

# The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda- Volume 8- Sayings and Utterances

## Sayings and Utterances

1. "Did Buddha teach that the many was real and the ego unreal, while orthodox Hinduism regards the One as the real, and the many as unreal?" the Swami was asked. "Yes", answered the Swami. "And what Ramakrishna Paramahansa and I have added to this is, that the Many and the One are the same Reality, perceived by the same mind at different times and in different attitudes."

2. "Remember!" he said once to a disciple, "Remember! the message of India is always "Not the soul for nature, but nature for the soul !"

3. "What the world wants today is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder, and say that they possess nothing but God. Who will go? Why should one fear? If this is true, what else could matter? If it is not true, what do our lives matter !"

4. "Oh, how calm would be the work of one who really understood the divinity of man! For such, there is nothing to do, save to open men's eyes. All the rest does itself."

5. "He (Shri Ramakrishna) was contented simply to live that great life and to leave it to others to find the explanation!"

6. "Plans! Plans!" Swami Vivekananda explained in indignation, when one of his disciples had offered him some piece of worldly wisdom. "That is why . . . Western people can never create a religion! If any of you ever did, it was only a few Catholic saints who had no plans. Religion was never preached by planners!"

7. "Social life in the West is like a peal of laughter; but underneath, it is a wail. It ends in a sob. The fun and frivolity are all on the surface: really it is full of tragic intensity. Now here, it is sad and gloomy on the outside, but underneath are carelessness and merriment. "We have a theory that the universe is God's manifestation of Himself just for fun, that the Incarnations came and lived here 'just for fun'. Play, it was all play. Why was Christ crucified? It was mere play. And so of life. Just play with the Lord. Say, "It is all play, it is all play". Do you do anything?"

8. "I am persuaded that a leader is not made in one life. He has to be born for it. For the difficulty is not in organisation and making plans; the test, the real test, of the leader, lies in holding widely different people together along the line of their common sympathies. And this can

only be done unconsciously, never by trying."

9. In explanation of Plato's doctrine of Ideas, Swamiji said, "And so you see, all this is but a feeble manifestation of the great ideas, which alone, are real and perfect. Somewhere is an ideal for you, and here is an attempt to manifest it! The attempt falls short still in many ways. Still, go on! You will interpret the ideal some day."

10. Answering the remark of a disciple who felt that it would be better for her to come back to this life again and again and help the causes that were of interest to her instead of striving for personal salvation with a deep longing to get out of life, the Swami retorted quickly: "That's because you cannot overcome the idea of progress. But things do not grow better. They remain as they are; and we grow better by the changes we make in them."

11. It was in Almora that a certain elderly man, with a face full of amiable weakness, came and put him a question about Karma. What were they to do, he asked, whose Karma it was to see the strong oppress the weak? The Swami turned on him in surprised indignation. "Why, thrash the strong, of course!" he said, "You forget your own part in this Karma: Yours is always the right to rebel!"

12. "Ought one to seek an opportunity of death in defense of right, or ought one to take the lesson of the Gita and learn never to react?" the Swami was asked. "I am for no reaction", said the Swami, speaking slowly and with a long pause. Then he added "-- for Sannyasins. Self - defense for the householder!"

13. "It is a mistake to hold that with all men pleasure is the motive. Quite as many are born to seek after pain. Let us worship the Terror for Its own sake."

14. "Ramakrishna Paramahansa was the only man who ever had the courage to say that we must speak to all men in their own language!"

15. "How I used to hate Kali!" he said, referring to his own days of doubts in accepting the Kali ideal, "And all Her ways! That was the ground of my six years' fight -- that I would not accept Her. But I had to accept Her at last! Ramakrishna Paramahansa dedicated me to Her, and now I believe that She guides me in everything I do, and does with me what She will. . . . Yet I fought so long! I loved him, you see, and that was what held me. I saw his marvellous purity. . . . I felt his wonderful love. . . . His greatness had not dawned on me then. All

that came afterwards when I had given in. At that time I thought him a brain - sick baby, always seeing visions and the rest. I hated it. And then I, too, had to accept Her! "No, the thing that made me do it is a secret that will die with me. I had great misfortunes at the time. . . . It was an opportunity. . . . She made a slave of me. Those were the very words: 'a slave of you'. And Ramakrishna Paramahansa made me over to Her. . . . Strange! He lived only two years after doing that, and most of the time he was suffering. Not more than six months did he keep his own health and brightness. "Guru Nanak was like that, you know, looking for the one disciple to whom he would give his power. And he passed over all his own family -- his children were as nothing to him -- till he came upon the boy to whom he gave it; and then he could die. "The future, you say, will call Ramakrishna Paramahansa an Incarnation of Kali? Yes, I think there's no doubt that She worked up the body of Ramakrishna for Her own ends. "You see, I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a great Power that thinks of Herself as feminine, and called Kali and Mother. . . . And I believe in Brahman too. . . . But is it not always like that? Is it not the multitude of cells in the body that make up the personality, the many brain - centres, not the one, that produce consciousness? . . . Unity in complexity! Just so! And why should it be different with Brahman? It is Brahman. It is the One. And yet -- and yet -- it is the gods too!"

16. "The older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new gospel."

17. Referring to some European reference to cannibalism, as if it were a normal part of life in some societies, the Swami remarked, "That is not true! No nation ever ate human flesh, save as a religious sacrifice, or in war, out of revenge. Don't you see? That's not the way of gregarious animals! It would cut at the root of social life!"

18. "Sex - love and creation! These are at the root of most religions. And these in India are called Vaishnavism, and in the West Christianity. How few have dared to worship Death or Kali! Let us worship Death! Let us embrace the Terrible, because it is terrible, not asking that it be toned down. Let us take misery for misery's own sake!"

19. "The three cycles of Buddhism were five hundred years of the Law, five hundred years of images, and five hundred years of Tantras. You must not imagine that there was ever a religion in India called Buddhism with temples and priests of its own order! Nothing of the sort. It was always within Hinduism. Only at one time the influence of Buddha was paramount, and this made the nation monastic."

20. "The conservative's whole ideal is submission. Your ideal is struggle. Consequently it is we who enjoy the life, and never you! You are always striving to change yours to something better; and before a millionth part of the change is carried out, you die. The Western ideal is to be doing; the Eastern to be suffering. The perfect life would be a wonderful harmony doing and suffering. But

that can never be. "In our system it is accepted that a man cannot have all he desires. Life is subjected to many restraints. This is ugly, yet it brings out points of light and strength. Our liberals see only the ugliness and try to throw it off. But they substitute something quite as bad; and the new custom takes as long as the old for us to work to its centres of strength. "Will is not strengthened by change. It is weakened and enslaved by it. But we must be always absorbing. Will grows stronger by absorption. And consciously or unconsciously, will is the one thing in the world that we admire. Suttie is great in the eyes of the whole world, because of the will that it manifests. "It is selfishness that we must seek to eliminate. I find that whenever I have made a mistake in my life, it has always been because self entered into the calculation. Where self has not been involved, my judgment has gone straight to the mark. "Without self, there would have been no religious system. If man had not wanted anything for himself, do you think he would have had all this praying and worship? Why! he would never have thought of God at all, except perhaps for a little praise now and then, at the sight of a beautiful landscape or something. And that is the only attitude there ought to be. All praise and thanks. If only we were rid of self! "You are quite wrong when you think that fighting is a sign of growth. It is not so at all. Absorption is the sign. Hinduism is a very genius of absorption. We have never cared for fighting. Of course we could strike a blow now and then, in defense of our homes! That was right. But we never cared for fighting for its own sake. Every one had to learn that. So let these races of newcomers whirl on! They'll all be taken into Hinduism in the end!"

21. "The totality of all souls, not the human alone, is the Personal God. The will of the Totality nothing can resist. It is what we know as law. And this is what we mean by Shiva and Kali and so on."

22. "Worship the Terrible! Worship Death! All else is vain. All struggle is vain. That is the last lesson. Yet this is not the coward's love of death, not the love of the weak or the suicide. It is the welcome of the strong man who has sounded everything to its depths and knows that there is no alternative."

23. "I disagree with all those who are giving their superstitions back to my people. Like the Egyptologist's interest in Egypt, it is easy to feel an interest in India that is purely selfish. One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies, one's dreams. My hope is to see again the strong points of that India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural way. The new stage of things must be a growth from within. "So I preach only the Upanishads. If you look, you will find that I have never quoted anything but the Upanishads. And of the Upanishads, it is only that One idea, strength. The quintessence of the Vedas and Vedanta and all lies in that one word. Buddha's teaching was non - resistance, or non - injury. But I think this is a better way of teaching the same thing. For behind that non - injury lay a dreadful

weakness. It is weakness that conceives the idea of resistance. I do not think of punishing or escaping from a drop of sea - spray. It is nothing to me. Yet to the mosquito it would be serious. Now I would make all injury like that. Strength and fearlessness. My own ideal is that saint whom they killed in the Mutiny and who broke his silence, when stabbed to the heart, to say, "And thou also art He!" "But you may ask, 'What is the place of Ramakrishna in this scheme?' "He is the method, that wonderful unconscious method! He did not understand himself. He knew nothing of England or the English, save that they were queer folk from over the sea. But he lived that great life: and I read the meaning. Never a word of condemnation for any! Once I had been attacking one of our sects of diabolists. I had been raving on for three hours, and he had listened quietly. 'Well, well!' said the old man as I finished, 'perhaps every house may have a backdoor. Who knows?' "Hitherto the great fault of our Indian religion has lain in its knowing only two words: renunciation and Mukti. Only Mukti here! Nothing for the householder! "But these are the very people whom I want to help. For are not all souls of the same quality? Is not the goal of all the same? "And so strength must come to the nation through education."

24. The Puranas, the Swami considered, to be the effort of Hinduism to bring lofty ideas to the door of the masses. There had been only one mind in India that had foreseen this need, that of Krishna, probably the greatest man who ever lived.

The Swami said, "Thus is created a religion that ends in the worship of Vishnu, as the preservation and enjoyment of life, leading to the realisation of God. Our last movement, Chaitanyaism, you remember, was for enjoyment. At the same time Jainism represents the other extreme, the slow destruction of the body by self - torture. Hence Buddhism, you see, is reformed Jainism; and this is the real meaning of Buddha's leaving the company of the five ascetics. In India, in every age, there is a cycle of sects which represents every gradation of physical practice, from the extreme of self - torture to the extreme of excess. And during the same period will always be developed a metaphysical cycle, which represents the realisation of God as taking place by every gradation of means, from that of using the senses as an instrument to that of the annihilation of the senses. Thus Hinduism always consists, as it were, of two counter - spirals, completing each other, round a single axis. "'Yes!' Vaishnavism says, 'it is all right -- this tremendous love for father, for mother, for brother, husband, or child! It is all right, if only you will think that Krishna is the child, and when you give him food, that you are feeding Krishna!' This was the cry of Chaitanya, 'Worship God through the senses', as against the Vedantic cry, 'Control the senses! suppress the senses!' "I see that India is a young and living organism. Europe is young and living. Neither has arrived at such a stage of development that we can safely criticise its institutions. They are two great experiments,

neither of which is yet complete. In India we have social communism, with the light of Advaita -- that is, spiritual individualism -- playing on and around it; in Europe you are socially individualists, but your thought is dualistic, which is spiritual communism. Thus the one consists of socialist institutions hedged in by individualist thought, while the other is made up of individualist institutions within the hedge of communistic thought. "Now we must help the Indian experiment as it is. Movements which do not attempt to help things as they are, are, from that point of view, no good. In Europe, for instance, I respect marriage as highly as non - marriage. Never forget that a man is made great and perfect as much by his faults as by his virtues. So we must not seek to rob a nation of its character, even if it could be proved that the character was all faults."

25. "You may always say that the image is God. The error you have to avoid is to think God is the image."

26. The Swami was appealed to on one occasion to condemn the fetishism of the Hottentot. "I do not know", he answered, "what fetishism is!" Then a lurid picture was hastily put before him of the object alternately worshipped, beaten, and thanked. "I do that!" he exclaimed. "Don't you see," he went on, a moment later, in hot resentment of injustice done to the lowly and absent, "don't you see that there is no fetishism? Oh, your hearts are steeled, that you cannot see that the child is right! The child sees person everywhere. Knowledge robs us of the child's vision. But at last, through higher knowledge, we win back to it. He connects a living power with rocks, sticks, trees and the rest. And is there not a living Power behind them? It is symbolism, not fetishism! Can you not see?"

27. One day he told the story of Satyabhama's sacrifice and how the word "Krishna", written on a piece of paper and thrown into the balance, made Krishna himself, on the other side, kick the beam. "Orthodox Hinduism", he began, "makes Shruti, the sound, everything. The thing is but a feeble manifestation of the pre - existing and eternal idea. So the name of God is everything: God Himself is merely the objectification of that idea in the eternal mind. Your own name is infinitely more perfect than the person you! The name of God is greater than God. Guard your speech!"

28. "I would not worship even the Greek Gods, for they were separate from humanity! Only those should be worshipped who are like ourselves but greater. The difference between the gods and me must be a difference only of degree."

29. "A stone falls and crushes a worm. Hence we infer that all stones, falling, crush worms. Why do we thus immediately reapply a perception? Experience, says one. But it happens, let us suppose, for the first time. Throw a baby into the air, and it cries. Experience from past lives? But why applied to the future? Because there is a real connection between certain things, a pervasiveness,

only it lies with us to see that the quality neither overlaps, nor falls short of, the instance. On this discrimination depends all human knowledge. "With regard to fallacies, it must be remembered that direct perception itself can only be a proof, provided the instrument, the method, and the persistence of the perception are all maintained pure. Disease or emotion will have the effect of disturbing the observation. Therefore direct perception itself is but a mode of inference. Therefore all human knowledge is uncertain and may be erroneous. Who is a true witness? He is a true witness to whom the thing said is a direct perception. Therefore the Vedas are true, because they consist of the evidence of competent persons. But is this power of perception peculiar to any? No! The Rishi, the Aryan, and the Mlechchha all alike have it. "Modern Bengal holds that evidence is only a special case of direct perception, and that analogy and parity of reasoning are only bad inferences. Therefore, of actual proofs there are only two, direct perception and inference. "One set of persons, you see, gives priority to the external manifestation, the other to the internal idea. Which is prior, the bird to the egg, or the egg to the bird? Does the oil hold the cup or the cup the oil? This is a problem of which there is no solution. Give it up! Escape from Maya!"

30. "Why should I care if the world itself were to disappear? According to my philosophy, that, you know, would be a very good thing! But, in fact, all that is against me must be with me in the end. Am I not Her soldier?"

31. "Yes, my own life is guided by the enthusiasm of a certain great personality, but what of that? Inspiration was never filtered out to the world through one man! "It is true I believe Ramakrishna Paramahansa to have been inspired. But then I am myself inspired also. And you are inspired. And your disciples will be; and theirs after them; and so on, to the end of time! "Don't you see that the age for esoteric interpretation is over? For good or for ill, that day is vanished, never to return. Truth, in the future, is to be open to the world!"

32. "Buddha made the fatal mistake of thinking that the whole world could be lifted to the height of the Upanishads. And self-interest spoilt all. Krishna was wiser, because He was more politic. But Buddha would have no compromise. The world before now has seen even the Avatara ruined by compromise, tortured to death for want of recognition, and lost. But Buddha would have been worshipped as God in his own lifetime, all over Asia, for a moment's compromise. And his reply was only: 'Buddhahood is an achievement, not a person!' Verily was He the only man in the world who was ever quite sane, the only sane man ever born!"

33. People had told the Swami in the West that the greatness of Buddha would have been more appealing, had he been crucified! This he stigmatised as "Roman brutality", and pointed out, "The lowest and most animal liking is for action. Therefore the world will always love the epic. Fortunately for India, however, she has

never produced a Milton, with his 'hurled headlong down the steep abyss'! The whole of that were well exchanged for a couple of lines of Browning!" It had been this epic vigour of the story, in his opinion, that had appealed to the Roman. The crucifixion it was that carried Christianity over the Roman world. "Yes, Yes!" he reiterated. "You Western folk want action! You cannot yet perceive the poetry of every common little incident in life! What beauty could be greater than that of the story of the young mother coming to Buddha with her dead boy? Or the incident of the goats? You see the Great Renunciation was not new in India! . . . But after Nirvana, look at the poetry! "It is a wet night, and he comes to the cowherd's hut and gathers in to the wall under the dripping eaves. The rain is pouring down and the wind rising. "Within, the cowherd catches a glimpse of a face through the window and thinks, 'Ha, ha! Yellow garb! stay there! It's good enough for you!' And then he begins to sing. "My cattle are housed, and the fire burns bright. My wife is safe, and my babes sleep sweet! Therefore ye may rain, if ye will, O clouds, tonight!" "And the Buddha answers from without, "My mind is controlled: my senses are all gathered in; my heart firm. Therefore ye may rain, if ye will, O clouds, tonight!" "Again the cowherd: 'The fields are reaped, and the hay is fast in the barn. The stream is full, and the roads are firm. Therefore ye may rain, if ye will, O clouds, tonight.' "And so it goes on, till at last the cowherd rises, in contrition and wonder, and becomes a disciple. "Or what would be more beautiful than the barber's story? "The Blessed One passed by my house, my house -- the Barber's! "I ran, but He turned and awaited me,

Awaited me -- the Barber!

"I said, 'May I speak, O Lord, with Thee?'

"And He said 'Yes!'

'Yes!' to me -- the Barber!

"And I said, 'Is Nirvana for such as I?'

"And He said 'Yes!'

Even for me -- the Barber!

"And I said, 'May I follow after Thee?'

"And He said, 'Oh yes!'

Even I -- the Barber!

"And I said, 'May I stay, O Lord, near Thee?'

"And He said, 'Thou mayest!'

Even to me -- the poor Barber!"

34. "The great point of contrast between Buddhism and Hinduism lies in the fact that Buddhism said, 'Realise all this as illusion', while Hinduism said, 'Realise that within the illusion is the Real.' Of how this was to be done, Hinduism never presumed to enunciate any rigid law. The

Buddhist command could only be carried out through monasticism; the Hindu might be fulfilled through any state of life. All alike were roads to the One Real. One of the highest and greatest expressions of the Faith is put into the mouth of a butcher, preaching by the orders of a married woman to a Sannyasin. Thus Buddhism became the religion of a monastic order, but Hinduism, in spite of its exaltation of monasticism, remains ever the religion of faithfulness to duty, whatever it be, as the path by which man may attain God."

35. "Lay down the rules for your group and formulate your ideas," the Swami said, dealing with the monastic ideal for women, "and put in a little universalism, if there is room for it. But remember that not more than half a dozen people in the whole world are ever at any time ready for this! There must be room for sects, as well as for rising above sects. You will have to manufacture your own tools. Frame laws, but frame them in such a fashion that when people are ready to do without them, they can burst them asunder. Our originality lies in combining perfect freedom with perfect authority. This can be done even in monasticism."

36. "Two different races mix and fuse, and out of them rises one strong distinct type. This tries to save itself from admixture, and here you see the beginning of caste. Look at the apple. The best specimens have been produced by crossing; but once crossed, we try to preserve the variety intact."

37. Referring to education of girls in India he said, "In worship of the gods, you must of course use images. But you can change these. Kali need not always be in one position. Encourage your girls to think of new ways of picturing Her. Have a hundred different conceptions of Saraswati. Let them draw and model and paint their own ideas. "In the chapel, the pitcher on the lowest step of the altar must be always full of water, and lights in great Tamil butter - lamps must be always burning. If, in addition, the maintenance of perpetual adoration could be organised, nothing could be more in accord with Hindu feeling. "But the ceremonies employed must themselves be Vedic. There must be a Vedic altar, on which at the hour of worship to light the Vedic fire. And the children must be present to share in the service of oblation. This is a rite which would claim the respect of the whole of India.

"Gather all sorts of animals about you. The cow makes a fine beginning. But you will also have dogs and cats and birds and others. Let the children have a time for going to feed and look after these. "Then there is the sacrifice of learning. That is the most beautiful of all. Do you know that every book is holy in India, not the Vedas alone, but the English and Mohammedan also? All are sacred. "Re-visit the old arts. Teach your girls fruit - modelling with hardened milk. Give them artistic cooking and sewing. Let them learn painting, photography, the cutting of designs in paper, and gold and silver filigree and embroi-

dery. See that everyone knows something by which she can earn a living in case of need. "And never forget Humanity! The idea of a humanitarian man - worship exists in nucleus in India, but it has never been sufficiently specialised. Let your students develop it. Make poetry, make art, of it. Yes, a daily worship at the feet of beggars, after bathing and before the meal, would be a wonderful practical training of heart and hand together. On some days, again, the worship might be of children, of your own pupils. Or you might borrow babies and nurse and feed them. What was it that Mataji<sup>[1]</sup> said to me? 'Swamiji! I have no help. But these blessed ones I worship, and they will take me to salvation!' She feels, you see, that she is serving Uma in the Kumari, and that is a wonderful thought, with which to begin a school."

38. "Love is always a manifestation of bliss. The least shadow of pain falling upon it is always a sign of physicality and selfishness."

39. "The West regards marriage as consisting in all that lies beyond the legal tie, while in India it is thought of as a bond thrown by society round two people to unite them together for all eternity. Those two must wed each other, whether they will or not, in life after life. Each acquires half of the merit of the other. And if one seems in this life to have fallen hopelessly behind, it is for the other only to wait and beat time, till he or she catches up again!"

40. "Consciousness is a mere film between two oceans, the subconscious and the superconscious."

41. "I could not believe my own ears when I heard Western people talking so much of consciousness! Consciousness? What does consciousness matter! Why, it is nothing compared with the unfathomable depths of the subconscious and the heights of the superconscious! In this I could never be misled, for had I not seen Ramakrishna Paramahansa gather in ten minutes, from a man's subconscious mind, the whole of his past, and determine from that his future and his powers?"

42. "All these (visions etc.) are side issues. They are not true Yoga. They may have a certain usefulness in establishing indirectly the truth of our statements. Even a little glimpse gives faith that there is something behind gross matter. Yet those who spend time on such things run into grave dangers. "These (psychic developments) are frontier questions ! There can never be any certainty or stability of knowledge reached by their means. Did I not say they were 'frontier questions'? The boundary line is always shifting!"

43. "Now on the Advaitic side it is held that the soul neither comes nor goes, and that all these spheres or layers of the universe are only so many varying products of Akasha and Prana. That is to say, the lowest or most condensed is the Solar Sphere, consisting of the visible universe, in which Prana appears as physical force, and Akasha as sensible matter. The next is called the Lunar Sphere, which surrounds the Solar Sphere. This is not the moon at all, but the habitation of the gods; that is to say, Prana

appears in it as psychic forces, and Akasha as Tanmatras or fine particles. Beyond this is the Electric Sphere; that is to say, a condition inseparable from Akasha, and you can hardly tell whether electricity is force or matter. Next is the Brahmaloaka, where there is neither Prana nor Akasha, but both are merged into the mind - stuff, the primal energy. And here -- there being neither Prana nor Akasha -- the Jiva contemplates the whole universe as Samashti or the sum total of Mahat or mind. This appears as Purusha, an abstract Universal Soul, yet not the Absolute, for still there is multiplicity. From this the Jiva finds at last that Unity which is the end. Advaitism says that these are the visions which arise in succession before the Jiva, who himself neither goes nor comes, and that in the same way this present vision has been projected. The projection (Srishti) and dissolution must take place in the same order, only one means going backward and the other coming out. "Now, as each individual can only see his own universe, that universe is created with his bondage and goes away with his liberation, although it remains for others who are in bondage. Now, name and form constitute the universe. A wave in the ocean is a wave only in so far as it is bound by name and form. If the wave subsides, it is the ocean, but that name - and - form has immediately vanished forever, so that the name and form of a wave could never be without the water that was fashioned into the wave by them. Yet the name and form themselves were not the wave; they die as soon as ever it returns to water, but other names and forms live on in relation to other waves. This name - and - form is called Maya and the water is Brahman. The wave was nothing but water all the time, yet as a wave it had the name and form. Again this name - and - form cannot remain for one moment separated from the wave, although the wave, as water, can remain eternally separate from name and form. But because the name and form can never be separated, they can never be said to exist. Yet they are not zero. This is called Maya."

44. "I am the servant of the servants of the servants of Buddha. Who was there ever like him?-- the Lord -- who never performed one action for himself -- with a heart that embraced the whole world! So full of pity that he -- prince and monk -- would give his life to save a little goat! So loving that he sacrificed himself to the hunger of a tigress!-- to the hospitality of a pariah and blessed him! And he came into my room when I was a boy, and I fell at his feet! For I knew it was the Lord Himself!"

45. "He (Shuka) is the ideal Paramahansa. To him alone amongst men was it given to drink a handful of the waters of that one undivided Ocean of Sat - chit - ananda -- existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute! Most saints die, having heard only the thunder of its waves upon the shore. A few gain the vision, and still fewer, taste of It. But he drank of the Sea of Bliss!"

46. "What is this idea of Bhakti without renunciation? It is most pernicious."

47. "We worship neither pain nor pleasure. We seek through either to come at that which transcends them both."

48. "Shankaracharya had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the national cadence. Indeed I always imagine that he had some vision such as mine when he was young, and recovered the ancient music that way. Anyway, his whole life's work is nothing but that, the throbbing of the beauty of the Vedas and the Upanishads."

49. "Though the love of a mother is in some ways greater, yet the whole world takes the love of man and woman as the type (of the soul's relation to God). No other has such tremendous idealising power. The beloved actually becomes what he is imagined to be. This love transforms its object."

50. "Is it so easy to be Janaka -- to sit on a throne absolutely unattached, caring nothing for wealth or fame, for wife or child? One after another in the West has told me that he has reached this. But I could only say, 'Such great men are not born in India!'"

51. "Never forget to say to yourself and to teach to your children, as the difference between a firefly and the blazing sun, between the infinite ocean and a little pond, between a mustard seed and the mountain Meru, such is the difference between the householder and the Sannyasin! "Everything is fraught with fear: Renunciation alone is fearless. "Blessed be even the fraudulent Sadhus and those who have failed to carry out their vows, inasmuch as they also have witnessed to their ideal and so are in some degree the cause of the success of others!"

"Let us never, never, forget our ideal!"

52. "The river is pure that flows, the monk is pure that goes!"

53. "The Sannyasin who thinks of gold, to desire it, commits suicide."

54. "What do I care if Mohammed was a good man, or Buddha? Does that altar my goodness or evil? Let us be good for our own sake on our own responsibility."

55. "You people in this country are so afraid of losing your in - di - vid - u - al - i - ty! Why, you are not individuals yet. When you realise your whole nature, you will attain your true individuality, not before. There is another thing I am constantly hearing in this country, and that is that we should live in harmony with nature. Don't you know that all the progress ever made in the world was made by conquering nature? We are to resist nature at every point if we are to make any progress."

56. "In India they tell me I ought not to teach Advaita Vedanta to the people at large; but I say, I can make even a child understand it. You cannot begin too early to teach the highest spiritual truths."

57. "The less you read, the better. Read the Gita and

other good works on Vedanta. That is all you need. The present system of education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. Control of the mind should be taught first. If I had my education to get over again and had any voice in the matter, I would learn to master my mind first, and then gather facts if I wanted them. It takes people a long time to learn things because they can't concentrate their minds at will.”

58. “If a bad time comes, what of that? The pendulum must swing back to the other side. But that is no better. The thing to do is to stop it.”

## 0.1 References

- [1] Tapaswini Mataji, foundress of the Mahakali Pathashala, Calcutta.

# 1 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

## 1.1 Text

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