

VI SELF-EFFORT AND DIVINE GRACE

1. Disciple: "How does one get the vision of God?"

Mother: "It is only through His grace. But one must practise meditation and Japa. These remove the impurities of the mind. One must practise spiritual disciplines such as worship and so forth. As one gets the fragrance of a flower by handling it, or as one gets the smell of sandalwood by rubbing it against a stone, in the same way one gets spiritual awakening by constantly thinking of God. But you can realize Him right now if you become desireless."

2. "The mind gets purified after hard Tapasya. Without regular practice nothing can be attained."

3. "The mind is rendered pure as the result of many austerities. 'God who is purity itself cannot be attained without austerities/ What else does one obtain by the realization of God? Does he grow two horns? No, his mind becomes pure, and through a pure mind one attains knowledge and spiritual awakening."

4. "The purpose of initiation is to try to realize God through sincere spiritual effort."

5. Disciple: "What is the need of Tapasya?"

Mother: "It is very necessary. ... The Master practised all kinds of disciplines. He used to say, *I have made the mould; now you may cast the image.'... To cast the image means to meditate and contemplate on the Master, to think of the various incidents of his life. By meditating on him, one gets all the spiritual moods."

6. "Spiritual practices are meant to keep the mind steady at the feet of God, to keep it immersed in His thought. Repeat His Name."

7. "If you practise spiritual discipline for some time in a solitary place, you will find that your mind has become strong, and then you can live in any place or society without being in the least affected by it. When the plant is tender, it should be hedged around. But when it has grown big, not even cows and goats can injure it. Spiritual practices in a solitary place are essential."

8. "Sit for meditation in the morning and the evening. Keep your head cool and practise meditation and prayer. It is very difficult to do so. It is rather easy to dig the earth with a spade." Looking at the picture of the Master, she said, "You will achieve nothing without His grace."

9. "Devotees who come nowadays simply keep on saying 'Show us God. They have no spiritual practice, no prayer, no austerity-and past sins must be many. These have to be removed step by step, and then only God can be seen. The moon in the sky is covered with clouds; wind will blow away the clouds, and then only can you see the moon. Do the clouds scatter away all of a sudden? Exactly the same here. The Karmas get exhausted slowly. When God is realized. He illumines the soul internally-one knows this internally."

10. "My child, you have been extremely fortunate in getting this human birth. Have intense devotion to God. One must work hard. Can one achieve anything without effort? You must devote some time for prayer even in the midst of the busiest hours of the day. I used to be very busy during my days at Dakshineswar; yet I did my prayer and meditation."

11. "Prayer and meditation, or pilgrimage, or even earning money, all these should be done during the earlier part of one's life. ... In old age one's physical and mental strength are weakened. Is that the time for any struggle? Look at our boys here now, they have turned their minds to God in their youth. This is right, this is the proper time. My son, your prayers and meditations must be accomplished now, in your youth. Do you think you will be able to do anything later? Whatever you may want to do, this is the time for it."

12. Disciple: "It is my desire to spend some time in spiritual exercises in the solitude of a garden."

Mother: "Quite right. This is the proper time to do so. This is just the proper age for you to undergo these disciplines. You must practise them, but be careful about your food, Swami Yogananda practised great austerity and as a result suffered much and passed away early in life."

13. "The room may contain different kinds of food-stuff, but one must cook them. He who cooks earlier gets his meal earlier too. Some eat in the morning, some others in the evening, and there are yet others who fast because they are too lazy to cook. ... The more intensely a person practises

spiritual disciplines, the more quickly he attains God. But even if he does not practise any spiritual disciplines, he will attain Him in the end surely he will. Only, he who spends his time idly, without practising prayer and meditation, will take a long time to attain Him.”

14. “Everything, no doubt, happens by God’s will, yet man must work because God expresses His will through man’s action. Do not relax your spiritual practices.”

15. Disciple: “Mother, how can I have a perfectly pure heart and love for God?” Mother: “All in good time. Now that you have taken refuge with the Master, everything will come to pass. You must pray to the Master.

16. Advice to a discouraged aspirant: “You must not think in this way. Are visions everyday things? The Master used to say, ‘You may ‘cast your line daily, but can you catch a large fish every day? If you wait intently day after day with all your paraphernalia, you may catch a fish some day, or you may not. But don’t give up waiting.’” Pray longer. ... Cling to what you have found. Say to yourself, ‘Even if I have no one else, I have a Mother.

17. Disciple: “Mother, why do I not see the Master?”

Mother: “Continue to pray without losing heart. Everything will happen in time. See how quite a number of munis and rishis could not find Him even after ages of searching, and you want to have Him for the mere asking ... Is God-vision such an easy thing? But fortunately the Master has chalked out an easier path this time; therefore it will be possible for all to realize God.”

18. When a disciple complained about making no spiritual progress, the Mother said to him, “Suppose you are asleep in Calcutta and someone is removing you with your couch to Banaras. Will you at that time know that you are on your way to Banaras? When you wake up you will be surprised to see where you have come.”

19. Mother: “One has to sit by the riverside and call on Him. He will ferry across at the proper time.”

Disciple: “If everything occurs at the proper time, then where is the place for His grace?”

Mother: “Even so, don’t you have to throw your line and wait for the fish when you go angling?”

20 . Disciple: “If God is our own, why then should one sit and wait?”

Mother: “That is true. It may happen even out of season.”

21. “God-realization can be had at any time by the grace of God, but there is a difference between it and what comes in the fullness of time.”

22. “Can the mango which ripens out of season be as sweet as the one which ripens in the month of Jyeshtha, that is, the proper season? Men are trying to get fruits out of season. ... But these are not as sweet as those found in the proper season. This is also true of the efforts that lead to God-realization. Perhaps you practise some Japa and austerities in this life; in the next life you may intensify the spiritual mood and in the following life you advance further.”

23. Disciple: “Mother, I have practised austerities and Japa so much, but I have not achieved anything.”

Mother: “God is not like fish or vegetables that you can buy Him for a price.”

24. “There is no such rule that the grace of God will fall on one simply because one is practising austerities. In olden days the rishis practised austerities for thousands of years with their feet up and head down and a lighted fire burning under them. Even then, only some received the grace of God.”

25. “Do you know, my child, what it is like? It is just like a candy in the hand of a child. Some people beg the child to part with it. But he does not care to give it to them. Still he easily hands it over to another whom he likes. A man performs severe austerity and spiritual practices throughout his life to realize God, but he does not succeed, whereas another man gets his realization practically without any effort. It depends upon the grace of God. He bestows His grace upon anyone He likes. Grace is the important thing.”

26. Mother: “God is like a child, you know. He denies some who seek and of Himself gives to some who do not. Perhaps such people had highly evolved souls from their previous lives. That is why they receive His grace.”

Disciple: “Then distinctions are made even in the matter of grace?”

Mother: “Certainly, it is all according to one’s Karma. Once the bonds of Karma are sundered, one realizes God.” ...

Disciple: “Mother, I admit that spiritual exercise, exhaustion of past Karma,

and proper time-all these are factors in the attainment of spiritual knowledge. But if God is our own, why should He not show Himself out of His grace?"

Mother: "That is right. But who has this faith that He is his own? All take up religion as a matter of form. How many really want God?"

27. "Be sincere in your practice, words and deeds. You will feel blessed! His blessings are always showered on all creatures on the earth. It is needless to ask for it. Practise meditation sincerely and you will understand His infinite grace. God wants sincerity, truthfulness and love. Outward verbal effusions do not touch Him."

28. "How many are there who truly want to realize God? Where is that earnestness? They, no doubt, profess great devotion and longing, but they feel satisfied when they get even a tiny bit of enjoyment. They say, 'Ah, how kind is God!'"

29. "If you don't call upon God-indeed many people never even remember Him-what does it matter to Him? It is your own misfortune. Such is the Maya of God, He keeps them ignorant of Him saying, 'They are happy enough, let them be so!'"

30 . "Whatever you yearn for, that you will get"

31. "My child, this world is like a deep marshy place. Once a man gets entangled there, it becomes very difficult for him to come out. ... Repeat the Name of God. If you do so. He will cut away your bondage some day. Can anyone get liberation, my child, unless He Himself removes the shackles? Have deep faith in God. Look upon the Master as your refuge, even as children regard their parents."

32. "You may say that you have done so much of Japa or so much of work; but nothing will avail. Nobody can achieve anything unless Mahamaya clears the way. Oh, my children, take refuge, just take refuge. Then alone she will clear the way out of her mercy. ... Once in summer at Kamarpukur, a heavy shower had filled up the fields, and water overflowed from the ponds. The Master was wading through water when proceeding by the side of the sweeper colony. As the cat-fish came out of the ponds, the people around began to beat and catch them. One of the fish kept swimming near about the Master's feet. So he said, 'Don't you kill this one. See how it seeks

my protection and plays round. It will be S3 good if one of you carries it to the Haldar's pond." Then he himself took it up and released it in the pond. Returning home he said, 'Ah, if anyone seeks protection in this way, one is saved.'"

33. "Repeat the Name of God in the innermost core of your heart, and in ail sincerity take refuge in the Master. Do not bother to know how your mind is reacting to things around. And do not waste time in calculating and worrying whether or not you are progressing in the path of spirituality. It is Ahamkara to Judge progress for oneself. Have faith in the grace of your Guru and Ishta."

34. Disciple: "There are devotees who surrender themselves to God but do not practise austerities. Will they attain to this state (of realization)?"

Mother: "That they surrender themselves to God, that they live placing implicit trust in Him, is their spiritual discipline. Naren said, 'Let me have millions of births, what do I fear?' It is true. Does a man of knowledge ever fear rebirth? He does not commit any sin. It is the ignorant person who is always seized with fear. He alone gets entangled. He becomes polluted by sin. For millions of births he suffers from endless miseries, he undergoes infinite pains, and at last he craves for God. ... The calf makes the sound of 'Ham Hai, Ham Hai (I am, I am). He makes the same sound even after drums and other instruments are made from his hide and entrails. At last he goes into the hand of a carder and then he makes the sound Tum Hai, Tum Hai' (It is Thou, It is Thou)."

35. "People suffer endless miseries on account of their egoism and at last they say, 'Not I, not I; it is Thou, O God! It is Thou!'"

36. Devotee: "Man cannot do anything by his individual effort. God is doing everything through him."

Mother: "Yes, that is true. But is one conscious of this always? Blinded by egoism, people think themselves to be independent agents in regard to action. They do not depend on God. He protects one who relies on Him."

37. "As you pray and meditate you will find the Master actually speaking to you, fulfilling all your desires immediately, and your mind will be filled with such deep peace. ... You will realize that He who is in me, is in you too and in the humblest of men-only then humility will be born in your mind."

38. “My child, if you can get perfect knowledge through my blessings, then I bless you with all my heart and soul. Is it ever possible for a man to free himself unaided from the clutches of Maya? It was for this that the Master performed spiritual austerities to the utmost extent and gave the results thereof for the redemption of mankind.”

39. The Master used to say, “The way is extremely difficult, like the sharp edge of a razor.’But He has kept you in His arms. He is looking after you.”

40 . “Just surrender yourself to Him; you will then feel His grace.”