancing age, they have to pass through

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all sorts of severe trials and bereavements and finally are so overcome by despair that life seems unbearable to them.

Those, on the other hand, who lead a life resigned to the Will of the Almighty, taking shelter at His Feet, will remain unperturbed and at peace even if faced with any number of privations and afflictions. In this ever changing world, happiness alternating with sorrow will always be man's lot, just like the eternal sequences of ebb and flow, sunshine and rain.

54

As a mother is known by her affection and tenderness for her children, a wife by her love and devotion for her husband, a

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friend by his fellow-feeling and loyalty to his comrades, so a religious person can be recognized by this God-centred, dedicated life. Merely to say that one believes in God is quite useless. Religion must be practised by one's attitude of mind and heart and by one's actions. When engaging in austerity — fasts, vigils and the like — if real devotion is lacking they become mere mechanical observances. Carefully examine your heart and mind and try to eradicate shortcomings that you discover in yourself. In this way, performing the duties that befit your station of life, steadily forge ahead : a day will come when your actions will be in harmony with your aspirations and then you will be capable of true spiritual progress.

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55

To taste is the natural function of the tongue. But unless some bitter, sweet, salty or sour substance touches it, there is no taste. The wonderful thing is that whatever is put on the tongue, be it pungent or delicious, its taste will be faithfully produced. In a similar manner, the possibility which the human body does not contain has yet to be discovered ; for this reason it may also be called a microcosm. Keep it in any way you like, it will respond. If you seek worldly experience, you will see how it will entice you, only to leave you surfeited. But if you train it to serve the spiritual life, it will let you grow calm and serene.

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The body is valuable, yet it is not: If you want to cross a river, the boat is of great importance to you; but once you have reached the other shore, you never even give a thought to the ferry that took you across. The usefulness of the human body is of a like nature. When the "I-ness" has become extinct, the world and with it the body will have gone out of the field of one's vision.

56

In all matters it is necessary to establish a centre. Otherwise real intensity cannot be developed. As the mind becomes ever more concentrated on one thing, one steadily grows more sincere, tranquil, loving

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and at ease. In this way one may well catch a glimpse of the All-pervading One. Choose a word, a form, an image, a symbol — in fact anything sacred representing Him as a whole or in part — and, whether in happiness or in misery, ceaselessly direct the current of your thinking towards it. Even though the mind may repeatedly wander here and there, it will again seek rest in this fixed centre. In due course, love and devotion will awaken for Him who will then take possession of your heart. To attain to Self-realization by personal effort only or to realise God by yoga and similar practices is in the present age extremely difficult for the ordinary person.

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57

Why do you sit idle, groping in the dark? Arise and set about in search of Light, ever more Light! For how much longer can you live by the gleam of a lantern or an electric bulb? When the oil is exhausted, when the bulb fuses, your lamp is bound to go out. Illumine the world with a light that can never be extinguished. Do you know what this light is? Faith in God, the love of God. Carry the quest for this light into every home and you will soon see everyone radiant within as well as without.

One thing has to be borne in mind: if anything is to be accomplished in our times, Mā Lakshmi will have to be propitiated,

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that is to say the co-operation of women must be secured. For it marks the spirit of the present time that women will take their place at the helm of society and men ply the oars. It is imperative to train girls along with boys to sing *kīrtana*, to read the Bhagavad Gita and the Srimad Bhagavata, to practise *japa* and meditation. They must be brought in touch with the Holy and Wise and attend *satsang*. Then you will see how the lives of both men and women will be enobled and raised to a higher level. If in this way the first of the *varnāśramas* of ancient times, namely the *brahmachārya āśrama* can be revived and lived by the young, a renaissance of Hindu society will follow.

Eighty Seven

A *samnyāsi* is he who ever dwells in the void (*śunya*). One who has taken *samnyāsa*, yet all the time depends on others, is merely attempting to become a *samnyāsi*. A genuine *samnyāsi* is he who in God's Name has set his all afloat in the void. So long as one harbours desires for home and family, for money and the things it buys, for bodily comforts and intellectual enjoyment, for fame, recognition and the like, it is far better to remain within the folds of the family. There are only very few who can tread the path of complete renunciation. Those who have gone forth into homelessness without having become utterly unselfish and are therefore

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unable to observe the prescribed rules of conduct of the *samnyāsāśrama*, will create all manners of complications. To be a householder with the spirit of *samnyāsa* is indeed very praiseworthy. But the man who merely assumes the ochre robe without being a *samnyāsi* at heart becomes guilty of a serious wrong. Not only does he harm himself, his behaviour also is contrary to the ideal of the sacred order of *samnyāsa*.

Without solitude God cannot be found. Those who are striving to attain to the Supreme Being by meditation in silence and freedom from ties will find the Himalayas

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a most congenial abode. Braced by the grandeur and magnificence of nature, enveloped in its stillness, it becomes easy to contemplate Infinity, one spontaneously dives into the depths of the Self.

Those, on the other hand, who are devotionally inclined will prefer to stay by the seashore. Inspired by the music of the rolling waves, ecstatic emotion surges up high until, engulfed in the boundless love of the Lord of Love, one is carried away straight to one's Goal.

For those who have no special line but are eager to be wayfarers on the path to Enlightenment, any beautiful, secluded spot will be suitable. Householders should set apart a corner in their homes kept sacred as a shrine for divine contemplation.

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But for one who has forsaken everything for the love of God, who everywhere sees Him alone, all places are equally good. Endeavour to control your rambling thoughts and rise above the changing circumstances of life; then the problem of having to select a suitable site for your *sādhana* will cease to exist.

60

To become a truly surrendered devotee one must uproot the "I" from one's thinking and feeling as well as from one's speech, and cease in toto to judge by one's reason and intelligence. A small infant, after wallowing in the filth of his own body, stretches out his arms wanting to be taken on his

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mother's lap ; and because a baby does not know any better, the mother cleans and washes him carefully and then smilingly lifts him to her bosom. Such is the law of selfless love and tenderness. Where complete self-effacement is the *sādhana*, no other mantra or tantra is required. Try to become as a little child and, without any other effort on your part, the Great Mother of the world will take you into Her Arms. But if contrariwise you wish to be guided by your own intelligence, you will have yourself to shoulder the entire responsibility of your uplift. Are you not weary of the play of your reason, have you not tasted enough of victory and defeat? Now is the moment to throw yourself unto the Mercy of the Almighty as one without

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SAD VANI

shelter and support. Leap into His embrace and you will be released from cares. Remember that it is the pure fool who shall find God.

61

God's play in the physical world of action is of a very different nature from that of the psychic world of ideas and sentiments (*bhāva*). The world of action is plainly perceptible and full of activities and disturbances, while in the subtle world of ideas and emotions everything happens in silence and secrecy. If it were otherwise, feelings and thoughts (*bhāva*) could not grow strong ; it is this inner force which keeps the world of action going. The source

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of the Ganges lies in the depths of inaccessible jungle, hidden away from the eyes of men; yet its life-giving waters irrigate fields and pastures and bring prosperity to the smiling country-side along its shores. It is *bhāva* which is at the root of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. Nevertheless, so long as man's bondage of karma has not fallen away of itself and he therefore depends on work, it is important to recognize the munificence of action. One who feels the desire to be active cannot attain to the highest Good without engaging in work.

62

The older you grow in years, the smaller you seem to become under the pressure

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of worldly cares. You may have come across some saints who, expecting nothing from nature or men, filled with all-embracing love, the very embodiment of independence, act as the spirit moves them and are happy and serene under all circumstances. But you, in spite of all your attempts at security in the fortress of secular life, are always frustrated and riddled with fear. Shake yourselves free and try to become really great. By applying in your active day to day life the power received from sages and saints, the world can be improved.

63

The sense of separation between God and man has continued to exist at all times.

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God is ever ready to receive man with open arms. But man, entangled in the meshes of his karma, is not aware of God's presence within him and, as if blind, neither sees nor even seeks Him. Yet, when the individual becomes engrossed in the search after the Divine, that very pain of separation becomes the causeway leading to union and thereby the flood-gates of Bliss are released. The hope of union is even more delightful than union itself. With increasing faith and devotion one exults ever more in this hope until one's yearning and supplications bring about fulfilment.

Have you never observed, how in the mountains birds are calling to each other from two different summits without ever

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getting tired? They hear each other's call quite well but derive so much satisfaction out of this love play from a distance, that they never fly near each other. Calling out to God gives itself relief from the temporary pangs of separation. The sense of want and absence is very necessary indeed. The strong impetus to struggle on, aroused by the anguish of being divorced from God, can never be induced by the recognition that the search after Truth is man's duty. Ever aware of your emptiness, try to fill it by intense aspiration. The deeper you become absorbed in thoughts of Him, the more will your growing longing for the Divine avert your interests from all other pursuits and bring about complete self-surrender.

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“God is everywhere. Why then should we have to call out to Him? Surely, He does not want anything from us!” Words of this kind can often be heard from young and old. Precious gems and metals lie hidden in the interior of the earth. How much strenuous labour is not required to bring them to light! Similarly, although He dwells in every human heart, man must by prayer and meditation, by delving deep into the mysteries of Truth, purify his mind and remove his ignorance, so as to become fit to receive Divine Grace which alone can induce the Supreme Experience. If the above mentioned query arises in anyone’s mind, it is an indication that the desire to find God is stirring in him. be he conscious

of it or not. He should therefore rouse himself by all means and turn to God. Don’t you pray but for your own benefit? When, after smarting in the threefold suffering of the world man faces a crisis, then only he implores God for help. How many desire Him purely for His own sake? To start with, most people cry out to God in dire distress. But when their prayers draw a response from Him, however dimly felt, then ever more joy is found in appealing to Him. While living your life in the world endeavour to invoke Him at all times whether you feel the inclination or not. Trials and tribulations will thereby lose the power to distress you.

“Unless one is blessed with His Grace, is it at all possible to pray to Him?” Such considerations sometimes serve as an excuse. If His Grace were not upon you at all times you could not even be alive. Take the trouble to examine your life patiently and you will get some idea of His Mercy.

Scattered all over the earth there are innumerable things. In order to collect and convert them into useful commodities, machines and factories are at work and science is constantly inventing new expedients and gadgets. If with similar zest you put your heart and soul into calling down His Divine Grace, you will very soon become aware of it distinctly and undeniably. He manifests

through action. Let your work be prompted solely by pure, unselfish motives ; by the force of your prayers the rigid knots that cause your inertia will be undone. You will then be able to see by direct perception that, like sunlight, He pervades everything.

Truly, weakness is man's greatest sin. To avoid any waste of one's physical energy is very important. Food and recreation in moderation give sustenance to the body ; purity of thought, aspiration and the remembrance of God provide the right nourishment for the mind. To keep the mechanism of body and mind in good condition makes it easy to find the Self (*Ātmā*) who is their master.

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67

To have continuous water supply in a city, the pumps must be worked day and night. Likewise, in order to keep the heart filled with the sweetness of the Divine Presence, the constant remembrance of Him is essential. If you can at all times remain engrossed in Self-inquiry (*tatwa vichāra*), *japa* or meditation, it is indeed excellent. If not, endeavour by all possible means, such as *kīrtana*, *pūjā*, *yajña*, the reading of scriptures, visiting temples and shrines, contacting saints and sages, going on pilgrimages, and so forth, to keep the thought of God fixed in your mind. Let all your actions be done as an instrument of God; live your life in the world purely in this spirit and all will be well. A person who is able

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to remember God's name or His Presence with every breath, day and night, abides in the continual awareness of Him. All his outer activities are then accomplished automatically and effortlessly like the movements of marionettes.

68

Do you know what real worship is? The expression of man's love of God. When something is boiled in a closed vessel, there comes a stage when the vapour will push up the lid and, unless force is used, the vessel cannot be kept covered anymore. In a similar manner, when, while being engaged in *japa* or some other spiritual exercise, a wave of ecstatic emotion surges up from within, it

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becomes difficult to check it. This ecstatic emotion is called *bhāva*. It emerges from deep within and expresses itself outwardly. At first it arises only for brief spells but by spiritual practices it is gradually strengthened. For *Mahābhāva*, the supreme source of divine love and inspiration is present in every human being and, given the opportunity, it functions freely and spontaneously. In the measure as this state of divine love becomes more constant, the aspirant is vouchsafed a glimpse of his Beloved. Religious practices carried out mechanically, without deep emotion, are like artificial flowers : very beautiful to look at, but devoid of perfume. *Kīrtana* may be performed in great style, the hall almost breaking with the throng of the congregation, but if the singing is without deep feeling (*bhāva*),

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there will be no response from on high. The Deity answers only to the call of the heart. Therefore it is imperative to be ever vigilant and make sure that outer observances go hand in hand with single-mindedness and purity of aspiration. Fire kept ablaze with plenty of fuel is bound to shoot up to great heights.

69

You often declare that the ego is the root of all evil ; in actual fact however, this is not so. The sense of "I" implies will-power and self-exertion. While the ego is the cause of birth and death, it also helps towards liberation. The development of the ego and of the spirit of independence has made the individual feel cut off from God. To uproot

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this sense of separateness, the use of will-power is indispensable. The man who has merged his ego in the Divine or surrendered it completely to God Almighty, the Lord of the universe, may depend on the working of Providence ; but a person with a strong sense of self-reliance, who feels that he is the doer, must exert himself in everything he undertakes. So long as intelligence rules man's life, it means that the ego still exists and that he is responsible for his actions and their results. Resign yourself entirely to Him or else be intensely absorbed in Self-inquiry. Although karma may still have to be worked out, by and by the perplexities and problems of the ego will diminish and finally fade away.

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70

Although God is ever present within as well as without, it is necessary to keep His remembrance awake in all one's thoughts and actions. For the tendencies (*samskāras*) acquired in countless former births bind man with such force that the Quest of God does not come to him easily. Nevertheless, even wet wood is dried by the heat of fire and finally absorbed by it. Similarly will one's interest in the objects of sense dwindle more and more by the power of intense contemplation of God, until a glimpse of Him who is All-Bliss gladdens the heart. Thus, along with your worldly pursuits, always try to give at least some thought to Him. I do not ask anyone to leave his family

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in order to meditate in the jungles. What this body requests of you all is to live your family life according to *dharma*. Just as a treasury without treasure has no value, equally worthless is human life devoid of religion.

71

“What is destined to happen, will happen”, is a perfectly true saying. If you look back on your own life and on the lives of others, you will come to realize how little man himself can do to shape events and how most things depend on the inscrutable law of a hidden power. The universe runs its course in a perfect way according to the Will of the Supreme Father of all. Therefore your maxim of life should be to welcome

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whatever circumstances God provides for you. The firmer you become established in this spirit, the more complete will be your resignation in God's Will ; and by your devotion and faith in the Divine Power the scales will fall from your eyes.

72

To say that all action is prompted by God's Will sounds very beautiful ; but in actual fact we do most of our work ultimately for sense gratification. This is why success makes us so happy and failure depresses us. A man who is employed by another is not so very concerned whether there is profit or loss as a result of his work. If everything is done exclusively as God's service, one simply attends

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to one's duty without giving a thought to its outcome once it is over. Keeping His remembrance alive from the beginning to the end of each task, dedicate all action to the Supreme Being and you will be free from care and anxiety.

73

The Great Mother, *Mahāmāyā*, is the origin of Creation. When the desire arose in Her to play the game of life, She divided Herself into two, namely *Mā* and *Māyā* and entered the stage of the world, concealing Herself in the many forms of *Māyā*. When, hard beaten by the blows of fate, a human being awakens to real intuition, he feels the Presence of the Mother behind the fleeting appearances and sets out in search of Her. Blessed by

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Her grace, his efforts are crowned with success as he realizes Her as the Prime Cause of all creation, *Mahāmāyā*. But this is not the end : experiencing Her as all-pervading, he becomes merged in Her and loses himself in the ocean of *Saccidānanda*, Divine Being-Consciousness-Bliss. Thus he comes to see that, what is called *moha* or *māyā* in the world, is named *Mahāmāyā*, the Great Mother, on the spiritual path ; although their functions are different in manifestation, essentially the two are one. Play the game of the world and you will be captivated by its delights, unwilling to let them go ; or, if you take to the spiritual path you will find Supreme Bliss. However, earthly joys are transitory whereas Divine Bliss is eternal. Both have their place : the Stage Manager of the world

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drama provides for each one what he needs at any particular setting, so that he may gradually be led to his final Goal where will be dispelled the error of the duality of *mohamāyā*, the great illusion, and *Mahāmāyā*, the Great Mother of the Universe.

74

For how many more days can you live by external light, like that of sun and moon? When your eyes fail, when your body becomes feeble with age and your intellect clouded, you will be left to grope in utter darkness. Set to work while there is yet time and try to kindle the inner light. In the hearth of the mind ignite the fire of Self-inquiry or the fire of God's Name ; fan it into a blazing flame by

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associating with the Holy and Wise, by prayer and meditation. Little by little this light will grow bright and steady and illumine you both inwardly and outwardly ; thereby the path to Self-realization will be made easy.

75

To be active in some cause is called to work ; and the work that is incumbent on any particular person is called his duty. It is important to think out carefully what exactly is each one's duty. For the householder and the housewife it is to look after their home and family. But if a man feels with overwhelming force that he should leave worldly life in order to devote himself entirely to the Supreme Quest, then this becomes his un-

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deniable duty. Consequently there is no absolute standard that can be applied to one and all ; each one's duty is determined by circumstances, time, place and the nature of his purpose in life. That the contemplation of God is the first and foremost duty of every human being has been forgotten by the majority of people. In ancient Hindu society man's life was regulated by division into four *āśramas* (phases) : *Brahmachārya*, the life of a student with the essential condition of conserving the life-force for the sake of ultimate Self-realization ; *Grihastya*, the stage of the householder with its various duties to society ; *Vānaprastha*, retirement into solitude for the sake of divine contemplation ; *Samnyāsa*, complete renunciation. But at the present time only the householder's *āśrama* is still in

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force. Therefore the opportunities that people used to have of preparing themselves for the highest Goal by worldly experiences as well as by renunciation are not available anymore. Pleasures and enjoyment are sought from beginning to end and the majority of men spend their whole life in worldly pursuits. This is why nowadays far too little thought is given to questions such as : What is the purpose of life ? What is this world and what the next ?

76

In the world people become rich by adding zeros to "one" : and on the spiritual path the aspirant concentrates on "one" alone in order to attain to the One Truth. Thus it is obvious that these two paths lead in entirely

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opposite directions. It will be worth while to ponder seriously over the fact that without the "one" the zeros have no value whatever. Therefore one should with complete faith and reliance on the One ever strive after the One Goal so that there may be no dread of poverty under any circumstances.

77

The efforts prompted by one's true nature (*svabhāva*) that are made in order to discover one's own real wealth (*svadhana*) are called *sādhana*. Potentially every action is a *sādhana*, every individual a *sādhaka* and God, being man's real treasure, is the sole purpose of all *sādhana*. So long as man is worldly, he performs his *sādhana* by work done from personal

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motives for the sake of material success ; yet, unconsciously he is even thereby seeking God, for nothing is outside of the ONE. Whatever anybody does is in the last analysis undertaken in order to attain to the Supreme ; this is self-evident. The *sādhana* of the mundane person is directed towards the satisfaction of his wants. Here the sense of possession prevails, and outer activity and enjoyment are the objective. There will be a powerful incentive for this kind of *sādhana* so long as man is harrassed by the lash of pain and misery, humiliation, disgrace, grief and affliction. In a way this *sādhana* also is prompted by man's true nature, for not until one has acutely felt the sting of ceaseless wanting, does one awaken to the urgency of discovering the Self. When a person grows

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eager to become established in his true being, to find his real treasure, this marks the beginning of spiritual *sādhana* and he learns to act without desire or personal motive. Thereby is laid the foundation for detachment, renunciation and all-embracing love. Young and immature people desire what others possess and hanker after petty enjoyments. When as a result of religious practices and good works, man in the midst of prosperity is reminded of his real treasure, he starts labouring vigorously for its recovery. The more he exerts himself in this activity of his true nature, the fuller will be the knowledge he gains of his inner wealth. When fire breaks out in a house, it will not die down until everything combustible has been burnt to ashes. Similarly, once real *sādhana* has begun, it is

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impossible to drop it ; on the contrary, it will gather impetus and intensity day by day and push the aspirant into the swift current of his own particular path to Enlightenment.

First of all the *sādhaka* ceases to identify himself with his body and mind ; then his cravings and desires are dissolved to the last trace ; thereupon the consciousness of complete equality will be born ; and finally the Self which transcends mind and body will be realized by direct experience. This is the ultimate goal of all *sādhana*. Single-mindedness is its very life ; faith, trust and patience constitute its powers.

78

Without observing the injunctions of the *Śāstras* it will be difficult to achieve purifica-

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tion of the mind (*cittaśuddhi*). There is a saying that the house built on the rock of *śāstric* observances cannot be demolished. It is important to follow as far as possible the rules of good conduct laid down in the *Śāstras* and to be particular about outer and inner cleanliness and purity. In order to be received into the presence of a king one has to submit to any number of rules and regulations. How much more urgent is the necessity for purity and meticulous care when one goes to visit a Deity in a temple or wants to contemplate the Divine.

79

A man who is well established in his true nature, who, in other words, knows Himself,

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who is indifferent to pleasure and pain since he is ever steeped in the bliss of the Eternal, is called a *sādhu*. Filled with universal love, he is free from cares and worries, munificent, of childlike simplicity and contentment. The very sight of such a great person spontaneously suffuses one's whole being with a heavenly joy, and his proximity evokes divine thoughts and aspirations. Just as water cleanses everything by its mere contact, even so the sight, touch, blessing, nay the very remembrance of a real *sādhu*, little by little clears away all impure desires and longings. Union with God is the one and only union man should seek. *Sādhus* or saints have had communion with God and hence there is a saving grace in their presence. Like attracts like, for this reason, in our times, the company

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of the Holy and Wise — *satsang* — offers the most potent aid and inspiration to the earnest seeker. Saints may be compared to trees : they always point upwards, and grant shade and shelter to all. They are free from likes and dislikes and whoever seeks refuge in them wholeheartedly, will find peace and fulfilment. When the burning desire to know Truth or Reality awakens in man, he has the good fortune of meeting a Saint or Sage. The Holy and Wise must be approached with a pure heart and a steady mind, with genuine faith and reverence. Much greater benefit will be derived by sitting still and meditating in their presence than by discussing or arguing. The behaviour of saints is not to be copied by ordinary people. But one should endeavour to carry out in one's life

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the teaching or advice received from them : Otherwise it would be like sowing any number of seeds without allowing a single one to grow into a plant ; this would indeed be a matter of deep regret.

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The Way to Release from Bondage :

1. *Work and Prayer* : The performance of meritorious acts and good works in harmony with the laws of nature, with an eye to the real welfare of one's body and mind and the world at large. Keeping God's name in one's heart and mind and on one's lips with the help of *japa*, prayer, the study of sacred scriptures and discourses on eternal truths.

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2. *Spiritual Experience* : The search after Truth through meditation with undivided concentration.

3. *The State of Pure Being* : Personal effort and identification with body and mind have come to an end. There is beatitude, complete equanimity, realization of the oneness of all. Man has become established in the fulness of Truth.

81

On the *ektāra* one can play only one note, on the harmonium the whole scale of seven. The average person enjoys hearing the harmonium, but to the ear of the contemplative the single note of the *ektāra* sounds sweet, for are not the seven but a dividing

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up of the one note ? Endeavour to let your body be like an *ektāra* ; on the string of your mind play unceasingly only the one song : "*Jai Jagadīsha Hare!* (Hail to Thee, Great Lord of the World !)" . If you go on doing this you will come to love singing the praises of God and cease to derive pleasure from anything else.

82

Just as the water of a lake cannot remain smooth while a breeze is blowing, so the mind can never become still so long as thoughts arise. With great determination try to drive away all thought and become calm and serene. At intervals take recourse to silence for set periods of time ; this will

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considerably increase your power of concentration. Whenever you find worldly thoughts agitating your mind, resolutely try to chase them away by every possible device. Just as with the help of ingenious machinery, extensive canals and marshes can be drained of all water, even so the well of desires and longings will finally be emptied through sustained and single-minded practice.

83

Sugar solution can be purified by boiling it with a few drops of milk; similarly can *samskāras*, the impurities that cloud consciousness, be removed by the contemplation of God. Worldly people as a rule take to religious practices only at an advanced age

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and soon grew weary and lack in energy. This is why men and women should be taught from early childhood to make God and the search after Truth the center of their lives so that they may not in their old age have to cry out piteously: "Eventide has come, my life is ebbing away. O Lord, have mercy upon me and take me across!"

For the maintenance of the body one has to earn money and collect goods; it is right to remember at all times that it is of even greater importance to cultivate and develop one's inner wealth.

84

Self-restraint is necessary for every human being. First of all one must practise self-

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discipline with a view to mastering the body as far as may be. When, with the help of various rules and regulations the body is trained to obey, the mind also gradually realizes the necessity of thought control. Then the proper thing to do is to combine the practice of physical and mental discipline. Once body and mind have been brought under control, the desire to know one's Self is kindled spontaneously. If one does not remain lukewarm but gives one's heart and soul to the Supreme Quest, the discovery of the Self becomes easy. So long as one is conscious of the body it is impossible to achieve anything without action. It is imperative ever to keep in mind that unless one is strict with oneself as a miser who amasses wealth or as a bee that collects

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honey, one cannot make headway on the spiritual path.

85

Listen ! Do not let your time pass idly. Either keep a rosary with you and do *japa* ; or if this does not suit you, at least go on repeating the name of the Lord regularly and without interruption like the ticking of a clock. There are no rules or restrictions in this : invoke Him by the name that appeals to you most, for as much time as you can, the longer the better. Even if you get tired or lose interest, administer the Name to yourself like a medicine that has to be taken. In this way you will at some auspicious moment discover the rosary of the mind ;

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and then you will continually hear within yourself the praises of the great Master, the Lord of Creation, like the never ceasing music of the boundless ocean; you will hear the land and the sea, the air and the heavens reverberate with the song of His glory. This is called the all-pervading presence of His Name.

The world consists of Name and Form: the Name is its beginning and the Name is its end. When the aspirant achieves perfection by concentrating on the Name, he loses himself in It. The world ceases to exist for him and his ego disappears. What then is, and what is not? Although some may realize this, it can never be expressed in words.

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If you say, "nothing at all exists," it is so; yet if you say, "everything exists", it is also correct. Do you not see, some declare the world to be an illusion, while others maintain that it is real. Many deny the existence of deities and angels, others are firmly convinced of it, since, if one prays to them fervently enough, one can have visions of them and also hear their voices.

Children look upon their clay and rubber dolls as living beings, but when they grow older they understand that they had been mistaken. Thus it can be seen that everyone's faith or disbelief in things is determined by the power and intensity of his ideas at any particular time. When genuine

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one-pointed devotion grows stronger and stronger, it does happen that aspirants in accordance with their conditioning and keen desire receive undeniable visions of deities and also hear their voices. However, for the serious contemplative, such experiences are nothing more than periodical feasts for the mind. As one advances on the spiritual path and loses oneself more and more in an unbroken stream of divine contemplation, various partial realizations and visions do occur. Although they may be helpful, they must never be confused with the ultimate Goal. Water evaporates, rises up into the air and forms into clouds; but the cloud fulfils its calling only when it condenses into raindrops and refreshes the thirsty earth. Likewise, *sādhana* does not reach its consummation

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unless one has been merged in Supreme Being and attained to Perfection.

87

Do you want deliverance from the bonds of the world? Then, weeping profusely, you will have to cry out from the bottom of your heart: "Deliver me, great Mother of the World, deliver me!" To obtain Her grace you will have to shed tears much more abundantly than when you desire things of the world. When by the flood of your tears the inner and the outer have fused into one, you will find Her, whom you sought with such anguish, nearer than the nearest, the very breath of life, the very core of every heart.

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Offering thanks to the Almighty, singing His praises, heartfelt prayers are all excellent. With the help of these the mind is purified and becomes serene ; one develops faith in God and may have glimpses of Truth. Yet, since these practices still belong to the realm of the ever-changing, meditation and contemplation are necessary along with them. One must dive deep and get immersed in the depths ; merely scraping the surface and roaming here and there is simply a waste of energy and will not promote one's growth. The tendencies (*saṁskāras*) acquired in many former births, have like a banyan-tree struck their roots in all directions of your nature. In order to eradicate them, a sharp axe will

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have to be applied both inwardly and outwardly. Every day, for as long as you can, try to withdraw your senses from all outer objects and let them repose within.

In order to awaken a religious spirit in your family, it is not enough that you yourself should lead a dedicated life. It is necessary to teach them as well to be devoted to God. This will also help you considerably in your own *sādhana*. With this purpose in view you should arrange for all the members of your household to assemble every evening at a convenient hour and sing *kīrtana* or other devotional music, have discussions on religion topics or read from

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sacred texts. Those who seek refuge in God gradually reduce their attachment and sense of possession and are able to stand undaunted in adversity and danger.

90

You say you want to be free from the ties of this world. But actually it can be seen that, like a kite that is held by a string or like an aeroplane driven by a pilot, you are unable to remain without support or guidance of some sort. If you want to be liberated, you must be like a bird that has broken its chain and, without a thought of food or shelter, fearlessly soars up into the sky.

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Ānanda — Divine Bliss, *Paramapurūṣa* — the Supreme Being, and *Ātmā* — the Self, are different conceptions of one and the same THING. Do you know what genuine *Ānanda* is? That which depends on nothing but the One, which is self-luminous, perfect in itself, true and eternal. You derive happiness from what you take in through the senses, but that happiness is elusive and fleeting and this is why you endlessly pursue one material object after another. With determination and perseverance dedicate yourself to the search of Him who is the source of all delight. Refuse to be satisfied with anything but His divine sweetness, and you will not be a slave to the senses,

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to passions, you will not, like a beggar, have to go from door to door.

92

The mere performance of rituals with pomp and splendour does not constitute real *sādhona*. It is important to bear in mind that practices carried out thoughtlessly and without deep feeling are not helpful to true spirituality. *Tapasyā* means to endure the fire of purgation. If you cannot bear much more even than the threefold suffering (*tritāpa*), it means that you are not engaged in *tapasyā*. All the senses and passions must be brought under complete control. So long as there is even a slight imperfection in you, it will be difficult

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to obtain the vision of the All-Perfect One. Try to fix as your goal Him who by a mere gesture upholds the entire universe; and the thirst for sense enjoyment will disappear of itself.

93

Standing on the seashore at Cape Comorin, one can watch wave after wave rise, dash against the rocks and break, merging into Infinity — nobody knows where. This world may also be likened to a vast ocean. How many myriads of beings are born and die at every moment and where they go when disappearing from our sight is beyond the grasp of human intelligence. This constant flux in nature illustrates the fact that, in reality,

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birth and death do not exist. There is only One Supreme Being That manifests Itself in countless forms, in numberless modes of life.

Learn to see the beauty in the laws of nature, to appreciate their impartial justice — and the contemplation of the Creator of all things will spontaneously awaken in you, you will realize that He alone is and nothing beside Him.

94

Many hang their heads in disappointment, murmuring, "I have received initiation from a *Sadguru*, but what progress have I made?" Just think, when a little ink is spilled on cloth, how much time it takes to remove it. How can you expect the thick layer of impurities

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that obscure human consciousness to be cleared up in a few days or months? Rather than trying to estimate how efficacious the power of the Guru and the mantra is, you should lay emphasis on exerting yourself to the utmost. By sitting back comfortably and without paying the price, spirituality does not come. Hard and sincere labour is indispensable in order to realize the Self. With implicit faith and a sacred regard for the Guru's instructions, continue your practice with the greatest possible regularity and concentration — rest assured, success will be yours. Those who serve *dharma* will be gripped by it and led on the path of *dharma*.

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Essentially there is no difference between the "I" of the path of Self-inquiry, the "Thou" of the path of devotion and the "I and Thou" of the path of yoga or action. Those who use their energy to place Him first and foremost in all their thoughts, feelings and actions and thus advance into the realm where the "I" and the "Thou" melt into one, will be immersed in the great ocean of Infinity. Only as long as one remains floating on the surface, there are bound to be differences of religion, sect and so on. But if by some means one is able to dive down into the depths, it will be seen that the Essence of things is one, that Truth and Love are one and the same.

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Man, like the spider, weaves web after web and does his best to keep himself entangled in its meshes throughout eternity. Caught up in the attractions of the senses and in delusion, he does not even pause to reflect how agonizing are the ever recurring action and reaction of birth and death. Resolve irrevocably and once for all that the bondage of karma must end with the present life and, like a war lord, rally all your forces in the desperate effort to tear through the veil of *māyā* ; or else, like a besieged garrison lie prostrate before the Almighty and surrender yourself unconditionally to His mercy — and He Himself will take care of everything.

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What is not to your liking you can easily give up ; but why can you not leave what you regard as wrong ? Try to discriminate between right and wrong and eschew sin like poison. At the same time cultivate good and rightful desires and inclinations by the constant contemplation of God and by the daily performance of beneficent actions. You may conquer the world, but if you cannot master yourself, it will be very difficult for you to tread the path of liberation.

The mental dispositions and tendencies (*saṁskāras*) accumulated in a great many

former births, are at the root of all bondage. By action these *saṁskāras* have developed and by action they will again be destroyed. In the manner of a gramophone record the structure of man's mind has been fashioned by his past actions, thoughts and feelings. When through identification with the senses old memories are revived, the mind acts as a gramophone needle, stimulating the repetition of ideas, emotions and deeds of the past. As by the sustained practice of God-centred actions, thoughts and aspirations, good and beautiful tendencies gain strength, in the same measure the undesirable ones will be wiped out. At the end, just as fire dies down of itself after reducing to ashes everything combustible, even so the good and laudable

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dispositions of the mind will also ultimately become extinct of themselves.

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“Remember Him, remember Him, day after day, hour after hour, remember Him !” By constantly sustaining the flow of God’s name, the days of your imprisonment in this world will expire. That you are working for your own uplift, goes without saying. But this is not enough : wherever you may be placed, call others also to join you. Untiringly entreat those of your fellow-men whose lives are divorced from religion to turn their thought to the Divine. Associate with seekers who with a pure heart aspire towards the realization of God and try to join them in

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their endeavour ; and further, let your life be blessed and fulfilled by the company of those who by first-hand knowledge know the greatness of God.

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So long as you go about repeating outwardly : “Everything happens by His Will”, it is a sign that your own strong will is still very prominent. Look, when His Will begins to work within you, your will becomes fused with It in such a manner as to make it impossible for you to distinguish the one from the other. So long as you have a will of your own, follow the various rules and observances of the *Śāstras* that are expressions of His Will, accepting success

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and failure with equanimity. Absolute surrender to the Divine Will is the duty of every lover of God. In this way the time will dawn when nothing is left that may be called your own will and when you experience everything, the outer as well as the inner, solely as the play of the Almighty One. Truly, this wonderful world has no significance unless one realizes that by His Will all of us are progressing every moment towards undifferentiated union.

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All work has to be done with a definite purpose in view. Aimless actions are fruitless and devoid of grace. The one way to realize Him is prayer and meditation, in other

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words, to leave the surface and to penetrate into the sanctuary. Prayer and meditation act as a bridge between the individual self and God, the Self of all. By watchfulness and the regular practice of the Presence of God one must try to get communion with Him. Just as medicine is necessary to counteract bodily ailments, so the contemplation of God is indispensable to free the mind from the dross of accumulated *samskāras*. For this reason one should not only attend to one's spiritual exercises morning and evening, but try to steadily increase the time and intensity of one's meditation, just as one applies oneself diligently when pursuing some worldly object. *Kīrtana* fails to have the desired effect if it is out of tune and rhythm. Similarly religious practice must have its

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regular tune and rhythm, otherwise the mind cannot become steady. The Self or God is unknowable to the ordinary intelligence but He is not unknown to us as the life-breath. When a man dies, one says he has breathed his last. If one uses the rhythm of one's breathing as a support in one's meditation, this will increase one's power. Therefore one should daily for some time sit still in a meditative pose in a solitary place, turn the mind within and repeat the name or a mantra in rhythm with one's breathing, without straining, in a natural way. When through prolonged practice the Name becomes inextricably linked with the breath, the body quite still and the mind one-pointed, one will come to realize that the individual is part of the One Great Life that pervades the universe.

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**GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT
WORDS**

GLOSSARY OF SANSKRIT WORDS

ānanda Bliss, delight, joy. The Bliss that is beyond happiness and sorrow and is not affected by either.

Ātmā The true Self. Supreme Existence or Being that is of the nature of Self-awareness and Self-delight and behind all manifestations in nature.

brahmachārya āśrama According to the Hindu system, human life is divided into four successive stages or *āśramas*, looked at from the point of view of the pilgrim on the spiritual path. The brahmachārya āśrama is the stage of the student who is expected to devote some time daily

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to spiritual practice and service and to observe strict celibacy.

dharmā The law of being. It signifies the inner principle of religion. Man's *dharmā* is to realise his innate Divinity. *Dharmā* may also mean righteousness or duty.

ektāra A musical instrument with one string.

japa Repetition of a mantra or a name of God. *Japa* may be vocal, semi-vocal or mental. It may be practised either without rhythm or following the natural rhythm of one's breath. The counting during *japa* may either be done with the help of one's fingers in the prescribed manner or with the help of a rosary.

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Hari God. A name of Viṣṇu, the sustainer and preserver of the universe.

karma Action, the result of action and also the law of cause and effect by which actions inevitably bear their fruit. *Karma* originates from the individual self, functioning in its ignorance as an active agent. When man realizes his own true Self, *karma* ceases for him.

karma yogin A person who dedicates every action as a service to the Supreme Lord. Aiming at perfection in all he does, he is yet unconcerned with the fruit of it. This is one of the paths that may lead to conscious Union with the One.

kīrtana The chanting or singing of the names or glories of God. Performed by

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one person or by a group of people to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals.

māyā The Supreme Divine Power by which the One conceals Himself and appears as the many.

Nāma kīrtana The singing of God's names.

Sadguru The perfect Guru who shows the way to the knowledge of Reality.

sādhaka One who practises *sādhana*.

sādhana Spiritual practice performed for the purpose of preparing oneself for Self-realization.

saṁskāra Impression, disposition, psychic trace left in the mind after any experience. Saṁskāras are often brought over

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from former births. They act like seeds and have a tendency to germinate into action. They are burnt up when the Light of Knowledge (*jñāna*) shines forth.

samnyāsa Renunciation. According to the Hindu system it is the last stage of human life in which a man renounces family, possessions, caste, social position — in fact everything to which he is attached — and surrenders himself to the Divine. Technically it is of two kinds, namely *vividiṣa samnyāsa*, preceded by a sense of detachment from the world. The other is *vidvat samnyāsa* which is *samnyāsa* per excellance, preceded by the realization of the Brahman. In the former certain rules of discipline have to be observed. The latter is absolute freedom.

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- samnyāsi* One who has taken *samnyāsa*.
- śāstras* The sacred Hindu Scriptures.
- satsang* The company of sages, saints and seekers after Truth, either the actual physical company or, in an applied sense, by reading holy scriptures or the lives of saints. Also a religious meeting. In its widest sense the practice of the presence of God.
- sattvic Prakriti* (primordial matter) has three properties or aspects (*guṇas*): *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*. *Sattva* is the quality of lightness, harmony, luminosity; *rajas* is motion and what produces motion; *tamas* inertia, heaviness, darkness. These three *guṇas* continually act and react on one another. Anything in which the quality of harmony and lightness predominates is called *sattvic*.

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- tapasyā* Hardships undergone with the definite object of attaining to the Spiritual.
- tritāpa* The threefold suffering of the individual, namely *ādhibhautika* bodily suffering; *ādhideivika* suffering due to the inclemency of the elements of nature, such as earthquake, flood, cyclone, etc; *ādhiātmika* mental and emotional suffering.
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