

**The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda-
Volume 9- Notes of Lectures and Classes**

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Chapter 1

Note

NOTE

Swami Vivekananda delivered scores of lectures and classes during his relatively short ministry. Unfortunately the Swami was not always accompanied by a professional stenographer who could keep pace with the exceptional speed of his extempore deliveries. However, a few students managed to take notes of some lectures and classes, which are today the only available records of works that would otherwise have been lost to the world.

The original quotation marks of the note-takers have been reproduced.

— Publisher

Chapter 2

The Religion of India

THE RELIGION OF INDIA

(New Discoveries, Vol. 2, pp. 145-49, 155-56.)

These notes of daily morning classes delivered at Greenacre, Maine, in the summer of 1894 and recorded by Miss Emma Thursby were discovered among Miss Emma Thursby's papers at the New-York Historical Society. They have been lightly edited in order to conform to the style of the Complete Works.

Notes taken miscellaneously from discourses given by Swami Vivekananda under the "Pine" at Greenacre in July and August 1894.

The name of Swami's master was Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The signification of Vivekananda is conscious bliss.

Meditation is a sort of prayer and prayer is meditation. The highest meditation is to think of nothing. If you can remain one moment without thought, great power will come. The whole secret of knowledge is concentration. Soul best develops itself by loving God with all the heart. Soul is the thinking principle in man, of which mind is a function. Soul is only the conduit from Spirit to mind.

All souls are playing, some consciously, some unconsciously. Religion is learning to play consciously.

The Guru is your own higher Self.

Seek the highest, always the highest, for in the highest is eternal bliss. If I am to hunt, I will hunt the rhinoceros. If I am to rob, I will rob the treasury of the king. Seek the highest.

[Some of the following passages are the Swami's free translations from Indian scriptures, including the Avadhuta-Gitâ of Dattâtreyâ.]

If you know you are bound [you are bound]; if you know you are free, you are free. My mind was never bound by yearnings of this world; for like the eternal blue sky, I am the essence of Knowledge, of Existence and of Bliss.

Why weepst thou, Brother? Neither death nor disease for thee. Why weepst thou, Brother? Neither misery nor misfortune for thee. Why weepst thou, Brother? Neither change nor death was predicated of thee. Thou Art Existence Absolute.

I know what God is; I cannot speak [of] Him to you. I know not [what] God is; how can I speak [of] Him to you? But seest not thou, my brother, that thou wert He, thou wert He? Why go seeking God here and there? Seek not, and that is God. Be your own Self — One that cannot be confessed or described, One that can be perceived in our heart of hearts. One beyond all compare, beyond limit, unchangeable like the blue sky. Oh! learn the All Holy One. Seek for nothing else.

Where changes of nature cannot reach, thought beyond all thought, unchangeable, immovable, whom all books declare, all sages worship, O Holy One! Seek for nothing else.

Beyond compare, Infinite Oneness — no comparison is possible. Water above, water beneath, water on the right, water on the left. No wave on that water, no ripple. All silence, all eternal bliss. Such will come to thy heart. Seek for nothing else. Thou art our father, our mother, our dear friend. Thou bearest the burden of this world. Help us to bear the burden of our lives. Thou art our friend, our lover, our husband. Thou art ourselves. Four sorts of people worship Me. Some want the delights of the physical world. Some want money, some want religion. Some worship Me because they love Me.

Real love is love for love's sake. I do not ask health or money or life or salvation. Send me to a thousand hells, but let me love Thee for love's sake. Mirâ Bâi, the great queen, taught the doctrine of love for love's sake.

Our present consciousness is only a little bit of an infinite sea of mind. Do not be limited to this consciousness.

Three great things [are] to be desired to develop the soul: First, human birth; second, thirst for the highest; third, to find one who has reached the highest — a Mahâtma, one whose mind, word and deed are full of the nectar of virtue, whose only pleasure is in doing good to the universe, who looks upon others' virtues, be

they only as a mustard seed, even as though they were a mountain, thus expanding his own self and helping others to expand. Thus is the Mahatma.

The word Yoga is the root of which our word yoke is a derivation — meaning “to join” — and Yoga means “joining ourselves with God” — joining me with my real Self.

All actions now involuntary or automatic were once voluntary, and our first step is to gain a knowledge of the automatic actions — the real idea being to revivify and make voluntary all automatic actions, to bring them into consciousness. Many Yogis can control the actions of their hearts.

To go back into consciousness and bring out things we have forgotten is ordinary power, but this can be heightened. All knowledge — all that — can be brought out of the inner consciousness, and to do this is Yoga. The majority of actions and thoughts is automatic, or acting behind consciousness. The seat of automatic action is in the medulla oblongata and down the spinal cord.

The question is, how to find our way back to our inner consciousness. We have come out through spirit, soul, mind, and body, and now we must go back from body to spirit. First, get hold of the air [breath], then the nervous system, then the mind, then the Atman, or spirit. But in this effort we must be perfectly sincere in desiring the highest.

The law of laws is concentration. First, concentrate all the nerve energies and all power lodged in the cells of the body into one force and direct it at will. Then bring the mind, which is thinner matter, into one center. The mind has layer after layer. When the nerve force concentrated is made to pass through the spinal column, one layer of the mind is open. When it is concentrated in one bone [plexus, or “lotus”], another part of the world is open. So from world to world it goes until it touches the pineal gland in the center of the brain. This is the seat of conservation of potential energy, the source of both activity and passivity.

Start with the idea that we can finish all experience in this world, in this incarnation. We must aim to become perfect in this life, this very moment. Success only comes to that life amongst men who wants to do this, this very moment. It is acquired by him who says, “Faith, I wait upon faith come what may”. Therefore, go on knowing you are to finish this very moment. Struggle hard and then if you do not succeed, you are not to blame. Let the world praise or blame you. Let all the wealth of the earth come to your feet, or let you be made the poorest on earth. Let death come this moment or hundreds of years hence. Swerve not from the path you have taken. All good thoughts are immortal and go to make Buddhas

and Christs.

Law is simply a means of [your] expression [of] various phenomena brought into your mind. Law is your method of grasping material phenomena and bringing them into unity. All law is finding unity in variety. The only method of knowledge is concentration on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes; and concentrating the powers of the mind to discover one in many, is what is called knowledge.

Everything that makes for unity is moral, everything that makes for diversity is immoral. Know the One without a second, that is perfection. The One who manifests in all is the basis of the universe; and all religion, all knowledge, must come to this point.

[The following are some of the disconnected notes taken by Miss Emma Thursby during the last of the Swami’s Greenacre classes, delivered Sunday morning, August 12, 1894.]

I am Existence Absolute Kundalini
Bliss Absolute Circle mother I am He, Shivoham
I am He, Shivoham
He is the learned man who sees that every man’s property is nothing. Every woman his Mother.
Shanti — peace —
We meditate on the Glory of Hrim (A Bija Mantra, or seed word, for the Divine Mother.)
Mother
Buddhistic Prayer
I bow to all the saint[s] on Earth
I bow down to the founders of Religion
to all holy men and women
Prophets of Religion
who have been on Earth
Hindu prayer
I meditate on the Glory of the producer of this Universe
may He enlighten our minds.

Chapter 3

Christ's Message to the World

CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

(New Discoveries, Vol. 5, p. 379.)

[From Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of a lecture delivered in San Francisco, California, on March 11, 1900]

Everything progresses in waves. The march of civilization, the progression of worlds, is in waves. All human activities likewise progress in waves — art, literature, science, religion.

Great waves succeed each other, and between these great waves is a quiet, a calm, a period of rest, a period of recuperation.

All manifest life seems to require a period of sleep, of calm, in which to gain added strength, renewed vigour, for the next manifestation, or awakening to activity. Thus is the march of all progress, of all manifest life — in waves, successive waves, [of] activity and repose. Waves succeed each other in an endless chain of progression.

Religion, like everything else, progresses in waves; and at the summit of each great wave stands an illumined soul, a mighty spiritual leader and teacher of men. Such a one was Jesus of Nazareth.

Chapter 4

Mohammed's Message to the World

MOHAMMED'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

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(New Discoveries, Vol. 5, pp. 401-3. Cf. "Mohammed",
[6]Complete Works, I.)

[Excerpts of Ida Ansell's first transcript of Swami Vivekananda's San Francisco lecture delivered Sunday, March 25, 1900]

Mohammed

[After stating that he would "take Mohammed and bring out the particular work of the great Arabian prophet", Swami Vivekananda continued his lecture.]

Each great messenger not only creates a new order of things, but is himself the creation of a certain order of things. There is no such thing as an independent, active cause. All causes are cause and effect in turn. Father is father and son in turn. Mother is mother and daughter in turn. It is necessary to understand the surroundings and circumstances into which they [the great messengers] come. . . .

This is the peculiarity of civilization. One wave of a race will go from its birthplace to a distant land and make a wonderful civilization. The rest will be left in barbarism. The Hindus came into India and the tribes of Central Asia were left in barbarism. Others came to Asia Minor and Europe. Then, you remember the coming out of Egypt of the Israelites. Their home was the Arabian desert. Out of that springs a new work. . . . All civilizations grow that way. A certain race becomes civilized. Then comes a nomad race. Nomads are always ready to fight. They come and conquer a race. They bring better blood, stronger physiques. They take up the mind of the conquered race and add that to their body and push civilization still further. One race becomes cultured and civilized until the body is worn out. Then like a whirlwind comes a race strong in the physical, and they take up the arts and the sciences and the mind, and push civilization further. This must be. Otherwise the world would not be.

The moment a great man rises, they build a beautiful [mythology] around him. Science and truth is all the religion that exists. Truth is more beautiful than any mythology in the world. . . .

The old Greeks had disappeared already, the whole nation [lay] under the feet of the Romans who were learning their science and art. The Roman was a barbarian, a conquering man. He had no eye for poetry or art. He knew how to rule and how to get everything centralized into that system of Rome and to enjoy that. That was sweet. And that Roman Empire is gone, destroyed by all sorts of difficulties, luxury, a new foreign religion, and all that. Christianity had been already six hundred years in the Roman Empire. . . .

Whenever a new religion tries to force itself upon another race, it succeeds if the race is uncultured. If it [the race] is cultured, it will destroy the [religion]. . . . The Roman Empire was a case in point, and the Persian people saw that. Christianity was another thing with the barbarians in the north. [But] the Christianity of the Roman Empire was a mixture of everything, something from Persia, from the Jews, from India, from Greece, everything.

• * * *

The race is always killed by [war]. War takes away the best men, gets them killed, and the cowards are left at home. Thus comes the degeneration of the race. . . . Men became small. Why? All the great men became [warriors]. That is how war kills races, takes their best into the battlefields.

Then the monasteries. They all went to the desert, to the caves for meditation. The monasteries gradually became the centres of wealth and luxury. . . .

The Anglo-Saxon race would not be Anglo-Saxon but for these monasteries. Every weak man was worse than a

slave. . . In that state of chaos these monasteries were centres of light and protection.

Where [cultures] differ very much they do not quarrel. All these warring, jarring elements [were originally] all one.

In the midst of all this chaos was born the prophet. . . .

[This concluded the first part of the Swami's lecture. Vide "Mohammed",

Chapter 5

Class Lessons in Meditation

CLASS LESSONS IN MEDITATION BY SWAMI
VIVEKANANDA

(New Discoveries, Vol. 6, p. 10.)

[Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of a class delivered in
San Francisco, California, on Monday, March 26, 1900]

The first point is the position. Sit with the spine perfectly free, with the weight resting on the hips. The next step is breathing. Breathe in the left nostril and out the right. Fill the lungs full and eject all the breath. Clear the lungs of all impure air. Breathe full and deep. The next thing is to think of the body as luminous, filled with light. The next thing is to concentrate on the base of the spine, not from the outside, but look down the spinal column inside to the base of the spine.

Chapter 6

The Gita

THE GITA

(New Discoveries, Vol. 6, pp. 175-76.)

[Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of a Bhagavad-Gitâ class delivered Thursday, May 24, 1900, in San Francisco, California]

The Gitâ is the gist of the Vedas. It is not our Bible; the Upanishads are our Bible. It [the Gita] is the gist of the Upanishads and harmonizes the many contradictory parts of the Upanishads.

The Vedas are divided into two portions — the work portion and the knowledge portion. The work portion contains ceremonials, rules as to eating, living, doing charitable work, etc. The knowledge came afterwards and was enunciated by kings.

The work portion was exclusively in the hands of the priests and pertained entirely to the sense life. It taught to do good works that one might go to heaven and enjoy eternal happiness. Anything, in fact, that one might want could be provided for him by the work or ceremonials. It provided for all classes of people good and bad. Nothing could be obtained through the ceremonials except by the intercession of the priests. So if one wanted anything, even if it was to have an enemy killed, all he had to do was to pay the priest; and the priest through these ceremonials would procure the desired results. It was therefore in the interests of the priests that the ceremonial portion of the Vedas should be preserved. By it they had their living. They consequently did all in their power to preserve that portion intact. Many of these ceremonials were very complicated, and it took years to perform some of them.

The knowledge portion came afterwards and was promulgated exclusively by kings. It was called the Knowledge of Kings. The great kings had no use for the work portion with all its frauds and superstitions and did all in their power to destroy it. This knowledge consisted of a knowledge of God, the soul, the universe, etc. These kings had no use for the ceremonials of the priests, their magical works, etc. They pronounced it all humbug; and when the

priests came to them for gifts, they questioned the priests about God, the soul, etc., and as the priests could not answer such questions they were sent away. The priests went back to their fathers to enquire about the things the kings asked them, but could learn nothing from them, so they came back again to the kings and became their disciples. Very little of the ceremonials are followed today. They have been mostly done away with, and only a few of the more simple ones are followed today.

Then in the Upanishads there is the doctrine of Karma. Karma is the law of causation applied to conduct. According to this doctrine we must work forever, and the only way to get rid of pain is to do good works and thus to enjoy the good effects; and after living a life of good works, die and go to heaven and live forever in happiness. Even in heaven we could not be free from Karma, only it would be good Karma, not bad.

The philosophical portion denounces all work however good, and all pleasure, as loving and kissing wife, husband or children, as useless. According to this doctrine all good works and pleasures are nothing but foolishness and in their very nature impermanent. "All this must come to an end sometime, so end it now; it is vain." So says the philosophical portion of the Upanishads. It claims all the pain in the world is caused by ignorance, therefore the cure is knowledge.

This idea of one being held down fast by past Karma, or work, is all nonsense. No matter how dense one may be, or how bad, one ray of light will dissipate it all. A bale of cotton, however large, will be utterly destroyed by a spark. If a room has been dark for untold ages, a lamp will end it all. So with each soul, however benighted he may be, he is not absolutely bound down by his past Karma to work for ages to come. "One ray of Divine Light will free him, reveal to him his true nature."

Well, the Gita harmonizes all these conflicting doctrines. As to Krishna, whether or not he ever lived, I do not know. "A great many stories are told of him, but I do not believe them."

"I doubt very much that he ever lived and think it would

be a good thing if he never did. There would have been one less god in the world.”

Chapter 7

The Gita — I

THE GITA — I

(New Discoveries, Vol. 6, pp. 205-7. Cf. Ida Ansell's notes of "The Gita I", [6]Complete Works, I.)

[Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of a Bhagavad-Gitâ lecture delivered Saturday, May 26, 1900, in San Francisco, California]

The Gitâ is to the Hindus what the New Testament is to the Christians. It is about five thousand years old, and the day of religious celebrations with the Hindus is the anniversary of the Battle of Kurukshetra about five thousand years ago. As I said, the Vedas are divided into two great divisions, the philosophical and the Karmakânda, or work portion.

Between the kings, who promulgated the philosophic portion, and the priests a great conflict arose. The priests had the people on their side because they had all the utility which appealed to the popular mind. The kings had all the spirituality and none of the economic element; but as they were powerful and the rulers of the nation, the struggle was a hard and bitter one. The kings gradually gained a little ground, but their ideas were too elevated for the masses, so the ceremonial, or work portion, always had the mass of the people.

Always remember this, that whenever a religious system gains ground with the people at large, it has a strong economic side to it. It is the economic side of a religion that finds lodgement with the people at large, and never its spiritual, or philosophic, side. If you should preach the grandest philosophy in the streets for a year, you would not have a handful of followers. But you could preach the most arrant nonsense, and if it had an economic element, you would have the whole people with you.

None knows by whom the Vedas were written; they are so ancient. According to the orthodox Hindus, the Vedas are not the written words at all, but they consist of the words themselves orally spoken with the exact enunciation and intonation. This vast mass of religion has been written and consists of thousands upon thousands of volumes. Anyone who knows the precise pronunciation and intonation knows the Vedas, and no one else. In ancient times certain royal families were the

custodians of certain parts of the Vedas. The head of the family could repeat every word of every volume he had, without missing a word or an intonation. These men had giant intellects, wonderful memories.

The strictly orthodox believers in the Vedas, the Karmakanda, did not believe in God, the soul or anything of the sort, but that we as we are were the only beings in the universe, material or spiritual. When they were asked what the many allusions to God in the Vedas mean, they say that they mean nothing at all; that the words properly articulated have a magical power, a power to create certain results. Aside from that they have no meaning.

Whenever you suppress a thought, you simply press it down out of sight in a coil, like a spring, only to spring out again at a moment's notice with all the pent up force as the result of the suppression, and do in a few moments what it would have done in a much longer period.

Every ounce of pleasure brings its pound of pain. It is the same energy that at one time manifests itself as pleasure and at another time as pain. As soon as one set of sensations stops, another begins. But in some cases, in more advanced persons, one may have two, yes, or even a hundred different thoughts enter into active operation at the same time. When one thought is suppressed, it is merely coiled up ready to spring forth with pent up fury at any time.

"Mind is of its own nature. Mind activity means creation. The thought is followed by the word, and the word by the form. All of this creating will have to stop, both mental and physical, before the mind can reflect the soul."

"My old master (Shri Ramakrishna.) could not write his own name without making a mistake. He made three mistakes in spelling, in writing his own name."

"Yet that is the kind of man at whose feet I sat."

"You will break the law of nature but once, and it will be the last time. Nature will then be nothing to you."

Chapter 8

The Gita — III

THE GITA — III

(New Discoveries, Vol. 6, pp. 213-16. Cf. Ida Ansell's notes of "The Gita III", [6]Complete Works, I.)

[Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of the Bhagavad-Gitâ lecture delivered Tuesday, May 29, 1900, in San Francisco, California]

1. "If you know everything, disturb not the childlike faith of the innocent."
2. "Religion is the realization of Spirit as Spirit. Not spirit as matter."
3. "You are spirit. Realize yourselves as spirit. Do it any way you can." 4. "Religion is a growth": each one must experience it himself. 5. "Everyone thinks 'my method is the best'. That is so, but it is the best for you."
6. "Spirit must stand revealed as spirit."
7. "There never was a time when spirit could be identified with matter." 8. "What is real in nature is the spirit."
9. "Action is in nature."
10. "In the beginning there was That Existence. He looked and everything was created."
11. "Everyone works according to his own nature." 12. "You are not bound by law. That is in your nature. The mind is in nature and is bound by law."
13. "If you want to be religious, keep out of religious arguments." 14. "Governments, societies, etc., are evils." "All societies are based on bad generalizations." "A law is that which cannot be broken."
15. "Better never love, if that love makes us hate others."
16. "The sign of death is weakness; the sign of life is strength."

[The following numbered paragraphs are correlated with the preceding numbered sentences.]

4. The Christian believes that Jesus Christ died to save him. With you it is belief in a doctrine, and this belief constitutes your salvation. With us, doctrine has nothing whatever to do with salvation. Each one may believe in whatever doctrine he likes or in no doctrine. With us realization is religion, not doctrine. What difference does it make to you whether Jesus Christ lived at a certain time? What has it to do with you that Moses saw God in a burning bush? The fact that Moses saw God in the burning bush does not constitute your seeing

Him, does it? If it does, then the fact that Moses ate is enough for you; you ought to stop eating. One is just as sensible as the other. Records of great spiritual men of the past do us no good whatever except that they urge us onward to do the same, to experience religion ourselves. Whatever Christ or Moses or anybody else did does not help us in the least except to urge us on.

5. Each one has a special nature peculiar to himself which he must follow and through which he will find his way to freedom. Your teacher should be able to tell you what your particular path in nature is and to put you in it. He should know by your face where you belong and should be able to indicate it to you. We should never try to follow another's path for that is his way, not yours. When that path is found, you have nothing to do but fold your arms and the tide will carry you to freedom. Therefore when you find it, never swerve from it. Your way is the best for you, but that is no sign it is the best for another.

6. The truly spiritual see spirit as spirit, not as matter. Spirit as such can never become matter, though matter is spirit at a low rate of vibration. It is spirit that makes nature move; it is the Reality in nature, so action is in nature but not in the spirit. Spirit is always the same, changeless, eternal. Spirit and matter are in reality the same, but spirit, as such, never becomes matter, and matter, as such, never becomes spirit. Matter, as such, never becomes spirit as such, for it is simply a mode of spirit, or spirit at a low rate of vibration. You take food and it becomes mind, and mind in turn becomes the body. Thus mind and body, spirit and matter are distinct though either may give place to the other; but they are not to be identified.

8. "What is real in nature is the Spirit." The spirit is the life in all action in nature. It is the spirit that gives nature its reality and power of action.

9. "Action is in nature." "The spirit never acts. Why should it?" It merely is, and that is sufficient. It is pure existence absolute and has no need of action.

12. All nature is bound by law, the law of its own action; and this law can never be broken. If you could break a law of nature, all nature would come to an end in an instant. There would be no more nature. He who attains freedom breaks the law of nature and for him nature fades away and has no more power over him. Each one will break the law but once and forever and that will end his trouble with nature. "You are not bound by law. That is in your nature. The mind is in nature and is bound by law."

14. The moment you form yourselves into an organization, you begin to hate everybody outside of that organization. When you join an organization you are putting bonds upon yourself, you are limiting your own freedom. Why should you form yourselves into an order having rules and regulations, thus limiting every one as to his independent action? If one breaks a law of an order or society he is hated by the rest. What right has anyone to lay down rules and laws governing others? Such laws are not laws at all. If it were a law it could not be broken. The fact that these so-called laws are broken shows clearly they are not laws.

Chapter 9

Gita Class

GITA CLASS

(New Discoveries, Vol. 6, pp. 275-76.)

[Sister Nivedita's notes of a New York Bhagavad-Gitâ class, recorded in a June 16, 1900 letter to Miss Josephine MacLeod]

This morning the lesson on the Gitâ was grand. It began with a long talk on the fact that the highest ideals are not for all. Non-resistance is not for the man who thinks the replacing of the maggot in the wound by the leprous saint with "Eat, Brother!" disgusting and horrible. Non-resistance is practised by a mother's love towards an angry child. It is a travesty in the mouth of a coward, or in the face of a lion.

Let us be true. Nine-tenths of our life's energy is spent in trying to make people think us that which we are not. That energy would be more rightly spent in becoming that which we would like to be. And so it went — beginning with the salutation to an incarnation:

Salutation to thee — the Guru of the universe, Whose
footstool is worshipped by the gods.

Thou one unbroken Soul,

Physician of the world's diseases.

Guru of even the gods,

To thee our salutation.

Thee we salute. Thee we salute. Thee we salute. In the
Indian tones — by Swami himself.

There was an implication throughout the talk that Christ and Buddha were inferior to Krishna — in the grasp of problems — inasmuch as they preached the highest ethics as a world path, whereas Krishna saw the right of the whole, in all its parts — to its own differing ideals.

Chapter 10

Remarks from Various Lectures

REMARKS FROM VARIOUS LECTURES

(New Discoveries, Vol. 6, pp. 209-10.)

[Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's random lecture notes, most of which seem to pertain to chapter two of the Bhagavad-Gitâ]

“Spirituality can never be attained until materiality is gone.” The first discourse in the Gita can be taken allegorically. “The Vedas only teach of things in nature, only teach of nature.” We are always letting sentiment usurp the place of duty, and flattering ourselves that we are acting in response to true love. We must get beyond emotionalism if we would be able to renounce. Emotion belongs to the animals. They are creatures of emotion entirely. It is not sacrifice of a high order to die for one's young. The animals do that, and just as readily as any human mother ever did. It is no sign of real love to do that; merely blind emotion.

We are forever trying to make our weakness look like strength, our sentiment like love, our cowardice like courage, etc.

Say to your soul in regard to vanities, weaknesses, etc., “This does not befit thee. This does not befit thee”.

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