

THE SUPREME SECRET

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In the Bhagavadgita and in several of the Upanishads, there appear the Sanskrit phrases *parama rahasyam* and *parama guhyam* and a rough translation of these phrases is “the supreme secret,” or “the supreme mystery.” In Chapter 9 of the Bhagavadgita, we find in the opening verses, Sri Krishna speaks of “*raja guhyam*” or “the supreme secret.” In the Maitri Upanishad also, we find a resonant phrase and the sage is thrilled that he has found a “supreme secret.” What is this secret? This is the subject of today’s discourse.

As many of you know, the Bhagavadgita is a sacred dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and the teacher Sri Krishna. It takes place on the battlefield, just before a battle is about to begin. Arjuna, the symbol of righteousness, suddenly has second thoughts at the eleventh hour if he should really be fighting. The prospect of having to fight some of his venerable teachers has led Arjuna to this impasse. He has forgotten that all avenues of diplomacy had been explored and have come to nothing. When Sri Krishna went to mediate between the two factions, Krishna was captured, gagged and bound. Fortunately, he escaped and was able to give this sacred teaching to Arjuna and thus, indirectly to us. His thundering message still echoes through the vistas of time and reaches us, energizes us with hope and strength.

A curious episode is related in the Mahābhārata concerning the period just before the war. As Krishna himself was a king, he commanded an army and had a formidable military force at his disposal. The leaders of both of the warring factions knew this and wanted to get Krishna on their side. Thus, Arjuna and Duryodhana, the leader of the opposing faction, both went to seek Krishna’s help. Duryodhana, however, was not interested in Krishna. He was only interested in getting the army and his arsenal of weapons. So he goes to Sri Krishna to ask him for just that, his army and weapons. At the same time, Arjuna arrives at the scene requesting help in the war. To be fair to both, Krishna makes the following offer. The passage in the Mahābhārata is quite humourous. Sri Krishna says to them: “One of you can have my army and military arsenal. The other can just have me. But mind you, I will not fight. I will assume no military position. I will be the charioteer of one of you. Occasionally, I may give unsolicited advice, and that too, if I feel like it. So do you both understand my offer. You may choose between me on one side, and my army on the other. Now as Arjuna is younger of the two of you, I will let Arjuna choose.” Duryodhana protests and says the offer is unfair. He had come there first, he insists, so he should get the first choice. But Krishna is firm and asks Arjuna, “Have you listened carefully? Know for sure, I will not fight. I will merely drive your chariot according to your instruction. I will pick up no weapon. I may give occasional advice and that too if and when I feel like it.” Duryodhana muses to himself. “What kind of an offer is this? Who would be a fool to refuse the weapons, the armies and the means to secure a victory in war. Arjuna will choose the weapons and I will be left with nothing!” But just then, Arjuna says he refuses the weapons and chooses Krishna. Duryodhana is elated and of course, Krishna too is elated. Sri Krishna had just given the first test to Arjuna, his future disciple, and the disciple had passed it. It is a foreshadow of the teaching about to take place and the teacher had tested the fitness of the disciple.

The fact that Sri Krishna offers to drive the chariot is full of spiritual significance. Let us observe that the imagery of the chariot that appears in this dialogue and in the Bhagavadgita is a repetition of the symbol that first occurs in the Katha Upanishad where its psychological meaning was described in some detail. In the Katha Upanishad, the teacher indicates that the human being is like a chariot. The charioteer is symbolised by illumined reason, or *buddhi*. The mind is symbolised by the reins of the chariot. The horses represent the sensory organs and the road the chariot moves upon is the world around us. The rider in the chariot is the *ātman*, the individual soul, here represented by Arjuna. The fact that Sri Krishna is the charioteer signifies that the higher spiritual teaching can be put into practice by uniting the reasoning faculty to the higher ideal so that it is transformed into *buddhi* or illumined reason.

The setting of the Bhagavadgita is symbolic of the battlefield of life but perhaps more importantly, it is symbolic of the battlefield within all of us. Our life is a constant turmoil between our positive impulses and negative impulses, between the pleasant and the better, between the good and the bad. As such, the Gita addresses questions that arise in the heart of every human being. Thus, even though the Gita is the record of a dialogue that occurred ages ago, it is relevant to the modern age (or any age), as it addresses fundamental questions and tries to provide answers to them. Through the vista of epic literature, we are able to hear and even see the sacred dialogue between Arjuna and Sri Krishna. Arjuna's despondency and hesitation are our own. Arjuna's questions are our own questions. As we read the Gita, it is as if we are in direct communion with the great sage embodied in the personality of Sri Krishna.

At a more deeper level, the Gita is really a conversation within every human heart. It is a dialogue between the lower self, represented by Arjuna, and the Higher Self, symbolised by Sri Krishna. Wisdom is within all of us, but often, we are unable to see clearly and think clearly. However, if we are silent, we can learn to hear the voice of wisdom within.

In the opening verses of Chapter 9, Sri Krishna says, "To you, who does not cavil, I shall declare this profound secret of wisdom combined with knowledge, by knowing which you shall be released from evil. This is sovereign knowledge, sovereign secret, supreme sanctity, known by direct experience, in accord with the law, very easy to practice and imperishable."

*idam tu te guhyatamam pravaksāmy anasūyave
jnānam vijñāna sahitam yaj jnātva moksyase subhāt
rājavidyārājaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam
pratyakāvagamam dharmyam susukham kartum avyayam.*

In these verses, Sri Krishna gives a fundamental prerequisite for anyone who wants to learn this secret. You must not cavil. What is the meaning of the word, 'cavil'? This word is derived from the Latin word, *cavilla* signifying 'jeering.' It means 'to quibble, to object unnecessarily.' In other words, we must not have a criticising attitude. Often we confuse the critical attitude with the criticising attitude and unfortunately adopt the latter deluding ourselves that we have the former.

In Sanskrit, the word for ‘cavil’ is *asūya*, often translated as meanness, or pettiness. Sri Krishna says that since you are free from this tendency, (the word used is *anasūya*), I will impart this secret teaching. I claim that in the prerequisite is the secret itself. We can understand this better if we understand the opposite of the word ‘cavil.’ In Sanskrit, that word is *śraddhā* which is often translated as ‘faith.’ This faith is a two-fold faith. First, it is a faith in our power of understanding and second it is a faith that there is something deeper in this universe to probe. These are the prerequisites for science. First, we must feel that with our mind, we can understand and second, we must feel that there are patterns to be discovered. Einstein used to say that the most incomprehensible mystery of the universe is that it is comprehensible, at least to some extent. If we do not have this two-fold faith, then no scientific enquiry can begin. Truth appears to the seeking mind. “Knock, and it shall be open to you.”

Attitude may be everything. Sri Ramakrishna tells the story of a man who wanted to know the way to Puri. He approached a sadhu (a wandering monk), very carelessly and demanded to know the way. The sadhu did not answer. After several attempts, the man gave up and started in earnest in some direction, at which point the sadhu called him and told him that he must go the other way. The man then asked the sadhu why did you not tell me this earlier? The sadhu replied, “Because you were not serious, you were careless and your whole attitude was sloppy. Now that you are starting sincerely, I thought it my duty to correct you.”

This is what happens to many of us. We want certain things but do not ask ourselves if we have the prerequisites. Are we sincere? The sincere student finds the sincere teacher. It is in the nature of things. This seems to be one of the deep secrets interwoven into the fabric of the universe.

The Maitri Upanishad concludes its discourse with this important message. It is thinking, or thought energy, that is responsible for the way things are and the way things are perceived. The way to liberation is to control thought. The thought must be serene and peaceful. “What a man thinks, that he becomes. This is the eternal mystery. This is the supreme secret.”

*cittam eva hi samsāram, tat prayatnena sodhayet
yac cittas tan-mayo bhavati guhyam etat sanātanam.*

“Our thoughts are the basis of our experience. Let an individual attempt their control. Whatever one thinks, that they become. This is the eternal mystery, the supreme secret.”

Let us try to understand the import of this verse. We often do not pay attention to our thoughts. But thoughts do affect our experience. When we remember something pleasant, we become cheerful. When we recall a traumatic experience of the past, our heart starts to beat faster, we become anxious and our mood changes. This is really the first teaching of raja yoga. By manipulating our thoughts, we can manipulate our mood, our experience of life. At the moment, with most of us, we are the victim of our thoughts. Our thoughts are created by external stimuli, by what someone says to us, by what we hear, by what we see, by what we read, by what we imagine. And these thoughts in turn determine our mood. However, if we observe our thoughts, we find that through their control we can

change many things. The first and foremost is our health, our equanimity. By thinking peaceful thoughts, we become peaceful. The body follows the mind. It seems that our thoughts slowly transmute their message into the physical system through our nerves, our veins and our arteries. All of the cells in our body are intelligent. Their goal seems to be to carry out whatever message the brain sends to them. In this way, our thoughts do play a role in our health. The mind-body connection is a fact.

Like in every department of life, it is one thing to know something intellectually, and quite another to actually experience it. It is one thing to read about something, and quite another to actually see it, first hand. I can give a recent personal example of how the mind-body connection was driven home to me as a matter of experience. A few months ago, I had to have some minor surgery performed related to the parotid gland. These glands are located on either side of the jaw, just below the ears. Together with the salivary glands that connect to the tongue and cheeks, they play a vital role in the digestive process that begins in the mouth. The surgeon informed me that after surgery, I will experience various difficulties especially at meal time or very close to meal time. "The excess juices of this gland may come out and you may perspire at meal time," he told me. His remedy was that I should have a towel ready and while eating, apply the towel to the cheek and just continue eating. He added that this will continue as long as you have the thought of food or eating in your mind. This really had piqued my interest in this phenomenon and I was actually curious to see this happen. For three days after the surgery, I did not notice anything of this sort. "Either the surgeon must be crazy or I was spared of this post-surgical complication," I thought. On the fourth day, when I was seated for lunch and as I was saying grace, my sister noticed that there were drops of water coming out of my earlobe. This was simply amazing. I hadn't even started to eat, and yet the signal was given from the brain for the various digestive glands to do their thing! This rather curious event persisted for about a week or so, and only at meal time. In the intervening period, I had to dismiss the thought of food from the mind, for otherwise, the thing would recur again. Here is the mind-body connection revealed with full force. Our thoughts do determine our health. There is certainly an interconnection.

Thus, when the Upanishad says "What you think, that you become," it does not mean that when you think of a monkey, you become a monkey. Rather, it is asserting this important mind-body connection. Thoughts are changed into neural messages and transmitted to the rest of the body. There seems to be an interconnectedness of awareness and intelligence. Minute cells receive these messages and seem to know what to do. *Sarvam khalvidam Brahman*. Everywhere is the principle of intelligence. Brahman is all-pervasive.

Recently there was a report that Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is completely wrong. It is not true that the human species has evolved from monkeys. The fact is that the human beings are evolving into monkeys. Humorous as this may seem, it is unfortunately a disturbing fact. Everything is restless. The youth are restless, the music is restless, and our days have become hurried living. Technology has not simplified things one bit. True, we can marvel at all the wonderful advances, and yet, is it really an advance when it does not leave us much time for silent contemplation and reflection? In this internet age, when there is too much information for us, we need to learn to slow down. As Swami

Vivekananda taught us long ago, “Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and the encyclopaedias the rishis.” (Vol. 3, p. 302)

Thus, it is the assimilation of ideas that is important. Our difficulty is that there may be too many ideas in our brain. This agitated state of mind must be replaced with thoughts of calmness and silence. When the thoughts are peaceful, the body becomes peaceful. When we awake in the morning, we must tell ourselves that external events will not disturb our mind. If we tell ourselves that, then they won't. We can maintain a calm demeanor and conduct ourselves in a peaceful and serene manner. Through calmness, we can make better decisions and bring more harmony to the situation.

Medical science is now coming to a point where this mind-body connection is acknowledged as a fact. How the body works, what neural messages are sent from the brain and how the cells respond is still a mystery. However, we do know that this interchange of information between mind and body is constantly happening. Thus, a logical consequence is that we can have some influence over our own physical health by having healthy and peaceful thoughts.

In many ways, memory and meditation are linked. In meditation or reflection, we recollect, or recall in our mind the spiritual message or import. By recalling to our mind some aspect of life and teaching of a spiritual personality, we try to create a mental atmosphere (and consequently a physical atmosphere) full of spiritual significance. Sri Ramakrishna's message that the essence of spiritual life is to love God and to live in the company of devotees is essentially the same as the teaching to keep always in the mind this recollectedness.

“The mind is like a laundered cloth,” Sri Ramakrishna used to say. “It takes the color of whatever dye you dip it in.” This is again the same teaching of what you think, that you become. Haven't you noticed that when you read something intently, it makes an impression on your mind and you have a tendency to repeat the same thought. This is why it is important to keep good company. Good company not only means people around you or the people you come into contact with, but also the company of good books, of great thoughts. To do this, one needs solitude and reflection. Holy company really means the company of holy thoughts, inspiring thoughts.

A good chunk of our difficulties are caused by the outgoing nature of the mind. What does this mean? What is the outgoing nature of the mind? It means that the mind has become “externalised,” or to be more accurate, the external world is used as a reference point to determine the value of our thoughts. Yoga is good for business, so we should take up yoga. A businessman goes to a yogi and demands he teach him meditation so that he will be on “the cutting edge of relaxation.” Recently, I read about a doctoral candidate in philosophy who wanted to write a dissertation about solitude and spiritual life. To conduct his research, he travels to some remote island off the coast of Chile and spends about six

months there. The article contained a detailed documentation of his experiments along with photographs. Photographs? I thought the guy was there alone? Yes, he was, but he took with him a camera with a timer attachment! He took several photographs of himself seated in meditation. When he returned back to “civilization,” so to speak, his friends say that he is a non-stop talker. He confessed that he himself was ever so eager to get back and tell people of all his experiences. There is no doubt this experience has enriched the life of this man, but why do we always have to determine the value of something by asking what it will bring us in the marketplace?

In his essay entitled “Realisation,” Swami Vivekananda describes this tendency of the human mind rather humourously and it is worth repeating, just for the laugh. “A great many questions will arise from time to time, especially to the modern man. There will be the question of utility. ... The dog’s pleasure is only in eating and drinking. The dog cannot understand the pleasure of the scientist who gives up everything, and perhaps, dwells on the top of a mountain to observe the position of the certain stars. The dogs may smile at him and think he is a madman. Perhaps this poor scientist never had money enough to marry even and lives very simply. Maybe the dog laughs at him. But the scientist says, “My dear dog, your pleasure is only in the senses which you enjoy, and you know nothing beyond; but for me this is the most enjoyable life, and if you have the right to seek your pleasure in your own way, so have I in mine.” The mistake is that we want to tie the whole world down to our own plane of thought and to make our mind the measure of the whole universe. ” (Vol. 2, p. 171.)

Thus, this externalisation of the mind, even in subtle forms, is a formidable tendency to contend with. Without ourselves being aware of it, our thoughts are already being screened for their worth in the marketplace. Even in the realm of the intellect we see this happening around us. The literary people write with a view to what will sell, what will become popular. The research of the scientist is determined by the research grant. In medical research too, the pharmaceutical corporations determine which direction research will go and what will be researched. All of this leads to the quantum effect in the realm of the mind. In quantum mechanics, the very act of observation changes the experiment. In a similar way, our very attitude will color the quality of thought. Thus, if we have a spiritual attitude, with a desire to know for its own sake, without any ulterior motive, we would have entered the spiritual dimension.

Buddha discovered this quantum effect phenomenon of the mind ages ago. We cannot have any hidden desires in the realm of the mind if we are to experience pure awareness. Whatever we suppress or repress, comes back with doubled force at a later stage. Thus, one must be cautious and so he gave his teaching of the middle path, where we go to neither extreme. But rather, we take a balanced attitude, a wholesome, cosmic approach to life. Introspection, and the consequent control of mind is not to be done in a violent way, but rather through a subtle approach.

The control of thought therefore is not something negative where thoughts are to be erased or subdued, but rather something positive that must be planted in the mind. This planting of a thought in the mind is done through the agency of the word or image. All of our waking life is made up of the word. That is why it is important that proper words

enter our brains that inspire us. The idea seems to grow through repetition. Thus, some form of vigilance must be maintained to ensure that the flower garden of our mind remains fragrant and refreshing. If not, weeds take over and we are unable to do anything about it. This seems to me the substance of all the new items reported in “The Daily Planet.”

How often do we hear stories in the newspaper of children getting into trouble because they were in the wrong company. The other day, I read the story of a little boy who had used some bad language in speaking to his mother. When she asked him where he had learned these words, he said there were some other kids using them and speaking like that. As Holy Mother used to say, “By using rough words, one’s whole nature becomes rough.” Words have that much power. They really are the substance of our thoughts.

The problem is that the mind can be coaxed to do anything. We may climb the spiritual summits or sink into the depths of degradation. The mind is everything. It is indeed an unfathomable ocean. What we do with it, how we shape it is largely in our own hands. If we don’t do it, then unfortunately, the world will do it for us. But then, the world will use you and we find that in the end, we have not shaped our life the way we wanted to do it. Swami Brahmananda taught us that if you give your mind to God, then you will grow spiritually. But if you give your mind to the world, it will destroy you. This is what we see around us.

Time is a valuable commodity. The Heavenly Father, or is it the Heavenly Mother, has been fair to all beings. She gives to each of us the same amount of time each day, not one second less, not one second more. We don’t have people saying, “I am very rich. I have a thousand hours in the bank!” There is no aristocracy of time. We don’t see any multi-millionaires of time, because no one can bank today so that they can use it tomorrow. If you don’t use today today, it is gone, it cannot be used to tomorrow! Neither can you use tomorrow today. Tomorrow is waiting for us and we all will get it at the same time! But leave it to the corporations, they have figured out a way to steal time, your time and mine. Are you actually working eight hours a day for your company or more than that by bringing your work home and filling your evening hours with office work. How much time do you spend answering office e-mail at home? Even if you don’t bring your work home, are part of your evenings spent by thinking what you will do at the office tomorrow?

In his lectures on Karma Yoga, Swami Vivekananda writes, “Look at those poor slaves to duty. Duty leaves them no time to say prayers, no time to bathe. Duty is ever on them. It is living a slave’s life, at last dropping down in the street and dying in harness like a horse. This is duty as it is understood. The only true duty is to be unattached and to work as free beings.” (Vol. 1, p. 103)

I don’t know how many of you have seen the Charlie Chaplin classic, “Modern Times” but though it was made in the 1930’s as a philosophic comment of the things to come, it’s message is still right on the mark even today. In a comical way, it addresses the question of man versus machine, or to put it more accurately, how humanity has been enslaved by the few so that the profits of the few are completely exaggerated so much so that the common man doesn’t have any money even to buy bread. It is not that political philosophies that are wrong, but rather the misuse and the abuse of them by the few. It

is not that technology and science are wrong, but rather how they have been appropriated by the few to exploit the many. Creative comedy when we look at it, is indeed philosophy. By exposing the farcical nature of the whole thing, it does make us think.

One humourous scene in this movie “Modern Times” involves the factory manager who, in order to increase his profits, wants to eliminate the lunch hour and so he has this contraption of a machine that will feed the factory workers while they are working on the assembly line. Of course, through the comical genius of Chaplin, we see the whole thing doesn’t work. But Chaplin’s point is that it is only a question of time, before all our time is eaten away by the corporation. Indeed, it has come to that now. We have the office at home! The cartoon strip “Adam at Home” captures the situation very nicely. The hero is “Adam.” I wonder why the cartoonist chose that name? Like the primeval man, Adam is unshaven and unkempt. He is always seen working at the computer, and in his spare moments, looking after the kids, who for the most part have to look after themselves. It is curious that often this comic strip is right next to “Hagar the Horrible,” and the juxtaposition makes us pause and reflect, “Has anything really changed on this planet since the Viking age?” Or is our modern era essentially the same but only that we have all been given sugar-coated palliatives to sedate us to think otherwise.

If it is not the office that we think about constantly, it may be other things. How much of our time is taken away by television, by commercials and all those useless jingles that enter into our brains and use up valuable neural energy! This is why the sages have advised us to repeat mantras because the mind will be repeating various thoughts anyway, and so why not have it repeat energizing thoughts? There is no time for anything. We all move in the grid of habit, without any new original thinking, without any new inspired thought, like pieces of automata. Why is that? It is because we don’t pause to reflect. We don’t get paid for doing that. At first, it may begin as a curiosity. Children may feel it is “cool” to project a certain image that they have either seen on television or in some of their friends. Slowly they are enticed into such company and after a while, they see nothing wrong with it. The mind will only churn out what you put into it. Just as the body is made of the food we eat, the mind is made of the thoughts we take in. By eating indiscriminately, by eating junk food, we cannot hope to take in all of the essential nutrients to keep the body free of disease and in good health. In a similar way, by thinking indiscriminately, by taking in all sorts of random thoughts, we cannot hope to have any form of mental health.

These days, everyone is health conscious and we are very particular about what we eat. Are we that careful when it comes to thinking? When negative thoughts arise, are we careful to say to ourselves, “There is no point moving in this direction since it will be of positive harm.” Once we decide this, we have to replace it with some positive thoughts. For this purpose, we must have an arsenal of techniques. Walking, they say, is one good method. By taking a short 15 minute walk, much of the worry and anxiety that may be hovering over our minds is largely dissipated by a sunny disposition and strident, rhythmic walk, filled with cheerful thoughts.

Thus, in the ninth chapter of the Bhagavadgita, Sri Krishna gives us the secret. “Fill the mind with Me, be My devotee, sacrifice unto Me, bow down to Me. Thus having made

your heart steadfast in Me, taking Me as the supreme goal, you shall come to Me.”

*Manmanābhava madbhakto madyājñām namaskuru
Mām eva esyasi yuktvaivam ātmānam matparāyanah.*

When this verse uses the personal pronoun ‘Me’, one must understand that it refers to the universal Brahman, or Universal Awareness that is at the center of our Being. The import of the verse is that we must make our life spiritually oriented, spiritually centered, instead of centering it on profits and the marketplace. At the same time, the verses emphasizes devotion, or *bhakti*. This is really an important word. Many of our difficulties arise simply because we have not refined our emotions, we have not given them a higher turn, or a spiritual direction. The earlier verses of the chapter indicate how easy it is to do this.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, “Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer, whatever you give away, whatever austerity you practice, do that as an offering unto Me.”

*Yatkarosi yadasnāsi yajjuhosi dadāsi yat
Yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurusva madarpanam .*

Thus, it isn’t that we must change what we do, but rather we must bring into a background spiritual awareness. It is the inner feeling, inner attitude that will color everything we do with the fragrance of spirituality. And what happens to one when this spiritual orientation is given. Sri Krishna says, “Even the wicked will slowly become good, for they are said to have rightly resolved. ” This is the magic of the spiritual touch.

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna, we find a perfect example of this psychological transformation in the personality of Girish Chandra Ghosh. Girish Ghosh was a Bengali dramatist and as he himself confessed, given to all the vices ever imagined. But the magic was that he came into contact with Sri Ramakrishna, and Sri Ramakrishna never condemned him for anything. When he admitted to Sri Ramakrishna that he was addicted to drink, Sri Ramakrishna told him, if you are so inclined, then offer it first to God and then drink! What a teaching! The magic is that it worked! Whatever he did, wherever he went, Girish always had the background thought of Sri Ramakrishna’s spiritual personality. And slowly, without himself being aware of it, he was transformed. Today, Girish Chandra Ghosh is worshipped as a saint.

About ten years ago, I was at Trinity College of Cambridge University in England attending a mathematical conference. Since the university was famous for its world class library and was reputed to have the original notebooks of great scientists such as Sir Isaac Newton, I wandered into the library when there was an interlude in the lectures. After having seen their scientific collection, it occurred to me that I should also explore the literary collection of first editions. The thought then came to me to check out the first edition of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, written in Bengali, by M. or Mahendranath Gupta. Sure enough, Trinity College had it and they even had an extensive Bengali collection. I found the first edition, and when I opened it, a letter fell out in M’s own handwriting. The letter was addressed to Professor Charles Tawney and the whole set was a gift from M to him. Tawney was in India, and that was how M. had met him. There

were other things thrilling about the volume. It was profusely corrected in M's own hand. On the back cover of the first volume, there were accolades of praise for the work. One of the was Girish Chandra Ghosh, who simply said, "I am grateful for these words that you have recorded for they have saved my life. " Wow. What a tribute!

The added thrill for me was that I was holding a volume that M had actually held in his hands. What a labour of love he has given us. Just as Vyasa had recorded the sacred dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna and we are able to hear it even today, M. had written down the sacred dialogues of Sri Ramakrishna and his devotees and we are able to benefit from them. We can travel to Dakshineswar, and have a private conversation with him, or be a participant in the spiritual discourse. Time is a construct of the human mind. Beyond the realm of the mind, there is no time. It is the eternal now. Thus the spiritual dialogues are ever present and we always have access to them.

In Volume 2 of his complete works, Swami Vivekananda has an essay entitled, 'The Open Secret.' The supreme secret is secret but it is also open to all. It is interwoven into the very nature of things. As Swami Vivekananda says in his essay, "Everything in this life is so vast that the intellect is nothing in comparison with it. It refuses to be bound by the laws of the intellect. ... And a thousandfold more so is the case with the human soul. "We ourselves" - this is the greatest mystery of the universe. ... All things are interpenetrated by that infinite ocean ... Infinite is finite and finite infinite. This is our existence. All our relation to the Infinite works in us unconsciously. In a manner, therefore, we forget our real being, and hence all this misery comes. ... Therefore there is hope for all. None can die; none can be degraded for ever. ... However we may receive blows, and however knocked about we may be, the [Supreme] Soul is [always] there and is never injured. We are that Infinite." (Vol. 2, p. 402)

The Supreme Secret is therefore the open secret, "What we think, that we become." When we contemplate the infinite, we open ourselves to the infinite dimension. The human body may not have wings, but the human mind has wings. Thus let us soar high in the spiritual realm. May we all fill ourselves with inspiration from these eternal sources of spiritual wisdom. May our thoughts become purified, energized and luminous. May we all realise our spiritual dimension. This is my prayer.