

**SARADA UPANISHAD:
LISTENING AT THE FEET OF HOLY MOTHER**

DEDICATORY PREFACE

Sri Sankaracarya concludes his wondrous hymn to the Divine Mother, *The Saundarya Lahari* (“Inundation of Divine Splendor”), with this verse: “Just as the light-waving ceremony to the sun is only the offering of his own light back to him; just as the offering to the moon with the water emanating from the moonstone is only giving back what belongs to the moon; and just as making a water offering to the ocean is only returning what belongs to it—so, O Mother, Source of all Learning, this hymn to You is composed of words that are already Yours” (adapted from the Sri Ramakrishna Math edition, translated by Swami Tapasyananda).

Holy Mother, this Upanishad is likewise an offering to You of words that are already Yours; only the arrangement is mine. My prayer is that this collection of Your holy and liberating words will be pleasing to You, and bring Your devotees joy.

Joseph Molleur

Vedanta Society of Iowa

May, 2007

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- GHM *The Gospel of the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi.* Recorded in Bengali by Her Devotee-Children; translated by Swami Nikhilananda, Swami Prabhananda, and others. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1986.
- MSH *The Mother as I Saw Her: Being Reminiscences of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi.* Original in Bengali by Swami Saradeshanda; translated by J. N. Dey. Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1982.
- RSSD *Reminiscences of Sri Sarada Devi.* Compiled and edited in Bengali by Swami Purnatmananda; translated by Maloti Sen Gupta. Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2004.

PEACE INVOCATION

My child, I bless you from my heart that you live long, attain devotion, and enjoy peace.

Peace is the principal thing. One needs peace alone. (GHM, p. 126)

OM. Peace, peace, peace be unto all.

I. THE MOTHER

1. I am your Mother and you are my child. (GHM 114)
2. I haven't borne a single child, yet I have to take care of thousands—monastics some of them, some householders and yet others, perhaps out of their mind, crying "Mother, save me."
(RSSD 205)
3. My dear, they too (foreigners) are my children. I have to run the house including everybody.
Could I be one-sided? (GHM 376)
4. Beings all over the universe are my children. (GHM 204)
5. I am the mother of the virtuous as well as the wicked. (GHM 305)
6. If the son defiles himself, the mother cleanses him. (RSSD 209)
7. Do you know, my son, that the Master looked upon all in this world as Mother? He left me behind this time for demonstrating that Motherhood to the world. (GHM 321)

II. HER TRUE IDENTITY

1. When I had occasion to go to him [Sri Ramakrishna] next, as soon as I met him, I asked,
“Who am I to you?” At once he replied, pointing to Kali’s temple, “She who is there also dwells here”—pointing to me. (RSSD 199)
2. People call me “goddess,” and I too am led to think so. Or how could you explain all the strange things that have happened in my life? (GHM 60)
3. Am I then a superhuman being? I never knew what worry was. And the vision of God—it lies, as it were, in the palm of my hand. Whenever I like it, I can have it. (GHM 37)
4. Now-a-days I find my mind having a strange power. Whatever thought arises, it comes true, be it good or bad. (GHM 388)
5. I do not remember having committed any sin since my very birth. (GHM 148)
6. I have been suffering from this ailment [nettle-rash] for the last three years. I do not know for whose sins I have been suffering in this body. Otherwise how is it possible for me to get any disease? (GHM 49)
7. I myself am Sita. (RSSD 48)
8. I myself am Maya! (GHM 147)
9. Look here, do not trouble me too much. If the one who is within me once raises his hood, there is none among Brahma, Vishnu or Maheshwara that can save you. (GHM 370)
10. Do not make any distinction between Sri Ramakrishna and me. (GHM 22)

III. SRI RAMAKRISHNA

1. Ah! How kindly Sri Ramakrishna treated me! Not even one day did he utter a word to wound my feelings. (GHM 60)
2. The Master is really God who assumed a human body to remove the sufferings of men. He moved about just as a king walks through his city in disguise, and he left the world as soon as his identity was discovered. (GHM 301)
3. Our Master alone is *Maheshwara* (Supreme God) and *Maheshwari* (Supreme Goddess) as well. He alone is the embodiment of all Deities. He alone is the embodiment of all mystic syllables. One can worship through him all Gods and Goddesses. You can address him as *Maheshwara* as well as *Maheshwari*. (GHM 164)
4. What else is spiritual life besides praying to the Master, repeating his Name, and contemplating on him? (*With a smile*) And the Master? What is there after all in him? He is our own eternally! (GHM 86)
5. At every step of life keep the Master in mind, then no pain will seem painful. Who doesn't have sorrow or suffering in life? They are inevitable. If you repeat his name, seek his protection, he will give you strength. (RSSD 271)
6. Whatever we may be, we are rooted in the Master. He is our ideal. Whatever you do, if you keep a firm hold on the Master, nothing will go wrong. (GHM 376)
7. Sri Ramakrishna is everything—both Guru and Ishta. He is all in all. (GHM 22)
8. I saw that Master was immanent in every being. Wherever I looked I saw Master—the blind, the lame too were Master. There was none but the Master everywhere. Then it dawned on me that the creation was His, every creature was He. (RSSD 222)

9. Sri Ramakrishna was a perfect soul. Certainly one can be free from sin by confessing it to one like him. (GHM 37)
10. The Master has predetermined what he is going to accomplish. If anyone surrenders himself totally at his feet, then the Master will see that everything is set right. (GHM 92–93)
11. If you pray to him constantly before his picture, then he manifests himself through that picture. The place where the picture is kept becomes a shrine. (GHM 100)
12. You say you haven't seen the Master? I tell you, you certainly shall. Is it any ordinary person who has cast his influence over you? (RSSD 213)
13. Don't be afraid, my child. The Master is ever-present. He alone will protect you, both here and hereafter. (GHM 166)
14. The Master will be your protector. It will be a heinous sin on the part of the Master if he does not protect those who have taken shelter at his feet, who have taken refuge in him renouncing all, and who want to lead a good life. You must live in a spirit of self-surrender to him. (GHM 131)
15. Master did not come to destroy tradition. (RSSD 214)
16. Our Master was a man of direct perception. He saw everything; he knew everything. His words are the words of the Veda. (GHM 151)
17. If you can follow even one of his instructions, you will attain to everything in life. (GHM 22)

IV. GRACE

1. Nothing can be attained without his grace. (GHM 305)

2. One suffers as a result of one's karma. So, instead of blaming others for such sufferings, one should pray to the Lord, and depending entirely on His Grace, bear them with patience under all circumstances. (MSH 211)
3. God-realization depends upon the grace of God. He bestows His grace upon anyone He likes. Grace is the important thing. (GHM 27)
4. In olden times the ascetics practiced austerities for thousands of years with their feet up and heads down, and with fires burning under them. Even then, only some of them received God's grace; others did not receive it at all. It entirely depends on His will. (GHM 220)
5. God is realized only through His grace. Nonetheless, one must perform Japa and meditation, for they remove the impurities of one's mind. (GHM 310)
6. Practice meditation sincerely and then you will understand His infinite grace. God wants sincerity, truthfulness, and love. If you exert yourself sincerely and, banishing all other thoughts, pray to Him from the core of your heart, then your call will be responded to and your prayers granted through His grace. (RSSD 300)
7. Well, everything will be done by the grace of Mother Kali. We shall try our utmost. (GHM 167)
8. One hears the *anahata-dhvani* prior to the rousing of the Kundalini. But this is not possible without the grace of the Divine Mother. (GHM 217)
9. If Mahamaya does not open the way, is anything possible for anyone? Oh bound soul! Surrender, surrender. Then alone will She take compassion on you and leave your path open. (GHM 408)
10. May my children have every blessing, joy and peace through the grace of Mother Durga. (MSH 63)

V. FAITH

1. Doubts will arise and again faith will come. This way alone faith is strengthened. Gradually, after many such attempts, firm faith will come. (GHM 367)
2. Faith and steadfastness to your ideal are the main things. If you have them, you will attain everything. (MSH 135)
3. May your spiritual consciousness awaken, may you have faith and devotion! (GHM 375)

VI. WORK

1. Always be engaged in some work or other. It is conducive to the health of both the body and the mind. (GHM 7)
2. Son, work for your living. If you don't work who will feed you? Work, eat well, sing the praises of God. (RSSD 38–39)
3. Only work, considering all work to be His work—service to Him. And the work that you are doing, dear, why, it is all my work! (RSSD 238)
4. One must do some work. Through work alone can one remove the bondage of work, not by avoiding work. Total detachment comes later on. One should not be without work even for a moment. (GHM 14–15)
5. My son, it is good to work. Please pray for me that I can do so till the last day of my life! (MSH 139)

6. It is good to do the right kind of work. One feels happy in doing good and one suffers by doing evil. (GHM 133)
7. How can the mind be kept well without any work? Is it possible to meditate for all the twenty-four hours of the day? So one has to take up some work. That keeps the mind in good shape. (GHM 105)

VII. SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

1. There should be a regular time for the practice of Japa and meditation. For no one knows when the auspicious moment will come. It comes suddenly—one has no hint of it before hand. Therefore, regularity in spiritual practice should be observed, no matter how busy one may be with worldly matters. (GHM 322)
2. At least once at dawn and dusk one must sit down for spiritual practices. It is like the rudder of a ship. When you sit at dusk, you get to think of all that you have done and not done during the day. Then you have to compare the states of your mind yesterday and today. Then doing Japa one has to meditate on the form of one's Ishta. Though in the beginning, one sees only the face of the Ishta, one must meditate on the whole form from the feet upwards. (GHM 396–397)
3. My child, austerities or worship, practice all these things right now. Will these things be possible later on? Whatever you want to achieve, achieve now; this is the right time. (GHM 177)
4. Do your spiritual practice ardently. Repeating His name will make your mind steadfast like the flame of a lamp protected from wind. (GHM 219)

5. Well, do you see how effective is the power of practice? In the same way, man achieves the highest goal through the practice of Japa. Japa leads to success. Yes, Japa leads to success! (GHM 227)
6. With a little practice one gets such joy! (GHM 408)

VIII. DEVOTION

1. Have intense devotion to God. One must work hard. How can one achieve anything without effort? One must devote some time for prayer even in the midst of one's household duties. (GHM 59)
2. But realization of God cannot be achieved without ecstatic love (Prema Bhakti) for Him. (GHM 87)
3. Neither Mantra nor scripture is of any avail; Bhakti or devotion alone accomplishes everything. (GHM 22)
4. One's love of God depends entirely upon one's inner feeling. Love of God is the essential thing. One realizes Him in proportion to the intensity of one's feeling for Him. (GHM 102)
5. Anyone who has once called on the Master, with sincere faith and devotion, has nothing more to fear. As one calls on Him, by His grace one gets Prema-bhakti, loving devotion. This love is to be cherished. (GHM 359)
6. Is the value of a thing to be gauged by its price? It is the love and devotion with which a thing is offered that really counts! (MSH 109)
7. Even the impossible becomes possible through devotion. (GHM 13)

IX. MEDITATION

1. In time the mind itself becomes the Guru. If one is able to pray to God and meditate on Him for even two minutes with full concentration, it is very good. (GHM 70)
2. If one is steady in meditation, one will clearly see the Lord in one's heart and hear His voice. (GHM 59)
3. Why can't one meditate if one has a pure mind? Why should one not be able to see God?
When a pure soul performs Japa, he feels as if the holy Name bubbles up spontaneously from within himself. He does not make an effort to repeat the Name. One should practice Japa and meditation at regular times. (GHM 176)
4. The practice of meditation will lead your mind to such one-pointedness that you won't like to give up meditation. But when you do not achieve such concentration of mind, don't force yourself to meditation. On such occasions finish your spiritual practice by simply saluting the Lord. The day on which you have the right mood, you will have meditation spontaneously. (GHM 213)
5. It is not an easy task. Compared to meditation, it is easier to till a plot of land. (GHM 305)
6. Practice meditation regularly, for your mind is still unripe. After prolonged practice of meditation, your mind will become steady. (GHM 214)

X. THE MIND

1. You may talk of the vision of God or of meditation, but remember, the mind is everything.

One gets everything when the mind becomes steady. (GHM 178)

2. Everything depends upon one's mind. Nothing can be achieved without purity of mind.

(GHM 76)

3. What else does a man obtain by the realization of God? Does he grow two horns? No, his

mind becomes pure, and through such a pure mind one attains knowledge and spiritual awakening. (GHM 173)

4. Please tell me what is impure in your body—the skin or flesh, or bones, or marrow? It is the mind that makes one pure or impure. There is nothing called impurity outside the mind.

(GHM 320)

5. If the mind is kept engaged in some work, it doesn't indulge in silly thoughts. But if you sit idle, the mind is likely to indulge in various kinds of thoughts. (GHM 214)

XI. BRAHMAN

1. Is the mind the cause of troubles only? Even when you try to attain to Brahman, you shall have to carry with you the mind, too. When you attain to It, none of them [troubles] will be there. At the present stage the assistance of the mind is very necessary. It is the pure mind which shows man the path. (GHM 207)

2. Brahman exists everywhere. The prophets and incarnations are born to show the way to a benighted humanity. They give different instructions suited to different temperaments.

There are many ways to realize the Truth. Even the wise could hardly realize the nature of Brahman by argument. Is Brahman an object of discussion? (GHM 20)

3. Is the Master a “part” of some “whole”? No, He is the “whole,” the complete, the full.

Brahman is the “whole,” without anything else beside Him. There is nothing existing but He. Everything that appears before us is the manifestation of Brahman, of His Power (Shakti). It is His Power that is manifested as all Deities and is worshipped through them. Brahman alone is the Purusha, the Male supreme, the Infinite and the Absolute Being; He is also the Prakriti or Shakti, the glorious Female, the source of this universe of multiplicity. (MSH 104)

XII. COMPASSION AND LOVE

1. He is unfortunate, indeed, who does not gain my compassion. I do not know anyone, not even an insect, for whom I do not feel compassion. (GHM 160)

2. Nothing can be achieved without sincere love. (GHM 47)

PEACE INVOCATION

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OM. Peace, peace, peace be unto all.

NOTES

- I.4 In response to a widow who asked Holy Mother, “How many children have you?”
- I.7 In response to a question about why she outlived Sri Ramakrishna, when incarnations usually outlive their consorts.
- II.8 In response to some women who had accused Holy Mother of being “terribly entangled in Maya” due to her involvement with bothersome relatives and worldly concerns.
- II.9 Speaking to her exasperating close relatives.
- IV.1 Pointing to a picture of Sri Ramakrishna.
- IV.4 Response to a monk of the Ramakrishna Order who asked when he would receive God’s grace as a reward for his “hard austerities.”
- IV.7 To Sri Ramakrishna, when he was ill.
- IV.8 The *anahata-dhvani* is “the mystical, primordial sound of the universe, the symbol of which is OM.”
- IV.10 Described as the “prayer she offered from the core of her heart” for her devotees.
- V.1 To Yogin-Ma, who was having doubts about Holy Mother’s renunciation due to the latter’s seeming entanglement with relatives and worldly affairs.
- VI.5 To a son of Holy Mother who pleaded with her not to work so much in her old age.
- XI.2 To a couple of argumentative nuns who disapproved of image worship.
- XII.2 After hearing a song of Mirabai that ends with the line: “God cannot be realized without love.”