

RAMAKRISHNA UPANISHAD:

“I HAVE SEEN GOD, AND YOU SHALL SEE HIM TOO”

Compiled by Joseph Molleur, Vedanta Society of Iowa, September, 2007

PREFACE

The following sayings are taken from *The Condensed Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*,¹ which is Mahendra Nath Gupta's (M's) own abbreviated English version of his voluminous Bengali *Kathamrita*. This work was chosen as the basis of the present Upanishad for two reasons: it has the great value of being M's own original work, not a translation done by another; and, since it is much less familiar to English readers than Swami Nikhilananda's famous translation,² it might provide such readers with a new perspective on the essential teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

PEACE INVOCATION

Do but have faith in my words,
and I will see that you find peace. (297)

OM. Peace, peace, peace be unto all.

I. SEEING GOD

1. Very few see that *the end of human life is to see God*. (293)

2. You may *see* God if your love for Him is as strong as the three attachments put together, namely, the attachment of a worldly man to the things of the world, the attachment of a mother to her child, and the attachment of a chaste and devoted wife to her husband. (37)

3. *Cry unto the Lord with a yearning heart and you shall see Him.* People would shed a jugful of tears for the sake of *wife and children!* They would suffer themselves to be carried away on the stream of their own tears, weeping for the sake of *money!* But who ever cries out for the Lord? Cry to him not to make a show—but with a longing and yearning heart. (37)

4. The truly wise man is he who has seen the Lord. He becomes like a child. The child, no doubt, seems to have an individuality, a separateness, of its own. But that individuality is a mere appearance, not a reality. The self of the child is nothing like the self of the grown-up man. He has seen the Lord and he is now a changed being. (173)

5. The thing is that in order to see God one must love Him, heart and soul. One must offer one's prayers so that they may reach the Divine Mother. (37)

6. Who can know God? It is not given to us, nor is it required of us to *know* Him fully. It is enough if we can see Him—feel that He is the only reality! It is enough if we can see God incarnate. (242)

7. You are not philosophers but devotees. You believe in a Personal God. That is right. Go on in this way. But have a yearning for the Lord and, depend upon it, you shall see Him as a reality! (136–137)

8. So march on and never halt till you have come up to the great ideal of your life—that of seeing God. (177)

II. GOD BOTH FORMLESS AND WITH FORM

1. For the sake of those that love the Lord, He manifests Himself in various ways and in various forms. The Lord manifests Himself, as with form or without form, with particular reference to the need of the devotee. (268)

2. To think of God as the Formless Being is quite right. But take care you do not run away with the idea that that view alone is true and all others false. Meditating upon Him as a Being “with form” is equally right. But you must hold to your particular point of view until you realize—until you *see* God, when everything will become clear. (32)

3. We should believe in the divine presence infilling the images of the deity. (157)

4. God lives in the temple of the human body. He knows our inmost thoughts. If there is anything wrong in image worship, does He not know that all the worship is meant for Him? He will be pleased enough to accept it knowing that it was meant for Him alone.

Why must you worry yourself about things above you and beyond your reach? Seek to know and revere God. Love God. That is the duty nearest you. (33)

5. There often comes a necessity of worshipping even such images as these [that is, images made of clay]. God Himself has provided these various forms of worship. The Lord has done all this—to suit different men in different stages of knowledge. (33)

6. Know that God makes His abode in all things, animate and inanimate. Hence everything should be the object of our worship, be it man or beast, bird, plant or mineral. (38–39)

7. But no creature in this world has yet been able to give proper and adequate expression to God the Absolute. He is unspeakable, unthinkable, inconceivable! Nothing can be predicated of It—the Being beyond the bounds of Relativity—of all existence! (62)

8. *Vijnanis*³ have realized that it is the Absolute and unconditioned who as the Primal Divine Energy causes this differentiation into God and the World-system, the soul and the universe. They have seen God both within and without and have received this Revelation from Him direct. God Personal has said to them, “I am the Absolute (*Brahman Nirguna* of the Upanishads) realized in *Samadhi*. The Personal God—creating, sustaining, destroying and causing the differentiation—has manifested Himself in various forms to those who seek *the Personal God* alone as well as to the *Vijnanis* as a Person. (68–69)

9. When the Supreme Being is thought of as inactive—neither creating, sustaining nor destroying, I call Him by the name of *Brahman* or *Purusha* (the Male Principle) [or] the Impersonal God. When I think of Him as active—creating, sustaining, destroying, I call Him by the name of *Shakti* or *Maya* or *Prakriti* (the Female Principle) or the Personal God. (70)

10. But in fact the distinction between Brahman, the Inactive or Impersonal God on the one hand, and Shakti, the Active or Personal God on the other, is a distinction without a difference. The Impersonal and the Personal are one and the same Being, even as fire and its burning property are one. (70)

11. God is one, only the names are different. Some call Him by the name of *Allah*, some *God*, some *Brahman*, others *Kali*, others again *Rama*, *Hari*, *Jesus*, *Buddha*. (119)

12. God is infinite. Infinite are the forms in which He manifests Himself! Infinite also is the number of ways leading to Him! (215)

III. THE DIVINE MOTHER

1. When nothing was—no sun, no moon, no planets—nothing but darkness deep, there was my Divine Mother alone, Formless! As Mother with dark blue complexion worshiped in Hindu homes, She is more accessible to man; She calls up human interest in a greater degree—coming to us with Her favors and saying to Her children, “Fear not.” (119)

2. O, my Divine Mother, Thou manifestest Thyself in everything. Thou art one with Thy Word that has taken the form of the Sacred Scriptures—the Vedas, the Puranas and the Tantras—the Bhagavad-Gita and the Gayatri.⁴ And, Mother, Thy devotees are but manifestations of Thyself! Thou art the same as God the Absolute beyond time and space; on the other hand, Thou art the Divine Energy manifesting Thyself in the universe. Thou art the Being Inactive [*Purusha*]. Thou art, again, the Principle of Activity [*Prakriti*]. Thou art the *Formless* Being and Thou art *with Form*. Thou art the universe before us. (103–104)

3. My Mother, the Primal Divine Energy, is both within and without this phenomenal world. Giving birth to the world, She lives within it! (120)

4. As Preserver She appears in times of plague, famine, earthquake, drought or excess of rain. At burning ghats of crematories, She appears in the form of Death [the All-Destroyer]. At the end of a cycle—upon the destruction of the world—my Mother, careful Matron that She is, puts together the seeds of creation. (120)

5. Variety is the law and my Divine Mother is that One Being who is manifest as many. Herself of Infinite Power, She has differentiated Herself into living creatures, and all other beings of this universe with all their varying powers and endowments—physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual. And this my Divine Mother is no other than the Absolute, the *Brahman* of the *Vedanta*. (72)

6. It [sometimes] pleases my Mother, the Personal God, to efface the self in selfless *Samadhi*.

The result is the realization of the Impersonal God in *Samadhi*. Sometimes it pleases Her to keep that self on in Her devotees and then to appear before them as the Personal God, and talk with them. (73)

7. That power of discrimination which the philosopher relies on comes from Her, my Divine

Mother, the Personal God. Prayer, meditation, devotion, self-surrender, are all likewise derived from my Omnipotent Mother. (74)

8. Take my word for it that if your prayer comes from the bottom of your heart, my Mother shall

respond to it, if you only wait. For, this She has revealed to Her children. (84)

9. That man is bound with the chains of “Woman and Gold”⁵ is due to the illusory power of

Maya that my Divine Mother has created as part of Her plan of the universe. That man can make himself free from her fetters is again due to the mercy and grace of the same Being, my Divine Mother. She takes Her children across the sea of the world and removes the chains with which they are bound hand and foot. (121)

10. The knowledge of oneness tells me that everything is but a manifestation of God the

Absolute on the plane of sense. Thus do I realize, actually see, that all women are so many forms in which the Divine Mother appears. So I revere all women alike—be it a

woman of the lower class or an ideal wife who sets an example to others of conjugal love and devotion. (230)

11. What Mother do I mean? The Mother of the universe—She who does create and does preserve—She who protects Her children always from evil and teaches them how to live in the world and how again to obtain liberation and true knowledge. A true child cannot live apart from the mother. He knows not anything—but his mother knows everything. He casts all his cares upon the mother. (147)

12. The moment their eyes open [that is, the eyes of those who are nearest to the Divine Mother], they change the course of their life and turn Godward, knowing that the Divine Mother is the one *Reality* in whom they live and move and have their being, and to whom they must always look up for light and life. (47)

IV. GOD INCARNATE

1. God is indeed infinite. But He is omnipotent. He may so order that His divinity as love may be manifest in the flesh and be among us as God incarnate. Divine incarnation is a fact. Of course, one cannot make this perfectly clear by means of words. It is a fact to be seen and realized by the spiritual eyes. One must see God to be convinced of this. (241)

2. I look upon all human beings—in fact, all creatures—as incarnations of the Deity. I see God evolved into all things, God manifest in every thing—in man and Nature. I see God

Himself has taken these multifarious forms that appear before our eyes in this universe!
(213)

3. Do you seek God? Well, seek Him in man! His divinity is manifest more in man than in any other object. Look around for a man with a love of God that overflows—a man who yearns for God—a man intoxicated with His love. In such a man has God incarnated Himself. (242)

4. How can the human being (the divine incarnation) who appears to view with all his limitations be the same as the Infinite, Eternal, Supreme Being? He *appears* as man with his limitations; but really He has no limitations. (276)

5. The milk of divine love streams to us from God incarnate. (242)

V. BHAKTI AND JNANA

1. It is the same Being whom men call by the name of the Absolute, the Soul of the Universe, [and] the Personal God with Divine Attributes. The first is the name applied by the Vedantist philosopher (monist), the second by the Yogi and the third by the devotees (dualists). (116)

2. To a devotee (dualistic worshiper) the Lord may manifest Himself in various forms. To one who has reached, by my Mother's will, to the height of Absolute Knowledge in *Samadhi*,

He is the Absolute once more, Formless, Unconditioned. Herein lies the reconciliation between realization by philosophy [*Jnana*] and that by love [*Bhakti*]. (76)

3. [My Divine Mother says], “Come unto Me through love, devotion, prayer, self-surrender; or through philosophy if you like; or with good works leading Godward; and I will lead you across this world, this ocean of all work. I will give you knowledge of the Absolute also, if you like.” (80)

4. So if knowledge of the Absolute is the end in view, one may attain to it ultimately if one would earnestly pray for it to the Almighty Mother and throw oneself entirely upon Her mercy. The devotee if thus anxious for such knowledge comes to my Mother (to any of Her Divine Manifestations) with ego of *Bhakti*, to find in the end the whole of his ego swept away in *Samadhi*, by my Mother’s will. (80)

5. Thus, in the first place, you may come unto *Brahman* by my Mother’s will through the path of philosophy. But it is given only to a few, especially in this *Kaliyuga*, to come through this road; so very difficult it is to shake off the conviction, “I am the body,” which clings to us. Again, you may come through prayer for light and for love. Self-surrender to Him and love of God are the various elements of *Bhakti*. First come to my Divine Mother, the Personal God, through these. (83–84)

6. It is She, my Divine Mother, who teaches *Bhakti* (love, devotion, prayer and self-surrender) to the devotee and thus changes his ego of this world into an ego of knowledge. (78)

7. The love of God is like a lady and so has access even to the *zenana* (harems). Knowledge (derived by reasoning) can go only up to the outer apartments (quarters reserved for men) and cannot get any entry into the inner apartment. (266)
8. As a rule, the *Bhakta* does not long for the realization of the Impersonal. He is anxious that the whole of his ego should not be effaced in *Samadhi*. He would rather have sufficient individuality left to him to enjoy the Vision as a Person. He would rather taste the sugar in place of being one with the sugar itself. To such, my Mother appears as a person (the Personal God), for She is loving to Her worshipers—Her children. (84)
9. Do you know how the devotee actually thinks and feels? He says, “O Lord! Thou art the Master, I am Thy servant; Thou art my Mother and I Thy child”; or again, “Thou art my child and I Thy father or Thy mother”; or thus, “Thou art the whole and I Thy part.” The devotee will not say “I am God.” (116)
10. To my Divine Mother, I prayed for pure devotion alone. With flowers in my folded hands, I prayed, saying, “Do thou, O Mother, grant that I may have pure and unalloyed devotion. Here is sin, here again is merit, O, take them both; I lay them at Thy feet. Here is knowledge (of many things), here again is ignorance, O, take them both and grant that I may have devotion alone. Here again is purification on the one hand and defilement on the other; I desire neither of them. Here are good works, here bad; both I lay at Thy feet; O, grant that I may have devotion alone and love for Thee! (126–127)

11. The heart of the devotee is the Lord's drawing-room. If one wants to meet the Lord, one had better seek an audience in the drawing-room. (115)
12. Does the Lord care for all the wealth that one may offer to Him? O, no. His grace lights on him alone who can offer love and devotion. What He values is pure love, non-attachment and renunciation for His sake. (149)
13. Call with *Bhakti* upon His hallowed name and *the mountain of your sins shall go out of sight*; just as a mountain of cotton will burn up and vanish if it but catches one spark of fire. (202)
14. Be not afraid like some foolish persons that you may "run to excess in your love of God." (180)
15. I long to worship the Lord in as many ways as I can, and still my heart's desire is not fulfilled! I long to worship Him with flowers and fruits and other offerings, to repeat His sacred name by myself, to meditate upon Him, to chant His hymns, to dance in the joy of the Lord! (281)
16. The one thing needful is love or devotion to God. As to renunciation and discrimination (between the real and the unreal), these will come of themselves if one loves the Lord. (104)

17. Do but come to my Divine Mother and you will get not only *Bhakti* but also *Jnana*, not only *Jnana* but also *Bhakti*—not only see Her in *Samadhi*, manifesting Herself in forms Divine but also realize Her as the Absolute in *Samadhi* in which all self in the devotee is effaced by my Mother and there is no manifestation of divine forms. (193)

18. Know that pure selfless devotion and pure selfless knowledge are both one and the same thing. The goal is the same. Smooth and easy is the path of devotion leading to God. (163)

VI. MEDITATION

1. Meditate upon God, the sole existence, knowledge and bliss eternal, and you also shall have joy everlasting. That Being of knowledge and bliss is always here and everywhere, only it is hidden from view by ignorance. The less is your attachment to the senses the more shall be your love towards God. (161)

2. In the course of meditation one must be merged in the Lord. If one floats on the surface one cannot hope to reach the precious stones lying at the bottom. (106)

3. The Yogi (or the aspirant who seeks to commune with God) wishes also to realize the Universal Soul [*Atman*]. His object is to bring by self-control the finite human soul [*Jivatman*] into communion with the Infinite Soul [*Brahman*]. He tries first to put

together his mind which lies scattered in the act of running after the world of senses; he then seeks to fix it on the Universal Soul. Hence the necessity of meditating on Him in solitude and in a posture which causes no distraction. (116)

4. Books—sacred scriptures—all point the way to God. Once you know the way, what is the use of books? Then the hour comes for the culture of the soul in solitary communion with God. (247)

VII. THE MIND

1. Placed in the midst of devotees, one's mind shall meditate upon God and talk on God and God alone. (124)
2. The mind is everything. It changes its nature according to the object—according to the things amongst which it lives and acts. (124)
3. The mind is everything. If the mind has lost its liberty, you lose yours. If the mind is free, you are free too. (124)

VIII. THE POWER OF FAITH

1. Pray earnestly to the Divine Mother, saying, "O Mother, grant unto me love and faith." Once you get faith, your work is done. *Verily, verily, there is nothing higher than faith.* (45)

2. You must have heard of the power of Faith. Ramachandra was God Incarnate; you know how he had to build a bridge across the sea (between India and Sri Lanka). But Hanuman, the great lover of the Lord, had infinite faith in the power of His Name. He repeated that Name and behold, he found himself at once on the other side! Here, you see, to show the power of faith, the Lord Himself had to build a bridge while the devotee who had faith in His Name needed no bridge to carry him across.⁶ (45)

3. Reason is weak. Faith is omnipotent. Reason cannot go far enough and must stop at some point or other. But faith will work wonders. Yes, by faith shall a man be able to cross the mighty ocean itself, without the slightest difficulty. (87)

4. Knowledge relating to God keeps pace with faith. Where there is little faith it is idle to look for much knowledge. (278)

5. The name of God, when uttered with faith by a sinner, shall bring salvation unto him. “What! Have I not chanted His holy name, and must I be a sinner still? Must I still be in bondage?” are words of faith in the Lord. (125)

6. What is more, sin and iniquity, worldliness and ignorance, all go out of sight before faith. Yes, faith is at the root of all spiritual progress. You can do without all other things; *only you must have faith*. Have but faith in the Lord, and you shall become at once free from the vilest, the blackest, of all sins. (88)

7. Faith like that of a child is the one thing needful. Such faith leads one to God. He that believes like the child receives the grace of God. (278)

IX. INSTRUCTIONS TO HOUSEHOLDERS

1. First, have a sense of what is real and what is unreal; and secondly, know what it is to live unattached to the world. Having these two, discrimination and non-attachment, we may live a family life. Along with this another thing is wanted—that is, intense devotion to God. (129)

2. Verily I say to you it matters not whether you live the life of a householder or that you are a man of the world. Only you must fix your mind on God. Do your work with one hand and touch the feet of the Lord with the other. When you have no work in the world to do, hold His feet fast to your heart with both your hands. (124)

3. To lead the life of a householder is by no means wrong. But take care that you work without attachment, with your mind always pointing to the feet of the Lord. A woman secretly carries on an intrigue with her lover. Live in the world like that woman, doing your many duties, with your soul secretly yearning for the Lord. She thinks of her lover all the time that she does her household duties.⁷ (296)

4. [In order to fix one's mind on God] one must chant without ceasing the Name of God and His great Attributes. One ought always to seek the company of holy men. One must always go among the Lord's devotees or those that have given up things of this world for the sake of the Lord. It is hard, no doubt, to fix one's mind on God in the midst of the world's cares and anxieties. Hence one must go into solitude now and then in order to meditate on Him. (34)

5. Do not seek more work than you can well manage. If you do, you will lose sight of the Lord. Work, or the performance of one's duty, is the means—and God is the end. Do not take the means for the end. (135, 136)

6. The attachment to work that is observable in England and America—an attachment leading to spiritual degredation—is to be condemned. If work is done unattached, it will lead to God. Work so done is a means to the end, and God is the end. No greater mistake can be committed than to look upon work as the be-all and end-all of human life. Work is the first chapter of human life. God is the conclusion. (174, 175)

7. What use has money? Why, it gives us food and clothes and a place to live in. Thus far it serves, and no further. Surely you cannot see God with the help of money. Money is certainly not the end of life. (36)

8. Charity, compassion, [and] kindness towards others are good if practiced without attachment. So practiced and with devotion they will lead to God. The ideal householder will give up

the world from the mind, that is, he will give up the fruit of all work for the sake of the love of God. (59, 60)

9. Do all your duties with your mind always fixed on God. As for your parents and wife and children, serve them as if they were your own, but know in the inmost recesses of your heart that they are not really yours, unless they too love the Lord. The Lord alone is really your own, and also those who love the Lord. (34)

10. Your path, as a married man, is to live with your wife just as brother and sister, after one or two children are born to you, and to pray to the Lord constantly that both of you may have strength to live a perfect life of spirituality and self-control. (280)

11. A wife who stands in the way of the husband seeking God is an ungodly wife who leads to ignorance and spiritual death.⁸ (109)

12. A man living in society, especially as a citizen and a householder, should *make a show* of resisting evil for the sake of self-defense. At the same time care should be taken to avoid paying back evil for evil. So raise the hood and hiss, but don't *bite*. (40, 42)

13. One who has realized the Lord can remain in the world and yet be fearless. Let such a person retire into solitude from time to time and thus attain sincere devotion and love to the Lord. Chaitanya Deva had several householders amongst his disciples. They were in the world but not of the world. They lived unattached to it. (110)

X. NOT I, BUT THOU

1. *Naham, naham—Tuhu-tuhu* (not I, not I, but Thou; Thou art the true actor; I am only the instrument in Thy hands). *Ami Yantra, Tumi Yantri* (I am the instrument, Thou art the being who uses the instrument). (165)

2. “I” and “mine” is ignorance. “Thou” and “Thine” is knowledge. The true devotee says, “Lord, Thou art the only active agent. I am only an instrument in Thy hands! I act as I am made to act by Thee. Thine are all these riches, the house, the family, everything! Nothing is mine. I am only a servant. Mine is only to serve according to Thy bidding.” (291)

3. Those that seek fame are under a delusion. They forget that everything is ordered by the Great Disposer of all things—the Supreme Being—and that all the credit is due to the Lord and to nobody else. It is the wise that say always, “It is Thou. It is Thou, O Lord!” But the ignorant and the self-deluded say, “It is I, it is I.” (172)

4. So long as there is the self which says, “I,” “I,” the problem for *me* is “How to live?” Shall I be content with a sensuous nature responding to a world of senses? No, let this self be the servant of the Lord—not the servant of the world and its so-called enjoyment! “Thou art the Lord; and I am, O Lord, Thy servant.” Not the enjoyment of the world and its

pleasures, but the enjoyment of Bliss everlasting, the enjoyment of the never-failing joy of the Lord! (225–226)

5. Those that have seen God feel that it is not they who help themselves but the Divine Mother.

All their strength comes from Her. Apart from the Divine Mother they are as good as non-entities. The child feels strong only in the presence of its Mother. (272)

6. The perfect liberation of the soul is within the reach of him alone who, being convinced that God is the disposer of all things, has learned the lesson of complete self-abnegation and absolute forgetfulness of “I,” “Me,” and “Mine.” (173)

XI. HIS TRUE IDENTITY

1. Many and various are [the spiritual forms of the Lord]! Amongst them do I behold also this form here, in which too the Lord hath manifested Himself. (By “this form” the Master means his own form). (304)

2. Here (that is, within himself) there are two Persons. One is the Divine Mother, the other person is Her devotee. It is the second person who has been now taken ill.⁹ (307)

3. *I see—I realize—that all things, every conceivable thing—comes out of this!* [that is, out of the Master’s own heart, to which he pointed as he spoke]. (311)

4. I now see that I and my Divine Mother have become one once for all. (306)

PEACE INVOCATION

Do but have faith in my words,
and I will see that you find peace. (297)
OM. Peace, peace, peace be unto all.¹⁰

¹ Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras. All parenthetical references are to page numbers in the third edition of this book. A few minor emendations have been made, mostly related to standardizing punctuation.

² *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1942).

³ “Literally *Vijnani* means, he who possesses an intimate knowledge of God” (M’s note).

⁴ Famous mantra in the *Rig Veda*: “We meditate on the adorable light of the radiant Sun. May He stimulate our intellect” (3.62.10).

⁵ A figure of speech signifying “lust and greed.” Sri Ramakrishna taught his male and female devotees separately, and “M” belonged to the group of male devotees. The Master similarly warned his female devotees of the dangers of “man and gold.”

⁶ Referring to an incident in the *Ramayana*. Ramakrishna proceeded to relate a story of lack of faith: “Another devotee wrote the name of Rama on a leaf and handed it to a man who wanted to cross the sea, saying, ‘Fear not, my friend; have faith and walk across the deep. But mind you do not show any lack of faith, for then you will be drowned.’ The man had tied up the leaf within the folds of his cloth. He went his way, walking on the sea. As he went, he was seized with a desire to look at the writing. He brought out the leaf and read the name of Rama (God) written large upon it. At this, he thought to himself, ‘Only the name of Rama! Is that all?’ And on the instant with loss of faith, down he went under the water!” (45).

⁷ Sri Ramakrishna is not commending the woman’s unchastity, but rather her single-mindedness.

⁸ Sri Ramakrishna’s corresponding instruction to his female devotees would be: “A husband who stands in the way of the wife seeking God is an ungodly husband who leads to ignorance and spiritual death” (see endnote 5).

⁹ Referring to his throat cancer. Sri Ramakrishna proceeded to ask: “Do you understand this?”

¹⁰ For another compendium of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, see Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, *Sri Ramakrishna Upanishad* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1953).