Sayings and Teachings

All religions lead to the same God

“All different creeds are but different paths to reach the one God. Diverse are the ways that lead to the temple of Mother Kali at Kalighat in Calcutta. Similarly, various are the paths that take men to the house of the Lord. Every religion is nothing but one of these paths.”

--- Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna: life and teachings (An interpretative study) by Swami Tapasyananda, page 149, Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, India.

Forgiveness and Forbearance

“The mind is everything. It is in the mind alone that one feels pure or impure. A man first makes his own mind guilty and then sees another’s faults. Can you injure anybody by enumerating his faults? You only injure yourself. I cannot see anybody’s shortcomings. If a man does a trifle for me, I try to remember even that. To see faults in others! Forgiveness is a great religious austerity. There is no virtue higher than forbearance.”

--- Sri Sarada Devi.

Holy Mother by Swami Nikhilananda, page 224, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.

Ideal Householder

“To his enemies, the householder must be a hero. Them, he must resist. That is the duty of the householder. He must not sit down in a corner and weep, and talk nonsense about non-resistance. If he does not show himself a hero to his enemies he has not done his duty. And to his friends and relatives, he must be as gentle as a lamb.”

--- Swami Vivekananda.

Teachings of Swami Vivekananda; Page 122, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, India.

Sri Ramakrishna Temple at the Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math, the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Howrah (West Bengal), India.

Calendar of Events from August to November 2008

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<td>Sri Krishna Janmastami</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Sunday, 24 August 2008</td>
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<td>Sydney</td>
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<td>Sri Sri Durga Puja</td>
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Welcome

We welcome you all to the Ramakrishna - Vedanta Movement and invite you to attend our functions and actively participate in the propagation of the Universal message of Vedanta as epitomized in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda.
ADELAIDE CENTRE
Monthly activities:
Swami Sriharananda continued to visit Adelaide three days a month to deliver discourses on the Bhagavad-Gita and Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. The talks are held at Dulwich Community Centre, 14 Union Street, Dulwich, SA 5065. The lectures are being recorded and used by devotees to augment their studies. For details of the ongoing monthly programmes please contact Mr. Raman Sharma, Secretary, on 08-8431 9775 or Mrs. Pathma Iswaran on 08-8379 5336.

BRISBANE CENTRE
Daily activities:
Morning worship, evening arati, bhajans, and reading from The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna are the regular activities at the Centre at 181 Burbong Street, Chapel Hill, QLD 4073. (Phone no.: 07-3720 0228). A resident volunteer looks after the day-to-day activities at the Centre.

Monthly and Annual activities:
Swami Atmeshananda visited Brisbane once every month. He delivered talks on Srimad-Bhagavad Gita and other spiritual topics.

Celebrations:
On July 12, 2008, the Centre held its annual celebrations at the Kenmore State High School Hall. The Hon. Rod Welford, Queensland Minister for Education and Training and the Arts was the guest of honour on the occasion. In his address the Hon. Minister praised the multicultural and multi-faith aspect of the Vedanta Movement and urged all to follow the ideals as practised by Sri Ramakrishna. Mr. Mahalingam Sinnathamby, President of the Brisbane centre and Swami Sriharanandaji also spoke on the occasion. The variety programme consisted of devotional music and dances by devotees and children. About 400 persons attended the programme.

MELBOURNE CENTRE
1. Daily Activities:
The vesper service is held daily at the Centre at 7 Judy Court, Vermont, Vic. 3133 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. It includes set hymns, scriptural readings and meditation. A resident volunteer looks after the services in the mornings and on other occasions.

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, Vedanta and other spiritual literature were made available in print, audio and visual media through the bookstall during the period. For further information please contact Mr. Suresh Ravinutala, Secretary, on 03-9803 6154 and Mr. Govindan Iyer, Treasurer, on 03-9543 4091.

2. Monthly/Annual Activities:
The monthly discourses on the Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita conducted by Swami Sriharananda continued to be delivered by Swami Sriharananda from Thursday to Saturday of a prescheduled week at Monash University, Clayton Campus of Law, Wellington Road. The lecture series were based on the Bhagavad Gita. The recordings of these discourses are available in Audio, Video and MP3 formats.

On the second Sunday of every month meetings were conducted from 5 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. These regular meetings include prayer, recitation of sacred mantras, rendering of kirtan and bhajans followed by selected readings from relevant scriptures and discussions thereon. The meetings concluded with arati and distribution of prasada.

Other Activities:
Yoga and Sanskrit classes have resumed from 13th April 2008. Dr. P.L. Aneja, PhD in Sanskrit and German and also a qualified Yoga instructor conducts the sessions.

PERTH CENTRE
1. Daily Activities:
Worship followed by Vedic chanting in the morning, and vesper service at 7 p.m. followed by a reading from The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and meditation, are being held daily at the Centre located at 2B Roe Close, Bull Creek W.A. 6149. In addition, a class on Isopanisad with Sankaracarya’s commentary is held daily in the afternoon. The Centre maintains a small bookstall and Library. Contacts: Centre - 08 9313 8796, Mr. K.P. Basu Mallick, Secretary, - 0411 791 058.

2. Weekly/Monthly Activities:
On Sundays, satsang for the devotees start at 11:00 a.m. followed by a simple lunch-prasada for all. On Wednesdays, a Kathopanisad class is held from 6:15 p.m. to 7 p.m. Every Saturday the Bala Bodhi class for children and youth is being conducted from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Swami Damodarananda conducts the above activities, meets the devotees and visitors, and, delivers talks at various places in Perth upon request.

Celebrations:
Ram Navami, Buddha Purnima and Guru Purnima were observed on 14th April, 11th May and 20th July 2008 respectively. Swami Damodarananda spoke on each one of these occasions.

SYDNEY CENTRE
Daily Activities:
In the morning, worship and meditation; and vesper service followed by devotional singing from 7 p.m. in the evening form the main focus of the daily activities at 85 Bland Street, Ashfield and 2 Stewart Street, Ermington centres. Counselling, interviews and discussions with devotees are also conducted on a
2. Weekly/ Monthly Activities:
The centre conducted the following activities in Sydney:

a) Swami Sridharananda conducted classes on the Srimad-Bhagavad-Gītā every Sunday morning from 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. at the South Strathfield Bowling Club, Augusta Street, Strathfield.

b) Classes on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali were held on Wednesdays from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Centre in Ashfield.

c) Many devotees have availed themselves of spiritual counselling and guidance. The Swamis also visited the homes of devotees when required.

d) Yogasana Classes for adults continued to be held every Tuesday at the Centre from 7:30 p.m.

e) Career guidance sessions were conducted on the second Saturday of every month from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. for new migrants to Australia to help them find suitable jobs. Mr. Abhijit Guha and his dedicated band of volunteers conducted the sessions.

f) Special meditation sessions were held at the Ermington Centre on Sundays from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Annual Activities/ Celebrations:
Ram Navami, Buddha Purnima and Guru Purnima were observed on 14th April, 20th May and 18th July 2008 respectively.

Other Activities:
Swami Sridharananda delivered two talks at the local Theosophical Society on 6th and 13th of June 2008 on spiritual subjects. He also spoke at a fund raising function organised by Abhayakaram, a local organisation which sends the proceeds to the Ramakrishna Mission, Sri Lanka.

The volunteers of Sydney centre were honoured on Sunday, the 6th of July 2008 in a special meeting.

The first book published by the Vedanta Centre of Sydney ‘Swami Rudrananda - A visionary Reformer’ was released on 18th of July 2008.

Overseas Visit:
Swami Sridharananda visited New Zealand from 15th of May to 21st of May 2008 and delivered talks on spiritual subjects. He installed the photos of Holy Trinity at the newly purchased house in Auckland on Buddha Purnima Day.

MANAGING COMMITTEES OF VEDANTA CENTRE OF SYDNEY AND OTHER CHAPTERS

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<td>Mr. B. Ramakrishna</td>
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<td><strong>President:</strong></td>
<td>Swami Sridharananda</td>
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<td><strong>Vice Presidents:</strong></td>
<td>Swami Atmeshananda</td>
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<td>Mrs. Prakash Chand</td>
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<td><strong>President:</strong></td>
<td>Swami Sridharananda</td>
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<td><strong>Patrons:</strong></td>
<td>Dr Janan Iswaran</td>
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<td><strong>Vice President:</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Pathma Iswaran</td>
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<td><strong>Secretary:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Joint Secretary:</strong></td>
<td>Mr. L.V. Krishnamoorthy</td>
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<td><strong>Members:</strong></td>
<td>Mr. N Rajaramanan, Mrs. Nirmala Puvan, Mrs. Pathmini Parasivam, Mrs S. Gowri Rajaramanan, Mrs. Shivani Sharma, Mrs Anjan Bhise, Mrs. Margaret Holdsworth, Mrs. Madhu Saraf</td>
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<td><strong>President:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Deputy President:</strong></td>
<td>Dr Ashim Majumdar</td>
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<td><strong>Vice President:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Treasurer:</strong></td>
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<td>Dr Gopal Krishna Bose, Dr Naidu Bodapati, Mr Biswadeep Basu, Mr Rajah Kunanjah, Mr Shyam Das, Mr Surendra Mutthiah, Mrs Parames Navaneetham, Mrs Vicky M Sundram, Ms Saras Narsey, Prof Kamal Puri, Prof Tapan Saha, Mr. Rashid Sricharan, Mr Lingam, Mr K Illungkoo, Mr. Chayan Sarkar</td>
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<td>Swami Sridharananda</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Secretary:</strong></td>
<td>Mr. Venkat Krishna, Mr. Murugesan Pathur</td>
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MELBOURNE

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**Directors:** Swami Atmeshananda, Dr. Jennifer Spencer, Mr. Jaishankar Venkataraman, Dr. S.J.Iswaran, Mr. Shubroto Bhattacharjee.
puffed rice was scattered over the
of myself. I fell down, and the
consciousness of everything outside
was so beautiful that I became
as milk against the black cloud. It
a flock of cranes came flying, white
covered almost the whole sky. Then
the puffed rice. Very soon the cloud
rain. I was watching it and eating
black cloud appeared, heavy with
fields. In one part of the sky a beautiful
along the narrow ridges of the rice
basket and was eating it as I walked
seven years old. One morning, I
June or July. I was then six or
or in the corner of a cloth. It was
carrying puffed rice either in a basket
play on the roads or in the fields
[Kamarpukur] children go out to
In that part of the country
The first ecstasy of the Master
is filled with incidents such as these.”
Good and bad. Sri Ramakrishna’s life
manifestation of God in everything,
life that a lover of God sees the
demonstrated through his ecstatic
during his boyhood, Chaitanaya
then renounced the world. In addition,
mother with his divine power and
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took some puffed rice in a small
basket and was eating it as I walked
along the narrow ridges of the rice
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black cloud appeared, heavy with
rain. I was watching it and eating
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consciousness of everything outside
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Sri Ramakrishna and His Divine Play
Sri Kshudiram Chatterji, a pious and heroic Brahmin, was the father of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, whom the world
today identifies as a Divine Incarnation. It was in one of the of pilgrimages undertaken by Kshudiram to Gaya in
1835 that he got the divine commandment from Vishnu, the Presiding Deity of that temple that He, the Supreme
Being, would be born in the humble home of Kshudiram as his son. Chandramani Devi, wife of Kshudiram, too had
a similar experience of a great birth through her. The earthly advent of this divinely announced son took place at
about 5.15a.m. on the 18th of February 1836. The child was named Gadadhar after one of the names of Vishnu.

Spiritual visions during childhood
The Master said, “It is common
knowledge that all avatars are
sometimes absorbed in spiritual
visions during their childhoods.
When he was a boy, Krishna
revealed his divinity to his parents
and friends many times. While
walking in a garden, the child Buddha
went into samadhi under a rose-
apple tree and attracted the attention
of both gods and human beings. In
his childhood, Jesus attracted the
birds of the forest with his love, and
he fed them with his own hands. As
a boy, Shankara overwhelmed his
mother with his divine power and
then renounced the world. In addition,
during his boyhood, Chaitanaya
demonstrated through his ecstatic life that a lover of God sees the
manifestation of God in everything,
good and bad. Sri Ramakrishna’s life
is filled with incidents such as these.”
The Master’s second ecstasy
The village of Anur is located a few
miles north of Kamarpukur, the
birthplace of Sri Ramakrishna. The
goddess Vishalakshi (literally the One with large eyes) of Anur is a
living deity. People of surrounding
villages, far and near, vow to offer
worship to the goddess if their various
desires are fulfilled... The shrine of
the goddess is in the middle of a
field, singing of the glory of the
village to perform their
respectable village women crossed
through the field to perform their
promised offerings to the goddess
Vishalakshi... When Gadadhar saw
the women on their way to Anur, he
insisted upon going with them.
Although they tried to discourage
him, thinking it would be hard for
him to walk such a distance, the
boy followed them without paying
attention to their words. Of course,
the women were delighted rather than
irritated. Who would be captivated
by a boy who was always cheerful
and humorous? More importantly,
even at this young age, Gadadhar
had learnt by heart many songs
about gods and goddesses, and folk
rhymes as well... And so the
women pondered, and finally
started their journey with Gadai.
While joyfully walking with them,
the boy told stories and sang songs
about gods and goddesses, just as
they had expected.
But as Gadadhar was crossing the
field, singing of the glory of the
goddess Vishalakshi, an extraordinary
incident took place. Suddenly he
appeared to be struck dumb. His
body stiffened and became numb.
Tears poured from his eyes. He did
not respond when the women asked
if he felt ill. Since they knew that
the boy was unaccustomed to making
such a journey, the women were
alarmed at the thought that he
might had a sunstroke. They
brought water from a nearby pond
and splashed it over his head and
eyes. But Gadadhar did not regain
consciousness...

After a short while, the thought
occurred to Prasanna, that perhaps
the goddess Vishalakshi had
possessed the simple, trusting boy.
She then suggested, “Instead of
calling ‘Gadai,’ let us call ‘Mother Vishalakshi’ wholeheartedly… Wonder of wonders! No sooner had the women called upon the goddess a few times than Gadadhar’s face glowed with a sweet smile, and slight signs of consciousness became visible. They were now convinced that the goddess had completely possessed the boy. They bowed down to him again and again; and addressing him as Mother, they prayed to him.

The Master’s third ecstasy

Another incident from Sri Ramakrishna’s early life clearly shows that he would often ascend to a higher plane of consciousness during his childhood.

The Pyne family, a family of goldsmiths lived in Kamarpukur, southwest of the Master’s ancestral home. The family was very wealthy at that time, which is evident even now from their brick Shiva temple decorated with beautiful artistry… Once, during Shiva-ratri, a dramatic performance had been arranged at the Pyne’s. A troupe from the neighbouring village was to perform a religious drama based on the glory of Shiva. The performance was to begin about half an hour after dusk… However, the boy who was to play Shiva had become seriously ill. The village council met to select someone who could play the part, and they decided on Gadadhar. Although he was young, his looks were right for the part and he knew many songs of Shiva. So he was dressed in Shiva’s costume, with matted hair, bedecked with rosaries, and smeared with ashes. He entered into the role so completely that the villagers were convinced he was Shiva himself. Gadadhar in that costume, with joy and awe upon seeing Gadadhar in that costume, with matted hair, bedecked with rosaries, and smeared with ashes. He entered into the role so completely that the villagers were convinced he was Shiva himself.

Gadadhar neither changed his position nor said anything. Then the director and a few elderly villagers went over to Gadadhar and found that his hands and feet were numb and that he seemed to have lost all external consciousness… Despite all efforts from his family Gadadhar could not be roused from his ecstatic state that night. In fact, some say that he remained outwardly unconscious for three whole days.

His unique characteristics

Not all of the remarkable events in the Master’s early life that have been recorded are the expressions of his divine power emanating from a higher plane of consciousness. Although some of them were of a divine nature, others sprang from the Master’s unique characteristics: his powerful memory, strong power of judgement, extreme steadfastness and firm resolution, indomitable courage, joyful sense of humour, and immense love and compassion. The Master’s extraordinary faith, purity, and selflessness were constant throughout his life.

His fantastic memory

In the village once there was a dramatic performance based on the life of either Rama or Krishna. The boy Gadadhar attended it along with other villagers. The next day the villagers were involved with their own activities, having forgotten those sacred stories and songs. But in Gadadhar’s mind the holy words flowed uninterruptedly. He repeated the entire play to his friends, and for fun, assembled them in the nearby mango grove. He helped them to learn by heart, as well as possible, the parts of the different characters of the play. He took the main role himself. The boys enacted the entire drama.

His firm determination

During his sacred thread ceremony Gadadhar went against family and social customs and insisted upon accepting his first ceremonial alms from Dhani, a woman of the blacksmith caste. Impressed with Dhani’s love and affection, and knowing her innermost wish, the boy brushed aside social restrictions and ate food cooked by this low-caste woman. Fearful, Dhani earnestly tried, but failed to stop the boy from eating her food.

His indomitable courage

There is a road leading to Puri at the southern periphery of Kamarpukur. When the Master was young, many Naga monks and Vaishnava mendicants would use that road to travel back and forth to Puri everyday. Because they believed the stories that were told about Naga monks, Gadadhar’s friends would stay away from them. But Gadadhar was not at all afraid. He mixed freely with those monks, talked to them, and pleased them with his service. He would spend a great deal of time with them in order to observe their conduct… One day he wanted to look like a monk, so he put holy marks all over his body; then he tore his new cloth into pieces to make a loin cloth, which he wore like a monk does. In this garb he presented himself to his mother.

Alertness of the Master’s mind

By studying stories of the Master’s early life, one gets an understanding of his spiritual disciplines. He accomplished whatever he set out to do; he shunned forcefully and immediately any obstacle that prevented him from reaching his goal. He performed all actions in this world by placing his firm faith in God, in himself, and in the innate divine nature of all people. He could not accept any ideas tinged with even the slightest narrowness, nor could he bear low, impure thoughts. Purity, love and compassion guided him always, in every respect. This aspirant’s mind could not be deceived by its own thoughts, nor could it be deceived by others.

Source:
Sri Ramakrishna and His Divine Play by Swami Chetanananda; pages 167-174, Vedanta Society of St. Louis, USA.
Sri Ramakrishna's training of his disciples

Jogindra was once in a ferryboat on the Ganges when he heard some passengers talking about Ramakrishna in a sneering way. At first, Jogindra was indignant; but he had a mild nature and soon reflected that the speakers were not to be blamed. After all they were only speaking in ignorance; they did not know Ramakrishna personally. “What business is this of mine,” Jogindra said to himself. So he remained silent.

Later, Jogindra told Ramakrishna about the incident, expecting that he would laugh at it. But Ramakrishna dismayed him by exclaiming indignantly, “They spoke ill of me without any reason, and you sat in silence and did nothing! Do you know what the scriptures say? A disciple should cut off the head of anyone who speaks ill of his Guru!”

Guru’s instructions: to be followed fully

On another occasion, Ramakrishna discovered cockroaches in a chest which he used for his clothes. He told Jogindra to take the clothes outside, shake out the cockroaches and kill them. The soft-hearted Jogindra did not want to kill the cockroaches, so he merely shook them out of the clothes and let them run away in the garden. He did not expect that Ramakrishna would give the matter a second thought, since the clothes were now clean. But he was wrong. Ramakrishna asked him if he had done as he had been told, and Jogindra was obliged to confess that he had not. “Always do exactly as I tell you,” said Ramakrishna. “Otherwise, sooner or later, you’ll follow your own whim about something that really is important; and then you will be sorry.”

To be a devotee but not a fool

Once, Jogindra went to the bazaar to buy an iron pan. The shopkeeper, greatly impressed him by his pious talk. When Jogindra got back, he found that the shopkeeper had cheated him – he had been sold a pot that was cracked. Ramakrishna reproved him. “What – you bought a pot and didn’t examine it first? The shopkeeper was there to do business, not to practice religion. Why did you believe him and get cheated? Just because you’re a devotee, that’s no reason to be a fool.”

Early Life of Swami Yogananda

The temple garden of Dakshineswar was built in 1855 by Rani Rasmani, a wealthy woman of Calcutta. It is a charming place full of trees and flower gardens; and the holy river Ganges flows beside its galaxy of temples. Jogin, a teenaged Brahmin from Dakshineswar, during his final year of school he met Sri Ramakrishna and began to visit the Master. With the journal in hand, Jogin arrived at Sri Ramakrishna’s veranda and found the room filled with Brahmo devotees. He was amazed to find that the man whom he had thought was a gardener earlier and whom his friends called a ‘mad brahmin’ was actually Sri Ramakrishna. Being too shy to enter the room, he stood outside the door attentively, listening to the spiritual conversation.

Jogindra Nath Roy Chaudhury was born into a well-to-do aristocratic family at Dakshineswar on 30 March 1861. His father was a pious Brahmin who spent long periods of time in spiritual pursuits. He did not pay much attention to managing his properties and, as a result, lost most of them. His only hope lay in his eldest and most promising son, Jogin, who might one day be able to shoulder the responsibilities of the whole family.

However, Jogin developed a religious tendency very early in life. He was sent to a Christian missionary school in Agarpada, a few miles from Dakshineswar. During his final year of school he met Sri Ramakrishna and began to visit him daily. This contact with Sri Ramakrishna brought about a great change in his thinking; the attainment of God became the sole purpose of his life. After his Entrance examination, Jogin began to live with Sri Ramakrishna for longer
tearful eyes. Then the Master, taking
bowed down to the Master with
and he breathed freely again. Jogin
weight was lifted from his heart
one bright with hope… A dead
from a region of utter despair to
He felt himself suddenly transported
Jogin was stupefied. What was this
make that also possible for you.”
worldly life and attain God, I’ll
that. And if you want to renounce
same time, bring your wife here at
family life and realise God at the
thousand marriages will be powerless
you have the grace of this place
meaning himself]
Haven’t I too been married? What
to the Kali temple. Sri Ramakrishna
disregarded his repeated summons,
ramakrishna suddenly appeared,
while he lurked there and watched,
so that Ramakrishna would not be
hovering in Jogin’s mind disappeared.
Jogin’s spirit of renunciation and
and the cloud of maya that had been
Jogin’s hands, escorted him to his
room.
The spiritual relationship between
the Master and the disciple was
re-established. Ramakrishna reinforced
Jogin’s spirit of renunciation and
the intention of serving him if
needed. Sri Ramakrishna was
pleased. After dinner the Master
gone. He got up
and looked out, but Ramakrishna was
nowhere to be seen. Then the terrible
suspicion came to Jogindra: perhaps
the Master has gone to the Nahabat,
to be with his wife! Could it be that all
his purity was pretence? Determined to
find out the truth without delay,
Jogindra went out of doors and
stationed himself near the Nahabat,
so that Ramakrishna would not be
able to leave it unseen by him. But
while he lurked there and watched,
Ramakrishna suddenly appeared,
walking from the direction of the
Panchavati, where he had been
meditating. Jogindra was bitterly
ashamed at his own lack of faith.
But Ramakrishna told him, “You
are quite right – before you accept
anyone as your guru, you should
watch him by day and by night.”

Once Sri Ramakrishna asked Jogin,
“What do you think of me? Jogin
replied, “You are neither a householder
nor a sannyasin [in any exclusive
sense].” He meant that the Master
was God – beyond attributes.
Ramakrishna was greatly pleased
and exclaimed, “What an extraordinary
statement you have just made!” Sometimes the Master would ask his
disciples to evaluate him in order to
check their level of understanding.
Ramakrishna always watched over
his disciples’ spiritual practices,
and also their sleeping and eating
habits. He approved of eating a
heavy meal at lunch, but did not like
his disciples to eat large quantities
at night, because he considered
the time for sadhana (spiritual
practices). One day the Master
asked Jogin, “What do you eat at
night?” “Bread made from one
pound of flour, and one half pound
of potato curry,” replied Jogin.
Immediately the Master said, “My
goodness! I don’t need your service. I
cannot afford to provide such a
large quantity of food every day.
You had better eat at home before
coming here.”

After that, Jogin began to strictly
observe the Master’s rules regarding eating. He did not even drink water
in anyone else’s house. One morning
he ate a little breakfast at home and
then left for Calcutta with the
Master. Ramakrishna visited several
places, but did not ask Jogin to eat
anything as he knew his strict
observance about taking food.
However, in the evening at Balaram
Basu’s house, the Master asked
Balaram to feed Jogin. The Master
knew that Jogin had eaten sweets
and fruits as Prasad at Balaram’s
on previous occasions. Balaram
immediately took Jogin to the
dining hall and fed him sumptuously.
Even though the Master frequently
passed in and out of spiritual ecstasy,
he was able to keep a vigilant
watch on the mental and physical
condition of his disciples.

Most artists and scientists are negligent
about personal tidiness and external
affairs while absorbed in their
work. But it is amazing to see that
although Ramakrishna was
completely oblivious to his body
and surroundings during samadhi,
he was careful even about trivial
details while in the normal plane.
One morning the Master left for
Balaram’s house by carriage with
Jogin and Ramlal. When the
Rasmani's objective may at least be the share that comes here so that he might fight with the temple officials for among devotees and sadhus. I think the offerings may be distributed to the service of this temple so that the Master and his disciples might have the prospect of obtaining something out of them. Jogin, "Look here, Rani Rasmani."

Meanwhile, Srijanakrishna asked Jogin, "Did you carry my cloth and towel?" He replied, "I am carrying your towel, but I forgot to bring the cloth. Anyhow, Balaram will be happy to give you a piece of new cloth." The Master said indignantly, 'Nonsense! People will say, 'What a hapless fellow has come! It will cause them trouble and they will be embarrassed. Stop the carriage. Go and bring the cloth.'"

When Jogin obeyed, the Master said, "There is an abundance of everything when a good, fortunate person comes as a guest. Whereas when an unlucky, wretched fellow comes, the host finds great difficulty in accommodating him, particularly if he arrives on a day when there is a dearth of necessities in the household."

It was a great education to live with Sri Ramakrishna: his every action and word carried deep meaning. According to the arrangements of the temple management, every day Sri Ramakrishna was to receive a portion of prasad, food offered to the deities. One morning he found that his share had not been sent to his room. This irregularity disturbed him, so he went to the temple office to inquire about it. The embarrassed temple manager immediately sent the Master's portion to his room. Jogin was surprised at this for he knew that the Master did not care much about eating as he had a very delicate stomach. Moreover he had never seen the Master so upset as he was on that day. After a good deal of reflection, Jogin came to the conclusion that the Master, in spite of his great spirituality, could not overcome the petty tendencies of his priestly class.

Meanwhile, Sri Ramakrishna returned to his room and said to Jogin, "Look here, Rani Rasmani has bequeathed her large estate to the service of this temple so that the offerings may be distributed among devotees and sadhus...I fight with the temple officials for the share that comes here so that Rasmani's objective may at least be partially fulfilled." Thus Jogin discovered that every act of the Master, no matter how trivial it might appear, had deep significance. Jogin learned from the Master to defend the truth. The Master also taught him to ignore the endless gossip of worldly people, for otherwise it would drag his mind from God to the worldly plane.

Ramakrishna had a special way of teaching his disciples. He did not teach in a classroom with a curriculum; there was no binding routine, nor any book to be read. He put himself on the same level as his young disciples. He was their companion; he talked familiarly with them; without any trace of superiority. The advice he gave them was not his own: it came through his lips from the Mother of the Universe. Sri Ramakrishna enacted the divine play with his disciples in the temple garden of Dakshineswar and demonstrated true spirituality to them by the example of his own life. He taught them how to realise God. He eradicated worldliness from their minds and gave them a taste of divine bliss.

In September, 1885, Sri Ramakrishna was taken to Calcutta for treatment of throat cancer and then in December, to Cossipore. Jogin followed the Master and served him. It was not so easy to serve Sri Ramakrishna. Once at Cossipore the Master expressed a wish to eat pala pudding (a kind of custard made from the zedoary root), and asked Jogin to buy it in Calcutta. On the way Jogin thought it would drag his mind from God to the worldly plane. He suggested that it would be better to buy it at Cossipore. Jogin followed the carriage to Cossipore. Jogin was surprised at this for he knew that the Master did not care much about eating as he had a very delicate stomach. Moreover he had never seen the Master so upset as he was on that day. After a good deal of reflection, Jogin came to the conclusion that the Master, in spite of his great spirituality, could not overcome the petty tendencies of his priestly class.

"The living God is within you, and yet you are building churches and temples and believing all sorts of imaginary nonsense. The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples."

—— Swami Vivekananda

Sources:
2. Ramakrishna and his Disciples by Christopher Isherwood; page 222, Advaita Ashrama; Kolkata.

In spite of his fatal disease, Sri Ramakrishna gave final shape to his future Order in Cossipore. He made Narendra the leader of his young disciples. One day the elder Gopal, one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, brought twelve pieces of ochre cloth and twelve rosaries, which the Master distributed among his disciples, including Jogin. Eight or nine days before his passing away, Ramakrishna asked Jogin to bring the almanac and read the events of each day and the position of the stars. When Jogin finished reading about 16 August 1886, the Master told him to stop and to put the almanac back in its proper place. Sri Ramakrishna passed away at 1.02 a.m. on the same auspicious day in August that he had selected.