

BRAHMANANDA UPANISHAD:

“MOVE ONWARD! LIGHT! MORE LIGHT!”

Compiled by Joseph Molleur, Vedanta Society of Iowa, March, 2008

PEACE INVOCATION

The greatest strength of character is to live in harmony with all.

No one can find peace if he hurts another.

Never utter one word that would hurt another.

It is easy to live in harmony with saints,

but real strength lies in living in harmony with all beings. (EC 219)ⁱ

OM. Peace, peace, peace be unto all.

I. SRI RAMAKRISHNA

1. We saw a true and living representation of discrimination and renunciation in Sri Ramakrishna. We read of discrimination and renunciation in the scriptures, but we saw them personified in him. (EC 248)
2. Sri Ramakrishna was many-sided. Whenever he talked about the intuitive knowledge of the Godhead, he would talk as one who was a pure *jnani*, a knower of God. And whenever he talked about love and devotion, he talked as a pure lover and devotee of God.ⁱⁱ (EC 178–79)

3. Our Master, Sri Ramakrishna, was the embodiment of supreme love and devotion; so that our own lives must be such that people all over the world, burdened by earthly sufferings and miseries, may learn to take his holy name and in him find rest and peace. (EC 49)
4. Sri Ramakrishna saw God in all beings. (EC 177)
5. Everyone, whether man or woman, rich or poor, high or low, has an equal right to the spiritual heritage and service of Sri Ramakrishna. Blessed is he who serves the Master and follows his teachings! (GLT 97)
6. The Master came this time to make a bridge between Jiva and Shiva [human beings and God]. See how easy it has now become to realize the Lord! (GLT 112; EC 121)
7. I am praying to God that I may remain absorbed in the thought of the Master. That is the one desire of my heart. (GLT 88)
8. Pray to Sri Ramakrishna. He still lives. Pray to him: “You are mine and I am yours.” Merge yourself in his consciousness; he will show you the path. (EC 232)
9. Ramakrishna exists always. Pray to him day and night for his vision. He will dispel all your doubts and will make you understand his true nature. (GLT 128)

10. Fear? You are coming to Sri Ramakrishna. What fear can there be? We all of us are his children. Don't be afraid! There should be no fear in approaching him. (EC 156; GLT 117)
11. Yearn for him. Since you have taken refuge in Sri Ramakrishna, be certain that you have his grace. (EC 251)
12. Oh, what superhuman power the Master had! One day I said to him: "Sir, I cannot get rid of lust. What shall I do?" He touched me in the region of the heart, muttering some indistinct words. All lust vanished from me forever! I have never felt its existence since then.ⁱⁱⁱ (GLT 85)
13. You will see yourself to what great spiritual heights you will soar through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna. (EC 214)
14. Through rare good fortune you have come within the orbit of Sri Ramakrishna. See that you do not waste your life in vain activities. (EC 283)
15. I will give you knowledge in one sentence: Read *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* regularly every day. That is enough. You will find in this book the truth of all religions. (GLT 108; EC 173)
16. The Master himself is preaching; we are only instruments. (GLT 107)

II. SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

1. Sri Ramakrishna was revealed to the world at large through Swamiji. Know that their words and teachings are not different. Sri Ramakrishna was too great for the average mind to grasp; it was Swami Vivekananda who made his life and teachings understandable to all. (EC 182)
2. Study Swamiji's works carefully, for unless you understand his teachings it is useless to try to understand Sri Ramakrishna. Read and study the teachings of both, and at the same time devote yourself to the practice of japam and meditation. (EC 182)
3. I tell you, you must have infinite faith in these two great souls, Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji, and work for them. (EC 212)
4. We have heard Swamiji often say, "Work and worship." I can confirm this from my own experience. "Work and worship" is the surest way to spiritual progress. (EC 267)
5. Swamiji's ideal was, "Liberation for one's self and service to mankind!" With one hand hold on to the feet of the Lord, and with the other do his work. (EC 222)

III. THE DIVINE MOTHER

1. The key to the knowledge of Brahman is in the Divine Mother's keeping. There is no way of communing with Brahman unless the Mother graciously unlocks the door. (GLT 101; EC 96)
2. It is very hard to understand Mother's [Sri Sarada Devi's] greatness, unless she herself reveals it. Through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, one may recognize the Divine Mother in her. (EC 95)

IV. GOD AND HIS DEVOTEE

1. Just do one thing: always try to remember God. (GLT 115; EC 163)
2. Within each one of us there are two currents flowing. One carries us toward God and the other carries us toward the world. One current takes you along the path of renunciation to God; the other tries to pull you toward worldly enjoyments. We must choose between them. As a result of this choice we become either gods or brutes. (EC 200–01)
3. "I want to taste sugar but not become sugar,"^{iv} is for the man who has not yet tasted sugar. When a devotee begins to taste the sweetness of God, he will desire to achieve oneness with him. (EC 238)

4. As long as you think “God is *there*,” you will find no peace. When you know and can feel that he is *here, here* (pointing to his heart), you will find peace. (EC 220)
5. Though temples may serve as aids to the beginner, they are but symbols of God’s greatest of all temples, the human heart. (EC 190)
6. One must have faith that the one Brahman is in man, woman, in all creatures; and with that faith one must learn to serve Shiva in the form of Jiva. You are that all-pervading Shiva; and thus can serve Shiva in the form of Jiva. (EC 136)
7. With the same whole-hearted devotion with which a devotee worships the Lord in the shrine he must serve the Lord in the poor, in the sick, in the lowly. (EC 136)

V. THE GURU

1. No scriptures or books can create such pure impressions or transform a man’s life as much as contact with an enlightened soul. (EC 257)
2. The aid of a guru is very necessary. With unwavering faith in the words of the guru, the disciple must regularly practice repetition of the mantram and meditation on its meaning. Thus will he find peace of heart. (EC 196)

3. If a man has faith in the words of his guru and follows them, then all his doubts and troubles vanish. If a man has faith in the words of his guru, God will meet all his wants. (EC 126)
4. Faith! Have intense faith in the words of the guru and you will achieve everything. Without faith in the words of the guru, spiritual life is fruitless. (EC 283)
5. Enlightenment comes quickly to one who has faith in the guru. But one must learn to see God in the guru. The guru must never be regarded as man. By worshiping him and serving him as God, the body and mind are purified. (EC 228)
6. If one can serve the guru one acquires an intense love for him, which later develops into an intense love for God. Thus there is really no difference between the guru and God. (EC 204)
7. If you make mistakes, the guru, in whom you have taken refuge, will wipe away all your impurities. (EC 284)
8. After leaving the body the true guru lives on in the invisible realm; sometimes he reveals himself to his disciples, but at all times he helps and guides them, until they, too, attain illumination. (EC 285)

VI. THE MIND

1. There is no greater guru than your own mind. When the mind has been purified by prayer and contemplation it will direct you from within. Even in your daily duties, this inner guru will guide you and will continue to help you until the goal is reached. (EC 191)
2. The holy company you keep, the spiritual talk you hear, all make an impression on your mind. In the course of time you will realize the effects of these things and the momentous changes that they will bring about in your life. (GLT 118)
3. Your mind is in constant danger of becoming contaminated; therefore, you must engage your mind in thinking good thoughts, studying good books, and discussing uplifting subjects. You must spend your time in worship of God, in service to holy men, and in contemplation. This is the only way to mold your character. (EC 218)
4. Man suffers because of his ignorance, which manifests as “I” and “mine.” The really happy and fortunate man is he who has given up his ego and has surrendered his life, mind, and intellect to God, and has nothing to call his own. (GLT 88)
5. A man’s mind tries to deceive him, but he must not allow himself to be swayed by his mind; he must curb and rule it. Hold fast to the truth. Be pure-hearted. The purer you become the more will your mind will be absorbed in God. You will be able to see the subtle

deceptions of the mind, and you will be able to root them out. Your mind is your only enemy, and your mind is your only friend. (EC 223)

6. With the strength of the intelligent will, keep the mind under control. A man can train horses and elephants and bring them under control; can't he learn to train his own mind? (EC 171)

7. Learn to train and control your mind. Be its master. Let it not control you. Teach it to give up all craving for fleshly enjoyments. When the mind is once freed from craving it becomes your slave. (EC 229)

8. Should you give up meditation because the mind does not like it? If you go on in that way you can never learn to meditate. Regular war must be waged against the mind. To force the mind to obey you is the ideal of spiritual discipline. (EC 287)

VII. FOUR METHODS OF WORSHIP

1. To meet the needs of all, the scriptures prescribe four distinct methods of worship. One method is the ritualistic worship of God embodied in an image or symbol. (EC 185)

2. Higher than this is the worship of God with prayer and japam. By this means the aspirant prays and chants and meditates upon the shining form of his Chosen Ideal within his own heart. (EC 185)

3. Higher still is meditation. When a man practices this form of worship, he keeps up a constant flow of thought toward God and becomes absorbed in the living presence of his Chosen Ideal. He goes beyond prayer and japam, but the sense of duality remains. (EC 185)
4. The highest method of worship is meditation on the unity of the Atman and Brahman. This leads directly and immediately to God. The aspirant experiences Brahman; he knows that God *is*. It is an actual realization of the omnipresent Reality. (EC 186)

VIII. JAPAM AND MEDITATION

1. The easiest method of realization is to remember God constantly. Entertain God in your thoughts. Converse freely with him. Know him as your very own, and you will find peace in him. (EC 192)
2. Practice japam unceasingly. Practice it with every breath. Practice it until it becomes your second nature; then you will find yourself chanting the name of God as you fall asleep and again as you awaken. (EC 236)
3. Japam—japam—japam! Even while you work, practice japam. Keep the name of the Lord spinning in the midst of all your activities. If you can do this, all the burning of the heart will be soothed. (EC 225)

4. The mantram is charged with spiritual power. The truth of this will be directly revealed to you as you practice. (EC 264)

5. Devotion, self-surrender, and all other virtues will grow from within as you practice meditation. (EC 208)

6. When you sit for meditation first think of a divine, blissful form. This will bring a soothing effect upon your nerves; otherwise meditation will be dry and tedious. Think of the form of your Chosen Ideal, smiling and full of bliss. (EC 207)

7. Meditate upon God within the shrine of your heart, or visualize him present before you.
Worship him mentally. Just as the ritualistic worshiper offers flowers, and waves incense and lights before the deity in the temple, so should you offer all the articles of worship mentally to the living presence enshrined within your heart. (EC 274)

8. As you meditate on your Chosen Ideal, think of him as bright and effulgent, and that everything shines because of his light. Think of him as living and conscious. As you continue thus, the form of your Chosen Ideal will gradually melt into the formless, into the Infinite. (EC 202)

9. When, through spiritual practices, a little awakening comes, do not mistake that for the goal. Do not stop! Move onward! Light! More light! Go deeper and deeper. You must see him face to face, and talk to him. (EC 241)

10. This life may end at any moment. No one knows when. Equip yourself for the journey with spiritual treasures. Always be ready for the great call. (EC 245)

IX. SELF-EFFORT AND GRACE

1. Be self-reliant. Self-effort is absolutely necessary to success in the spiritual life. (EC 198)

2. Struggle, make an effort, and soon you will find faith and devotion awakening within you. You will be blessed by the vision of God, and you will become the heirs of immortal bliss. (EC 218)

3. Have tremendous faith in yourself. Say to yourself, “I can know God”—with this faith forge ahead and you will reach him. Be his eternal companion. (EC 245)

4. Believe me, the Lord is always with you. Practice even a little, and he will extend his hand to help you. He will protect you from all miseries and unhappiness. How unbounded is his grace! (EC 207)

5. If you go one step towards God, God will come a hundred steps towards you. Why did God create us? So that we may love him. (RHD 330; EC 288)

6. Sri Ramakrishna is attached to his devotees. The breeze of his grace is blowing. Take a little trouble to set your sail. Then the touch of that breeze of grace will make your boat of life land at his feet. (EC 134)
7. The Master loved us so dearly that he gave us everything he had to give. Still we have not attained peace. This shows that it now lies with us to do the rest for the fulfillment of life's objective. (GLT 89)
8. As one progresses on the path of spirituality, one is confronted by many kinds of temptations. Cravings—such as for lust and greed, for name and fame—arise again and may lead one farther away from God. Unless you beware of this thief in the form of cravings he will steal all the goodness in you, and you will drown in the bottomless ocean of worldliness. But, on the other hand, there is the ocean of divine grace—if anyone will sincerely call on him but once. (GLT 113–14)
9. Hold on for a little while. Do not give your mind up to objects of desire. You must exercise great self-control in everything. Objects of desire! They will follow you like slaves. Then, through his grace, you will find you have no desire for them—nor will you feel any attachment to them. (EC 270)
10. Banish all fear and weakness. Never weaken your mind by thinking of past mistakes. Sin? Sin exists only in man's eye. In God's eye there is no sin. One glance of his and the sins of many, many births are wiped away. (EC 246–47; GLT 117–18)

X. THE SECRET OF WORK

1. The only purpose of life is to know God. Attain knowledge and devotion; then serve God in mankind. Work is not the end of life. Disinterested work is a means of attaining devotion. Keep at least three fourths of your mind in God. It is enough for you to give one fourth to service. (RHD 328; EC 54)
2. Do your duties conscientiously, and without attachment. Always remember that you are an instrument in the hands of God, and that God himself is the only doer. Keep your mind fixed in God. (EC 184)
3. Each and every work is equally important—whether it is meditation or household duties. Do it with the right spirit. Work is worship. (GLT 110)
4. Learn to work for the Lord instead of working for yourself. Know that you are worshiping the Lord through your work. If you can work with this attitude, work will not bind you; on the contrary, it will improve you in every way, physically, mentally, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Offer yourself, body and soul, to the Lord. (EC 211)
5. Set yourself to work for the Lord, and before you begin any task remember the Lord and offer your salutations to him. Do this from time to time while you are working, and also when

you have finished. Know in your heart that the work you are doing you are doing for him. (EC 214)

6. Everyone wants to do the work he best likes to do, but that is not the secret of work. Whatever work you do, whether you like it or not, know that it is the Lord's work, and adjust yourself accordingly. Remember this, all work must be done as worship of God. (EC 231)

7. Try to remember God constantly—even while you are working. In the beginning it is a little difficult, but through practice it becomes easy. Never give up struggling. (EC 237)

8. Give the whole of your mind to God. If there is no waste of mental energy, with a fraction of your mind you can do so much work that the world will be dazed. (GLT 95)

9. Learn to perform all duties, great or small, with a concentrated mind. He who can concentrate his mind in action can also concentrate when practicing meditation. (EC 231)

XI. THE JOY OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

1. Struggle hard to control the outgoing mind and fix it on God. When you can do this, you will realize what joy there is in spiritual life, what fun it is! (EC 183)

2. God and the lust for worldly enjoyments cannot go together. To have one you have to let go the other. At the same time it is not possible to entirely give up the lower pleasures unless you have tasted the joy of the higher. That is why I insist that you give your whole heart to God now. (EC 229)

3. The more the mind is absorbed within, the greater will be the joy of meditation; and when once you taste joy in your spiritual practices, the desire to continue in them will grow. (EC 286)

4. This constant flow of thought toward God is meditation. Neither time, nor place, nor circumstances need be taken into account in this practice. Plunge in! Oh, the joy of it! (EC 268)

5. There is an inexpressible joy in humility. (GLT 101)

6. It's good to laugh every day; it relaxes the body and the mind. (RHD 331; EC 78)

7. Play with God, sing his glory, enjoy the fun! (EC 271)

PEACE INVOCATION

The greatest strength of character is to live in harmony with all.

No one can find peace if he hurts another.

Never utter one word that would hurt another.

It is easy to live in harmony with saints,
but real strength lies in living in harmony with all beings. (EC 219)

OM. Peace, peace, peace be unto all.

NOTES

i The following abbreviations are used in this compilation:

EC: Prabhavananda, Swami. *The Eternal Companion: Brahmananda*. 3rd ed. Hollywood: Vedanta Press, 1970.

GLT: Chetanananda, Swami. *God Lived with Them: Life Stories of Sixteen Monastic Disciples of Sri Ramakrishna*. St. Louis: Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 1997.

RHD: Isherwood, Christopher. *Ramakrishna and His Disciples*. London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1986.

ii Swami Brahmananda recommended such a balanced approach for all: “There is the path of devotion and there is the path of knowledge. However, one is not different from the other. In the end, the devotee and the man of knowledge become one” (EC 226–27).

iii Contrast Sri Ramakrishna’s response to a nearly identical request made by Swami Turiyananda: “Give up lust? Why should you give up lust? Instead of trying to give up, you should increase your lust!” By this, the Master meant: “Direct all your thoughts of lust and all your passions toward God” (EC 178). Contrast also Swami Brahmananda’s method of instructing his own disciple, Swami Prabhavananda. The latter writes: “Once, I asked him [Swami Brahmananda] to free my mind from lust. ‘I could do that for you,’ he replied, ‘but then, my child, you would lose all the joy of struggle. Life would seem insipid’” (EC 69). It seems that instructions for dealing with lust vary on a case-by-case basis, depending on the guru’s insight into the individual qualities and needs of the disciple.

iv A proverbial anti-*advaita* sentiment, common among dualists, perhaps first articulated by the great eighteenth-century Bengali poet and devotee of Kali, Ramprasad Sen.