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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

ON RECORDING VIVEKANANDA'S LECTURES

BY IDA ANSELL

Swami Vivekananda's second trip to the West occurred in 1899-1900. During the first half of 1900 he worked in and around San Francisco, California. I was a resident of that city, twenty-two years old at the time. . . . I heard him lecture perhaps a score of times from March to May of 1900, and recorded seventeen of his talks. . . .

The lectures were given in San Francisco, Oakland, and Alameda, in churches, in the Alameda and San Francisco Homes of Truth, and in rented halls. Some were free to the public, and others were given in courses of three for a dollar. Altogether Swamiji gave, besides nearly daily interviews and informal classes, at least thirty or forty major addresses in March, April, and May. He was phenomenally prolific. How he could speak so often and yet always with such originality is something no one has ever been able to explain. He himself confessed that time after time on his lecture tours he felt exhausted intellectually and incapable of appearing the next day. Then, as his authorized *Life* explains, he would be

aided in various ways: 'For instance, at dead of night he would hear a voice shouting at him the very thoughts he was to speak on the morrow. . . . Or again it would be like someone delivering a lecture alongside of him, as he lay on his bed listening. At other times two voices would argue before him, discussing at great length subjects that he would find himself repeating on the following day upon the platform or in the pulpit. Sometimes these discussions involved ideas that he had never heard or thought of previously. . . . To his disciples he would explain that these incidents betrayed the powers and potentialities of the Self.' . . .

I was long hesitant about transcribing and releasing these lectures because of the imperfectness of my notes. I was just an amateur stenographer at the time I took them. The only experience I had had in recording and transcribing lectures was in connection with the talks of Miss Lydia Bell, the leader of one of the Homes of Truth of San Francisco. Miss Bell spoke slowly and deliberately, and I could

almost always get down every word. But one would have needed a speed of at least three hundred words per minute to capture all of Swamiji's torrents of eloquence. I possessed less than half the required speed, and at the time I had no idea that the material would have value to anyone but myself. In addition to his fast speaking pace, Swamiji was a superb actor. His stories and imitations absolutely forced one to stop writing, to enjoy watching him.

Since his death in 1902, Swami Vivekananda has become an international figure. The religious ideas he taught are being considered and accepted by people all over the world. Now we see that Swamiji was a special messenger from God and that every word he said was full of significance. So, even though my notes were somewhat fragmentary, I have yielded to

the opinion that their contents are precious and must be given for publication.

Swamiji's speaking style was colloquial, fresh, and forceful. No alterations have been made in it; no adjusting or smoothing out of his spontaneous flow for purposes of publication has been done. Where omissions were made because of some obscurity in the meaning, they have been indicated by three dots. Anything inserted for purposes of clarification has been placed in square brackets. With these qualifications, the words are exactly as Swamiji spoke them.

Everything Swamiji said had tremendous power. These lectures have slept in my old stenographer's notebook for more than fifty years. Now as they emerge, one feels that the power is still there.

CONCENTRATION

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

All knowledge that we have, either of the external or internal world, is obtained through only one method—by the concentration of the mind. No knowledge can be had of any science unless we can concentrate our minds upon the subject. The astronomer concentrates his mind through the telescope . . . and so on. If you want to study your own mind, it will be the same process. You will have to concentrate your mind and turn it back upon itself. The difference in this world between mind and mind is simply the fact of concentration. One is more concentrated than the other, gets more knowledge.

In the lives of all great men, past and present, we find this tremendous power of concentration. Those are men of genius, you say. The science of yoga tells us that we are all geniuses, if we try hard to be. Some will come into this life better fitted and will do it

quicker perhaps. We can all do the same. The same power is in everyone. The subject of the present lecture is how to concentrate the mind in order to study the mind itself. Yogis have laid down certain rules and this night I am going to give you a sketch of some of these rules.

Concentration, of course, comes from various sources. Through the senses you can get concentration. Some get it when they hear beautiful music, others when they see beautiful scenery. . . . Some get concentrated by lying upon beds of spikes, sharp iron spikes, others by sitting upon sharp pebbles. These are extraordinary cases [using] most unscientific procedure. Scientific procedure is gradually training the mind.

One gets concentrated by holding his arm up. Torture gives him the concentration he wants. But all these are extraordinary.