

ENGLISH

#### SMILING FACE

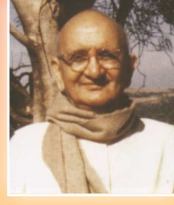
You know how I love laughter. No wonder I fell in love with Swami Ramdas when I saw him first with a little child in his arms, his face wreathed in smiles, waiting for me in his Anandashram, on the top of the staircase. It was no smile of a worldling, but of a mystic par excellence - the result of a consciousness, and not the expression of a mood of merriment or courtesy, however flawless. It can grace the face of a devotee alone, an authentic Vaishnava of whom the definition is given by Krishna in the Bhagawat: "He never riles nor will be riled by the world. Insulting none, he's unhurt by insult hurted."

Sri Dilip Kumar Roy

*Om Sri Ram /ai Ram/ya Ram  
Let your heart be ever  
filled with the sweetness  
of Ramnam.  
All joy and peace to  
you.  
Devoty Blessings  
Ramdas  
13. 6. 57*

THUS SPEAKS RAMDAS

## THUS SPEAKS RAMDAS



#### ALL IS THYSELF

To speak of Thee is joy;  
To be silent with Thee is also joy.  
To open my eyes is joy;  
To close them is also joy.  
Whatever Thou givest  
I take with joy;  
When Thou givest nothing -  
then also joy.  
To ask of Thee and get is joy;  
Not to make any demands of  
Thee is also joy.  
O, there is joy within Thee;  
There is joy without Thee as well.

Mother Krishnabai  
Translated

# Thus Speaks RAMDAS



## Anandashram

Anandashram PO,  
Kanhngad 671531

Kerala, India.

Tel: 0467 2203036

Email: [anandashram@gmail.com](mailto:anandashram@gmail.com)

Web: [www.anandashram.org](http://www.anandashram.org)

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## SWAMI RAMDAS

Swami Ramdas is one of the rarest flowers of representative Indian spirituality. His life is now a practical demonstration of the scriptural description about the blissful, carefree and unconcerned activity of a Jivanmukta. His picturesque and chequered earlier life, his enterprising, daring and reckless later life of Nivritti and his grand, sublime and joyous state today, are all proofs positive of the declarations of the great scriptures like the Upanishads and the Gita.

We find in him personified the Supreme Truth that one who has transcended his little self, comes to behold the Supreme Spirit alone everywhere and in everything. He realises his identity with this Cosmic Spirit. Ramdas says in one of his letters that this state came to him through Bhakti, Vairagya and Satsang. Elsewhere he states that the ultimate Supreme factor is Divine Grace. Swami Ramdas is truly a living monument of the Lord's Grace.

His spiritual experiences and realisations have made him a saint of Sama-Drishti. He sees the Lord alone in all beings and is thus rooted in equal vision. It is to such a type of soul that the Lord refers when He says in the Gita, "Vasudevah Sarvamithi Sa Mahatma Sudurlabhah." His realisations have confirmed him in his beliefs in the fundamental oneness of all faiths and creeds.

God is all-love, goodness, compassion and beneficial activity. Sainthood is the realisation of the identity with such a Being, and as such the love, the goodness and service that arise from such sainthood will irresistibly seek expression upon this earthly plane. Thus we find Ramdas ever immersed in joyous, blissful service of the Lord in all. His Anandashram is a veritable mart of Divine Bliss. He wants each and every one to plunge into that infinite source of joy wherein he himself is blissfully swimming. To this end he advocates two methods – a continuous remembrance of the Lord and the practice of beholding Him everywhere. To thus remember Him and feel His presence, the most potent method is the repetition of the Divine Name. Swami Ramdas is a staunch advocate of the Divine Name. He also insists upon regular Sadhana of self-control and surrender. He himself exemplifies the highest form of surrender. He demonstrates the fact that Para-Bhakti and Jnana are one. The highest Vedanta and the most indescribable

love are combined in Ramdas. Both of these have become manifest as the loftiest type of Vishwa Seva.

May all emulate his lofty, sublime life! May all attain the highest indescribable experience of Adwaitic awareness!

– Swami Sivananda  
Ananda Kutir, Rishikesh

## **PRAYER**

O Lord of the universe,  
O Creator, Protector and Destroyer of the worlds,  
I come in all humility to Thy holy feet,  
And surrender myself entirely to Thee.  
Deign to bless me ever with Thy remembrance.  
O merciful divine Master,  
Give me strength, purity and peace.  
Thou art absolute power, omniscient and omnipresent,  
Thou art seated in the hearts of all,  
Thou art all purity, all goodness and all love,  
Thou art a veritable ocean of peace and bliss,  
Thou art the lover of Thy devotees,  
Refuge of the helpless,  
Redeemer and Saviour of  
Those who resign themselves to Thee;  
Make me dedicate my life, to Thee and to Thy service,  
By Thy Grace, may peace and joy always dwell in my heart.  
Thou art mother, master, friend and all to me,  
Accept me as Thy child and servant;  
Grant me power to love Thee with all my heart;  
Let whatever I do, be a fitting offering at Thy holy feet;  
Make me pure in thought, word and deed;  
I lay my mind at Thy feet,  
Fill it always with Thy remembrance;  
Let Thy glorious light illumine my heart.  
O Sustainer of the worlds,  
O kind and compassionate Lord, God of gods,  
Give me the divine vision, so that,  
I may behold Thee in all, as all;  
Make me ever feel Thy constant fellowship;  
May my life be guided and controlled by Thee!  
Thy Presence be ever with me, in me,  
And everywhere around me.

I beg of Thee, I prostrate before Thee,  
Hearken to this heartfelt prayer of mine.  
And make me Thine and Thine only  
For ever and ever!

### **YOUR REALITY**

The Truth that you seek is the essence of your soul.  
Truth is the totality of life within and without.  
'Tis whole of the part and part of the whole.  
'Tis love clothed with immortal delight.  
Perfected in imperfect things.  
Fulfilled in transcendence.  
Revealed in all changes of life.  
Form of form – light of light.  
Sole power – knowledge.  
All-containing but still eluding the grasp of thought.  
This Truth is thyself –  
Know this and be free.

### **THE AIM OF LIFE**

1. Human life is a rare acquisition. Its purpose is to know the Atman by knowing which you have nothing more to know. Everyone must realise that the Divine is within him. God is within your heart; you are His embodiment. You are He, but you do not know that. There is a veil of ignorance separating you from God. Remove the veil. First God, everything else comes next.
2. The microcosm is the macrocosm. The individual is the universal. God dwells in every being and thing, however small, in His entirety and perfection. Think, not in terms of the individual, but always in terms of the universal. Do everything for the sake of God. Then your ego-sense will vanish and you will realise you are the Universal Spirit – changeless, eternal, infinite. This is your goal.
3. Your life is intended for the service of all. The expansion of the individual into the universal is possible only when God-thought rules your mind, when God-love fills your heart and God's will governs your actions. Whenever you see anybody, you must see not only the external form but also the indwelling Reality. This is the true vision. This alone can free you from the sense of diversity and make you realise the unity and oneness of all existence. It is not merely in holy persons and places that you should see God, but in all, everywhere, even in the marketplace. You must always feel the Divine Presence in and about you.
4. Just as man has aspiration for the Divine, woman also has. So women too must be given ample opportunities to walk on the path that leads to liberation. We have in India, women who have reached the highest spiritual attainment.

### **ASPIRATION**

5. The first thing necessary is keen aspiration to realise God or Truth. This aspiration will make you constantly remember Him because where your love is, there your heart is. So if you really desire to realise God, you cannot but remember Him. By such constant remembrance and aspiration, your heart will be purified and your devotion to Truth will become one-pointed.

6. It is much easier for a poor man to tune his mind to the Divine than for a rich man who is steeped in worldly pleasures. Many of our Rishis and saints were born poor.

7. The path is simple, straight and easy. Remember the Beloved with all the love of your heart. That instant you are filled with joy. There will be no strain, no pain, no struggle. As you seek Him, so does He seek you in the shrine of your heart. Let His love envelop and absorb you.

8. God is ever after us. He wants to take us to Himself and grant us the highest beatitude. But we try to escape from Him even as a dirt-covered child runs away from its mother who wants to bathe it. We are trying to run away from the Divine Mother who wants to purify us and give us the highest bliss. We like playing with the toys of the world, ignoring Her call.

9. Seek not to find peace and freedom in the external circumstances of life. True freedom and happiness is an inner state which you acquire when you are in tune with God who dwells within you. Let the knocks you get in life turn you more and more towards God.

## **NAMASMARAN**

10. All Sadhana is for keeping remembrance of God unbroken. Remembrance is Darshan. The easiest way is to take the name of God constantly. The Name is the link between the devotee and God. It brings the devotee face to face with Him and enables him to realise oneness with Him. Namasmaran is capable of granting the universal vision by which one sees everything as God. When you take the name, you are taking the Name of the Lord who dwells in your own heart.

11. Take the Name with all the faith you are capable of. Repeat it without a moment's break, whether you are in the kitchen, or engaged in fetching water, taking bath, walking in the streets or doing any physical work. If you do not practise keeping the Name ever on your lips, you cannot avoid being unhappy. Know this once and for all.

12. Japa must be done with intense love and devotion for God, and not as a discipline imposed on you by somebody else. If you do not get joy in doing Japa, you had better not do it, as it will not help you very much. When you have love for God, Japa of His Name must give you great joy. It is not mere mechanical repetition that helps, but a spontaneous outflow of your love for Him along with the repetition of His Name.

13. It is not always necessary that you should chant the Name of the Lord aloud. In the early stages, it might be found very helpful. But mental repetition is far more effective.

14. All names of God are great and powerful. But Ram Nam has a value of its own. Rhythm is a most important factor in a Mantra. The soothing melody of the repeated word, or combination of words, has a marvellous effect on the distracted mind. No two letters linked together could, by their harmonious music, lull and bring peace to the mind more than Ram. It is said, rightly, that 'Ram' is equal in power to the sacred syllable 'OM'. For the devotee who strives to reach God through His Saguna or personal aspect, 'Ram' is valuable also as the name of an incarnation of God. For these reasons, Ramdas thinks that Ram Nam is more widely popular in India than any other Name.

15. God is a wonder. His Name is a greater wonder. As a worm bores through the wood until it makes the inside hollow, the Ram mantra gradually destroys all your desires and purifies you

through and through. By chanting it, a new strength, a new joy and a new light will reveal themselves in you. Then you will realise you are an immortal and radiant Spirit ever identical with God.

16. The Name or Mantra, by itself, is to be taken as God. A separate form of His, need not be meditated upon. The sound of the Name is Nada-Brahman or Shabda-Brahman. Concentrate on that. After the repetition of the Mantra for some time, your mind will become still. In this stillness you will realise the Divine dwelling within you, and His presence will be felt thereafter at all times. Nama Japa is the simplest way to realise God.

17. The Name is God, the Guru, the all in all. Indeed, the power of God's Name is simply marvellous. It can take man to the summit of spiritual experience. It grants one eternal freedom, bliss and peace. The Name has the power to tear up the veil of Maya or ignorance and bring you face to face with God or Truth. It gives you at once the bliss of Bhakti and Mukti. The Name is not different from Him. The Divine Name is greater than any philosophy in the world. It is the key by which you can unlock the gates to the kingdom of immortal peace and bliss.

18. Sri Samarth Ramdas assures the aspirant that if he takes "Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram" 13 crores of times, he will have the vision of Sri Rama. The Mantra mentioned by Samarth Ramdas is without 'OM'. The Mantra Ramdas gives you is "Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram". 'OM' has untold spiritual power. Hence Ramdas, from his own experience, tells you that by repeating this Mantra with 'OM' six crores of times, you will attain salvation. Repeat the Mantra at all times, until the target is reached. You need not keep count of the Mantra. When it reaches six crores you will automatically realise Ram – the Supreme Self. Chanting His name is the way to make Him manifest Himself in you. The meaning of "Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram" is as follows:

Om = Impersonal Truth

Sri = Divine Power

Ram = God who is both Truth and Power, both personal and impersonal.

Ram represents the Purushottama of the Gita who is at once Purusha and Prakriti and also the supreme, transcendent One beyond both.

Jai Ram = Victory to God.

Jai Jai Ram = Victory, victory to God.

"God who is at once Truth and Power, Impersonal and Personal! Victory to Thee; victory, victory to Thee!"

When God is victorious in your heart, all darkness born of ego-sense disappears. There is then nothing but a feast of immortal joy and peace for you.

19. It is not enough to sing the praise of the Name. You must keep it constantly on your lips. Gradually, you will find the Name taking hold of you. Now it is not you who possess the Name, but the Name takes possession of you. Then the mind will refuse to wander here and there. It gets absorbed in the Name and derives great peace and joy. Contact with the Name is contact with God, because Name and God are not different. Name is God and God is Name.

20. Nama Sankirtan and Bhajan must be the mainstay of a householder who is a spiritual aspirant. Let the house thrill with the sound of God's name and glory. In such a house the spiritual atmosphere will always have a favourable reaction on the health of the inmates – both physical and mental. Bliss flows there in floods. Verily, Name is God. He is present where His names are sung with love.

**GURU**

21. The Guru, when he gives the Name, infuses into it his own spiritual power. He transmits his power through the Mantra to the disciple. The word 'Guru' means 'dispeller of darkness' or giver of light. Guru is the spiritual awakener. Guru is God embodied in human form to liberate souls from ignorance. Ignorance is disease. Knowledge is health. Guru is the divine doctor, who cures us by giving us knowledge of Self.

22. Before we can be fit to receive the grace of the Guru, we have to purify ourselves by loving service rendered to our parents. The first honour and adoration of our heart must go to the mother, then to the father, then to the Guru who liberates us from the bondage of ignorance.

23. A God-realised soul alone can awaken and kindle another soul. Going to temples alone will not do. Reading books alone will not do. The contact of great souls who have realised God is essential.

24. Saints transmit their powers to others by thought, sight and touch. When a saint thinks of a person, even though he be far away, he is helped spiritually. A saint looks at a person – the person is transformed. A new consciousness dawns in him. If a saint touches an aspirant, the latter will feel a tremendous change taking place in him.

25. What are the characteristics of a saint? Sama Darshan or equal vision is a dominant trait that marks a saint from others. It is the keynote of his life. He sees God in all and loves all alike. While ordinary people are obsessed by an individualistic outlook, a sense of separation from others, saints and sages who have realised the Truth show a universal outlook in their thoughts, words and deeds. They are also always conscious of their immortal and all-blissful nature and so are free from fear of death. They know that life is eternal and that every one is essentially divine.

26. There are no external signs to mark out a God-realised saint. He does not grow a horn. But he is always full of bliss. He is happy under all conditions. No miracles can be expected from him, as a matter of course. But they are sometimes done by him by God's will, without his intention to perform them.

27. Satsang or association with a saint is indeed valuable. But it must be of the right kind. Internal contact must be established. Otherwise there is danger of the aspirant's mind getting externalized and remaining attached to the physical person of the saint, missing the impersonal Truth which the saint embodies. Without reaching the depths of the inner Reality represented by the saint, one cannot reap the full benefits of Satsang. One must take care not to fall into the error of thinking that a saint's grace can be won by adoring merely his body and serving him without looking upon all beings as his expressions and serving them with an equal vision. There is nothing more dangerous to an aspirant than a narrow, personal attitude. His progress depends on the extent to which he is able to expand his heart and universalize his outlook.

28. One cannot rise beyond a certain stage of spiritual advancement if he is bound to any institution. In spiritual matters, the best rules are those which are not made by others but self-imposed – by the Guru from within. A tree does not grow in the shade of another tree, but gets stunted. It can grow fully only in the open. So also you must have a free and open atmosphere for your spiritual growth. One may receive light and inspiration from saints and sages, but one must have an atmosphere of freedom in which to develop one's nature, independent of all external interference or guidance. By depending always on guidance from without, the disciple does not look within and rely on God who dwells in the heart.

29. So get inspiration from saints, but do not think of taking shelter permanently in any Ashram. Live alone in a free and open atmosphere. Then God within will lead you. The indwelling God is none other than your Guru who initiated you from outside as a human being. Guru is the immortal, all-pervading Spirit. Never look upon him as a mere person. If you develop this attitude from the beginning, you will realise that the Guru never dies. You will never feel his absence as he is eternally within you.

## RENUNCIATION

30. It is not by mere external renunciation that one attains God. There are so many who have externally renounced and gone to the forests but have not realised Him. It is not necessary that one should externally renounce anything. It is not the outer condition that matters so much as one's inner state of mind. If we dedicate our life to God and live in His light, it does not matter where we live. We can live in the family and still realise Him, because God is everywhere and not only in forests and caves. He is in us, with us and all about us. To seek Him, we need not go anywhere.

31. The examples of Buddha, Chaitanya and Vivekananda are not for all to follow. They are rare cases in which God made them renounce the external ties also so that they might freely serve all mankind. When God wants us to undertake such a glorious mission, by all means, let us not resist the current when it comes to sweep away our narrow limitations. Sri Krishna and Janaka in their lives have shown that even for the work of Lokasangraha, the normal duties of life that fall to our lot need not be abandoned. To attain Moksha for oneself, wilful breaking off from external ties is not at all necessary.

32. God-realisation is not getting away from the world, but looking upon it as the manifestation of God and serving Him in all creatures and beings, in a state of perfect submission to His will.

33. What we have to give up is the ego-sense, the idea that we are the doers. God within us is the doer, the sole master of all our activities. If we dedicate all our actions to Him we can destroy our ego-sense and find our supreme union with Him. Surrender does not denote any change in the external mode of life, but a right attitude towards it.

34. Ramdas still belongs to the world, not in a partial sense, but in totality. His Beloved is not only in particular persons, but is in His full power and glory in all beings, creatures and things. Ramdas has only expanded the narrow family circle into a world-family. So it is not renunciation, but expansion. God has in His mercy made him embrace the whole universe as his. Ramdas' Beloved dwells everywhere, as all beings and creatures in the world.

35. Action in itself is neither virtuous nor sinful. The error lies in attributing it to our false individuality, when really it emanates from Him. So no action which we are engaged in need be discarded. All actions are to be surrendered up to Him who is the master of all actions. 'Possess things, but do not be possessed by them'. Whenever you accept presents from any one, take it that the Lord Himself gives them to you and the moment an occasion comes when you have to part with them, give them away with as much delight as you had when you received them. Understand that you are returning them only to Him who gave them to you. In the same light consider every gain and loss. The Lord gives and the Lord takes away.

36. The sense of possession is a great obstacle to the realisation of God. The idea of 'I' and 'mine' must disappear entirely before the aspirant can find absolute freedom and peace in union with God. Verily, everything belongs to the Lord who dwells in the hearts of all creatures and things. Attachment to any external object narrows our vision, fosters egoism and gives rise to the false notion that we are separate from God, i.e., from the universal life and spirit. The whole universe is permeated through and through with God. The visible and invisible worlds are all He. There is nothing and none but He. All, all are He. Such is the Truth; where then is room for the ideas of 'I' and 'you' – 'mine' and 'yours'? All are He!

37. A spiritual aspirant need not discard woman and gold, but he must change his attitude to them. He should neither enslave them, nor allow himself to be enslaved by them. He should look upon them as manifestations of the Divine Power. Ramdas does not believe that woman is



the cause of man's ruin. Man ruins himself by his foolish attachment to the body and other perishable objects of life, thereby denying the supremacy of the Divine Spirit over everything else in this world. In fact, woman is the liberator of man if he looks upon her as the form of the Divine Mother. Ramdas worships woman as a veritable Goddess and uses gold for Her service in humanity.

## **WORK**

38. Ramdas does not want anyone to lead only a contemplative life. One must also serve one's fellow-beings in a selfless spirit. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" does not mean that love should only be felt in the heart. It must be shown also in action, in the form of relieving distress and rendering help in all possible ways. To serve man is to serve God. In Karma Yoga, work is done as worship. Then alone it gives joy. It should be done as perfectly as possible, with great care and love and never in a slipshod, clumsy, irregular or half-hearted way. The inner beauty must reveal itself in outer conduct.

39. Do not renounce work but divinise work by doing it in full submission to the will of God. Work is worship when it is done selflessly in a spirit of dedication to God. Do not run away from the work given to you by the Divine. Do it without the ego-sense. Become willing instruments in the hands of the Divine and cheerfully do the work, without any thought of the fruits. Work, and be a detached witness of the work.

## **SERVICE**

40. A life dedicated to the selfless service of humanity is the true life. For such service, it is necessary that one should possess perfect self-control. Whenever you achieve anything great, be always humble. All power and glory belong to God.

41. Let your service be done in a spirit of spontaneous love, which is by itself a great balm and a source of unlimited joy and peace. True service lies in your not being conscious of having done anything for anybody, while you are busily engaged in relieving the pains and sorrows of people around you. A marvellous depth of patience, a spirit of never-failing forgiveness and a capacity to suffer cheerfully for the sake of others – all these will then be yours.

42. To serve your fellow-beings is to serve God. In the final synthesis of an all-round spiritual experience, you realise that the whole universe is your body. Your love and service of anyone in it will be felt to be but love and service done to yourself.

## **SURRENDER**

43. The only way to be always happy is to submit to God's will, and leaving everything to Him, to be contented in the condition in which He places us. Surrender means inner contentment and peace. It means giving up of the ego-sense. Until the ego-sense is completely eliminated, we cannot realise God.

44. Self-surrender means that we throw the whole burden of life, our anxieties and sorrows on the Supreme Lord who is the Master of all and keep our mind filled with calmness and peace that comes from His constant remembrance.

45. Cling to the Lord in all situations. Do not worry about anything. Have complete trust in God. Give up all superstitious notions. Do not mind the opinions of the world about you. Court the society of pure and noble souls. Whenever changes come in your life, take them that they come by God's will alone. Take to the changes naturally and cheerfully.

46. We are ever under God's care and protection. We are never forsaken. God is all love. We have doubts about this because we are not conscious of His love. Let us know once and for all that He is our sole refuge. We are ever watched over, guided and lovingly taken care of by Him. So let us surrender ourselves to Him, keeping up His remembrance always.

47. Surrender to God as you are. It is not that we must purify ourselves first and then go to Him. He must purify us. We must go to him as a child to its mother. If the child goes to her in a dirty condition, the mother does not turn it away nor ask it to come clean. She herself takes the child and bathes it clean. God is more loving than the earthly mother.

48. When we surrender to God and allow ourselves to be guided by Him, all 'obstacles' that come on the way are found to be helpful and beneficial to our progress. Life is a battle for all. There is joy in winning as well as losing in this battle. Let your heart be ever in tune with God. Then winning and losing are seen as the play of the Divine.

49. Some persons say that surrender is a sign of weakness. Ramdas says it is the path of the strong. Surrender is not so easy as people seem to think. It is very hard to eradicate the ego-sense. Surrender is the only way to root out the ego. It is the straight path that leads to God.

50. Really, man has no will of his own. There is only one Divine will at work everywhere and in all. It is a mistake to think that we, as individuals, have got any power to do anything. God is behind everything. His power does all things. If we know that His power is alone active in us and submit to Him, we shall be free from the ego-sense and realise that we are the infinite, universal Spirit.

51. Know once and for all that, as an individual actor, you do not exist. It is the one Divine Shakti or Power that controls and guides all movements and changes in the world. You are the instrument actuated by God's power; you are the very expression of God – nay, you are God Himself!

## **REASON AND INTUITION**

52. The intellect is too feeble and limited to gauge the depths of the Infinite. It cannot find out the how and why of ignorance. Once we know we are caught in ignorance, our concern must only be to remove it, to get out of the cage, and not be enquiring into its cause and source. Sadhana is meant for breaking the walls of the cage.

53. Reason is a help, no doubt. It is surely a more reliable guide than the fickle mind. It helps us to discriminate between the Real and the unreal. But it helps only up to a limit. After a stage, it becomes a hindrance. It cannot be a safe guide throughout the spiritual journey. If you want to take a leap into the Infinite and realise your oneness with It, you have to stop reasoning. Reason must give place to intuition. Intuition is born of a purified heart and an illumined intelligence. It is a spontaneous outflow of Divine Light. This can come only after the elimination of the ego-sense.

54. So long as intuition has not dawned in you, you have to be guided by reason. But reason is liable to go wrong. For, when reason works, the ego-sense is present. But when intuition is working, the ego-sense is absent. So intuition guides you unerringly. Intuition is the voice of God within you.

55. It is very hard for others to know whether, in a particular case, it is reason or intuition that is working in a person. It is a matter of inner experience for that person. Others cannot know it. But it is possible to a certain extent to find it out from what the person does or says. Perfect unselfishness is a mark of intuition. The intellect often works as an instrument of the ego. But it is difficult to know.

56. The intellect does not work by itself. It is acted on by the Self or Atman. The intellect can grasp external things. But it cannot turn back and grasp its own Divine Source. With a pair of tongs you can hold material objects. But the tongs cannot catch the hands which hold it. Similarly, the intellect cannot grasp God or Self – the higher Power behind it. The best use of the intellect is to help us know its own limitations.

57. Merely reading books on Vedanta and getting intellectually equipped with the ideas relating to the highest attainment cannot make one a true Vedantin. Learning is both a help and a hindrance. It is a hindrance if it feeds one's ego-sense and makes one pose as a person who has realised the Truth. God-realisation means experience of God. For this, humility is essential. Too much learning makes one proud. One must bend one's head to Him, realising the limitations of reason. It can take you only to the gate and it has to be left behind when you enter the realm of the Spirit. You have to unlearn what you have learnt and become as simple and guileless as a child.

58. Modern philosophy begins with doubts about God and His existence. The ancient wisdom began with certitude. Westerners do not think with a purified intellect. So they are full of doubts. Their philosophy turns round in circles, without getting anywhere. They take dry intellectualism to be a sign of strength, and compassion in the heart to be weakness.

59. No amount of argument can make you understand the Truth. Direct perception and experience alone can grant you the vision of the Truth.

## **GRACE**

60. God has made the law of Karma, but He can also set it aside. If He cannot brush aside His law, the law will be greater than He. This cannot be. For, He is the infinite, omnipotent Lord. So He must have the power to suspend any law. Generally God does not interfere. He allows the Karma to be worked out. But He may, in special cases, go beyond His law and by His grace free the soul from the bondage of Karma.

61. Our mind turns towards God only by His grace. It is His grace that makes us yearn for Him. Grace is self-revealing. When Grace comes to us, our heart becomes perfectly pure and we overflow with love for all beings. We shall have no ill-feeling towards anybody. We shall experience a rare joy which we never had before.

62. Does faith come first or Grace first? It has been conclusively proved by saints who have had the highest spiritual experience that Grace comes first. Without Grace we cannot have faith in God. The true devotee says: "Oh God, I remember You because You remembered me first".

63. Our ego-sense makes us think we can attain Him by our Sadhana or struggle. But we soon realise our helplessness and know that our efforts are by themselves of no avail. Then we

surrender to Him and depend on His mercy. Thus we need His grace at the beginning, in the middle and at the end. Grace is all-in-all.

64. We cannot get Grace by virtue of our so-called merit. The worst sinners have received Grace and become pure and glorious. Purity is not a precondition for Grace. It is the flow of Grace that makes the heart pure. When grace comes, it comes, not because we deserve it, nor as a reward for our Sadhana, but only out of God's boundless mercy and love. One who gets Grace never feels he is worthy of it.

65. The way of Grace is mysterious. You struggle for it and you do not get it. Sometimes, without any struggle, you get it. Its working is governed by something beyond all laws. It is not bound by any rules, regulations or conditions. You are wonder-struck when Grace comes to apparently undeserving persons, while the so-called deserving ones are still waiting for it.

66. Looked at from another angle, it must be said Grace is pouring on all alike. Some receive it and some do not. Some people open the windows of their hearts to receive Grace and benefit by it while others keep them closed and so they do not get it. But even to keep the windows of the heart open, we require inner aspiration and longing which can come to us only through His Grace.

67. Grace is ever pouring on us from God, as the sun is ever shedding light on all objects – opaque, translucent and transparent. But opaque objects do not reflect the light, translucent things reflect it but partially, while transparent things reflect it fully. The difference is not due to the absence or failure of sunlight, but due to the difference in the reflecting capacity of the objects. Similarly, we imbibe Grace and benefit by it according to our capacity to receive, according to our preparedness and purity.

68. If Grace is all in all, and comes of its own accord, governed by no laws and conditions, what is the place of Sadhana in spiritual life? Why should we perform Sadhana at all? The secret is that Sadhana is done to make us realise that by Sadhana alone we cannot attain Him. So long as our ego-sense persists we cannot see God. When we know we are utterly helpless in spite of all our efforts to attain Him, our ego-sense is crushed and we throw ourselves at His feet.

69. It is difficult to know why God reveals Himself to some and plays the game of hide-and-seek with others. It is His Lila. He cannot be accused of favouring some and forsaking others. Let us always remember that He ever dwells in us and that we ever dwell in Him. He who reveals Himself to us is He. He who plays hide-and-seek with us is also He. Everything is He. Guru is He, Shishya is He, Player is He, Witness is He. There is none but He. Realise this great truth and rest happy.

## **GOD-REALISATION**

70. God is at once personal and impersonal. He is an impersonal Person – that is, He is not only the all-pervading, nameless and formless Reality, but He is also all that have names and forms.

71. There are two ways to realise Him – one to expand the ego, the individual, to infinity and the other to reduce it to nothing. The former is the path of knowledge, the latter that of devotion. The Jnani says: "I am God – the universal Truth." The Bhakta says: "I am nothing, O Lord, You are everything." In both cases the ego-sense disappears. The second is the safer and surer way – to take refuge in God and be ever under His protection.

72. If one sees God within himself, he sees God everywhere. If any one says he is God and not the others, he has not known God at all, because that is not the right experience. If he has seen God within himself, he must see everybody as the embodiment of God.

73. It is the restless, moving mind that makes us see movements outside, putting us under the illusion that the world of movement is real. But when the mind attains a state of perfect calm and stillness, we immediately experience the changeless or immutable Reality in which change and motion seem to be like waves on the surface of the ocean. Verily, we and God are one, never separate. It is by ignorance we feel we are separate from Him. When this ignorance is removed, we know we are one with Him and that we have always been so.

74. Absolute Adwaitism that negates all manifestation is not the whole truth. God is at once manifest and unmanifest. He is manifest as the individual Jiva for the sake of Lila. He incarnates Himself again with His mighty power and knowledge to lead the ignorant Jivas – in reality His own varied expressions – to the full knowledge of Himself, dwelling in their hearts.

75. Dwaita and Adwaita are only stages in our spiritual evolution. We start with Dwaita, pass through Visishtadwaita and reach the goal of Adwaita. We can be one with God. We can be in Him and He in us. A devotee, even after realising his oneness with God, wants to remain a devotee to sing His praises and enjoy Him.

76. There are four stages of God-consciousness. First, by total surrender, the ego is dissolved completely. Egolessness means realisation of the all-pervading Spirit or God. We know that we and that Spirit are one. After that comes the universal vision of the Divine everywhere. The whole universe is seen as the expression of that Spirit. We see God everywhere. In the third stage we see the manifest and the unmanifest as two aspects of One Truth which is both and yet beyond both. It is unthinkable, incomprehensible and inexpressible. We can express something about the dynamic and the static aspects, that is, the Reality with form and without form, but that which is beyond these is incomprehensible and inexpressible. God is at once dynamic, static and transcendent. Even after realising this supreme Godhead, there is a fourth stage in which we maintain a relationship with Him. It is purely personal. It is the best and sweetest relationship. We become one with God and yet we remain His child, servant or lover – two in One and One in two.

77. Man is nothing by himself, but man is everything when he has realised God and attuned his life to the Divine. For, to dwell in the Divine is to become the Divine.

78. The great Teachers of the world have given us the same truths. Buddha taught us to purify ourselves and have compassion for all creatures. Jesus Christ asked us to love all beings as we love ourselves. Krishna taught us to see the Divine in each and every one in the world. Mohammed taught us to submit to the will of God and be His instruments. If we but follow the teachings of these great Masters, we have no reason to quarrel among ourselves on any account.

79. Ramdas firmly believes that all the various creeds, faiths and religions are paths that lead to the same goal. All great Teachers of the world are from one God – the first eternal cause of all existence. Whether it be in the Gita, the Bible or the Koran or the Zend Avesta, we find the same note insistently struck, viz., self-surrender is the supreme way to liberation or salvation.

## LOVE

80. Divine Love is the highest attainment. All spiritual practices should end in this sweet consummation. Love is the end of the quest. See that you are absorbed in God who is Love and become an image of Him. Let all our emotions be of love. Life is dry and insipid if it is not filled with love. Be intoxicated with love – the love that blesses you with a vision of your Beloved. All beings are the forms of your Beloved. Grace, Love and Bliss are synonymous. The three are one in your Beloved and you are He. Dance with joy.

81. The victories of the intellect and the highest flights of imagination, cannot be compared with the triumphs of love. The discords and conflicts in life are the result of the absence of love. Love purifies, ennobles and sanctifies every movement of life. Love invites sufferings for the sake of the Beloved and transmutes them into unalloyed joy. The pointed dart tipped with love injects delight, not pain.

82. Ordinarily love based on physical affinity is a source of misery both to the lover and the loved. But Divine Love based on the feeling of spiritual oneness is sublime. It is a source of pure bliss. Here you love another not because he is a relation of yours, but because you and he are one in Spirit.

83. Love in the making sees faults; love in the fulfilment sees none. Seeing faults is like cutting love into pieces, murdering love. By so doing we keep the mind alive. We have to go beyond the mind. The mind must die.

84. Love breaks all barriers. Even body-consciousness is transcended under the intoxication of love. What to say then of man-made distinctions created by allegiance to creed, race and institutions? Love is a great unifying force. It is a solvent of differences and diversities. It creates unity. But to love truly, one must have knowledge of the Self. On the basis of Self-knowledge alone one can love all with an equal eye.

85. Love begets love and kindness begets kindness. This is a law which knows no exception. People dislike us because we have no love for them. If we love them, their love automatically flows to us. When our love goes to them and their love comes to us, the two streams mingle together and there is an ocean of love and joy. Love is not bargaining; it is not give and take. It is a spontaneous merging of souls.

86. Truly speaking it is not that we have to love God; we have to know that God who is Love is enthroned in our hearts. By surrendering ourselves to this Divine Love in us, we become embodiments of that Love. By constant remembrance and meditation we realise His presence in us and our life becomes filled with His light and love. His love then radiates through us and we see with love, talk with love, give with love, receive with love and act with love.

87. Love of God means love of all beings because God is all and all is in God. He is all-in-all. Love is consciousness of unity as hatred is of diversity. Go beyond all narrow limitations. Rise, soar high and hold the world in one embrace of Love. Your dwelling place is the whole universe which is your body. Live in it as Love!

### **GOPIS' LOVE FOR KRISHNA**

88. Krishna is an Avatar of perfect love. The word Krishna signifies attraction. He is the embodiment of the Supreme Truth manifest in the sweetest and most charming human form to attract the whole world towards Him. That is Krishna!

89. Gopis' love for Krishna was wonderful. It is difficult to find words to describe this love. Many are mistaken in thinking that the love between Gopis and Krishna was an ordinary kind of love on the physical level. When the Gopis thought of Krishna, they were simply lost in Him. They forgot themselves and their surroundings. They were in a state of ecstasy. All their worldly desires and thoughts were drowned in that ecstasy. Their love was of the purest and holiest type, grand and sublime. Very few can understand the sublimity of this love.

**TO SADHAKAS**

90. A Sadhaka should be wide awake, alert and heedful. He should closely watch the movements of his mind to wean it away gradually from the path of ignorance and guide it on the path of knowledge. He should develop a witness consciousness through meditation and self-surrender. It is a state of awareness of the immortal and radiant Truth within him. In fact, this awareness itself is God-realisation.

91. All visions of lights and forms have to be transcended before the absolute Reality can be realised. The visions are surely milestones on the spiritual path. But do not cling to them.

92. Give up doubts and churning of the intellect. Feel you are a simple child of the Lord and thus enter into His being. This is the easy way to reach Him. Do not perplex the mind with questions. Be humble, pure and cheerful, taking refuge in Him. Follow the straight and simple path of devotion. Open the flood-gates of your heart and allow Prem, pure love, that is in you, to flow over unimpeded to the holy feet of the Lord seated within. Remember that God's grace is ever with you. Benefit by its redeeming influence, by opening yourself to receive it and becoming aware of the Amrita Vrishti – shower of nectar.

93. Some churning of the mind or intellect may be there. But after some time, this process should stop so that the butter of Divine Bliss may be formed and collected. After the impurities are eliminated, pure and divine emotions rise up. Even this stage is passed when the infinite silence of the inner peace is experienced. Here the rippling and dancing river mingles with the calm waters of the ocean. That is the end of all Sadhana.

94. You cannot please everybody in the world. When the mind is drawn within and you are absorbed in the Self, you will be unaffected by what people say about you. Be true to the Atman within you.

95. Cultivate the consciousness that keeps you detached from the mind and its antics. This can be done only by your continued remembrance of the Divine Power that resides in you. Despair and dejection are enemies on the path of spiritual progress. Do not allow the mind to be depressed on any account. Keep yourself cheerful by chanting the Mantra. Your life must flow in a spontaneous and natural way. Your nature should become childlike.

96. Good and evil are merely conceptual and relative. What is good for you may be bad for another. There are no fixed standards, but only those set by the mind. There is a state beyond the mind in which there is no good and evil. There you see the whole universe filled with the light of the Divine.

97. What, after all, is right and wrong? That which takes you towards God is right and that which takes you away from God is wrong. There is no question of right and wrong for one who has realised God. He has transcended all duality. His entire life is an offering at the feet of God. His life flows spontaneously for the good of all. For him there is only God, and God is all.

98. In the eyes of God there is no evil. We suffer because of our ego. The sense of individuality, or separation from others, is responsible for all apparent evils. God is all-benevolent and all-loving. If you think of God constantly you can be happy in all situations. If you can take it that God's will prevails in the world and everything happens by His will, you cannot see evil anywhere and there is no suffering for you at any time. This is Ramdas' experience.

99. Evil is our own creation; it is not God's creation. If we have the vision of God, we cannot see evil anywhere. When love prevails evil disappears. Evil is the offspring of the ignorant mind. If we accept the sovereignty of God by surrendering ourselves to His will, we love all alike and see no evil at all. Just as darkness disappears before light, evil disappears in the light of God.

100. God never punishes. Punishment is always self-inflicted. We bring suffering on ourselves by our own wrong actions. If we are conscious that God is acting through us, we will never do any wrong. We do wrong only when we forget God.

101. Everyone has some good points in him. We should see only those good points. If we are to see bad points, let us look for them only in ourselves. If we practise this, the evil in us will disappear. If we see evil in others and good in us, what little of good we have will disappear and the evil in us will grow. By criticizing and thinking ill of others, we only make our minds more and more impure. The way to progress is to see good in everyone and love everyone. To see good in others is to see God in them; for, God alone is good. By seeing God in others we can easily realise God in our own heart. So long as we criticize others we can never see God in them.

102. Adversity is not undesirable, because, it is only when you are down and out in life that you can realise its true value. Face all the vicissitudes in life by throwing yourselves completely on the mercy of the Almighty Lord. When you are made to go through the fire of suffering, you can come out of it purified and strengthened. Such suffering constitutes real Sadhana for attaining God. The more bitter it is, the more rapid becomes your spiritual progress. God-realisation does not mean living in worldly comfort and opulence. It means living in peace and freedom, whatever the external conditions may be. For such a person misery has no sting. The lives of most of the great saints of the world clearly show that they had the worst of sufferings. When you are disowned by the world you become the acknowledged child of God.

103. Heroes are they who suffer and sacrifice for the sake of Truth or God. Strange are the ways of the Divine! His most beloved devotees, to whom He reveals Himself in all His glory, are made by Him to pass through great trials and tribulations both before and after they are accepted by Him. Before they realise Him, these sufferings are for their own self-purification and after their realisation, they are for the uplift and redemption of mankind.

## **HUMAN PROGRESS AND UNITY**

104. Earth is the theatre on which we play the game of life. It is the stage where we struggle to attain the supreme beatitude of life. It is the Karma Bhumi, the Dharma Kshetra, the field in which we prepare ourselves for Self-realisation. Humanity is the heart of this world. Identity with humanity is identity with the universe.

105. Material progress should not be at the cost of spiritual advancement. The two must go hand in hand. Then we will have integral evolution. Material advancement must be founded on and controlled by spiritual principles and values. That alone will maintain the right relation and balance between the material and spiritual aspects of life and thereby transform the entire life into an expression of the Spirit. Spirit and matter are not two different isolated entities, but one integral whole.

106. Religion should enter into every department of our life. It is the cry now-a-days that our life should be moulded purely on a secular basis. This means that we should build up life ignoring the soul. But man is not merely what he appears to be, a bundle of flesh, bones, blood and skin, nor a creature living and acting solely under the impulses and thoughts rising from the mind. We have to recognize that beyond the exterior dynamics of the body and mind, there is within man the Spirit which is immortal. It is by the power of the Spirit that our life is activated in its manifold expressions. In the class-room, hospital, office, marketplace, factory and field as well as in temple, church and mosque we should tune ourselves with this Spirit. Divine thoughts and feelings should permeate us.

107. It is a mistake to divide the world into the East and the West. The planet we live in is one, humanity is one and God is one. All have come from one God. If only we remember this, there will be no room for strife. The most deplorable thing is that we are fighting even in the name of



religion or God. The fight is really for power and pelf. All the great Teachers have taught the same Truth and preached the same gospel of Love.

## **NEW WORLD ORDER**

108. Religion is the bedrock on which a true regeneration of mankind can be brought about. But this should bear all the characteristics of a universal religion based on the teachings of the great Masters from whose lips flowed the same wisdom and truth. Narrow dogmatism, blind superstitions and outworn traditions, which have blurred the pristine light of spiritual culture through the years, must be shed.

109. Real happiness depends on a well ordered society based on moral and spiritual values. True religion should unite man and man through the realisation of the same indwelling Spirit in all. God has no caste. Castes and creeds are of our making. All differences and distinctions which, through the eye of ignorance, one beholds in this variegated world-show, disappear in the exalted, universal vision of the Divine.

110. The world is at present passing through a crisis. The old civilization is crumbling to pieces. There is going on a reshuffling of the values of life. The lesson that the present situation holds for mankind is that unbridled lust for power and possession leads to strife and war, that selfishness, greed and pride, whether among individuals or nations, cause widespread suffering and misery. Out of the travails through which the world is passing, a new order is bound to emerge based on a knowledge of the universal Spirit. But this cannot be achieved by the efforts of politicians, diplomats and administrators whose vision is warped by narrow considerations of personal, national and racial self-interest. The transformation can be brought about only by divinely inspired saints and sages who have experienced the universal vision of Truth or God, who are perfectly selfless and whose hearts are ever filled with love for all.

111. Love limited to one's country, loyalty confined to one's race, religion or community, attachment to one's family and identification of Self with one's body, are all alike the offsprings of ignorance which confine us in a cage of a smaller or bigger dimension. To fling one's life into the infinite expanse of the Divine is the work of heroes. Immortality is the birth-right of mankind.

112. The teachings of the ancient Rishis clearly show that ignorance of the one all-pervading Truth, whose nature is pure bliss, is the root-cause of fear, strife and misery. International conflicts, religious wrangles, social injustices, economic exploitations and political tyrannies are all found, in the ultimate analysis, to spring from selfishness born of the failure to realise the unity and universality of the Spirit. All World- Teachers unanimously declare: "O man! If you want peace for yourself and others in the world, adjust your conduct in accordance with the law of Love. Expand your vision so that it can embrace all fellow-beings and link them to yourself by Love. Rise above narrow creeds, cults, communal leanings and national ambitions. Merge your life in the infinity of God!"

## **SOAR UP**

Soar on the wings of faith and  
aspiration  
To the seat of the Beloved.

Be garbed in the robes of purity  
and peace  
And seek His presence.  
Sweetly sing the name of the  
King of kings.  
And draw Him to thy heart.  
Apply the collyrium of love to  
the eyes  
And behold Him everywhere.

### **ONE IS REAL**

All life is one  
Stand apart from it.  
And you are in a trap;  
Feel one with it  
And you are free.  
Say, "I am life of all life".

\* \* \*

I am you.  
How can we be two?  
How untrue the two-ness,  
How real the one!

### **GLOSSARY**

Adwaita – Non-duality; Monism  
Ashram – Abode of saint  
Atman – The Spirit  
Avatar – Incarnation of God  
Bhajan – Devotional songs  
Bhakta – Devotee of God  
Bhakti – Devotion; Love of God  
Buddha – (Lit. One who is enlightened) Founder of Buddhism  
Chaitanya – Lord Gauranga, the prophet who taught the love of God  
Darshan – Visit or Vision  
Dharma Kshetra – Field of righteousness  
Dwaita – Duality, dualism  
Gita – Bhagavad Gita, song of God  
Gopis – Milkmaids of Brindavan  
Guru – Spiritual guide or preceptor

Janaka – was a philosopher king  
Japa – Repetition of God's name  
Jiva – Individual soul  
Jivanmukta – Liberated soul  
Jnana – Divine Knowledge  
Jnani – One who has attained Self-knowledge  
Karma – Action or work  
Karma Bhumi – Land of action; earth-plane  
Karma Yoga – Yoga of selfless action; performance of one's own duty  
Koran – Mohammedan scripture  
Lila – The divine play  
Lokasangraha – The welfare or uplift of the world  
Mantra – A mystic word or words  
Maya – Illusive power of God  
Mohammed – Prophet of Islam  
Moksha/Mukti – Liberation from karma and rebirth  
Nada-Brahman – Mystic sound of God; the first or primal sound from which all creation has emanated  
Nama sankirtan – Singing or chanting the Name of God  
Namasmaraṇ – Remembrance of the Name of God  
Nivritti – Renunciation; stepping back from worldly activity  
Om – Sacred syllable symbolizing God  
Para Bhakti – Supreme devotion where devotee sees God everywhere  
Prakriti – Nature, gross and subtle; Shakti  
Prem – Intense, ecstatic love of God  
Purusha – The unaffected, witness – aspect of God  
Purushottama – Supreme God-head  
Ram – Supreme Spirit; also an incarnation whose life-story is told in the Ramayana  
Ram Mantra – An incantation containing the word Ram  
Ram Nam – God's name  
Rishis – Sages, seers of the Truth  
Sadhana – Spiritual practice  
Saguna – Personal aspect of God  
Samadarshan/ Samadrishti – Equal vision  
Satsang – Company of holy persons  
Shabda Brahman – Sound signifying Brahman or the Absolute  
Shakti – Divine energy, creative power (female aspect of God)  
Sishya – Disciple  
Sri Samartha Ramdas – A great saint of Maharashtra, South India  
Upanishads – Knowledge portion of the Vedas; texts dealing with the ultimate Truth and its realisation. Upanishads are mainly 108 in number, of which 10 are regarded most important.  
Vairagya – Dispassion; indifference and renunciation of worldly enjoyments  
“Vasudeva Sarvamithi Sa Mahatma Sudurlabhah..” – A verse from the Bhagavad Gita meaning  
“The great soul, who knows that Vasudeva (the Supreme) is all, is very difficult to find.”

Vedanta – The end of the Vedas; the Upanishads; the school of Hindu thoughts (based primarily on the Upanishads) upholding the doctrine of either pure non-dualism or conditional nondualism; (the original text of this school is Vedanta darsana or Uttaramimansa or the Brahma-sutras compiled by Sage Vyasa)

Vedantin – One who practises Vedantic philosophy

Vedas – The highest authority among the Aryans of India; it is held that these were never written by anyone and are, therefore, free from the imperfections to which human productions are subject. When it was forgotten, it was reproduced by Rishis by doing meditation. As the sounds forming the text of the Vedas occur in the same order and are pronounced in the same manner, it is said to be eternal; it teaches who and what Brahman is, and how He should be worshipped. Smritis, Itihasas and Puranas only amplify its teaching. It is the most ancient, authentic scripture of the Hindus.