

# *Brahmacharya Quotes*

- *Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa*

1. **Sri Ramakrishna** was uncompromising on the need for celibacy for God-realization. He used to tell devotees, **“To be able to realize God, one must practise absolute continence.** Sages like Sukadeva are examples of an ‘urdhvareta’ (a person of unbroken and complete continence). Their chastity was absolutely unbroken. **A man practising unbroken brahmacharya for twelve years develops a special power. He grows a new inner nerve called the nerve of memory. Through that nerve he remembers all, he understands all. When a man succeeds in the conservation of his sexual energy, his intellect reflects the image of Brahman. The man who carries this image of Brahman in his heart is able to accomplish everything – he will succeed wonderfully in whatever action he engages himself.**
2. **The loss of reproductive elements dissipates a person’s strength. But there is no harm in nocturnal emission. That reproductive element is from food. After nocturnal emission, a man retains enough to succeed. But he must not lose it voluntarily.** What remains after nocturnal emission is very refined. The Lahas stored pots of molasses<sup>[18]</sup> with holes in the bottom. After a year it was found that the molasses had turned into crystals, like sugar candy. Whatever liquid there was had come out through the holes.
3. Sri Ramakrishna (*to Mahima*): “What you were saying about men of continence is correct. One cannot hold these spiritual teachings without practising brahmacharya. **Someone said to Chaitanya Deva, ‘You give the devotees so much instruction. Why aren’t they able to make much progress?’ He replied, ‘They squander it all by breaking brahmacharya. That’s why they’re not able to hold on to spiritual instruction.’** If you fill a leaky pail with water, the water trickles out little by little.”
4. Sri Ramakrishna (*to Balaram*) — **Maya is only ‘lust and greed’. By living in the midst of them for a few days, one loses spiritual awareness but feels that all is well.** A scavenger carries a pot of excreta and in course of time, doesn’t feel any repulsion for it. One gradually acquires love and devotion for God by practicing the chanting of the Lord’s name and glories.
5. **If you want to realize God, you will have to be a brahmachari. Without practising brahmacharya, one cannot concentrate steadily on God. From brahmacharya comes intellectual conviction and then comes faith in the power of Brahman. Without this faith, one cannot feel that he is living in Brahman. Practise japam (repetition of the holy mantra) and meditation day and night. This is the way one can get rid of attachment to lust and gold.**
6. **When a man succeeds in the conservation of his sexual energy, his intellect reflects the image of Brahman, even as a glass gives a perfect image when its back is painted with mercury solution. The man who carries**

**this image of Brahman in his heart is able to accomplish everything—he will succeed wonderfully in whatever action he engages himself.**

7. “As long as you have even a little consciousness of ‘I,’ you are under the jurisdiction of the Primal Power – and unable to set yourself free.
8. **Sri Ramakrishna and principle of yoga – ‘lust and greed’ are impediments to yoga – You ask me why you don’t develop deep dispassion. There is a reason for it. You have a strong desire for sense enjoyments,** your mind is filled with *pravritti*<sup>[261]</sup>. I say the same to Hazra. In the countryside before they bring water to the fields, they make mud ridges on all four sides of the field so that water can’t flow out. They are mud ridges, but they have water outlets here and there. There are holes. Water is brought with full force to the field, but it goes out through the holes. **Our desires are like these holes, these outlets. You may be practicing *japa* (repetition of God’s name) and austerities, but at the back of your mind, you have desires for sense enjoyments. From the outlets of desire, everything leaks out.** “One catches fish with a bamboo trap. Ordinarily bamboo is straight, but when bent to the ground, it acts as a fish trap. Desire for sense enjoyments is the fish, so the mind remains bent toward the world. **If there is no desire, the mind naturally orients upward, toward the Lord. Do you know how? Like the needles of a scale. Because of the weight of ‘lust and greed,’ the upper needle does not align itself with the lower needle. Thus one strays from the path of yoga. Haven’t you seen the flame of a lamp? It flickers by just a puff of air. The state of yoga is like the flame of a lamp where there is no wind.** Our mind is spread out in different directions. A part of it has reached Dacca, a part Delhi and another part Coochbehar. **You have to collect this mind and concentrate it to a point.** If you want a cloth worth sixteen annas<sup>[262]</sup>, you have to pay this amount to the cloth merchant. **Even if there is a slight obstacle, yoga is not possible. If the telegraph wire is broken, howsoever small the break may be, it will not convey your message.**
9. **The nearer you come to God, the more tranquility you feel. Peace, peace, profound peace. The nearer you approach the holy Ganges, the cooler you feel. A dip in it is even more soothing.** On attaining the knowledge of Brahman, attachment to the world and enthusiasm for ‘lust and greed’ vanishes. You attain perfect peace. A piece of burning wood produces a crackling sound and gives out heat. When it is consumed and has turned to ash, all sound ceases. As soon as you get rid of attachment, the restlessness for ‘lust and greed’ vanishes. Finally you attain tranquility.
10. Sri Ramakrishna: **“Those through whom God will teach mankind must renounce the world. It is essential for religious teachers to renounce ‘lust and greed.’ Without it, their teachings are not accepted. It is not enough for them to renounce inwardly. They must also renounce outwardly. Only then can they teach mankind. If they don’t, people will think that they are being asked to renounce ‘lust and greed,’ while they secretly enjoy them.** “An Ayurvedic physician<sup>[13]</sup> prescribed some medicine to a patient and said, ‘Please come again another day and I will tell you about diet.’ That day, there were a number of jars of molasses<sup>[14]</sup> in his room. The patient lived quite far away. He

came another day. The physician said to him, 'Be careful about your diet. Molasses is not good for you.' When the patient had left, somebody asked the physician, 'Why did you cause him the trouble of coming here again, all that way? You could have said this to him the first day.' The physician laughed and said, 'There is a reason. I had some jars of molasses in my room that day. If I had asked him to give up molasses, he wouldn't have trusted me. He would have thought, He has so many jars of molasses in his room, he must surely be eating some of it. In that case it can't be so bad. Today I have hidden the jars; he will now believe me.' "I have seen the religious teacher<sup>[15]</sup> of the Adi [Brahmo] Samaj. I hear that he has married two or three times. And that he has grown sons. Such are religious teachers! If these people say that only the Lord is real and all else is an illusion, who will believe them? You can guess very well what kind of disciples they will have.

11. **Full renunciation is for sannyasins. They shouldn't even see the picture of a woman.** Women are like poison for them. They must keep at least ten cubits away or, if that's not possible, at least one cubit. Even if a woman is a great devotee, a sannyasin **shouldn't talk to her for long.** **"A sannyasin should live in a place where he doesn't even see the face of a woman, or very rarely.** *"Money is also a poison for sannyasins. When you have money, you quickly fall prey to anxiety, pride, physical comfort, anger, and so forth. Rajas increases. When there is rajoguna, it leads to tamoguna. So a sannyasin shouldn't touch money. 'Lust and greed' make you forget God. Why such difficult rules of conduct for a sannyasin? They are there for the instruction of humanity as well as for his own good. Even if a sannyasin lives unattached, having controlled his senses, he should renounce 'lust and greed' in order to teach mankind. People will muster the courage for renunciation only if they see the one hundred percent renunciation of a sannyasin. Then only will they endeavour to renounce 'lust and greed.'* If a sannyasin doesn't impart this instruction of renunciation, who else will? **One should lead a householder's life only after attaining God.** It is like keeping butter in water after it has been churned. Janaka led the life of a householder only after attaining the knowledge of Brahman.
12. **Discrimination and dispassion.** **One is able to renounce the attachment to 'lust and greed' by the yoga of practice. The Gita says this. Practice brings extraordinary strength to the mind. Then you don't find it difficult to subdue the senses, to control passions like lust and anger. For instance, a tortoise doesn't bring out its limbs once it has drawn them inside its shell, even if you cut it into four pieces with an axe.** Differentiating between the real and the unreal in this manner is discrimination. Dispassion means a distaste for worldly things. This does not come about all of a sudden. It has to be practiced daily. To begin with, you have to renounce 'lust and greed' in the mind. Then, God willing, you can renounce them externally as well as internally.
13. **If you are attached to 'lust and greed,' you develop pride of learning, pride of wealth and high position – all these things ... Sri Ramakrishna (to the devotees) — Do you know what happens when you live as a householder? A lot of your mental powers are unnecessarily expended. This wastage of mental**

powers can be made up only by embracing sannyasa. Your father gives you your first birth. Your second birth is when your sacred thread ceremony is performed. And the third one is when you enter monastic life[96]. “ ‘Lust and greed.’ These indeed are the two obstacles. The attachment to a woman leads one away from the path to the Lord. A man is unable to realize what has brought his downfall. When I went to the Fort, I hardly knew that I was going down a slope. When the carriage reached the Fort, I observed how far down I had come. Ah, She doesn’t let man know! Captain said, ‘My wife is spiritually wise.’ When an evil spirit possesses a person, he does not know that he is possessed. He just says, ‘I am all right.’ (Everybody sits perfectly still.) “It is not only lust which is a danger in family life. There is anger, too. When you are thwarted in your desire, you get angry.” **M.** — When a cat reaches out to snatch fish from my plate, I can’t do anything about it. **Sri Ramakrishna** — Why not? You must beat it once, there is no harm in that. The householder must hiss [threaten], but never pour venom. Reason? One must not harm anybody. However, you have to make a show of anger to save yourself from the enemy or he will hurt you. But one who has renounced need not even hiss.

14. **Sri Ramakrishna: “Lovelorn! Oh, you have to be mad for God to attain Him! “This does not happen if the mind dwells on ‘lust and greed.’ What joy is there in lust? One feels ten million times that joy from a vision of God. One feels the joy of union with the Atman in every pore.”**
15. **When a person gets even a drop of God’s ecstatic love, ‘lust and greed’ become so insignificant!** When you get a drink sweetened with sugar candy, how can you care for one mixed with molasses? When you pray to God with a yearning heart, when you chant His name and glories incessantly, you gradually develop that kind of love for Him.
16. **The Brahma devotee:**Lust and anger are the real enemies. What can we do about them?” **Sri Ramakrishna:** “Turn the six enemies around – towards God. Have lust for union with the Atman. Show anger to those who are an obstacle in the way to God. Have greed to attain Him. If you have to say, ‘Me and mine,’ say it in relation to Him – as, for example, ‘My Krishna or my Rama.’ If you have pride, let it be like the pride of Bibhishana who said, ‘I have bowed to Rama. This head shall never bow to anybody else.’”
17. There is a view that a man doesn’t attain spiritual awakening until his desire for worldly enjoyments is over. **But what is there to enjoy? The pleasures of ‘lust and greed’ are momentary – this moment they exist and the next moment they disappear.** What is there in ‘lust and greed’? Its enjoyment is like eating a hog-plum that is all stone and rind. Eat it and you get colic. The moment you swallow sweet sandesh, it is gone.
18. **One does not realize God unless ‘lust and greed’ have vanished from the mind.** The fire of spiritual wisdom first burns up lust, anger and other such enemies. Later it destroys the sense of I-ness[117]. Lastly, it brings about a great turmoil [in the body].
19. **Sri Ramakrishna** — He has seen the plight of worldly people who are forgetful of God. That is why he is developing renunciation for these things. Need one whose mind is freed from the attachment to ‘lust and greed’ worry about

anything? “Oh, how strange! I had to perform so much repetition of the Name and meditation to get rid of these desires. How is it that he has absolutely freed his mind from desire so quickly? Is it so easy to get rid of lust? Oh, what a sensation I felt in my chest even six months after starting my spiritual practices! I would lie under a tree and weep. I cried to the Divine Mother, ‘Mother! If I experience the feeling of lust, I will cut my throat with a knife!’ **(To the devotees)** “If the mind is free from ‘lust and greed,’ what else remains to be attained? Then one enjoys only the joy of Brahman.”

20. **Sri Ramakrishna (to the devotees): “You cannot achieve union with God when the mind dwells on ‘lust and greed.’** The mind of an ordinary person remains in the centres of awareness located at the genital, anal, and naval regions.<sup>[2]</sup>**It takes a lot of effort in spiritual discipline for the kundalini to awaken.** There are three nerves – ida, pingala, and sushumna. And in the sushumna are six lotuses, the lowest being the muladhara. Then there are svadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddha, and ajna. These are the six spiritual centres. “When the kundalini awakens, after it has crossed the lotuses of muladhara, svadhisthana, and manipura, it reaches the anahata lotus located at the heart. It stays there. The mind is then withdrawn from the three lower centres of anus, sex organ, and navel; it attains a spiritual consciousness and sees a light. The aspirant is speechless with wonder and exclaims, ‘What is this! What is this!’ “Having pierced six centres, the kundalini reaches the lotus of sahasrara and unites with it. When the kundalini reaches there, the aspirant passes into samadhi. “According to the Vedas, these centres are called bhumis or planes. There are seven planes. The heart is the fourth, and the lotus at anahata is twelve-petalled. “The vishuddha centre is the fifth plane. When the mind reaches there, the heart yearns only to talk of God and to hear about Him. This centre is located in the throat. It has a sixteen-petalled lotus. The person whose mind has reached this centre feels great pain to hear any worldly talk, such as talk of ‘lust and greed.’ When he hears such talk, he gets up and leaves the place. “After this comes the sixth plane, the ajna centre of two petals. When the kundalini reaches there, one has the vision of God’s form. But there is still a thin screen of separation. Like a lantern, the light can’t be touched because of a glass barrier. “Then one reaches the seventh plane, the thousand-petalled lotus. When the kundalini reaches there, samadhi comes about. The Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute Shiva resides at the sahasrara. Here He unites with Shakti – it is the union of Shiva and Shakti. “When the mind reaches the sahasrara, one becomes absorbed in samadhi. In this state all awareness of the external disappears, and the person cannot preserve his body. If milk is poured into his mouth, it runs out.
21. **Difference between the mind of a worldly man and a genuine renouncer.** **Girish** (to Sri Ramakrishna) — Well sir, at times the mind rises so high – and then it falls so suddenly! Why is this? **Sri Ramakrishna** — This does happen when one leads a worldly life. The mind is first up, then down. First you feel so strong – and then so weak. You see, it is because one has to live amidst ‘lust and greed’. In worldly life the devotee contemplates the Lord and repeats His name – but then he gives his mind to ‘lust and greed’. He is like a housefly. Sometimes it sits on sandesh, at other times on a festering wound – and even on

excreta. It is different with tyagis (those who have renounced the world). Taking their mind from 'lust and greed,' they give it to the Lord and only sip the sweetness of Hari's name. A genuine man of renunciation doesn't like anything but the Lord. When he hears worldly talk, he gets up and leaves. He only listens to Godly matters. The genuine renouncer talks of nothing but the Lord. The bee sits only on flowers, for it drinks honey. It likes no other thing."

22. **They who live only with 'lust and greed' – who don't think of God even once – are bound souls. What great work can they perform?** They are like mangoes pecked by crows. Such mangoes cannot be offered to the gods. Eating them yourself is also risky. Bound souls, worldly people, are like silkworms. They could come out of their cocoons if they wished, but they have built their own homes and maya does not allow them to escape. And it all ends with death. Liberated souls are not under the control of 'lust and greed'. Some clever silkworms cut their cocoons and come out. But they are very few. Because of maya (attachment), one remains forgetful. Few attain spiritual awakening, few are not deluded by the magic of maya, are not subject to the control of 'lust and greed.' When the pot<sup>[57]</sup> containing ashes from the maternity room falls on one's feet, the 'damn, damn' word of the magician can do no harm. One can see exactly what the magician is doing.
23. **...A young man sadly asked Sri Ramakrishna: "Sir, how can I get rid of lust? I strive so hard, still I suffer from restlessness due to passion and bad thoughts." Sri Ramakrishna: "... Do you think I am free from it? At one time I believed that I had conquered lust. Then one day when I was seated in the Panchavati, I suddenly had such an onrush of lust that it was hard for me to maintain control! Immediately I began crying, rubbing my face in the dust, and saying to the Divine Mother: "I have made a big mistake, Mother. I shall never again think that I have conquered lust.' Only then did it subside. Do you know, you boys are now passing through a flood tide of adolescence? You can't stop it. Can an embankment or a breakwater stop a tidal wave? The overflowing water breaks through and rushes forward, and then the water stands as high as a bamboo over the paddy fields. There is a saying, 'Mental sin is not considered to be a sin in this Kaliyuga.' If a bad thought happens to arise once or twice in the mind, why should you go on brooding about it? Sometimes those feelings come and go. They are natural to the body; consider them to be physical functions like the call of nature. Do people worry when they have an urge for the call of nature? Similarly, consider those feelings to be insignificant, trifling, and worthless, and don't think of them anymore. Pray to God intensely, chant His name, and meditate on Him. Don't pay any heed to whether those feelings come or go. Gradually, they will come under control." ...**
24. **Sri Ramakrishna: "Lust and greed' are the cause of bondage. 'Lust and greed' mean worldliness. In fact it is 'lust and greed' that keep one from seeing God."** Saying this, Thakur covers his face with a hand towel and says, "Can you see me now? This is a veil. When the veil of 'lust and greed' is removed, one attains consciousness-bliss.<sup>[5]</sup> "Just see. Whoever has given up the joy of lust has renounced the joy of the world. God is very near to this person." Some of the devotees are standing, others are sitting, as they silently listen to these words.

(To Kedar, Vijay, and others) “He who has given up the pleasure of lust has given up the pleasures of the world. This ‘lust and greed’ is truly the veil. You show off such big moustaches, and you are still immersed in it. Tell me truly. Search your mind and see if it isn’t so.” **Vijay:** “Sir, it is true.”

25. **Those who live amidst ‘lust and greed’ aren’t able to understand because of their inebriation.** Chess players often don’t know if a move is right until the game has continued for some time. But onlookers from a distance can see and understand the game better.
26. In the state of a paramahansa one becomes like a child. A five-year-old does not distinguish between a man and a woman. Even so, the paramahansa has to be careful to set a good example.
27. **Why was Keshab Sen not able to teach people?** Keshab Sen was associated with ‘lust and greed.’ It hindered his teaching of humanity. That is what Thakur is saying. **Sri Ramakrishna:** “He (Keshab) – do you understand?” **Vijay:** “Yes, sir.” **Sri Ramakrishna:** “He (Keshab Sen) tried to take care of both the worldly and the spiritual. So he couldn’t achieve very much.”
28. **Why did Chaitanya Deva renounce the world?** **Vijay:** “Chaitanya Deva said to Nityananda, ‘Nitai, if I hadn’t renounced the world, people would not be helped. They would all want to live a worldly life. Nobody would try to give his whole mind to the lotus feet of God by renouncing ‘lust and greed.’” **Sri Ramakrishna:** Chaitanya Deva renounced the world to set an example. “A sadhu renounces ‘lust and greed’ for his own good. And then even when he has become detached, he must not allow a woman or gold near him, to set an example. A man of renunciation, the sanniyasin, is a world teacher. Just seeing him gives spiritual awakening.”
29. **“One may wash a cup that contains garlic many times, but the smell of garlic will not leave the cup. The boys who have not touched ‘lust and gold’ are pure vessels. When a person is rubbed with the garlic of ‘lust and gold’ for a considerable time, the smell of garlic persists in him.** “They are like mangoes pecked at and defiled by crows. Such a mango cannot be offered to Bhagavan. It is suspect even for personal use. It is as different as new earthen pots and the pots in which milk was once turned into curds. It is not safe to keep pure milk in vessels that once contained curds. The chances are that the milk will turn sour.” **“With ‘lust and greed’ always around you, how is it possible to realize God? It is very hard indeed to live unattached in their midst. In the first place, one is a slave of one’s spouse. In the second place, one is a slave to money. And in the third place, one is a slave to him whom one serves for the sake of his living.**
30. **M. — Will one always have to perform spiritual practices?** **Sri Ramakrishna** — No, in the beginning you must be up and doing, but you don’t have to work so hard later on. As long as there are storms, tempests and rough water, the boat has to be steered along zigzag routes; so long does the boatman stand and hold the rudder – but he no longer does so when he is past them. When the boat rounds a bend and a favourable wind blows, he can sit down and relax and just touch the rudder. Then he prepares to hoist the sail and sits down for a smoke. There is peace when the storm and tempest of ‘lust and greed’ pass.

31. Some people show signs of yoga. But even they have to be careful. 'Lust and greed' are the obstacles to yoga. They make one deviate from yoga and fall into worldliness – if there is still any desire for sense enjoyment.
32. **If the mind is restless, yoga is not possible. The wind of the world always distracts the flame of the mind. When the flame does not waver, one attains a perfect state of yoga.** 'Lust and greed' are obstacles to yoga. You must discriminate: what is there in human body but blood, flesh, fat, intestines, worms, urine, faeces and so on. Why love such a body? ... "Worldly people are intoxicated – inebriated with 'lust and greed'. They have lost their awareness. That is why I am fond of the young men. 'Lust and greed' have not yet entered their minds. They are 'good receptacles' and can be of use in the Lord's work. Worldly people are full of worthless stuff.
33. **"'Lust and greed' is maya. One attains union with God when the mind is rid of these two.** The Atman, the Supreme Soul, is the magnet. The embodied soul is like a needle. When the former pulls the latter, it results in union. But if the needle is covered with dirt, the magnet can't pull it. When, however, the dirt is removed, it is drawn again. You have to clean yourself of the dirt of 'lust and greed.'" **Mukherji: "How can we do this?" Sri Ramakrishna: "Weep for God with a longing heart. The water of your tears will wash off the dirt. And then the magnet can pull it. Only then will you attain union with God."** **Mukherji: "Oh, wonderful!" Sri Ramakrishna: "When you are free from lust and greed, Kumbhak (breath retention) occurs by itself. Samadhi comes after that. "And then there is the practice of meditation. Shiva manifests especially in the Sahasrara. Meditate on Him. The body is like a saucer, and the mind and intellect are like water. In this water, the sun of Sat-chit-ananda is reflected. By meditating on that reflected sun, one has the revelation of the real sun through God's grace."** "When you can weep for God, He grants His vision. And you attain samadhi. Perfection in yoga is samadhi.
34. **Why family life? – when desire for enjoyment is over, one feels yearning for God and realizes Him. A devotee: "Why has He kept us in the world?" Sri Ramakrishna: "To keep the creation going. That is His will. That is His maya. God has bewitched us with 'lust and greed.'" A devotee: "Why has He bewitched us? Why does He will this?" Sri Ramakrishna: "If He granted the bliss of God even once, no one would live a householder's life. And that would lead to the end of creation. Rice is stocked in big bags in a warehouse. So that rats don't find the rice, the grain dealer keeps some puffed and sweetened rice in a husking pan. The rats like the sweetened rice and eat it through the night. They don't look for the bagged rice. But look, you can make fourteen times the volume of one seer of rice with puffed sweetened rice. How great is the bliss of God compared to the joy of 'lust and greed!' Contemplating His beauty, even the beauty of Rambha and Tilottama appears like ashes from a fire."** **A devotee: "Why don't we develop that yearning to realize God?" Sri Ramakrishna: "A person doesn't feel yearning for God until the desire for enjoyment is over. Until the desire for 'lust and greed' is satisfied, a person doesn't remember the Mother of the Universe. A child busy playing doesn't look for his mother. When his play is over, he says, 'I want to go to my mother.'** Once Hriday's son was playing with a

pigeon. He was calling out to it, 'Come here, tee tee!' As soon as he had enough of playing, he began to cry. A stranger came by and said, 'Come, I'll take you to your mother.' The boy even climbed on the man's shoulders to be taken. **"Those who are born perfect don't have to go through the householder's life. They are already free from the desire for enjoyments since their birth."**

35. **Four classes of men attachment to 'woman and gold' is the sign of worldly man: Sri Ramakrishna** — Four classes of human beings have been stated the bound souls, the seekers after liberation, the liberated and the ever free. The world is like the fishing net, the jiva (individual soul) like the fish and the Lord (whose maya constitutes the world) is the fisherman. When fishes fall into the fisherman's net many of them try to tear the net to escape, i.e. they try to free themselves. They are like the men seeking liberation. However, all those who try to escape cannot run away. Only a few fishes slip out with a splash. Then people call out, 'There goes the big fish.' Such two or four beings are the liberated ones. Some fishes are so cautious by nature that they never fall into the net. Narada and such other saints are ever free; they never fall in the net of the world. However, most of the fish keep lying in the net unaware of the fact that they have fallen into a net and will die. Remaining in the net, they dart straight ahead taking the net along and try to hide their body into the mud. They make no attempt to escape, rather they fall deeper into the mud. They are like the bound souls. They live in the net and think, 'We are quite happy here.' **The bound jivas remain attached to the world that is to 'woman and gold'. They remain sunk in the sea of evil and think that they are very happy there.** Those who seek for liberation and those who are liberated look upon the world as a death well, they don't like it. So, some of them having attained jnana and the vision of Bhagavan give up their bodies. However, giving up body in this way is a far cry. **"The bound creatures, the worldly men, don't get awareness by any means. They suffer so much misery, so many trials, and so many sorrows; even then they don't get awakening.** The camel likes thorny bushes but the more it eats, the more it bleeds from its face. Even so, it continues to eat the same thorny bush and does not leave it. **The worldly man suffers so much agony, so much sorrow, yet he reverts back to his old self quite soon. Perhaps his wife has died or she has proved faithless to him, yet he marries again. Perhaps he has lost his son and suffered so much of sorrow, yet he forgets all this in a few days. The mother of this boy, who was beside herself with grief, ties up her hair again and bedecks herself with jewellery. In the same way though people spend all in the marriage of their daughters, they continue giving birth to more children year after year. They lose all in litigation. Yet they again go to law! They cannot feed the children they have, neither can they educate them, nor can they look after them properly, still they beget more children every year.** At times, their state can be likened to that of the snake trying to swallow the mole. The snake cannot swallow the mole, nor can it give it up. The bound soul may have realized that there is no substance in the world that it is like a hog plum that has nothing but stone and skin yet he cannot give it up. Even though he cannot turn his mind towards the Lord. A relative of Keshab Sen, fifty years old, was playing cards, as if time was

not yet ripe for him to think of the Lord. The bound jiva has yet another sign. If he is lifted from worldly life to a better place, he will pine away to death. The worm of faeces feels pleasure in the excreta alone; it is only there that it thrives. If you put it in a pot of rice, it will die.” (All laugh.)

36. Sri Ramakrishna — **The very ego of man is maya. This egotism has veiled everything. All troubles cease when the I-ness dies. If by the grace of the Lord a man realizes, ‘I am not the doer,’ he becomes a jivanmukta[4]. He has nothing to fear then.** The maya or the I-ness is like a cloud. The sun becomes invisible even if there is a patch of cloud. As soon as the cloud passes away, one can see the sun. If by the grace of the Guru the feeling of I-ness vanishes, one realizes the Lord... You can get rid of I-ness when you have attained jnana (spiritual knowledge). On attaining jnana, you go into samadhi. **Only in samadhi does I-ness disappear.** But it is very difficult to attain this jnana. **The Vedas say that I-ness vanishes only when the mind ascends to the seventh plane. It is only after attaining samadhi, that I-ness disappears.** Where does the mind generally dwell? In the first three planes at the organs of generation and evacuation, and at the navel. Here the mind remains only attached to the world, to ‘lust and gold’. When the mind dwells in the heart, one sees the divine light. While seeing this light, one exclaims, ‘O, what is this! What is this!’ The next plane is at the throat. On this plane one likes to hear and speak only of the Lord. When the mind goes to the forehead, between the eyebrows, one sees the form of Sachchidananda. One has the desire to embrace and touch this very form, but one cannot. Though the flame in the lantern can be seen but it cannot be touched. You feel as if you are just touching it but you cannot. **When the mind ascends to the seventh plane, I-ness vanishes one goes into samadhi.** The ‘I’ that makes one worldly, attaches one to ‘lust and gold’ is the ‘rascal I’. Because of its intervention the jiva and the atman appear apart. If a stick is put on water, it appears to be divided into two. In reality the water is one but it appears to be two because of the stick. **I-ness is the stick. Remove the stick, the water will become one as before.** What is the ‘rascal I’? That which says, ‘Don’t you know me? I have so much money. Who is greater than me?’ If a thief steals ten rupees, first of all this man snatches the money from him and gives him a good beating. He doesn’t leave him even then. He sends for the watchman and handing him over to the police gets him punished. The ‘rascal I’ says, ‘Don’t you know, you stole my ten rupees. Such impertinence!’ ” ..... **Vijay** — How can one see the Lord? **Sri Ramakrishna** — Not till the mind is purified. Living amidst ‘lust and gold,’ the mind remains soiled, it remains covered with their dirt. If the needle is covered with mud, the magnet does not attract it. But when the mud and dirt are washed off, the magnet attracts. You can wash the dirt of the mind with the water of your eyes. If you weep with tears of repentance, saying, ‘O Lord, I shall never do such a thing again,’ then this dirt is washed away. Then the magnet of the Lord attracts the needle of the mind. You then go into samadhi and have the vision of the Lord. **But you may try a thousand times, nothing is achieved without God’s grace. Without His grace you cannot see Him. Is it easy to gain His grace? You will have to get rid of your**

**egoism completely. When you have the feeling that you are the doer, you cannot see the Lord.**

37. **Unless you give up pride, you can't attain spiritual knowledge. Water doesn't stay on the top of a mound. It flows down quickly on all sides to the ground below.**
38. **Surendra's office – worldly life, the eight bonds, and the three gunas. Sri Ramakrishna:** "Eight bonds bind man: shame, hatred, fear, pride of caste, suspicion, and secretiveness are all bonds. Thakur sings: "This is the grief that weighs on my heart: though You, my Mother, are here and I am wide awake, thieves of passion rob my house." Then he sings: "In the world's bustling marketplace, O Shyama, You fly kites that soar on the wind of hope, held fast by maya's string." "**“Maya's string' means wife and son. By rubbing the string with the paste of sensuousness, the string has become hard. Sensuousness means 'lust and greed.'** There follows another song: "One comes to this world to play dice. I came with great hopes. But hope is in itself only a broken state. First I got the piece marked five, and age after age the twelve, the eighteen, and the sixteen. Divine Mother, last of all I got the unripe twelve piece, and I got ensnared by the five and six-mark pieces. Six and two equal eight, six and four make ten. O Divine Mother, I have no control over these. I won neither honour nor fame in this game, which I have been playing all through the night until dawn. "The piece marked 'five,' that is the five elements. To get ensnared in the 'fives' and 'sixes' means to fall under the control of the five elements and the six passions. To play tricks with the six piece means not to fall under the control of the six enemies. To deceive the 'three' piece means to be beyond the three gunas. "Sattva, rajas, and tamas, the three qualities of nature, have brought mankind under their control. They are like three brothers: if there is sattva, it can call on rajas; and if there is rajas, it can call on tamas. All three gunas are thieves. Tamas destroys, while rajas binds. Sattva, though it frees from the bonds, cannot take one to God." **Vijay (smiling):** "Sattva is also a thief, isn't it?" **Sri Ramakrishna:** "It can't take one to God, but it does show the way to Him." **Bhavanath:** "Oh, what wonderful words!" **Sri Ramakrishna:** "Yes, it is a very lofty thought." The devotees are very happy hearing these words.
39. **To devotees: You don't have to renounce women altogether. It's not wrong to sleep with your own wife. But after you've had children, you should live like brother and sister.**
40. **To Bhavanath:** "Keep your mind fixed on Bhagavan. **He is a brave man indeed who, while living with his wife, does not have physical relations with her. Talk only about spiritual matters with your wife.**" After awhile, Thakur again beckons Bhavanath and says, "Take your meal here today." Bhavanath — As you please. Don't worry about me. I am quite all right.
41. **Sri Ramakrishna: In the stage of spiritual practices, one should think of a woman (man for female aspirants) as a forest fire! Or a black cobra! In the state of perfection, after God-realization, one sees woman as the All-Blissful Mother. One then looks at each as a different aspect of the Divine Mother.**" Many days ago, Thakur had warned Narayan very seriously about women. He said, "Do not let the breeze from a woman's body touch you. Cover

yourself with a thick sheet so the air will not touch you. And except for your mother, keep a distance of eight cubits, or two cubits, or at least one cubit away from women.”

42. **Sri Ramakrishna (to M.) — There is nothing in the household life.** His (Ishan’s) household life is still better. Had that not been so and if the boys had been womanizers, drug-addicts, drunkards, disobedient, there would have been no end to troubles. Everybody’s mind is Godward, the household is permeated with vidya (spiritual knowledge); it is rarely to be seen. I have seen only a couple of such homes, otherwise **there are only quarrels, wrangles, violence and then disease, sorrow and poverty.** Seeing so I said, ‘Mother, please give a turn just now.’ Just see, what problems Narendra is facing! His father has died. The members of his family don’t have food to eat. Job is so hard to be found. He is trying hard, but does not find any. Just see, how he is wandering about! “M., earlier you used to go (to Dakshineswar) so often, now why have your visits become fewer? It appears, you have got too much attached to your family. Is that so? “This is not anybody’s fault. All around there is ‘woman and gold.’ That is why I pray, ‘Mother, if I shall ever have to take a human body, don’t make a householder of me.’ ” Brahmin of Bhattapada — But sir, the household life has been praised in the holy books. **Sri Ramakrishna** — Yes, but it is very difficult.
43. **One easily experiences a downfall by thinking of a woman as one’s wife. Taking her as the Mother is a pure attitude.**
44. God is not visible to this mind, but to the purified mind! Then this mind disappears. **Even one who has the least trace of attachment to sense objects does not succeed.** When the mind is purified, you may call it the pure mind, or the pure Atman.
45. Thakur had many women devotees, but he did not talk much about them to the men devotees. If someone went to visit women devotees, he would say, “Don’t go to her very often. You may have a fall.” Sometimes he would say, “Even if a woman rolls on the ground with love for God, you shouldn’t visit her frequently.” **Let men and women devotees live separately. This will be good for both of them.** And he would say further, “It isn’t good for women devotees to practice motherly feelings for men. Such an attitude could change and bring about a downfall.”
46. **A Particular Devotee** — Sir, what is the way for worldly people? **Sri Ramakrishna** — Keeping the company of holy men and listening to spiritual talk. “Worldly people are intoxicated – they are inebriated with ‘lust and greed’. A drunkard gradually comes to his senses if he is fed rice water in small quantities at regular intervals. “And one must listen to the instructions of a Sadguru. There are signs of a Sadguru. One should listen about Kashi from one who has visited Kashi, who has seen it. A man of mere learning will be of no help. One should not listen to the instructions of a pundit who has not realized that the world is ephemeral. Only a pundit who has gained discrimination and dispassion has the right to instruct mankind.
47. Despite Ramakrishna’s childlike behaviour and unusual humility during the moments of teaching he could and did speak with a strange tone of authority, a mysterious divine power fortifying his simple words. When he spoke to Bankim

Chatterji, the eminent writer of those days, he thundered like Christ on the Pharisees. His talks with Keshab, Shivanath, Pratap, Ishan and Vidyasagar are full of sparkling wisdom, striking the listeners with wonder. His words to Kedar are awfully irrevocable.

His words in the presence of Michael Madhusudan Dutta are tragically poignant. But when he speaks to Narendra who was only a boy compared to these social stalwarts already mentioned, Ramakrishna's voice is unusually soft with affection and even with an unmistakable respect of great expectation. M. describes a scene (Kathamrita, Vol. 11, p. 202) when Ramakrishna affectionately looks at Narendra and speaks of renunciation in a tone of importunate request. – **“My child, nothing will be achieved until one renounces lust and gold.”**

Speaking these words, Ramakrishna was again absorbed in a divine mood. With the same compassionate look he began to sing in an inspired way: “I am afraid to speak; I am afraid not to speak; I only fear lest I should lose my darling. The mantra that I have learnt, The same I give unto you, Now it belongs to you. “Sri Ramakrishna is afraid lest Narendra should belong to somebody else.” (Kathamrita, Vol. II, p. 202).

48. Swami Yogananda (then Jogindranath Roy Choudhury) asked Thakur how to get rid of lust. Thakur replied: “Repeat and repeat Hari's Name, lust will fly out.” Jogen was not impressed. Thought he, “What a remedy! He does not know of any kriya (Tantric ritual) so he says that this will do. Can the repetition of Hari's Name eradicate lust? Besides so many people repeat Hari's Name. Why don't they get rid of their lust?” Then he thought, “Since Thakur has said it why not see what is the result?” Thinking in this way he began repeating the Name with full concentration, and did in fact get clearly the results within a few days as Thakur had said. Because of differences in nature and variations in eligibility we find him in many places teaching differently to different persons – telling everyone what was needful for him. But nowhere did he prescribe anything difficult – he never asked anybody to take up anything, which was hard to practise and distinguished him from others. On the other hand he said, “You have not to take up anything unusual; you have to lead a simple life.” He himself is an example of this simplicity: no long hair, no smearing the body with ashes, no iron tongs – none of the outward signs, which distinguish sadhus from the common man – nothing like it. For them who go to him, the nearer they go the farther they find him, the more vastness they see in him. This is his wonderful uniqueness.