

# THE SAYINGS OF RAMAKRISHNA

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## Introduction

His sayings or Logia were collected and written down by his pupils, in Bengâli; some were translated into Sanskrit and into English. There are many that remind us of old Sanskrit sayings, of which there are several collections, all, however, in metrical form. The sayings of Ramakrishna are different, because they are in prose, uttered evidently on the spur of the moment, and tinged here and there with European ideas which must have reached Ramakrishna through his intercourse with Anglo-Indians, and not from books, for he was ignorant of English. I received a complete collection of them from Ramakrishna's own pupil, Vivekânanda, well known by his missionary labours in the United States and England. I give them as they were sent to me, with such corrections only as seemed absolutely necessary. I thought at first of arranging them under different heads, but found that this would have destroyed their character and

made them rather monotonous reading. I believe as they are, they give a true picture of the man and of his way of teaching, suggested by the impulses of the moment, but by no means systematic, and by no means free from repetitions and contradictions. I should have liked very much to leave out some of his sayings, because, to our mind, they seem insipid, in bad taste, or even blasphemous. But should I not in doing so have offended against historic truth? We want to know the man who has exercised and is exercising so wide an influence, such as he was, not such as we wish him to have been. He himself never wished to appear different from what he was, and he often seems to have made himself out worse than he was. Besides, if I had done so, I know that there are men who would not have been ashamed of suspecting me of a wish to represent the religions of the East, both modern and ancient, as better than they really are. These are the very men who would find many a lesson to learn from Ramakrishna's sayings. No, I said, let the wheat and the tares remain together. Few thoughtful readers will go through them without finding some thought that makes them ponder, some truth that will startle them as coming from so unexpected a quarter. Nothing, on the other hand, would be easier than to pick out a saying here and there, and thus to show that they are all insipid and foolish. This is a very old trick, described in India as the trick of the rice-merchants who wish to sell or to buy a rice-field, and who offer you a handful of good or bad grains to show that the field is either valuable or worthless. To my mind these sayings, the good, the bad, and the indifferent, are interesting because they represent an important phase of thought, an attempt to give prominence to the devotional and practical side of the Vedânta, and because they show the compatibility of the Vedânta with other religions. They will make it clear that the Vedânta also possesses a morality of its own, which may seem too high and too spiritual for ordinary mortals, but which in India has done good, is doing good, and may continue to do good for centuries to come. In conclusion, I have to thank my friend Mozoomdar, and several of the disciples of Ramakrishna, more particularly Vivekânanda and the editor of the Brahnavâdin, for the ready help they have rendered me in publishing this collection of the sayings of their departed Master.

## His Teachings

1. Thou seest many stars at night in the sky, but findest them not when the sun rises. Canst thou say that there are no stars, then, in the heaven of day? So, O man, because thou beholdest not the Almighty in the days of thy ignorance, say not that there is no God.

2. As one and the same material, viz. water, is called by different names by different people--one calling it 'water,' another 'vâri,' a third 'aqua,' and another 'pani'--so the one Sat-kit-ânanda, the Everlasting-Intelligent-Bliss, is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Hari, and by others as Brahman.

3. Two persons were hotly disputing as to the colour of a chameleon. One said, 'The chameleon on that palm-tree is of a beautiful red colour.' The other, contradicting him, said, 'You are mistaken, the chameleon is not red, but blue.' Not being able to settle the matter by arguments, both went to the person who always lived under that tree and had watched the chameleon in all its phases of colour. One of them said, 'Sir, is not the chameleon on that tree of a red colour?' The person replied, 'Yes, sir.' The other disputant said, 'What do you say? How is it? It is not red, it is blue.' That person again humbly replied, 'Yes, sir.' The person knew that the chameleon is an animal that constantly changes its colour; thus it was that he said 'yes' to both these conflicting statements. The Sat-kit-ânanda likewise has various forms. The devotee who has seen God in one aspect only, knows Him in that aspect alone. But he who has seen Him in His manifold aspects, is alone in a position to say, 'All these forms are of one God, for God is multiform.' He has forms and has no forms, and many are His forms which no one knows.

4. Many are the names of God, and infinite the forms that lead us to know Him. In whatsoever name or form you desire to call Him, in that very form and name you will see Him.

5. Four blind men went to see an elephant. One touched the leg of the elephant, and said, 'The elephant is like a pillar.' The second touched the trunk, and said, 'The elephant is like a thick stick or club.' The third touched the belly, and said, 'The elephant is like a big jar.' The fourth touched the ears, and said, 'The elephant is like a winnowing basket.' Thus they began to dispute amongst themselves as to the figure of the elephant. A passer-by seeing them thus quarrelling, said, 'What is it that you are disputing about?' They told him everything, and asked him to arbitrate. That man said, 'None of you has seen the

elephant. The elephant is not like a pillar, its legs are like pillars. It is not like a big water-vessel, its belly is like a water-vessel. It is not like a winnowing basket, its ears are like winnowing baskets. It is not like a thick stick or club, but its proboscis is like that. The elephant is the combination of all these.' In the same manner those quarrel who have seen one aspect only of the Deity.

6. As the same sugar is made into various figures of birds and beasts, so one sweet Mother Divine is worshipped in various climes and ages under various names and forms. Different creeds are but different paths to reach the Almighty.

7. As with one gold various ornaments are made, having different forms and names, so one God is worshipped in different countries and ages, and has different forms and names. Though He may be worshipped variously, some loving to call him Father, others Mother, &c., yet it is one God that is being worshipped in all these various relations and modes.

8. Q. If the God of every religion is the same, why is it then that the God is painted differently by different religionists? A. God is one, but His aspects are different: as one master of the house is father to one, brother to another, and husband to a third, and is called by these different names by those different persons, so one God is described and called in various ways according to the particular aspect in which He appears to His particular worshipper.

9. In a potter's shop there are vessels of different shapes and forms--pots, jars, dishes, plates, &c.--but all are made of one clay. So God is one, but is worshipped in different ages and climes under different names and aspects.

10. God is one, but his aspects are many. One and the same fish may be made to taste differently, according to the different modes of preparing it, so one God is enjoyed variously (i.e. in His various aspects) by His devotees.

11. Man is like a pillow-case. The colour of one may be red, another blue, another black, but all contain the same cotton So it is with man--one is beautiful, one is black, another is holy, a fourth wicked; but the Divine dwells in them all.

12. All waters are brooded over by Nârâyana, but every kind of water is not fit for drink. Similarly, though it is true that the Almighty dwells in every place, yet every place is not fit to be visited by man. As one kind of water may be used for washing our feet, another may serve the purpose of ablution, and others may be drunk, and others again may not be touched at all; so there are different kinds of

places. We may approach some, we can enter into the inside of others, others we must avoid, even at a distance.

13. It is true that God is even in the tiger, but we must not go and face the animal. So it is true that God dwells even in the most wicked, but it is not meet that we should associate with the wicked.

14. The manifestation of the Divinity must be understood to be in greater degree in those who are honoured, respected, and obeyed by a large following, than in those who have gained no such influence.

15. The Master said: 'Everything that exists is God.' The pupil understood it literally, but not in the true spirit. While he was passing through a street, he met with an elephant. The driver (mâhut) shouted aloud from his high place, 'Move away, move away!' The pupil argued in his mind, 'Why should I move away? I am God, so is the elephant also God. What fear has God of Himself?' Thinking thus he did not move. At last the elephant took him up by his trunk, and dashed him aside. He was severely hurt, and going back to his Master, he related the whole adventure. The Master said, 'All right, you are God. The elephant is God also, but God in the shape of the elephant-driver was warning you also from above. Why did you not pay heed to his warnings?'

16. God, His scripture (the Bhâgavata), and His devotee are all to be regarded as one, i.e. in one and the same light.

17. Every being is Nârâyana. Man or animal, sage or knave, nay, the whole universe, is Nârâyana, the Supreme Spirit.

18. As many have merely heard of snow but not seen it, so many are the religious preachers who have read only in books about the attributes of God, but have not realised them in their lives. And as many may have seen but not tasted it, so many are the religious teachers who have got only a glimpse of Divine Glory, but have not understood its real essence. He who has tasted the snow can say what it is like. He who has enjoyed the society of God in different aspects, now as a servant, now as a friend, now as a lover, or as being absorbed in Him, &c., he alone can tell what are the attributes of God.

19. As the lamp does not burn without oil, so man cannot live without God.

20. The human body is like a boiling pot, and the mind and the senses are like water, rice or potato, &c. in it. Put the pot with its ingredients on the fire; it will

be so hot as to burn your finger when you touch it. But the heat does not belong to the pot, nor anything contained in it, but is in the fire. So it is the fire of Brahman in man that causes the mind and the senses to perform their functions, and when that fire ceases to act, the senses also, or the organs, stop.

21. Says God, 'I am the snake that biteth and the charmer that healeth; I am the judge that condemneth and the executioner that whippeth.'

22. God tells the thief to go and steal, and at the same time warns the householder against the thief.

23. How doth the Lord dwell in the body? He dwells in the body like the plug of a syringe, i.e. in the body, and yet apart from it.

24. The Lord can pass an elephant through the eye of a needle. He can do whatever He likes.

25. As fishes playing in a pond covered over with reeds and scum cannot be seen from outside, so God plays in the heart of a man invisibly, being screened by Mâyâ. from human view.

26. A man sitting under the shade of the Kalpa-vriksha (wishing-tree) wished to be a king, and in an instant he was a king. The next moment he wished to have a charming damsel, and the damsel was instantly by his side. The man then thought within himself, if a tiger came and devoured him, and alas! in an instant he was in the jaws of a tiger! God is like that wishing-tree: whosoever in His presence thinks that he is destitute and poor, remains as such, but he who thinks and believes that the Lord fulfils all his wants, receives everything from Him.

27. The landlord may be very rich, but when a poor cultivator brings a humble present to him with a loving heart, he accepts it with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction.

28. While a bell is being rung, the repeated ding-dongs can be distinguished one from the other, but when we stop ringing, then an undistinguishable sound only remains audible. We can easily distinguish one note from the other, as if each distinct note had a certain shape; but the continued and unbroken sound when the ding-dongs have ceased is undistinguishable, as if formless. Like the sound of the bell, God is both with and without form.

29. As a boy begins to learn writing by drawing big scrawls, before he can master the small-hand, so we must learn concentration of the mind by fixing it first on forms; and when we have attained success therein, we can easily fix it upon the formless.

30. As a marksman learns to shoot by first taking aim at large and big objects, and the more he acquires the facility, the greater becomes the ease with which he can shoot at the smaller marks on the target, so when the mind has been trained to be fixed on images having form, it becomes easy for it to be fixed upon images having no form.

31. God is the Absolute and Eternal Brahman, as well as the Father of the Universe. The indivisible Brahman is like a vast shoreless ocean, without bounds and limits, in which I can only struggle and sink. But when I approach the always sportive (active) personal Deity (Hari), I get peace, like the sinking man who nears the shore.

32. God is formless, and is with form too, and He is that which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone can say what else He is.

33. At a certain stage of his path of devotion, the devotee finds satisfaction in God with form; at another stage, in God without form.

34. The God with form is visible, nay, we can touch Him face to face, as with one's dearest friend.

35. As at one time I am clothed, and at another time naked, so Brahman is at one time with attributes and at another without.

36. As water when congealed becomes ice, so the visible form of the Almighty is the materialised manifestation of the all-pervading formless Brahman. It may be called, in fact, Sat-kit-ânanda solidified. As the ice, being part and parcel of the water, remains in the water for a time and afterwards melts in it, so the Personal God is part and parcel of the Impersonal. He rises from the Impersonal, remains there, and ultimately merges into it and disappears.

37. His name is Intelligence; His abode is Intelligence too, and He, the Lord, is Intelligence Himself.

38. Two are the occasions when the Lord smiles. First, when brothers remove the chains which partition off the family property, saying, This is mine and that is

thine;' and secondly, when the patient is on the point of death, and the physician says, 'I will cure him.'

39. Lunatics, drunkards, and children sometimes give out the truth unconsciously, as if inspired by Heaven.

40. The sun is many times larger than the earth, but owing to the great distance it appears like a small disk. So the Lord is infinitely great, but owing to our being too far from Him we fall very, very short of comprehending His real greatness.

41. Knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously, in whatever state we utter His name, we acquire the merit of such utterance. A man who voluntarily goes into a river and bathes therein gets the benefit of the bath; so does likewise he who has been pushed into the river by another, or who while sleeping soundly has water thrown upon him by another.

42. Satan never enters the house wherein are always sung the praises of Hari.

43. A king having committed the mortal crime of killing a Brâhmana, went to the hermitage of a sage to learn what penance he must perform in order to be purified. The sage was absent from home, but his son was there. The son hearing the case of the king, said, 'Repeat the name of God (Râma) three times and your sin will be expiated.' When the sage came back and heard the penance prescribed by his son, he said to him in great wrath, 'Sins committed in myriads of births are purged at once by but once uttering the name of the Almighty; how weak must be thy faith, O son, that thou hast ordered that name to be repeated thrice! For this offence of thine go and become a Kândâla.' And the son became the Guhaka Kândâla of the Râmâyana.

44. Consciously or unconsciously, in whatever way one falls into the trough of nectar, one becomes immortal. Similarly, whosoever utters the name of the Deity voluntarily or involuntarily finds immortality in the end.

45. As a large and powerful steamer moves swiftly over the waters, towing rafts and barges in its wake, so when a Saviour descends, He easily carries thousands across the ocean of Mâyâ (illusion).

46. When the flood comes, it overflows rivers and streams, and makes one watery surface of all adjacent lands. But the rain-water flows away through fixed channels. When the Saviour becomes incarnate, all are saved through His grace. The Siddhas (perfect ones) only save themselves with much pain and penance.

47. When a mighty raft of wood floats down a stream, it can carry a hundred men, and still it does not sink. A reed floating down may sink with the weight of even a crow. So when a Saviour becomes incarnate, innumerable are the men who find salvation by taking refuge under Him. The Siddha only saves himself with much toil and trouble.

48. The locomotive engine reaches the destination itself, and also draws and takes with it a long train of loaded wagons. So likewise act the Saviours. They carry multitudes of men, heavily laden with the cares and sorrows of the world, to the feet of the Almighty.

49. When Bhagavân Srî Râmakandra came to this world, seven sages only could recognise Him to be the God incarnate. So when God descends into this world, few only can recognise His Divine nature.

50. On the tree of Sat-kit-ânanda there are innumerable Râmas, Krishnas, Christs, &c.; one or two of them come down into this world now and then, and produce mighty changes and revolutions.

51. The Avatâra or Saviour is the messenger of God. He is like the Viceroy of a mighty monarch. As when there is some disturbance in a far-off province the king sends his viceroy to quell it; so whenever there is any waning of religion in any part of the world, God sends His Avatâra there.

52. It is one and the same Avatâra that, having plunged into the ocean of life, rises up in one place and is known as Krishna, and diving again rises in another place and is known as Christ.

53. In some seasons water can be obtained from the great depths of the wells only and with great difficulty, but when the country is flooded in the rainy season, water is obtained with ease everywhere. So ordinarily, God is reached with great pains through prayers and penances, but when the flood of Incarnation descends, God is seen anywhere and everywhere.

54. A Siddha-purusha (perfect one) is like an archaeologist who removes the dust and lays open an old well which was covered up during ages of disuse by rank growth. The Avatâra, on the other hand, is like a great engineer who sinks a new well in a place where there was no water before. Great men can give salvation to those only who have the waters of piety and goodness hidden in themselves, but the Saviour saves him too whose heart is devoid of all love, and dry as a desert.

55. Think not that Râma, Sitâ, Srî Krishna, Râdhâ, Arguna, &c., were not historical personages, but mere allegories, or that the Scriptures have an inner and esoteric meaning only. Nay, they were human beings of flesh and blood just as you are, but because they were Divinities, their lives can be interpreted both historically and spiritually.

56. None knoweth the immensity of the sacrifice which the Godhead maketh when it becomes incarnate or becomes flesh.

57. The Saviours are to Brahman as the waves are to the ocean.

58. What is the state which a Siddha attains? (A perfect man and well-cooked food are both called siddha. There is a pun here on the word.) As potato or brinjal, &c., when boiled properly (siddha), becomes soft and tender, so when a man reaches perfection (Siddha) he becomes all humility and tenderness.

59. Five are the kinds of Siddhas found in this world:--

(1) The Svapna Siddhas are those who attain perfection by means of dream inspiration.

(2) The Mantra Siddhas are those who attain perfection by means of any sacred mantra.

(3) The Hathat Siddhas are those who attain perfection suddenly. As a poor man may suddenly become rich by finding a hidden treasure, or by marrying into a rich family, so many sinners become pure all of a sudden, and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

(4) The Kripâ Siddhas are those who attain perfection through the tangible grace of the Almighty, as a poor man is made wealthy by the kindness of a king.

(5) The Nitya Siddhas are those who are ever-perfect. As a gourd or a pumpkin-creeper brings forth fruit first and then its flower, so the ever-perfect is born a Siddha, and all his seeming exertions after perfection are merely for the sake of setting examples to humanity.

60. There is a fabled species of birds called 'Homâ,' which live so high up in the heavens, and so dearly love those regions, that they never condescend to come down to the earth. Even their eggs, which, when laid in the sky, begin to fall down to the earth attracted by gravity, are said to get hatched in the middle of their downward course and give birth to the young ones. The fledgelings at once

find out that they are falling down, and immediately change their course and begin to fly up towards their home, drawn thither by instinct. Men such as Suka Deva, Nârada, Jesus, Samkarâkârya and others, are like those birds, who even in their boyhood give up all attachments to the things of this world and betake themselves to the highest regions of true Knowledge and Divine Light. These men are called Nitya Siddhas.

61. The Divine sages form, as it were, the inner circle of God's nearest relatives. They are like friends, companions, kinsmen of God. Ordinary beings form the outer circle or are the creatures of God.

62. When the shell of an ordinary cocoa-nut is pierced through, the nail enters the kernel of the nut too. But in the case of the dry nut, the kernel becomes separate from the shell, and so when the shell is pierced the kernel is not touched. Jesus was like the dry nut, i.e. His inner soul was separate from His physical shell, and consequently the sufferings of the body did not affect Him.

63. Once a holy man, while passing through a crowded street, accidentally trod upon the toe of a wicked person. The wicked man, furious with rage, beat the Sâdhu mercilessly, till he fell to the ground in a faint. His disciples took great pains and adopted various measures to bring him back to consciousness, and when they saw that he had recovered a little, one of them asked, 'Sir, do you recognise who is attending upon you?' The Sâdhu replied, 'He who beat me.' A true Sâdhu finds no distinction between a friend and a foe.

64. The swan can separate the milk from water; it drinks only the milk, leaving the water untouched. Other birds cannot do so. Similarly God is intimately mixed up with Mâyâ; ordinary men cannot see Him separately from Mâyâ. Only the Paramahansa (the great soul--here is a pun on the word 'hansa,' which means both soul and swan) throws off Mâyâ, and takes up God only.

65. The wind carries the smell of the sandal-wood as well as that of ordure, but does not mix with either. Similarly a perfect man lives in the world, but does not mix with it.

66. A perfect man is like a lotus-leaf in the water or like a mud-fish in the marsh. Neither of these is polluted by the element in which it lives.

67. As water passes under a bridge but never stagnates, so money passes through the hands of 'The Free' who never hoard it.

68. As a rope that is burnt retains its shape intact, but has become all ashes, so that nothing can be bound with it; similarly, (the man who is emancipated retains the form of his egoism, but not an idea of vanity (Ahamkâra).

69. As an aquatic bird, such as a pelican, dives into water, but the water does not wet its plumage, so the perfect man lives in the world, but the world does not touch him.

70. When the head of a goat is severed from its body, the trunk moves about for some time, still showing the signs of life. Similarly, though the Ahamkâra (vanity or egoism) is beheaded in the perfect man, yet sufficient of its vitality is left to make such a man carry on the functions of physical life; but that much is not sufficient to bind him again to the world.

71. Ornaments cannot be made of pure gold. Some alloy must be mixed with it. A man totally devoid of Mâyâ. will not survive more than twenty-one days. So long as the man has body, he must have some Mâyâ, however small it may be, to carry on the functions of the body.

72. In the play of hide-and-seek, if the player once succeeds in touching the non-player, called the grand-dame (Boorî), he is no longer liable to be made a thief. Similarly, by once seeing the Almighty, a man is no longer bound down by the fetters of the world. The boy, by touching the Boorî, is free to go wherever he wishes, without being pursued, and no one can make him a thief. Similarly, in this world's playground, there is no fear to him who has once touched the feet of the Almighty.

73. The iron, once converted into gold by the touch of the Philosopher's stone, may be kept under the ground, or thrown into a rubbish-heap, but it remains always gold, and will never return to its former condition. Similar is the case with him who has once touched the feet of the Almighty. Whether he dwells in the bustle of the world, or in the solitude of forests, nothing will ever contaminate him.

74. The steel sword turns into a golden sword by the touch of the Philosopher's stone, and though it retains its former form it becomes incapable of injuring any one. Similarly, the outward form of a man who has touched the feet of the Almighty is not changed, but he no longer doeth any evil.

75. The loadstone rock under the sea attracts the ship sailing over it, draws out all its iron nails, separates its planks, and sinks the vessel into the deep. Thus, when

the human soul is attracted by the magnetism of Universal Consciousness, the latter destroys in a moment all its individuality and selfishness, and plunges it in the ocean of God's infinite Love.

76. Milk and water, when brought into contact, are sure to mix so that the milk can never be separated again. So if the neophyte, thirsting after self-improvement, mixes indiscriminately with all sorts of worldly men, he not only loses his ideals, but his former faith, love, and enthusiasm also die away imperceptibly. When, however, you convert the milk into butter, it no longer mixes with water, but floats over it. Similarly, when the soul once attains God-head, it may live in any company, without ever being affected by its evil influences.

77. So long as no child is born to her, the newly-married girl remains deeply absorbed in her domestic duties. But no sooner is a son born, than she leaves off all her house-hold concerns, and no longer finds any pleasure in them. On the contrary, she fondles the newborn baby the livelong day, and kisses it with intense joy. Thus man, in his state of ignorance, performs all sorts of worldly works, but no sooner does he see the Almighty, than he finds no longer any relish in them. On the contrary, his happiness now consists only in serving the Deity and doing His works alone.

78. So long as a man is far from the market, he hears a loud and indistinct buzzing only, something like 'Ho! Ho!' But when he enters the market he no longer hears the uproar, but perceives distinctly that some one is bargaining for potatoes, another for Brinjal, and so on. As long as a man is far away from God, he is in the midst of the noise and confusion of reason, argument, and discussion; but when once a person approaches the Almighty, all reasonings, arguments, and discussions cease, and he understands the mysteries of God with vivid and clear perception.

79. So long as a man calls aloud, 'Allah Ho! Allah Ho! (O God! O God!)', be sure that he has not found God, for he who has found him becomes still.

80. So long as the bee is outside the petals of the lotus, and has not tasted its honey, it hovers round the flower, emitting its buzzing sound; but when it is inside the flower, it drinks its nectar noiselessly. So long as a man quarrels and disputes about doctrines and dogmas, he has not tasted the nectar of true faith; when he has tasted it he becomes still.

81. Little children play with dolls in a room apart just as they like, but as soon as their mother comes in they throw aside the dolls and run to her crying, 'Mamma, Mamma!' You also are now playing in this world deeply absorbed with the dolls of wealth, honour, and fame, and have no fear or anxiety. But if you once see the Divine Mother entering in, you will not find pleasure any more in wealth, honour, and fame. Leaving off all these you will run to Her.

82. The naked Sage, Totâpuri, used to say, 'If a brass pot be not rubbed daily, it will get rusty. So if a man does not contemplate the Deity daily, his heart will grow impure.' To him Srî Râmakrishna replied, 'Yes, but if the vessel be of gold, it does not require daily cleaning. The man who has reached God requires prayers or penances no more.'

83. He who has once tasted the refined and crystalline sugar-candy, finds no pleasure in raw treacle; he who has slept in a palace, will not find pleasure in lying down in a dirty hovel. So the soul that has once tasted the sweetness of the Divine Bliss finds no delight in the ignoble pleasures of the world.

84. She who has a king for her lover will not accept the homage of a street beggar. So the soul that has once found favour in the sight of the Lord does not want the paltry things of this world.

85. When a man is in the plains he sees the lowly grass and the mighty pine-tree and says, 'How big is the tree and how small is the grass!' But when he ascends the mountain and looks from its high peak to the plain below, the mighty pine-tree and the lowly grass blend into one indistinct mass of green verdure. So in the sight of worldly men there are differences of rank and position, but when the Divine sight is opened there remains no distinction of high and low.

86. When water is poured into an empty vessel a bubbling noise ensues, but when the vessel is full no such noise is heard. Similarly, the man who has not found God is full of vain disputations. But when he has seen Him, all vanities disappear, and he silently enjoys the Bliss Divine.

87. A woman naturally feels shy to relate to all the talk she daily has with her husband, save to her own companions. Similarly, a devotee does not like to relate to any one but a true Bhakta (devotee) the ecstatic joys which he experiences in his Divine communion; nay, sometimes he becomes impatient of relating his experiences even to those of his own class.

88. The moth once seeing the light never returns to darkness; the ant dies in the sugar-heap, but never retreats therefrom. Similarly, a good devotee gladly sacrifices his life for his God by renunciation.

89. Why does the God-lover find such pleasure in addressing the Deity as Mother? Because the child is more free with its mother, and consequently she is dearer to the child than any one else.

90. The pious man, like a hemp-smoker, finds no pleasure in singing the praises of the Almighty alone. (The hemp-smoker never finds pleasure in smoking alone.)

91. If a strange animal enters a herd of cows, it is driven off by the combined attacks of the whole herd. But let only a cow enter, and all the other cows will make friends with her by mutual licking of bodies. Thus, when a devotee meets with another devotee, both experience great happiness and feel loth to separate, but when a scoffer enters the circle they carefully avoid him.

92. What is the strength of a devotee? He is a child of God, and tears are his greatest strength.

93. The young of a monkey clasps and clings to its mother. The young kitten cannot clasp its mother, but mews piteously whenever it is near her. If the young monkey lets go its hold on its mother, it falls down and gets hurt. This is because it depends upon its own strength; but the kitten runs no such risk, as the mother herself carries it about from place to place. Such is the difference between self-reliance and entire resignation to the will of God.

94. It is fabled that the pearl oyster leaves its bed at the bottom of the sea and comes up to the surface to catch the rain-water when the star Svâti is in the ascendant. It floats about on the surface of the sea with its mouth agape, until it succeeds in catching a drop of the marvellous Svâti-rain. Then it dives down to its sea-bed and there rests, till it has succeeded in fashioning a beautiful pearl out of that rain-drop. Similarly, there are some true and eager aspirants who travel from place to place in search of that watchword from a godly and perfect preceptor (Sad-guru) which will open for them the gate of eternal bliss, and if in their diligent search one is fortunate enough to meet such a Guru and get from him the much-longed-for logos, which is sure to break down all fetters, he at once retires from society, enters into the deep recess of his own heart and rests there, till he has succeeded in gaining eternal peace.

95. The flint may remain for myriads of years under water, still it does not lose its inner fire. Strike it with iron whenever you like and out flows the glowing spark. So is the true devotee firm in his faith. Though he may remain surrounded by all the impurities of the world, he never loses his faith and love. He becomes entranced as soon as he hears the name of the Almighty.

96. The Stone may remain for myriads of years in water, and the water will never penetrate it. But clay is soon softened into mud by the contact of water. So the strong heart of the faithful does not despair in the midst of trials and persecutions, but the man of weak faith is easily shaken even by the most trifling cause.

97. How sweet is the simplicity of the child! He prefers a doll to all riches and wealth. So is the faithful devotee. No one else can throw aside wealth and honour to take God only.

98. God is like unto a hill of sugar. A small ant carries away from it a small grain of sugar, the bigger ant takes from it a larger grain. But the hill remains as large as before. So are the devotees of God. They become ecstatic with even a grain of one Divine attribute. No one can contain within him all His attributes.

99. A logician once asked Srî Râmakrishna, 'What are knowledge, knower, and the object known?' To which he replied, 'Good man, I do not know all these niceties of scholastic learning. I know only my Mother Divine, and that I am Her son.'

100. A man who finds all the hairs of his body standing on end at the bare mention of Srî Hari's name, through sheer ecstasy, and who sheds tears of love on hearing the name of God, he has reached his last birth.

101. The more you scratch the ringworm, the greater grows the itching, and the more pleasure do you find in scratching. Similarly, the devotees once beginning to sing His praises, never get tired of it, but continue for hours and hours together.

102. When grains are measured out to the purchaser in the granary of a rich merchant, the measurer unceasingly goes on measuring, while the attending women supply him with basket-fulls of grain from the main store. The measurer does not leave his seat, while the women incessantly supply him with grain. But a small grocer has neither such attendants, nor is his store so inexhaustible. Similarly, it is God Himself who is constantly inspiring thoughts and sentiments in the hearts of His devotees, and that is the reason why the latter are never in lack of new and wise thoughts and sentiments; while, on the other hand, the book-learned, like petty grocers, soon find that their thoughts have become exhausted.

103. A born farmer does not leave off tilling the soil, though it may not rain for twelve consecutive years, while a merchant who has but lately taken himself to the plough is discouraged by one season of drought. The true believer is never discouraged, if even with his lifelong devotion he fails to see God.

104. A true devotee who has drunk deep of the Divine Love is like a veritable drunkard, and, as such, cannot always observe the rules of propriety.

105. Dala (sedge) does not grow in large and pure water-tanks, but in small stagnant and miasmatic pools. Similarly, Dala (schism) does not take place in a party whose adherents are guided by pure, broad, and unselfish motives, but it takes firm root in a party whose advocates are given to selfishness, insincerity, and bigotry. ('Dala,' in Bengâli, means both sedges and schism.)

106. The Yogins and Samyâsins are like snakes. The snake never digs a hole for itself, but it lives in the hole made by the mouse. When one hole becomes uninhabitable, it enters into another hole. So the Yogins and the Samyâsins make no houses for themselves; they pass their days in other men's houses--to-day in one house, to-morrow in another.

107. The sage alone can recognise a sage. He who deals in cotton twists can alone tell of what number and quality a particular twist is made.

108. A sage was lying in a deep trance (Samâdhi) by a roadside; a thief passing by, saw him, and thought within himself, This fellow, lying here, is a thief. He has been breaking into some house by night, and now sleeps exhausted. The police will very soon be here to catch him. So let me escape in time.' Thus thinking, he ran away. Soon after a drunkard came upon the sage, and said, Hallo! thou hast fallen into the ditch by taking a drop too much. I am steadier than thou, and am not going to tumble.' Last of all came a sage, and understanding that a great sage was in a trance (Samâdhi), he sat down, and touched him, and began to rub gently his holy feet.

109. An itinerant Sâdhu came once upon the Kâlî temple of Râni Râsamani, and seeing a dog eating the remains of a feast, he went up to him and said, embracing him, 'Brother, how is it that thou eatest alone, without giving me a share?' So saying, he began to eat along with the dog. The people of the place naturally thought him mad, but when standing before the temple of the Goddess, he began to chant forth some hymns in praise of Kâlî, and the temple appeared to shake through the fervour of his devotion. Then the people knew him to be a great

Sâdhu. The true Sâdhus roam about like children or mad men, in dirty clothes, and various other disguises.

110. The true religious man is he who does not do anything wrong or act impiously when he is alone, i.e. when there is none to look after and blame him.

111. In the Bengâli alphabet no three letters are alike in sound except the three sibilants (Sa, sha, and sa), all meaning 'forbear,' 'forbear,' 'forbear.' This shows that even from our childhood we are made to learn forbearance in our very alphabets. The quality of forbearance is of the highest importance to every man.

112. Sugar and sand may be mixed together, but the ant rejects the sand and goes off with the sugar-grain; so pious men sift the good from the bad.

113. It is the nature of the winnowing basket to reject the bad and keep the good; even such is the case with pious men.

114. He is truly a pious man who is dead even in life, i.e. whose passions and desires have been all destroyed as in a dead body.

115. Worldly persons perform many pious and charitable acts with a hope of worldly rewards, but when misfortune, sorrow, and poverty approach them, they forget them all. They are like the parrot that repeats the Divine name 'Râdhâ-Krishna, Râdhâ-Krishna' the livelong day, but cries 'Kaw, Kaw' when caught by a cat, forgetting the Divine name.

116. A spring cushion is squeezed down when one sits upon it, but it soon resumes its original shape when the pressure is removed. So it is with worldly men. They are full of religious sentiments, so long as they hear religious talks; but no sooner do they enter into the daily routine of the world, than they forget all those high and noble thoughts, and become as impure as before.

117. So long as the iron is in the furnace it is red-hot, but it becomes black as soon as it is taken out of the fire. So also is the worldly man. As long as he is in church or in the society of pious people, he is full of religious emotions, but no sooner does he come out of those associations than he loses them all.

118. Some one said, 'When my boy Harish grows up, I will get him married, and give him the charge of the family; I shall then renounce the world, and begin to practise Yoga.' At this a Sâdhu remarked, 'You will never find any opportunity of practising Yoga (devotion). You will say afterwards, "Harish and Girish are too

much attached to me. They do not like to leave my company as yet." Then you will desire perhaps, "Let Harish have a son, and let me see that son married." And thus there will be no end of your desires.'

119. Flies sit at times on the sweetmeats kept exposed for sale in the shop of a confectioner; but no sooner does a sweeper pass by with a basket full of filth than the flies leave the sweetmeats and sit upon the filth-basket. But the honey-bee never sits on filthy objects, and always drinks honey from the flowers. The worldly men are like flies. At times they get a momentary taste of Divine sweetness, but their natural tendency for filth soon brings them back to the dunghill of the world. The good man, on the other hand, is always absorbed in the beatific contemplation of Divine Beauty.

N.B. The worldly man is like a filthy worm that always lives and dies in filth, and has no idea of higher things; the good man of the world is like the fly that sits now on the filth and now on the sweet; while the free soul of a Yogin is like the bee that always drinks the honey of God's holy presence, and nothing else.

120. When it was argued that a family-man (Grihastha) may remain in the family, but may have no concern with it, and consequently may remain uncontaminated by the world, an illustration was cited to refute such an argument, which is as follows: A poor Brâhmana once came to one of those family-men, who are unconcerned with family affairs, to beg some money. When the beggar asked of him some money, he replied, 'Sir, I never touch money. Why are you wasting your time in begging of me?' The Brâhmana, however, would not go away. Tired with his importunate entreaties the man at last resolved in his mind to give him a rupee, and told him, 'Well, sir, come to-morrow, I shall see what I can do for you.' Then going in, this typical family-man told his wife, who was the manager of all his affairs, he being unconcerned, 'Look here, dear, a poor Brâhmana is in great difficulty, and wants something of me. I have made up my mind to give him a rupee. What is your opinion about it?' 'Aha! what a generous fellow you are!' she replied, in great excitement at the name of a rupee. 'Rupees are not, like leaves or stones, to be thrown away without any thought.' 'Well, dear,' replied the husband, in an apologetic tone, 'the man is very poor and we should not give him less than a rupee.' 'No!' replied the wife, 'I cannot spare that much; here is a two-anna-bit and you can give him that, if you like.' The man of course had no other alternative, being himself unconcerned in all such worldly matters, and he took what his wife gave him. Next day the beggar came, and received only a two-anna-bit. Such uncontaminated family-men are really henpecked persons who are solely guided by their wives, and as such are very poor specimens of humanity.

121. Seeing the water pass glittering through the net of bamboo frame-work [1](#), the small fry enter into it with great pleasure, and having once entered they cannot get out again--and are caught. Similarly, foolish men enter into the world allured by its false glitter, but as it is easier to enter the net than to get out of it, it is easier to enter the world than renounce it, after having once entered it.

122. Men always quote the example of the king Ganaka, as that of a man who lived in the world and yet attained perfection. But throughout the whole history of mankind there is only this solitary example. His case was not the rule, but the exception. The general rule is that no one can attain spiritual perfection unless he renounces lust and greed. Do not think yourself to be a Ganaka. Many centuries have rolled away and the world has not produced another Ganaka.

123. This world is like a stage, where men perform many parts under various disguises. They do not like to take off the mask, unless they have played for some time. Let them play for a while, and then they will leave off the mask of their own accord.

124. The heart of the devotee is like a dry match; and the slightest mention of the name of the Deity kindles the fire of love in his heart. But the mind of the worldly, soaked in lust and greed, is like the moist match, and can never be heated to enthusiasm, though God may be preached to him innumerable times.

125. A worldly man may be endowed with intellect as great as that of Ganaka, may take as much pains and trouble as a Yogin, and make as great sacrifices as an ascetic; but all these he makes and does, not for God, but for worldliness, honour, and wealth.

126. As water does not enter into a stone, so religious advice produces no impression on the heart of a worldly man.

127. As a nail cannot enter into a stone, but can easily be driven into the earth, so the advice of the pious does not affect the soul of a worldly man. It enters into the heart of a believer.

128. As soft clay easily takes an impression, but not so a stone, so also the Divine Wisdom impresses itself on the heart of the devotee, but not on the soul of the worldly man.

129. The characteristic of a thoroughly worldly man is that he does not only not listen to hymns, religious discourses, praises of the Almighty, &c., but also

prevents others from hearing them, and abuses religious men and societies, and scoffs at prayers.

130. The alligator has got such a thick and scaly hide that no weapons can pierce it; on the contrary, they fall off harmless. So, howmuchsoever you may preach religion to a worldly man, it will have no effect upon his heart.

131. As the water enters in on one side under the bridge, and soon passes out on the other, so religious advice affects worldly souls. It enters into them by one ear and goes out by the other, without making any impression upon their minds.

132. By talking with a worldly man one can feel that his heart is filled with worldly thoughts and desires, even as the crop of a pigeon is filled with grains.

133. So long as the fire is beneath, the milk boils and bubbles. Remove the fire and it is quiet again. So the heart of the neophyte boils with enthusiasm, so long as he goes on with his spiritual exercises, but afterwards it cools down.

134. As to approach a monarch one must ingratiate oneself with the officials that keep the gate and surround the throne, so to reach the Almighty one must practise many devotions, as well as serve many devotees and keep the company of the wise.

135. Keep thy own sentiments and faith to thyself. Do not talk about them abroad. Otherwise thou wilt be a great loser.

136. There are three kinds of dolls; the first made of salt, the second made of cloth, and the third made of stone. If these dolls be immersed in water, the first will get dissolved and lose its form, the second will absorb a large quantity of water but retain its form, while the third will be impervious to the water. The first doll represents the man who merges his self in the Universal and All-pervading Self and becomes one with it, that is the 'Mukta purusha'; the second represents a true lover or Bhakta, who is full of Divine bliss and knowledge; and the third represents a worldly man, who will not absorb the least drop of true knowledge.

137. As when fishes are caught in a net some do not struggle at all, some again struggle hard to come out of the net, while a few are happy enough to effect their escape by rending the net; so there are three sorts of men, viz. fettered (Baddha), wriggling (Mumukshu), and released (Mukta).

138. As sieves separate the finer and coarser parts of a pulverized or ground substance, keeping the coarser and rejecting the finer, even so the wicked man takes the evil and rejects the good.

139. Two men went into a garden. The worldly-wise man no sooner entered the gate than he began to count the number of the mango-trees, how many mangoes each tree bore, and what might be the approximate price of the whole orchard. The other went to the owner, made his acquaintance, and quietly going under a mango-tree began to pluck the fruit and eat it with the owner's consent. Now who is the wiser of the two? Eat mangoes, it will satisfy your hunger. What is the good of counting the leaves and making vain calculations? The vain man of intellect is uselessly busy in finding out the 'why and wherefore' of creation, while the humble man of wisdom makes acquaintance with the Creator and enjoys Supreme Bliss in this world.

140. The vulture soars high up in the air, but all the while he is looking down into the charnel-pits in search of putrid carcasses. So the book-read pandits speak glibly and volubly about Divine Knowledge, but it is all mere talk, for all the while their mind is thinking about how to get money, respect, honour, power, &c., the vain guerdon of their learning.

141. Once a dispute arose in the court of the Maharajah of Burdwan among the learned men there, as to who was the greater Deity, Siva or Vishnu. Some gave preference to Siva, others to Vishnu. When the dispute grew hot a wise pandit remarked, addressing the Raja, 'Sire, I have neither met Siva nor seen Vishnu; how can I say who is the greater of the two?' At this the dispute stopped, for none of the disputants really had seen the Deities. Similarly none should compare one Deity with another. When a man has really seen a Deity, he comes to know that all the Deities are manifestations of one and the same Brahman.

142. As the elephant has two sets of teeth, the external tusks and the inner grinders, so the God-men, like Srî Krishna, &c., act and behave to all appearances like common men, while their heart and soul rest far beyond the pale of Karman.

143. The Sâdhu who distributes medicines, and uses in-toxicants, is not a proper Sâdhu; avoid the company of such.

144. A Brâhmana was laying down a garden, and looked after it day and night. One day a cow straying into the garden browsed away a mango sapling which was one of the most carefully-watched trees of the Brâhmana. The Brâhmana seeing

the cow destroy his favourite plant gave it such a sound beating that it died of the injuries received, The news soon spread like wildfire that the Brâhmana killed the sacred animal.

Now the Brâhmana was a so-called Vedântist, and when taxed with the sin denied it, saying,--'No, I have not killed the cow; it is my hand that has done it, and as Indra is the presiding Deity of the hand, so if any one has incurred the guilt of killing the cow, it is Indra and not I.'

Indra in his Heaven heard all this, assumed the shape of an old Brâhmana, came to the owner of the garden, and said, 'Sir, whose garden is this?'

Brâhmana--' Mine.'

Indra--' It is a beautiful garden. You have got a skilful gardener, for see how neatly and artistically he has planted the trees!'

Brâhmana--' Well, sir, that is also my work. The trees are planted under my personal supervision and direction.'

Indra--' Indeed! O, you are very clever. But who has laid out this road? It is very ably planned and neatly executed.'

Brâhmana--' All this has been done by me.'

Then Indra with joined hands said, 'When all these things are yours, and you take credit for all the works done in this garden, it is hard lines for poor Indra to be held responsible for the killing of the cow.'

145. If thou art in right earnest to be good and perfect, God will send the true and proper Master (Sad-Guru) to thee. Earnestness is the only thing necessary.

146. As when going to a strange country, one must abide by the directions of him who knows the way, while taking the advice of many may lead to confusion, so in trying to reach God one should follow implicitly the advice of one single Guru who knows the way to God.

147. Whoever can call on the Almighty with sincerity and intense earnestness needs no Guru. But such a man is rare, hence the necessity of a Guru or Guide. The Guru should be only one, but Upagurus (assistant Gurus) may be many. He from whom any thing whatsoever is learned is an Upaguru. The great Avadhûta had twenty-four such Gurus.

148. Many roads lead to Calcutta. A certain man started from his home in a distant village towards the metropolis. He asked a man on the road, 'What road must I take to reach Calcutta soon?' The man said, 'Follow this road.' Proceeding some distance, he met another man and asked him, 'Is this the shortest road to Calcutta?' The man replied, 'O, no! You must retrace your footsteps and take the road to your left.' The man did so. Going in that new road for some distance he met a third man who pointed him out another road to Calcutta. Thus the traveller made no progress, but spent the day in changing one road for another. As he wanted to reach Calcutta he should have stuck to the road pointed out to him by the first man. Similarly those who want to reach God must follow one and one only Guide.

149. The disciple should never criticise his own Guru. He must implicitly obey whatever his Guru says. Says a Bengâli couplet:

Though my Guru may visit tavern and still,  
My Guru is holy Rai Nityânanda still.

150. The Guru is a mediator. He brings man and God together.

151. Take the pearl and throw the oyster-shell away. Follow the mantra (advice) given thee by thy Guru and throw out of consideration the human frailties of thy teacher.

152. Listen not, if any one criticises and censures thy Guru. Leave his presence at once.

153. As the moon is the uncle of every child, so God is the Father and Guide of the whole Humanity. (The children in Bengal call the moon their 'maternal uncle.')

154. A disciple, having firm faith in the infinite power of his Guru, walked over a river even by pronouncing his name. The Guru, seeing this, thought within himself, 'Well, is there such a power even in my name? Then I must be very great and powerful, no doubt!' The next day he also tried to walk over the river pronouncing 'I, I, I,' but no sooner had he stepped into the waters than he sank and was drowned. Faith can achieve miracles, while vanity or egoism is the death of man.

155. Gurus can be had by hundreds, but good Chelas (disciples) are very rare.

156. It is easy to utter 'do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si,' by mouth, but not so easy to sing or play them on any instrument. So it is easy to talk religion, but it is difficult to act religion.

157. Common men talk bagfuls of religion, but act not a grain of it, while the wise man speaks little, but his whole life is a religion acted out.

158. What you wish others to do, do yourself.

159. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that he who yearns for God, finds Him.

160. The petals of the lotus drop off in time, but they leave scars behind. So when true knowledge comes egoism goes off, but its traces remain. These, however, are not at all active for evil.

161. There are two Egos in man, one ripe and the other unripe. The ripe Ego thinks, 'Nothing is mine; whatever I see, or feel, or hear, nay, even this body is not mine, I am always free and eternal.' The unripe Ego, on the contrary, thinks, 'This is my house, my room, my child, my wife, my body, &c.'

162. The cup in which garlic juice is kept retains the nasty odour, though it may be rubbed and scoured hundreds of times. Egoism also is such an obstinate creature. It never leaves us completely.

163. The leaves of the cocoa-palm fall off, but leave still their marks behind on the trunk. Similarly, so long as one has this body, there will remain the mark of egoism, how high soever a man may advance in spirituality. But these traces of egoism do not bind such men to the world nor cause their re-birth.

164. The sun can give heat and light to the whole world, but it can do nothing when the clouds are in the sky and shut out its rays, Similarly, so long as egoism is in the soul, God cannot shine upon the heart.

165. Vanity is like a heap of rubbish or ashes on which the water, as soon as it falls, dries away. Prayers and contemplations produce no effect upon the heart puffed up with vanity.

166. Of all the birds of the air the crow is considered to be the wisest, and he thinks himself so too. He never falls into a snare. He flies off at the slightest approach of danger, and steals the food with the greatest dexterity. But all this wisdom can supply him with no better living than filth and foul matter. This is the result of his having the wisdom of the pettifogger.

167. Once upon a time conceit entered the heart of the Divine Sage Nârada, and he thought there was no greater devotee than himself. Reading his heart, the Lord Srî Vishnu said, 'Nârada, go to such and such a place, there is a great Bhakta of mine there, and cultivate his acquaintance.' Nârada went there and found an agriculturist, who rose early in the morning, pronounced the name of Hari only once, and taking his plough went out to till the ground all day long. At night he went to bed after pronouncing the name of Hari once more. Nârada said within himself, 'How can this rustic be called a lover of God? I see him busily engaged in worldly duties, and he has no signs of a pious man in him.' Nârada then went back to the Lord and said all he thought of his new acquaintance. The Lord said, 'Nârada, take this cup full of oil, go round this city and come back with it, but beware lest a drop of it fall to the ground.' Nârada did as he was told, and on his return he was asked, 'Well, Nârada, how often did you remember me in your walk?' 'Not once, my Lord,' replied Nârada, 'and how could I when I had to watch this cup brimming over with oil?' The Lord then said, 'This one cup of oil did so divert your attention that even you did forget me altogether, but look to that rustic who, carrying the heavy load of a family, still remembers me twice every day.'

168. There are three kinds of love, selfish, mutual, and unselfish. The selfish love is the lowest. It only looks towards its own happiness, no matter whether the beloved suffers weal or woe. In mutual love the lover not only wants the happiness of his or her beloved, but has an eye towards his or her own happiness also. The unselfish love is of the highest kind. The lover only minds the welfare of the beloved.

169. A true lover sees his God as his nearest and dearest relative, just as the shepherd women of Vrindâvana saw in Srî Krishna, not the Lord of the Universe (Gagannâtha), but their own beloved (Gopînâtha).

170. 'I must attain perfection in this life, yea, in three days I must find God; nay, with a single utterance of His name I will draw Him to me.' With such a violent love the Lord is attracted soon. The lukewarm lovers take ages to go to Him, if at all.

171. A lover and a knower of God were once passing through a forest. On their way they saw a tiger at a distance. The Gñânin or knower of God said, 'There is no reason why we should flee; the Almighty God will certainly protect us.' At this the lover said, 'No, brother, come let us run away. Why should we trouble the Lord for what can be accomplished by our own exertions?'

172. The Knowledge of God may be likened to a man, while the Love of God is like a woman. Knowledge has entry only up to the outer rooms of God, but no one can enter into the inner mysteries of God save a lover, for a woman has access even into the harem of the Almighty.

173. Knowledge and love of God are ultimately one and the same. There is no difference between pure knowledge and pure love.

174. A group of fisherwomen on their way home from a distant market held on an afternoon, were overtaken by a heavy hailstorm at nightfall in the middle of their way, and so were compelled to take shelter in a florist's house near at hand. Through the kindness of the florist they were allowed to sleep that night in one of his rooms, where some baskets of sweet-smelling flowers had been kept for supplying his customers. The atmosphere of the room was too good for the fisherwomen, and they could not, owing to it, get even a wink of sleep, till one of them suggested a remedy by saying, 'Let each of us keep her empty basket of fish close to her nose, and thus prevent this troublesome smell of flowers from attacking our nostrils and killing our sleep.' Every one gladly agreed to the proposal, and did accordingly; and soon all began to snore. Such, indeed, is the power and influence of bad habits over all those who are addicted to them.

175. A tame mongoose had its home high up on the wall of a house. One end of a rope was tied to its neck, while the other end was fastened to a weight. The mongoose with the appendage runs and plays in the parlour or in the yard of the house, but no sooner does it get frightened than it at once runs up and hides itself in its home on the wall. But it cannot stay there long, as the weight at the other end of the rope draws it down, and it is constrained to leave its home. Similarly, a man has his home high up at the feet of the Almighty. Whenever he is frightened by adversity and misfortune he goes up to his God, his true home; but in a short time he is constrained to come down into the world by its irresistible attractions.

176. As Helonchâ (Hingcha repens) should not be counted among pot-herbs, or sugar-candy among common sweets, because even a sick man can use them without injuring his health; or as the pranava ( ॐ ) is not to be counted as a word, but as Divinity itself; so the desires of holiness, devotion, and love are not to be reckoned as desires at all.

177. When the fruit grows the petals drop off of themselves. So when the Divinity in thee increases, the weakness of humanity in thee will vanish.

178. The new-born calf falls and tumbles down scores of times before it learns to stand steady. So in the path of devotion, the slips are many before success is achieved.

179. Some get tipsy with even a small glass of wine. Others require two or three bottles to make them intoxicated. But both get equal and full pleasure of intoxication. Similarly, some devotees get intoxicated with celestial bliss by coming in direct contact with the Lord of the Universe, while others become full of ecstasy even by a glimpse of the Divine Glory. But both are equally fortunate, since both are deluged with Divine bliss.

180. The snake is very venomous. It bites when any one approaches to catch it. But the person who has learnt the snake-charm can not only catch a snake, but carries about several of them like so many ornaments. Similarly, he who has acquired spiritual knowledge can never be polluted by lust and greed.

181. When a man realises one of the following states he becomes perfect:--(1) All this am I; (2) All this art thou; (3) Thou the Master, and I the servant.

182. Thou shouldst sacrifice thy body, mind, and riches, to find God.

183. Humanity must die before Divinity manifests itself. But this Divinity must, in turn, die before the higher manifestation of the Blissful Mother takes place. It is on the bosom of dead Divinity (Siva) that the Blissful Mother dances Her dance celestial.

184. He finds God the quickest whose yearning and concentration are the greatest.

185. Samâdhi is the state of bliss which is experienced by a live fish which, being kept out of water for some time, is again put into it.

186. There are hills and mountains, dales and valleys, under the sea, but they are not visible from the surface. So in the state of Samâdhi, when one floats upon the ocean of Sat-kit-ânanda, all human consciousness lies latent in him.

187. If you fill an earthen vessel with water, and set it apart upon a shelf, the water in it will dry up in a few days; but if you place the same pot into water it will remain filled as long as it is kept there. Even such is the case with your love to the Lord God. Fill and enrich your bosom with the love of God for a time, and then employ yourself in other affairs, forgetting Him all the while, and then you

are sure to find within a short time that your heart has become poor and vacant and devoid of that precious love. But if you keep your heart immersed always in the depth of that holy love, your heart is sure to remain ever full to overflowing with the Divine fervour of sacred love.

188. He who at the time of contemplation is entirely unconscious of everything outside, has acquired the perfection of contemplation.

189. A jar kept in water is full of water inside and outside. Similarly the soul immersed in God sees the all-pervading spirit within and without.

190. When the grace of the Almighty descends, every one will understand his mistakes; knowing this you should not dispute.

191. The darkness of centuries is dispersed at once as soon as a light is brought into the room. The accumulated ignorances and misdoings of innumerable births vanish before the single glance of the Almighty's gracious look.

192. When the Malaya breeze blows, all trees, having stamina in them, become converted into sandal-trees; but those which have no stamina remain unchanged as before, like bamboo, plantain, palm-tree, &c. So when Divine Grace descends, men having the germs of piety and goodness in them are changed at once into holy beings and are filled with Divinity, but worthless and worldly men remain as before.

193. As the dawn heralds in the rising sun, so unselfishness, purity, righteousness, &c., precede the advent of the Lord.

194. As a king, before going to the house of his servant, sends from his own stores the necessary seats, ornaments, food, &c., to his servant, so that the latter may properly receive him; so before the Lord cometh, He sends love, reverence, faith, yearning, &c., into the heart of the devotee.

195. Shallow water in an open field will in time be dried up though no one may lessen it by using it. So a sinner is sometimes purified by simply resigning himself totally and absolutely to the mercy and grace of God.

196. A policeman can see with a dark lantern (bull's-eye) every one upon whom he throws the rays, but no one can see him so long as he does not turn the light towards himself. So does God see every one, but no one seeth Him until the Lord revealeth Himself to him in His mercy.

197. There are some fish which have many sets of bones, and others have one; but as the eater cleans all the bones and eats the fish, so some men have many sins and others have few; but the grace of God purifies them all in time.

198. The breeze of His grace is blowing night and day over thy head. Unfurl the sails of thy boat (mind) if thou wantest to make rapid progress through the ocean of life.

199. Fans should be discarded when the wind blows. Prayers and penances should be discarded when the grace of God descends.

200. Creeds and sects matter nothing. Let every one perform with faith the devotions and practices of his creed. Faith is the only clue to get to God.

201. He who has faith has all, and he who wants faith wants all.

202. The faith-healers of India order their patients to repeat with full conviction the words, 'There is no illness in me, there is no illness at all.' The patient repeats it, and, thus mentally denying, the illness goes off. So if you think yourself to be morally weak and without goodness, you will really find yourself to be so in no time. Know and believe that you are of immense power, and the power will come to you at last.

203. Bhagavân Srî Râmakandra had to bridge the ocean before he could cross over to Lamkâ (Ceylon). But Hanumân, his faithful monkey-servant, with one jump crossed the ocean through the firmness of his faith in Râma. Here the servant achieved more than the master, simply through faith.

204. A man wanted to cross the river. A sage gave him an amulet and said, 'This will carry thee across.' The man, taking it in his hand, began to walk over the waters. When he reached the middle of the river curiosity entered into his heart, and he opened the amulet to see what was in it. Therein he found, written on a bit of paper, the sacred name of Râma. The man at this said deprecatingly, 'Is this the only secret?' No sooner had he said this than he sank down. It is faith in the name of the Lord that works miracles, for faith is life, and doubt is death.

205. Q. How can I perform devotion when I must always think of my daily bread?  
A. He for whom thou workest will supply thy necessities. God hath made provision for thy support before he sent thee here.

206. Q. When shall I be free? A. When thy I-hood (egoism) will vanish, and thy self-will be merged in the Divinity.

207. Out of the myriads of paper kites that are made to fly in the air, only one or two rend the string and get free. So out of hundreds of Sâdhakas, only one or two get free from worldly bonds.

208. As a piece of lead, thrown into a basin of mercury, is soon dissolved therein, so the human soul loses its individual existence when it falls into the ocean of Brâhma.

209. Q. What do you say about the method of religious preaching employed now-a-days? A. It is inviting hundreds of persons to dinner, when the food supply is sufficient for one only.

210. Instead of preaching to others, if one worships God all that time, that is enough preaching. He who strives to make himself free, is the real preacher. Hundreds come from all sides, no one knows whence, to him who is free, and are taught. When a flower opens the bees come from all sides uninvited and unasked.

211. Hast thou got, O preacher, the badge of authority? As the humblest subject wearing the badge of the King is heard with respect and awe, and can quell the riot by showing his badge; so must thou, O preacher, obtain first the order and inspiration from God. So long as thou hast not this inspiration, thou mayest preach all thy life, but that will be mere waste of breath.

212. He alone is the true 'man' who is illumined with the Spiritual Light.

213. The soul enchained is 'man,' and free from chain is 'Siva' (God).

214. The heavier scale of a balance goes down while the lighter one rises up. Similarly he who is weighed down with too many cares and anxieties of the world, goes down to the world, while he who has less cares rises up towards the Kingdom of Heaven.

215. God is in all men, but all men are not in God: that is the reason why they suffer.

216. There are two sorts of men. The Guru said to one of his disciples, 'What I impart to thee, my dear, is invaluable; keep it to thyself,' and the disciple kept it all to himself. But when the Guru imparted that knowledge to another of his disciples, the latter, knowing its inestimable worth, and not liking to enjoy it all

alone, stood upon a high place and began to declare the good tidings to all the people. The Avatâras are of the latter class, while the Siddhas are of the former.

217. No man keeps a total fast. Some get food at 9 a.m., others at noon, others at 2 p.m., and others in the evening. Similarly, at some time or other, in this life or after many lives, all will see God.

218. When fruit becomes ripe and falls of itself, it tastes very sweet; but when unripe fruit is plucked and artificially ripened it does not taste so sweet and becomes shrivelled up. So when one has attained perfection, the observance of caste distinctions falls off of itself from him, but so long as this exalted knowledge is not reached, one must observe caste distinctions.

219. When a storm blows, it is impossible to distinguish an Asvattha (pippal) and a Vata (banian) tree. So when the storm of true knowledge (the knowledge of one universal existence) blows, there can be no distinction of caste.

220. When a wound is perfectly healed, the slough falls off of itself; but if the slough be taken off earlier, it bleeds. Similarly, when the perfection of knowledge is reached by a man, the distinctions of caste fall off from him, but it is wrong for the ignorant to break such distinctions.

221. Q. Is it proper to keep the Brâhmanical thread? A. When the knowledge of self is obtained, all fetters fall off of themselves. Then there is no distinction of a Brâhmana Or a Sûdra, a high caste or a low caste. In that case the sacred thread-sign of caste falls away of itself. But so long as a man has the consciousness of distinction and difference he should not forcibly throw it off.

222. Q. Why do you not lead a family life with your wife? A. The God Kârtikeya, the leader of the Heavenly army, once happened to scratch a cat with his nail. On going home he saw there was the mark of a scratch on the cheek of his Mother. Seeing this, he asked of her, 'Mother, dear, how have you got that ugly scratch on your cheek?' The Goddess Durgâ replied, 'Child, this is thy own handiwork,--the mark scratched by thy own nail.' Kârtikeya asked in wonder, 'Mother, how is it? I never remember to have scratched thee!' The Mother replied, 'Darling, hast thou forgotten having scratched a cat this morning?' Kârtikeya said, 'Yes, I did scratch a cat; but how did your cheek get marked?' The Mother replied, 'Dear child, nothing exists in this world but myself. I am all creation. Whomsoever thou hurtest, thou hurtest me.' Kârtikeya was greatly surprised at this, and determined

thenceforward never to marry; for whom would he marry? Every woman was mother to him. I am like Kârtikeya. I consider every woman as my Divine Mother.

223. When I look upon chaste women of respectable families, I see in them the Mother Divine arrayed in the garb of a chaste lady; and again, when I look upon the public women of the city, sitting in their open verandas, arrayed in the garb of immorality and shamelessness, I see in them also the Mother Divine, sporting in a different way.

224. The light of the gas illumines various localities with various intensities. But the life of the light, namely, the gas, comes from one common reservoir. So the religious teachers of all climes and ages are but as many lamp-posts through which is emitted the light of the spirit flowing constantly from one source, the Lord Almighty.

225. As the rain-water from the top of a house may be discharged through pipes having their mouth-pieces shaped like the head of a tiger, a cow or a bull, &c., although the water does not belong to these pipes, but comes from the heaven above, so are the holy Sâdhus (saints) through whose mouths eternal and heavenly truths are discharged into this world by the Almighty.

226. The cries of all jackals are alike. The teachings of all the wise men of the world are essentially one and the same.

227. Whatever gives happiness in this world contains a bit of divine enjoyment in it. The difference between the two is as between treacle and refined candy.

228. He who is absorbed in others' affairs, forgets his own outer and inner affairs (i.e. does not think about his own lower and higher self, but is absorbed in the affairs of other selfs).

229. When the mind dwells in evil propensities, it is like a high-caste Brâhmana living in the quarters of the out-castes, or like a gentleman dwelling in the back slums of the town.

230. If a man sees a pleader he naturally thinks of cases and causes; similarly, on seeing a pious devotee, the man remembers his God and the hereafter.

231. Q. What is the reason that a Prophet is not honoured by his own kinsmen? A. The kinsmen of a juggler do not crowd round him to see his performances, while strangers stand agape at his wonderful tricks.

232. The seeds of Vagravântula do not fall to the bottom of the tree. From the shell they shoot far away from the tree and take root there. So the Spirit of a Prophet manifests itself at a distance, and he is appreciated there.

233. There is always a shade under the lamp while its light illumines the surrounding objects. So the man in the immediate proximity of a Prophet does not understand him. Those who live afar off are charmed by his spirit and extraordinary power.

234. The waters of a swiftly-flowing current move round and round in eddies and whirlpools, but quickly crossing these they resume their former course. So the hearts of the pious fall sometimes into the whirlpools of despondency, grief, and unbelief, but it is only a momentary aberration. It does not last long.

235. A tree, laden with fruit, always bends low. So, if thou wantest to be great, be low and meek.

236. The heavier scale goes down and the lighter one rises up. So the man of merit and ability is always humble, but the fool is always puffed up with vanity.

237. The anger of the good is like a line drawn on the surface of water, which does not last long.

238. If a white cloth is stained with a small speck the blackness appears very ugly indeed by the contrast; so the smallest fault of a holy man becomes painfully prominent by his surrounding purity.

239. The sunlight is one and the same wherever it falls; but bright surfaces like water, mirror and polished metals, &c., can reflect it fully. So is the Light Divine. It falls equally and impartially on all hearts, but the pure and clean hearts of the good and holy Sâdhus only can fully reflect it.

240. As in a pane of glass on which quicksilver has been laid, one can see his face reflected, so in the chaste heart of a totally abstinent man is reflected the image of the Almighty

241. So long as one does not become simple like a child, one does not get Divine illumination. Forget all the worldly knowledge that thou hast acquired, and become as ignorant about it as a child, and then thou wilt get the knowledge of the True.

242. The Hindu almanacs contain predictions of the annual rainfall. But squeeze the book, and not a drop of water will be got out of it. So also many good sayings are to be found in books, but merely reading them will not make one religious. One has to practise the virtues taught therein.

243. Q. Why do religions degenerate? A. The rain-water is pure, but becomes soiled according to the medium it passes through. If the roof and the pipe be dirty, the discharge is dirty.

244. Money can procure bread and butter only. Do not consider it therefore as if it were thy sole end and aim.

245. As by rubbing gold and brass on a touch-stone, their real worth becomes known; so a sincere Sâdhu and a hypocrite are found out when they are rubbed through the touch-stone of persecution and adversity.

246. The iron must be heated several times and hammered before it becomes good steel. Then only it becomes fit to be made into a sharp sword, and can be bent any way you like. So a man must be heated several times in the furnace of tribulations, and hammered with the persecutions of the world, before he becomes pure and humble.

247. Remain always strong and steadfast in thy own faith, but eschew all bigotry and intolerance.

248. Be not like the frog in the well. The frog in the well knows nothing bigger and grander than its well. So are all bigots: they do not see anything better than their own creeds.

249. There was a man who worshipped Siva, but hated all other Deities. One day Siva appeared to him and said, I shall never be pleased with thee, so long as thou hatest the other gods.' But the man was inexorable. After a few days Siva again appeared to him. This time he appeared as Hari-Hara, that is, one side of his body was that of Siva, and the other side that of Vishnu. At this the man was half pleased and half displeased. He laid his offerings on the side representing Siva, and did not offer anything to the side representing Vishnu, and when he offered the burning incense to his beloved God (Siva) he was careful as well as audacious enough to press the nostril of Vishnu, the other half of Hari-Hara, lest the fragrance should be pleasing to Vishnu. Seeing him altogether inexorable, the God Siva was sorely displeased with him, and at once vanished from his sight. But the man was as undaunted as ever. However, the children of the village began to

tease him by uttering the name of Vishnu in his hearing. Displeased with this, the man hung two bells to his ears, which he used to ring as soon as the boys cried out the names of Vishnu, in order to prevent the sound entering his ears. And thus he was known by the name of Bell-eared, or Ghantâ-karna. He is still so much hated for his bigotry that every year at a certain period the boys of Bengal break down his effigy with a cudgel, and this serves him right.

250. As the young wife in a family shows her love and respect to her father-in-law, mother-in-law, and every other member of the family, and at the same time loves her husband more than these; similarly, being firm in thy devotion to the Deity of thy own choice (Ishta-Devatâ), do not despise other Deities, but honour them all.

251. A truly religious man should think that other religions also are paths leading to the truth. We should always maintain an attitude of respect towards other religions.

252. The difference between the modern Brâhmaism and Hinduism is like the difference between the single note of music and the whole music. The modern Brâhmas are content with the single note of Brahman, while the Hindu religion is made up of several notes producing a sweet and melodious harmony.

253. Some years ago, when the Hindus and the Brâhmas were preaching their respective religions with true earnestness and great zeal, some one asked Bhagavân Srî Râmakrishna his opinion about both parties, on which he replied, I see that my Mother Divine is getting her work done through both parties.'

254. Hari (from hri, to steal) means 'He who steals our hearts,' and Haribala means 'Hari is our strength.'

255. Sin like quicksilver can never be kept concealed. (When a man takes calomel, sooner or later it is sure to show itself in the shape of eruptions on the skin.)

256. The tears of repentance and the tears of happiness flow from the two different corners of the eye. The tears of repentance flow from the side near the nose, and the tears of happiness flow from the other extremity.

257. Visit not miracle workers. They are wanderers from the path of truth. Their minds have become entangled in the meshes of psychic powers, which lie in the way of the pilgrim towards Brahman, as temptations. Beware of these powers, and desire them not.

258. A man after fourteen years of hard asceticism in a lonely forest obtained at last the power of walking over the waters. Overjoyed at this acquisition, he went to his Guru, and told him of his grand feat. At this the Master replied, 'My poor boy, what thou hast accomplished after fourteen years' arduous labour, ordinary men do the same by paying a penny to the boatman.'

259. A youthful disciple of Srî Râmakrishna once acquired the power of reading the heart of another. When he related this experience to the Master, he rebuked him and said, 'Shame on thee, child, do not waste thy energies on these petty things.'

260. A washerman keeps a large store of clothes and has a rich wardrobe, but these are not his. As soon as the clothes are washed his wardrobe becomes empty. Men having no original thoughts of their own are like the washerman.

261. Greed brings woe, while contentment is all happiness. A barber was once passing under a haunted tree when he heard a voice say, 'Wilt thou accept of seven jars of gold?' The barber looked round, but could see no one. The mysterious voice again repeated the words, and the cupidity of the barber being greatly roused by the spontaneous offer of such vast wealth he spoke aloud, 'When the merciful God is so good as to take pity even on a poor barber like me, is there anything to be said as to my accepting the kind offer so generously made?' At once the reply came, 'Go home, I have already carried the jars thither.' The barber ran in hot haste to his house, and was transported to see the promised jars there. He opened them one after another and saw them all filled, save one which was half filled. Now arose the desire of filling this last jar in the heart of the barber. So he sold all his gold and silver ornaments and converted them into coins and threw them into the jar. But the jar still remained empty. He now began to starve himself and his family by living upon insufficient, coarse, and cheap food, throwing all his savings into the jar, but the jar remained as empty as ever. The barber then requested the King to increase his pay as it was not sufficient to maintain him and his family. As he was a favourite of the King, the latter granted his request. The barber now began to save all his pay and emoluments, and throw them all into the jar, but the greedy jar showed no sign of being filled. He now began to live by begging, and became as wretched and miserable as ever. One day the King seeing his sad plight, inquired of him by saying, 'Hallo! when thy pay was half of what thou gettest now, thou wast far happier and more cheerful, contented, and healthy, but with double that pay I see thee morose, care-worn, and dejected. Now what is the matter with thee? Hast thou accepted the seven jars of gold?' The barber was taken aback by this home-thrust, and with clasped

hands asked the King as to who had informed his majesty about the matter. The King answered, 'Whosoever accepts the riches of a Yaksha is sure to be reduced to such an abject and wretched plight. I have known thee through this invariable sign. Do away with the money at once. Thou canst not spend a farthing of it. That money is for hoarding and not for spending.' The barber was brought to his senses by this advice and went to the haunted tree and said, 'O Yaksha, take back thy gold,' and he returned home to find the seven jars vanished, taking with them his life-long savings. Nevertheless he began to live happily after it.

262. It is very pleasant to scratch a ringworm, but the after-sensation is very painful and intolerable; so the pleasures of the world are very pleasant in the beginning, but their after-consequences are very terrible to contemplate.

263. Q. What is the world like? A. It is like an Âmlâ fruit, all skin and stone with but very little pulp, the eating of which produces colic.

264. Like unto a miser that longeth after gold, let thy heart pant after Him.

265. So long as the heavenly expanse of the heart is troubled and disturbed by the gusts of desire, there is little chance of our beholding therein the brightness of God. The beatific vision occurs only in the heart which is calm and rapt up in divine communion.

266. The soiled mirror never reflects the rays of the sun, and the impure and unclean in heart who are subject to Mâyâ (illusion) never perceive the glory of the Bhagavân (the Venerable). But the pure in heart see the Lord, as the clear mirror reflects the sun. Be holy, then.

267. As on the troubled surface of rolling waters the moon shines in broken images, so on the unsettled mind of a worldly man engrossed in Mâyâ, the perfect God shines with partial light only.

268. Why does a Bhakta (one full of the love of God) forsake everything for the sake of God? An insect flies from the darkness as soon as any light meets its eyes; the ant loses its life in molasses, but never leaves them. So the Bhakta cleaves unto his God for ever, and leaves all else.

269. As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope, so diverse also are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world shows one of these ways.

270. If God is Omnipresent, why do we not see Him? Standing by the bank of a pool thickly overspread with scum and weeds, you will say that there is no water in it. If you desire to see the water, remove the scum from the surface of the pond. With eyes covered with the film of Mâyâ you complain that you cannot see God. If you wish to see Him, remove the film of Mâyâ from off your eyes.

271. Why cannot we see the Divine Mother? She is like a high-born lady transacting all her business from behind the screen, seeing all, but seen by none. Her devout sons only see Her, by going near Her and behind the screen of Mâyâ.

272. Dispute not. As you rest firmly on your own faith, allow others also the same liberty to stand by their own faiths. By mere disputation you shall never succeed in convincing another of his error. When the grace of God descends on him, every one will understand his own mistakes.

273. A husbandman was watering a sugar-cane field the whole of a day. After finishing his task he saw that not a drop of water had entered the field; all the water had gone underground through several big rat-holes. Such is the state of that devotee who, cherishing secretly in his heart worldly desires (of fame, pleasures, and comforts) and ambitions, worships God. Though daily praying, he makes no progress because the entire devotion runs to waste through the rat-holes of his desires, and at the end of his life-long devotion he is the same man as before, and has not advanced one step.

274. Keep thyself aloof at the time of thy devotion from those who scoff, and those who ridicule piety and the pious.

275. Is it good to create sects? (Here is a pun on the word 'Dal,' which means both a 'sect' or 'party' as well as 'the rank growth on the surface of a stagnant pool.')

The 'Dal' cannot grow in a current of water: it grows only in the stagnant waters of petty pools. He whose heart earnestly longs after the Deity has no time for anything else. He who looks for fame and honour, forms sects (Dal). (Cf. 105.)

276. The Vedas, Tantras, and the Purânas, and all the sacred scriptures of the world, have become as if defiled (as food thrown out of the mouth becomes polluted): because they have been constantly repeated by and have come out of human mouths. But the Brahman or the Absolute has never been defiled, for no one as yet has been able to express Him by human speech.

277. The parable of a Brahman and his low-caste servant: As soon as Mâyâ is found out, she flies away. A priest was once going to the village of a disciple. He

had no servant with him. On the way, seeing a cobbler, he addressed him, saying, 'Hallo! good man, wilt thou accompany me as a servant? Thou shalt dine well and wilt be cared for; come along.' The cobbler replied, Reverend Sir, I am of the lowest caste, how can I represent your servant?' The priest said, 'Never mind that. Do not tell anybody what thou art, nor speak to or make acquaintance with any one.' The cobbler agreed. At twilight, while the priest was sitting at prayers in the house of his disciple, another Brahman came and addressed the priest's servant, 'Fellow, go and bring my shoes from there.' The servant, true to the words of his master, made no response. The Brahman repeated the order a second time, but the servant remained silent. The Brahman repeated it again and again, but the cobbler moved not an inch. At last, getting annoyed, the Brahman angrily said, 'Hallo Sirrah! How darest thou not obey a Brahman's command! What is thy caste? Art thou not a cobbler?' The cobbler hearing this began to tremble with fear, and piteously looking at the priest said, 'O venerable Sir, O venerable Sir! I am found out. I cannot stay here any longer, let me flee.' So saying he took to his heels.

278. What is the relation between Gîvâtman and Paramâtman, the personal and the Highest Self? As when a plank of wood is stretched across a current of water, the water seems to be divided into two, so the indivisible appears divided into two by limitations (Upâdhi) of Mâyâ. In truth they are one and the same.

279. There is little chance of a ship running astray, so long as its compass points towards the true North. So if the mind of man--the compass-needle of the ship of life is turned always towards the Parabrahman without oscillation, it will steer clear of every danger.

280. The Avadhûta saw a bridal procession passing through a meadow, with the beating of drums and the blowing of trumpets, and with great pomp. Hard by the road through which the procession was passing he saw a hunter deeply absorbed in aiming at a bird, and perfectly inattentive to the noise and pomp of the procession, casting not even a passing look at it. The Avadhûta, saluting the hunter, said, 'Sir, you are my Guru. When I sit in meditation let my mind be concentrated on its object of meditation as yours has been on the bird.'

281. An angler was fishing in a pond. The Avadhûta, approaching him, asked, 'Brother, which way leads to such and such a place?' The float of the rod at that time was indicating that the fish was nibbling the bait: so the man did not give any reply, but was all attention to his fishing-rod. When the fish was caught, he turned round and said, 'What is it you have been saying, sir?' The Avadhûta

saluted him and said, 'Sir, you are my Guru. When I sit in the contemplation of the Paramâtman, let me follow your example, and before finishing my devotions let me not attend to anything else.'

282. A heron was slowly walking to catch a fish. Behind, there was a hunter aiming an arrow at it; but the bird was totally unmindful of this fact. The Avadhûta, saluting the heron, said, 'When I sit in meditation let me follow your example, and never turn back to see who is behind me.'

283. A kite with a fish in its beak was followed by a host of crows and other kites, which were screeching and pecking at it, and were trying to snatch the fish away. In whatever direction it went the crowd of kites and crows followed it, screeching and cawing. Getting tired of this annoyance, the kite let go the fish, when it was instantly caught by another kite, and at once the crowd of kites and crows transferred their kind attentions to the new owner of the fish. The first kite was left unmolested, and sat calmly on the branch of a tree. Seeing this quiet and tranquil state of the bird the Avadhûta, saluting it, said, 'You are my Guru, O Kite; for you have taught me that so long as man does not throw off the burden of the worldly desires he carries, he cannot be undisturbed and at peace with himself.'

284. The human Guru whispers the sacred formula into the ear; the Divine Guru breathes the spirit into the soul.

285. If thou wishest to thread the needle, make the thread pointed, and remove all extraneous fibres. Then the thread will easily enter into the eye of the needle. So if thou wishest to concentrate thy heart on God, be meek, humble, and poor in spirit, and remove all filaments of desire.

286. A snake dwelt in a certain place. No one dared to pass by that way. For whoever did so was instantaneously bitten to death. Once a Mahâtman passed by that road, and the serpent ran after the sage in order to bite him. But when the snake approached the holy man he lost all his ferocity, and was overpowered by the gentleness of the Yogin. Seeing the snake, the sage said, 'Well, friend, thinkest thou to bite me?' The snake was abashed and made no reply. At this the sage said, 'Hearken, friend, do not injure anybody in future.' The snake bowed and nodded assent. The sage went his own way and the snake entered his hole, and thenceforward began to live a life of innocence and purity without even attempting to harm any one. In a few days all the neighbourhood began to think that the snake had lost all his venom, and was no more dangerous, and so every one began to tease him. Some pelted him, others dragged him mercilessly by the

tail, and in this way there was no end to his troubles. Fortunately the sage again passed by that way, and seeing the bruised and battered condition of the good snake, was very much moved, and inquired the cause of his distress. At this the snake replied, 'Holy sir, this is because I do not injure any one, after your advice. But alas! they are so merciless!' The sage smilingly said, 'My dear friend, I simply advised you not to bite any one, but I did not tell you not to frighten others. Although you should not bite any creature, still you should keep every one at a considerable distance by hissing at him.' Similarly, if thou livest in the world, make thyself feared and respected. Do not injure any one, but be not, at the same time, injured by others.

287. When the bird has flown away from it, one cares no longer for the cage. So when the bird of life has flown away, no one cares any longer for the carcass.

288. As a lamp does not burn without oil, so a man cannot live without God.

289, 290. A learned Brahman once went over to a wise king and said, 'Hear, O king, I am well versed in the holy scriptures. I intend to teach thee the holy book of the Bhâgavata.' The king, who was the wiser of the two, well knew that a man who has read the Bhâgavata would seek more to know his own Self than honour and wealth in a king's court. He replied, 'I see, O Brahman, that you yourself have not mastered that book thoroughly. I promise to make you my tutor, but go first and learn the scripture well.' The Brahman went his way, thinking within himself, 'How foolish the king is to say I have not mastered the Bhâgavata well, when I have been reading the book over and over again for all these years.' However, he went over the book carefully once more and appeared before the king. The king told him the same thing again and sent him away. The Brahman was sore vexed, but thought there must be some meaning for this behaviour of the king. He went home, shut himself up in his closet, and applied himself more than ever to the study of the book. By and by the hidden meanings began to flash before his intellect; the vanity of running after the bubbles, riches and honour, kings and courts, wealth and fame, all vanished before his unclouded vision. From that day forward he gave himself up entirely to attain perfection by the worship of God, and never returned to the king. A few years after the king thought of the Brahman, and went to his house to see what he was about. Seeing the Brahman, all radiant with the divine light and love, he fell upon his knees and said, 'I see you have now arrived at the true meaning of the scriptures; I am ready to be your disciple, if you will duly condescend to make me one.'

291. As long as there is no breeze blowing, we fan ourselves to alleviate heat, but when the breeze blows both for rich and poor, we give up fanning. We should persevere ourselves to reach our final goal as long as there is no help from above; but when that help comes to any, let him then stop labouring and persevering; otherwise not.

292. Q. Where is God? How can we get to Him? A. There are pearls in the sea, you must dive deep again and again until you get the pearls. So there is God in the world, but you should persevere to see Him.

293. How does the soul stay in the body? As the piston stays in a syringe.

294. As in mid-ocean a bird, which found its perch upon the topmast of a ship, getting tired of its position, flies away to discover a new place of rest for itself, and alas! without finding any, returns at last to its old roost upon the masthead, weary and exhausted; so when an ordinary aspirant, being disgusted with the monotony of the task and the discipline imposed upon him by his well-wishing and thoroughly experienced preceptor (Guru), loses all hope, and, having no confidence in him, launches forth into the broad world ever in search of a new adviser, he is sure at last to return to his original master after a fruitless search, which has, however, increased the reverence of the repentant aspirant for the master.

295. In the month of June a young goat was playing near his mother, when, with a merry frisk, he told her that he meant to make a feast of Râs-flowers, a species of flowers budding abundantly during the time of the Râslîlâ festival. 'Well, my darling,' replied the dam, 'it is not such an easy thing as you seem to think. You will have to pass through many crises before you can hope to feast on Râs-flowers. The interval between the coming September and October is not very auspicious to you; for some one may take you for a sacrifice to the Goddess Durgâ; then, again, you will have to get through the time of Kâlî-pûgâ, and if you are fortunate enough to escape through that period, there comes the Gagaddhâtri-pûgâ, when almost all the surviving male members of our tribe are destroyed. If your good luck leads you safe and sound through all these crises, then you can hope to make a feast of Râs-flowers in the beginning of November.' Like the dam in the fable, we should not hastily approve of all the aspirations which our youthful hopes may entertain, remembering the manifold crises which one will have to pass through in the course of one's life.

296. As the fly sits, now on the unclean sore of the human body, and now on the offerings dedicated to the gods, so the mind of the worldly man is at one time deeply engaged in religious topics and at the next moment loses itself in the pleasures of wealth and lust.

297. As the rain-water falling upon the roof of a house Rows down to the ground through spouts grotesquely shaped like the tiger's head, thus seeming to come out of tigers' mouths, while in reality it descends from the sky; even so are the holy instructions that come out of the mouths of godly men, which seem to be uttered by those men themselves, while in reality they proceed from the throne of God. (See 225.)

298. As it is very difficult to gather together the mustard-seeds that escape out of a torn package, and are scattered in all directions; so, when the human mind runs in diverse directions and is occupied with many things in the world, it is not a very easy affair to collect and concentrate it.

299. As thieves cannot enter the house the inmates of which are wide awake, so, if you are always on your guard, no evil spirits will be able to enter your heart to rob it of its goodness.

300. The new-born calf looks very lively, blithe, and merry. It jumps and runs all day long, and only stops to suck the sweet milk from its darn. But no sooner is the rope placed round its neck than it begins to pine away gradually, and, far from being merry, wears a dejected and sorry appearance, and gets almost reduced to a skeleton. So long as a boy has no concern with the affairs of the world he is as merry as the day is long. But when he once feels the weight of the responsibilities of a man of family, by binding himself in time to the world by the indissoluble tie of wedlock, then he no longer appears jolly, but wears the look of dejection, care, and anxiety, and is seen to lose the glow of health from his cheeks, while wrinkles gradually make their appearance over the forehead. Blessed is he that remains a boy throughout his life, free as the morning air, fresh as a newly-blown flower, and pure as a dewdrop.

301. A boat may stay in the water, but water should not stay in the boat. An aspirant may live in the world, but the world should not live in him.

302. He who thinks his spiritual guide a mere man, can-not derive any benefit from him.

303. What you think you should say. Let there be a harmony between your thoughts and your words; otherwise, if you merely tell that God is your all in all, while your mind has made the world its all in all, you cannot derive any benefit thereby.

304. A young plant should be always protected by a fence from the mischief of goats and cows and little urchins. But when once it becomes a big tree, a flock of goats or a herd of cows may find shelter under its spreading boughs, and fill their stomachs with its leaves. So when you have but little faith within you, you should protect it from the evil influences of bad company and worldliness. But when once you grow strong in faith, no worldliness or evil inclination will dare approach your holy presence; and many who are wicked will become godly through your holy contact.

305. If you wash the body of an elephant and set him at large, he is sure to get himself dirtied in no time, but if after washing him you tie him down to his own room he will remain clean. So if by the good influences of holy men you once become pure in spirit, and then allow yourself the liberty to mix freely with worldly men, you are sure to lose that purity soon; but if you keep your mind fixed on your God, you will never more get soiled in spirit.

306. Where does the strength of an aspirant lie? It is in his tears. As a mother gives her consent to fulfil the desire of her importunately weeping child, so God vouchsafes to His weeping son whatever he is crying for.

307. Meditate on God either in an unknown corner, or in the solitude of forests, or within your own mind.

308. Chant forth the sweet name of Hari (God), keeping time all the while by clapping your hands, then you will acquire mental concentration. If you clap your hands, sitting under a tree, the birds on the boughs thereof will fly away in all directions, and when you chant forth the name of Hari and clap your hands, all evil thoughts will fly away from your mind.

309, 310. As the same fish is dressed into soup, curry, or cutlet, and each has his own choice dish of it, so the Lord of the Universe, though one, manifests Himself differently according to the different likings of His worshippers, and each of these has his own taste of God, which he values the most. To some He is a kind master or a loving father, a sweet smiling mother or a devout friend, and to others a faithful husband or a dutiful and obliging son.

311. Bow down and adore where others kneel, for where so many hearts have been paying the tribute of adoration, the kind Lord will manifest Himself, for He is all mercy.

312. There are men, who, although they have nothing to attract them in this world, create some attachments for themselves, and so try to bind themselves to this earth. They do not want and do not like to be free. A man who has no family to care for, no relatives to look after, generally takes a cat, or a monkey, or a dog, or a bird for a pet object and companion; and thus slakes his thirst for milk by drinking mere whey. Such is the power of Mâyâ or Nescience over humanity.

313, 314. A patient, in high fever and excess of thirst, imagines that he can drink away quite a sea of water; but when that fit of fever goes and he regains his normal temperature, he can barely quaff off a single cupful of water, and his thirst is at once appeased with even a very small quantity of it. So a man, being under the feverish excitement of Mâyâ, and forgetful of his own littleness, imagines that he can embrace the whole of Divinity within his own bosom, but when the illusion passes away a single ray of Divine Light is seen to be sufficient to flood him with eternal divine bliss.

315. A man, under the influence of very high fever and in excessive thirst, is placed between a row of pitchers filled with cold water and a set of open-mouthed bottles filled with flavoured sauces. Is it possible for the thirsty and restless patient in such a case to refrain from either drinking the water or from tasting the sauces placed so near him, although thereby his case may become worse? Even such is the case with the man who is under the maddening influence of his ever-active and misleading senses when he is placed between the attractions of woman's charm on the one side and those of wealth on the other. It is then difficult for him to behave properly, and he is liable to deviate often from the true path and thus make his case worse.

316. None ventures to keep milk in a vessel in which curd had formerly formed, lest the milk itself should get curdled. Nor can the vessel be safely used for other working purposes lest it should crack upon the fire. It is therefore almost useless. A good and experienced preceptor does not entrust to a worldly man valuable and exalting precepts, for he is sure to misinterpret and misuse them to suit his own mean designs. Nor will he ask him to do any useful work that may cost a little labour, lest he should think that the preceptor was taking undue advantage of him.

317. When a certain quantity of pure milk is mixed with double the quantity of water, it takes a long time and much labour to thicken it to the consistency of Kshîra (condensed milk). The mind of a worldly man is largely diluted with the filthy water of evil and impure thoughts, and it requires much time and labour before anything can be done to purify and give the proper consistency to it.

318. The vanities of all others may gradually die out, but the vanity of a saint as regards his sainthood is hard indeed to wear away.

319. Of the grains of paddy which are fried in a frying-pan, the few which leap out of the pan and burst outside are the best fried, being without the slightest mark of any tinge; while every one of the properly-fried grains in the pan itself is sure to have at least a very small charred mark of a burn. So of all good devotees, the few who altogether give up the world and go out of it are perfect without any spot, while even the best of those devotees who are in the world must have at least some small spot of imperfection in their character.

320. We cannot say that God is gracious because He feeds us, for every father is bound to supply his children with food; but when He keeps us from going astray, and holds us back from temptations, then He is truly gracious.

321. If you can detect and find out the universal illusion or Mâyâ, it will fly away from you, just as a thief runs away when found out.

322. Fire itself has no definite shape, but in glowing embers it assumes certain forms, and the formless fire is then endowed with forms. Similarly, the formless God sometimes invests Himself with definite forms.

323. Should we pray aloud unto God? Pray unto Him in any way you like. He is sure to hear you, for He can hear even the footfall of an ant.

324. He who tries to give one an idea of God by mere book-learning is like the man who tries to give one an idea of Kâsî (Benares) by means of a map or a picture.

325. A man began to sink a well, but having dug down to the depth of twenty cubits he could not find the least trace of the water-spring which was to feed his well. So he desisted from the work and selected another place for the purpose. There he dug deeper than before, but even then he could not find any water. So again he selected another spot and dug still deeper than before, but it was also of no avail. At last in utter disgust he gave up the task altogether. The sum total of

the depths of these three wells was little short of a hundred cubits. Had he had the patience to devote even a half of the whole of this labour to his first well, without shifting the site of the well from place to place, he would surely have been successful in getting water. Such is the case with men who continually shift their positions in regard to faith. In order to meet with success we should devote ourselves entirely to a single object of faith, without being doubtful as to its efficacy.

326. Although in a grain of paddy the germ is considered the only necessary thing (for germination and growth), while the husk or chaff is considered to be of no importance, still if the unhusked grain be put into the ground it will not sprout up and grow into a plant and produce rice. To get a crop one must needs sow the grain with the husk on; but if one wants to get at the germinating matter itself he must first perform the operation of removing the husk from the seed. So rites and ceremonies are necessary for the growth and perpetuation of a religion. They are the receptacles that contain the seeds of truth, and consequently every man must perform them before he reaches the central truth.

327. The pearl-oyster that contains the precious pearl is in itself of very little value, but it is essential for the growth of the pearl. The shell itself is of no use to the man who has got the pearl, neither are ceremonies and rites necessary for him who has attained the Highest Truth --God.

328. A woodcutter led a very miserable life with the small means he could procure by daily selling the load of wood brought from a neighbouring forest. Once a Samnyâsin, who was wending his way through the forest, saw him at work, and advised him to proceed onward into the interior recesses of the forest, intimating to him that he would be a gainer thereby. The woodcutter obeyed the injunction and proceeded onward till he came to a sandal-wood tree, and being much pleased he took away with him as many sandal-logs as he could carry, and sold them in the market and derived much profit. Then he began to think within himself why the good Samnyâsin did not tell him anything about the wood of the sandal-trees, but simply advised him to proceed onward into the interior of the forest. So the next day he went on even beyond the place of the sandal-wood, and at last came upon a copper-mine, and he took with him as much copper as he could carry, and selling it in the market got much money by it. Next day, without stopping at the copper-mine, he proceeded further still, as the Sâdhu had advised him to do, and came upon a silver-mine, and took with him as much of it as he could carry, and sold it all and got even more money; and so daily proceeding further and further he got at gold-mines and diamond-mines, and at last became

exceedingly rich. Such is also the case with the man who aspires after true knowledge. If he does not stop in his progress after attaining a few extraordinary and supernatural powers, he at last becomes really rich in the eternal knowledge of truth.

329. If you first smear the palms of your hands with oil and then break open the jack-fruit, the sticky milky exudation of the fruit will not stick to your hands and trouble you. So if you first fortify yourself with the true knowledge of the Universal Self, and then live in the midst of wealth and women, they will affect you in no way.

330. He who would learn to swim must attempt swimming for some days. No one can venture to swim in the sea after a single day's practice. So if you want to swim in the sea of Brahman, you must make many ineffectual attempts at first, before you can successfully swim therein.

331. When does a man get his salvation? When his egoism dies.

332. When a sharp thorn finds its way into the sole of one's foot, one takes another thorn to get the former out, and then casts both of them away. So relative knowledge alone can remove the relative ignorance which blinds the eye of the Self. As both such knowledge and ignorance are comprised truly under Nescience, the man who attains the highest Gñâna, or knowledge of the Absolute, does away with both knowledge and ignorance in the end, being himself free from all duality.

333. To drink pure water from a shallow pond, one should gently take the water from the surface, and not disturb it. If it is disturbed the sediments will rise up from the bottom and make the whole water muddy. If you desire to be pure, have firm faith and slowly go on with your devotional practices, and waste not your energies in useless scriptural discussions and arguments. The little brain will otherwise be muddled.

334. If this body is worthless and transitory, why do pious and devout men take care of it? No one takes care of an empty box. All protect with care a chest full of precious jewels, gold, and costly articles. The pious soul cannot help taking care of the body in which the Divine one dwells, for all our bodies form the playground of the Deity.

335. The tender bamboo can be easily bent, but the full-grown bamboo breaks when an attempt is made to bend it. It is easy to bend young hearts towards good, but the heart of the old escapes the hold when so drawn.

336. The locomotive engine easily drags along a train of heavily-laden carriages. So the loving children of God, firm in their faith and devotion to Him, feel no trouble in passing through all the worries and anxieties of life, and leading many men along with them to God.

337. Every man should follow his own religion. A Christian should follow Christianity, a Mohammedan should follow Mohammedanism, and so on. For the Hindus the ancient path, the path of the Aryan Rishis, is the best.

338, 339. He alone is the true man who is illumined with the light of true knowledge. Others are men in name only.

340. The magnetic needle always points towards the North, and hence it is that the sailing-vessel does not lose her course. So long as the heart of man is directed towards God he cannot be lost in the ocean of worldliness.

341. As the village maidens in India carry four or five pots of water placed one over the other upon their heads, talking all the way with one another about their own joys and sorrows, and yet do not allow one drop of water to be spilt, so must the traveller in the path of virtue walk along. In whatever circumstances he may be placed, let him always take heed that his heart does not swerve from the true path.

342. In our theatrical exhibitions wherein the life and exploits of Krishna are exhibited, the performance commences with the beating of drums and the singing aloud of 'O Krishna, come; come, O dear one.' But the person who plays the part of Krishna pays no heed to this noise and turmoil, and goes on complacently chatting and smoking in the green-room behind the stage. But as soon as the noise ceases, and the pious sage Nârada enters on the stage with sweet and soft music and calls upon Krishna to come out with a heart overflowing with love, Krishna finds that he can no longer remain indifferent, and hurriedly comes on to the stage. So long as the religious devotee cries, 'Come, O Lord; come, O Lord,' with lip-prayers only, verily the Lord will never come; when the Lord does come, the heart of the devotee will melt in divine emotion, and his loud utterances will all cease for ever. The Lord cannot delay in coming when man calls upon Him from the depths of his heart overflowing with deep love and devotion.

343. There is no Path safer and smoother than that of ba-kalamâ (sic). Ba-kalamâ means resigning the self to the will of the Almighty, to have no consciousness that anything is 'mine.'

344. What is the nature of absolute reliance? It is that happy state of comfort felt by a fatigued worker, when reclining on a pillow he smokes at leisure after a hard day's toil: it is a cessation of all anxieties and worries.

345. As dry leaves are blown about here and there by the wind, and have no choice of their own, and make no exertion: so those who depend upon God move in harmony with His will, and can have no will, and put forth no effort, of their own.

346, 347. What do you think of the man who is a good orator and preacher, but whose spirituality is undeveloped? He is like a person who squanders another's property left in trust with him. He can easily advise others, for it costs him nothing, as the ideas he expresses are not his own, but borrowed.

348. A worldly man is best known by his antipathy to whatever savours of religion. He does not like to hear any sacred music or psalm, or to utter the holy name of God, and even dissuades others from doing the same. He scoffs at prayers, and pours down a volley of abuse upon all religious societies and men.

349. As a boy holding on to a post or a pillar gyrates round it with headlong speed without fear of a fall, so, fixing thy hold firmly on God, perform thy worldly duties, and thou shalt be free from all dangers.

350. As an unchaste woman, busily engaged in household affairs, is all the while thinking of her secret lover, even so, O thou man of the world, do thy round of worldly duties, but fix thy heart always on the Lord.

351. As a wet-nurse in a rich family brings up the child of her master, loving the baby as if it were her own, but knows well that she has no claim upon it; so think ye also that you are but trustees and guardians of your children whose real father is the Lord God in Heaven.

352. It is useless to pore over holy scriptures and sacred Shastras without a discriminating and dispassionate mind. No spiritual progress can be made without discrimination (Viveka) and dispassion (Vairâgya).

353. Know thyself, and thou shalt then know the non-self and the Lord of all. What is my ego? Is it my hand, or foot, or flesh, or blood, or muscle, or tendon? Ponder deep, and thou shalt know that there is no such thing as I. As by continually peeling off the skin of the onion, so by analysing the ego it will be found that there is not any real entity corresponding to the ego. The ultimate result of all such analysis is God. When egoism drops away, Divinity manifests itself.

354. The truly devotional and spiritual practice suited for this Iron-age (Kâlî-yuga) is the constant repetition of the name of the Lord of Love.

355. If thou wishest to see God, have firm faith in the efficacy of repeating the name of Hari, and try to discriminate the real from the unreal.

356. When an elephant is let loose, it goes about uprooting trees and shrubs, but as soon as the driver pricks him on the head with the goad he becomes quiet; so the mind when unrestrained wantons in the luxuriance of idle thoughts, but becomes calm at once when struck with the goad of discrimination.

357. Devotional practices are necessary only so long as tears of ecstasy do not flow at hearing the name of Hari. He needs no devotional practices whose heart is moved to tears at the mere mention of the name of Hari.

358. The companionship of the holy and wise is one of the main elements of spiritual progress.

359. The soul reincarnates in a body of which it was thinking just before its last departure from this world. Devotional practices may therefore be seen to be very necessary. When, by constant practice, no worldly ideas arise in the mind, then the god-idea alone fills the soul, and does not leave it even when on the brink of eternity.

360. How should one love God? As the true and chaste wife loves her husband and the niggardly miser loves his hoarded wealth, so the devotee should love the Lord with all his heart and soul.

361. How may we conquer the old Adam in us? When the fruit grows out of the flower, the petals of the flower drop off of themselves. So, when the divinity in thee increases, the weaknesses of thy human nature will all vanish of their own accord.

362, 363. When does the attraction of sensual and worldly pleasures die away? In God, who is Indivisible Ever-Existing Bliss, there is a consolidation of all happiness and of all pleasures. They who enjoy Him can find no attraction in the cheap and worthless pleasures of the world.

364. In what condition of the mind does God-vision take place? God is seen when the mind is tranquil. When the mental sea is agitated by the wind of desires, it cannot reflect God, and then God-vision is impossible.

365. How may we find our God? The angler, anxious to hook a big and beautiful Rohitta-fish, waits calmly for hours together, having thrown the bait and the hook into the water, watching patiently until the bait is caught by the fish. Similarly, the devotee who patiently goes on with his devotions is sure at last to find his God.

366. The heart of a sinner is like a curled hair. You may pull it ever so long, but will not succeed in making it straight. So also the heart of the wicked cannot be easily changed.

367. Knowledge leads to unity, and Ignorance to diversity.

368, 369. The society of pious men is like the water in which rice is washed. The rice-water dissipates intoxication. So doth the society of the pious relieve worldly men, intoxicated with the wine of desires, from their intoxication.

370. The agent of a rich Zemindar, when he goes into the mofussil or interior, tyrannises in various ways over the tenants. But when he comes back to the headquarters under the eyes of his master, he changes his ways, becomes very pious, treats the tenants kindly, inquires fully into all their grievances, and tries to mete out impartial justice to all. The tyrannical agent even becomes good through the fear of the landlord, and by the effect of his society. Similarly doth the society of the pious make even the wicked righteous, awakening awe and reverence within them.

371. Moist wood placed upon a fire soon becomes dry, and ultimately begins to burn. Similarly, the society of the pious drives away the moisture of greed and lust from the hearts of worldly men and women, and then the fire of Viveka (Discrimination) burns in them.

372. How should one pass his or her life? As the fire on the hearth is stirred from time to time with a poker to make it burn brightly and prevent it from going out, so the mind should be invigorated occasionally by the society of the pious.

373. As the blacksmith keeps alive the fire of his furnace by the occasional blowing of his bellows, so the mind should be kept a-burning by the society of the pious.

374. Throw an unbaked cake of flour into hot ghee, it will make a sort of boiling noise. But the more it is fried, the less becomes the noise; and when it is fully fried the bubbling ceases altogether. So long as a man has little knowledge, he goes about lecturing and preaching, but when the perfection of knowledge is obtained, he ceases to make vain displays.

375. That man who, living in the midst of the temptations of the world, attains perfection, is the true hero.

376. We must dive deep into the ocean of the Eternal-Intelligent-Bliss. Fear not the deep-sea monsters, Avarice and Anger. Coat thyself with the turmeric of Discrimination and Dispassion (Viveka and Vairâgya) and those alligators will not approach thee, as the scent of this turmeric is too much for them.

377. When unavoidably entering into places where there may be temptation, carry always with thee the thought of thy Divine Mother. She will protect thee from the many evils that may be lurking even in thy heart. Cannot the presence of thy mother shame thee away from evil deeds and evil thoughts?

378. How may we conquer the love of life? The human frame is made up of decaying things; of flesh and blood and bone. It is a collection of flesh, bone, marrow, blood, and other filthy substances subject to putrefaction. By thus analysing the body, our love thereof vanishes.

379. Should the devotee adopt any particular costume? The adoption of a suitable costume is good. Dressed in the Samnyâsin's orange robes, or carrying the religious mendicant's tambourine and cymbals, a man can never utter light and profane things, or sing profane songs. But a man dressed in the smart style of a beau will naturally have his heart inclined to think low thoughts and sing low songs.

380. Sometimes peace reigns in the heart, but why does it not always last long? The fire made by the burning of the bamboo is soon extinguished unless kept alive

by constant blowing. Continual devotion is necessary to keep alive the fire of spirituality.

381. Those who live in the world and try to find salvation are like soldiers that fight protected by the breast-work of a fort, while the ascetics who renounce the world in search of God are like soldiers fighting in the open field. To fight from within the fort is safer than to fight in the open field. (Is this right or should it be transposed?)

382. Pray to the Divine Mother in this wise. Give me, O Mother! love that knows no incontinence, and faith adamantine that cannot be shaken.

383. As persons living in a house infested by venomous snakes are always alert and cautious, so should men living in the world be always on their guard against the allurements of lust and greed.

384. If there is a small hole in the bottom of a jar of water, the whole water flows out of it by that small aperture. Similarly, if there be the smallest tinge of worldliness in the neophyte, all his exertions come to naught.

385. When the butter is produced by churning the whey, it should not be kept in the same vessel containing the remaining whey, for then it will lose something of its sweetness and cohesion. It should be kept in pure water and in a different vessel. So after attaining some partial perfection in the world, if one still continues to mix with the worldly, and remains in the midst of the world, it is likely that he will be tainted; but he will remain pure if he lives out of it.

386. You cannot live in a sooty room without blackening your body to some extent, however small it may be, with all your caution. So, if a man or a woman lives in the company of one of his or her opposite sex of the same age, with the greatest circumspection and control over his or her passion, still some carnal thought, however small, is sure to arise in his or her mind.

387. Two persons, it is said, began together the rite of invoking the Goddess Kâlî by the terrible process called 'Savasâdhana.' (This Tantrik invocation is performed in the cemetery yard, the invoker sitting on the body of a corpse in a dark night.) One invoker was frightened to insanity by the horrors of the earlier portion of the night; the other was favoured with the vision of the Divine Mother at the end of the night. Then he asked her, 'Mother! why did the other man become mad?' The Deity answered, 'Thou too, O child! didst become mad many times in thy various previous births, and now at last thou seest me.'

388. There are various sects among the Hindus; which sect or which creed should we then adopt? Pârvatî once asked Mahâdeva, 'O Lord! what is the root of the Eternal, Everlasting, All-embracing Bliss?' To her Mahâdeva thus replied, 'The root is faith.' The peculiarities of creeds and sects matter little or nothing. Let every one perform with faith the devotions and the duties of his own creed.

389. As a little boy or a girl can have no idea of conjugal affection, even so a worldly man cannot at all comprehend the ecstasy of Divine communion.

390. The body is transient and unimportant. Why then is it so much looked after? No one cares for an empty box. But people carefully preserve the box that contains money and other valuable property. The virtuous cannot but take care of the body, the temple of the soul in which God has manifested Himself or which has been blessed by God's advent.

391. How long does godliness remain in man? The iron is red so long as it is in fire. It is black the moment it is removed from fire. So the human being is godly so long as he is in communion with God.

392. Soft clay admits of forms, but the burnt clay does not. So those whose hearts are consumed with the desire of worldly things cannot realise higher ideas.

393. As the water and its bubbles are one, and as the bubbles have their birth in the water, float on the water, and ultimately are resolved into water; so the Gîvâtman and the Paramâtman are one and the same: the difference is in degrees- the one is finite and small, the other is infinite; the one is dependent, the other independent.

394, 395. When the tail of the tadpole drops off, it can live both in water and on land. When the tail of ignorance drops off, man becomes free. He can then live both in God and in the world equally well.

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