

**Swami Kriyananda**

**A New Direction for Ananda's Music**

**Lugano, Switzerland, November 21, 1998**

While I was meditating this morning, something came to me to talk about.

It seems to me that we have a great opportunity before us now, to get Master's work out in a new and vital way.

We've talked about "the art of living," and it occurs to me that built into that subject is "music and the art of living."

Let me explain.

I've done this to some extent already. I've brought out music as a way of expressing Master's teachings. But I want to make a distinction that I believe will be helpful to you in understanding where I want to go with this.

In our teachings and in everything we do, we have the science of yoga. But, as I've been saying for a long time, there's also the art of yoga. And until you've got the art, the science alone won't get you there.

You're huffing and puffing, doing your yoga practices, but there's a feeling that you aren't getting it right. And it's because you have to get the art of it.

I've often talked about the thousands people who go to art school, and they learn more techniques than Leonardo ever had, because many new methods have been discovered since his time. But how many Leonardos are the art schools producing today? None, probably.

So there's not only the science of it, there's also the art of it. And what the colleges can teach you is the science, but they can't teach you the art.

In teaching people, we've emphasized the techniques. But what Master emphasized when he talked with us in person was the art. And we have a perfect opportunity through our music to use it as a vehicle for introducing people to the art of living.

The music can give people a handle on the art, and much more, it can give it a very clear focus.

I called Asha and David this morning to talk about this point and see what they thought of it. Asha was very excited. She thought it was a fantastic idea.

I suggested that whenever we start something new like this, we have to start with thinking about how to finance it. It's unfortunate, but Divine Mother hasn't

given us a millionaire like Rajarsi. So we've had to do it ourselves. And it's been good for us.

I had to write the *Secrets* books because I knew they would sell and it would help finance the longer and more serious books.

But in the process, because I wrote them with all sincerity, they are also good books. And it's a good thing that I wrote them, because a lot of people can get more out of a short book of sayings than from a longer book that they'll never read. Or if they read it, they won't abstract from it anything specific.

You ask them, "How did you like it?" And they say, vaguely, "I don't know, I liked it." But with the *Secrets* books, they can have a phrase that's easy to remember. And the same with *Do It Now*.

We need something specific, simple, and memorable for the art of living. But we also have to pay for it.

People used to ask me to write on deeper things. I said, "I can't yet. We have to build a base so that we can then afford to put out books that won't sell."

*Crisis in Modern Thought (Out of the Labyrinth)* was the first book where we knew it wouldn't sell, and yet it's a very important book. And the few people who've read it have been greatly influenced by it.

The same with the other books. I hope that some of the books that I put my heart into will sell. But in the meantime, we have enough of a range of books to be able to reach people.

Many times, the only way I could support my writing was by going out and lecturing.

In the beginning, I would try to find publishers for my books, and they all said, “We don’t know if it will sell.” Because these are new ideas, and they’re afraid to be the pioneers who step up and try to open up a new field.

*Jonathan Livingston Seagull* was rejected by, I think, eighteen major publishers, until finally one publisher took a chance, and it sold seven million copies very quickly.

But publishers, generally speaking, don’t want to do the new thing. I’ve been a pioneer, and they aren’t interested. Moreover, I don’t write to dazzle. I write to inspire and to deepen.

I remember taking a recording of mine to a music publisher, and while he listened to me he was smoking a cigar and talking on three phones. He ended up growling, “It needs more rhythm...” In fact, he had never listened to the piece.

So you have to accept that if you want to be able to function in this world, you need the funds to live.

So, with our music ministry, we have to think how we can do it on a practical level. Now, I don't like the idea of always begging people for money, "Can you give for this? Can you give for that?" Even though it's for their own benefit and not ours.

But I think one thing that could help a great deal is a field that we've never really tried to explore. And I've been talking about it more and more, from the standpoint of everything being an art as well as a science.

I've been introducing it in the lectures and classes I've given – this idea that you have to understand the art of it, that you have to get the knack of it, and it means coming at it through attunement. And with the right inner feeling, then you can get the techniques better, too, and you can meditate better.

But what we need now is to stress the *art* of living.

As Sri Yukteswar said, "Learn to behave." That's the art of living. He wasn't saying "Just do Kriya." He was saying, "Learn to behave."

Learn to live. And the art of living includes the entire spectrum of life. How to be gracious. How to be kind. How to be considerate of other people.

Master told a devotee, shortly before his *mahasamadhi*, “When I am gone, only love can take my place” He was talking about people being able to give love to others, and not just loving God alone.

**When we talk of the art of living, the problem is that we haven’t made it specific enough. But if we can bring music into it as a living example, it will make the art of it real to people in a very immediate way.**

**Not to teach people how to compose music, but show them how music expresses different states of consciousness, and how profoundly it can influence our consciousness.**

Now, I’ve used music in my classes. I’ve had an intuition for many years that the music and the teachings should somehow go hand in hand. But I’ve never gone beyond that thought and worked out how it can happen in reality.

I would sing as a supplemental illustration to the words in a talk, because the words alone seemed to me inadequate. So I would sing a song as an illustration, and people would say, “That’s cute,” or “That’s nice,” or “That’s beautiful.” But it doesn’t make a specific point, because I could have given the talk without music and they would have gotten the same message.

**But if we combine music and the art of living, we can concentrate especially on the positive message of the music as a teaching in itself.**

People easily concentrate on the negative side of music, as a channel to express their negative emotions and so on. But I wouldn't make that the focus.

I've told you the story of a woman who tried to commit suicide and had a near-death experience. She had loved heavy metal music and she found herself transported out of her body and into a hellish state. She was surrounded by people, some of whom were dressed in the style of many centuries ago, even two or three thousand years ago, and she said that if you were there for five minutes or five thousand years, it would make no difference, because there was no sense of time passing. They were people who had died in a state of absolute negation of everything. They were completely locked up in themselves, and she looked around at these people and felt bad for them.

When she came back into her body, she spent years campaigning to get people not to listen to that type of music, because she was sure that that hellish place was where they were headed.

Whether they commit suicide or not, it's such a consciousness-deadening vibration that they're bound to go where their consciousness is virtually dead.

**That's an example of the negative side of music. And when we talk about music and the art of living, we need to talk about levels of consciousness, and the spinal chakras. You all need to explore these thoughts, of how the music ties in with the chakras in a very specific way.**

For example, the tonic is where you are right now. You know what the tonic means? That's the note that you keep coming back to as the beginning note of a scale.

I would say that the tonic could relate perhaps to the navel chakra. Maybe not, I don't know. But that's what we need to explore.

There are notes that lift you above that level, and notes that take you below it. And any effort to rise usually means that you have to come down so that you can rise higher. You can't just keep soaring upward. And so music will go up and then down, and then up some more, and then down – you can't just keep going up without going off the scale and out of the range of sound that we can hear. And that's not music.

Music soars with the movements of energy in the spine. And music that takes your mind downward will go down the scale also. This is why the ending of the song *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* by Donovan is the tonic note, but it sort of clunks on the floor.

And when you get even farther below that, with heavy bass notes and drums and bass, cello, and so on, all of these are sounds of the lower chakras, and much of modern music is of the lower chakras.

That's why it's tied in with moods of anger and hatred, destructiveness, and violence. Whereas music that goes upward, with melodies that soar, is the opposite.

A very interesting example, and again, I think you've heard me talk about this, is *Cloisters*.

*Cloisters* starts as a Gregorian chant. (Swami sings the first part.) Then it deliberately breaks out of that mood, and it goes close to the tonic, close to the bass note. But then it goes higher in a way that, if you're a monk in a traditional Catholic order, they wouldn't encourage you to sing, because they don't encourage individuality. They wouldn't encourage novelty, and they wouldn't encourage you to think in non-traditional ways. And this simple note does that.

**This is the sort of message that we can give people, as a hook to get them to understand their own feelings – not just why Swami Kriyananda happened to write this particular song, but to better understand their own feelings and how they work, and how to work with them.**

For example, here it goes (sings). That higher note automatically represents to the mind the thought of a new idea. It's not Gregorian. But it's not only the fact that it isn't Gregorian, it's the fact that the melody itself shows openness (sings).

And then you need to repeat that, just as you need to repeat an affirmation in your life. Because in affirming, you deepen the thought. You go into it and make it a habit and make it your own (sings).

Now, in modern music, what you have is music that's emotional. It's the screaming we heard in the music they were playing in the restaurant last night. And if I were a modern songwriter, the automatic next line of *Cloisters* would be emotional. "Now I've broken out of my cage, and I can go out and explode." So automatically the next line would be (sings). Isn't it so?

That's how your emotions would express that kind of energy. Once you think you're free, you just go out wildly emoting. (Makes extravagant arm gestures.)

It's the way of a lot of modern self-help teachings try to take you, the "primal scream" sort of teachings where you've supposedly broken out emotionally and you're no longer doing what daddy and mommy told you, and you're gonna be you, and suddenly you're "Ah! Ah! Ah!" You're emotional and uncontrolled, and it gets you nowhere.

When I wrote *Cloisters* I could feel that it could go that way, and I held it back, because I knew that it would lose its power.

Once you've screamed, there's nothing else you can do. In fact, people don't get rid of their anger by screaming. They may feel better for a while, but that feeling is merely a kind of exhaustion. They exhaust their emotions, and they can't feel them for a while, but tomorrow they'll have the same emotions again.

**So the modern way of composing and singing is not a way of transforming anything. But if you keep it controlled (sings) – so that I don't go to the higher note, but hold it under control with the reins, and only then let it go up – then it has power (sings).**

**Although it's a soft sound, there's a lot of power in that note. And that's what people don't understand – how music is really a language.**

While writing that song, I didn't analyze it. I felt the things I'm describing. And always, I keep tightly holding the reins.

**This is something we can bring into the art of living. We can use music as a means to help people learn how to live, in a way that will be much more meaningful for them than if you only talk about the teachings.**

**In the case of *Cloisters*, it can give them the idea that you need to hold your emotions in check if you want to use them in a more effective way. (Sings emotionally) is destructive. (Sings with exaggerated restraint) is too held-back. But when you go (sings), it's got a melody line that can take you inward and give power to your expression of feeling.**

And you can say that all of my music is an example of that, but *Cloisters* is a particularly good example.

Then the way the song ends – I could have made it end normally (sings), because a song classically ends on the tonic.

But I didn't want that, because I didn't want it to come back to "you." To come back to the tonic means that you come back to *you*. And I wanted it to soar into the infinite and expand, and leave it there.

So I couldn't have that ending. I had to do (sings), and then you see that it goes off into infinity.

In every piece I've written, there's something like that. I've never talked about it, except for this example, which I've given several times. I've given it sometimes as an example of how I go about writing music, but I haven't talked about it from the standpoint of the art of living. And I wanted to play the new *Mystic Harp* for you because every one of those pieces is an example of some of these things.

You don't need to say, "Why don't we play more of Swami's music?" They'll want to play it if they can see that it's doing something they can understand, and if they feel that it's helping them.

Meanwhile, if you were to charge for classes at our centers, you could earn the money to keep the music ministry going.

**When you teach them chanting, you can show them why Master gave us this devotional form. You can help them understand why some of the Indian chants are just noise, and why some are thrilling. Music is not an analytical thing, and so you have to bring it beyond analysis, to where it can become an experience for them, more than just verbally taking it apart.**

If you sing Master's chants, they're not as melodic, in my opinion, as the songs I've written. But, still, there are some lovely melodies. A wonderful one is *In the Valley of Sorrow* (sings). You see how, by keeping it on one note, it makes it more meditative.

If you were to make it more melodic and not meditative (sings), it wouldn't have that mood. But having it all on that one note, it works. And that's why I sometimes tell people, "No, don't go off of the note." Because staying on the note takes your mind along with it and draws you into the thought of a real place, a real feeling.

Then, of course, *In the Valley of Sorrows* has to go down (sings), because those minor notes sort of draw your heartstrings (sings). Then it really helps you become drawn into your feelings.

**But that song is only one example. Whereas if you to go through song after song, chant after chant, it would be exciting to understand that the words are important, of course they are, but they're not nearly so important as the melody, at least in this particular sense, that the melody affects your consciousness.**

We can think of the heavy metal music that had taken that woman into a state of consciousness that brought her to hell after she died and left her body. And she saw that

that kind of music carries the vibration of the particular plane of hell that she was on.

**In the same way, by listening to certain music and absorbing it deeply, it can change your consciousness. It's not just entertainment. It's not just nice melodies. And that's why we should listen to music that is born of Spirit rather than just beautiful sentiments.**

We don't need to tell people any more than that. It will take a while for people to catch on. But this is exciting. It can become a cornerstone of our teachings.

**All of the arts do this. They express levels of consciousness that we can attune ourselves to when we participate in that art. But there is no art that does it as powerfully as music.**

Lori with her dancing I think is probably the next thing. Because that, too, is important. You can get, through physical movement, what you can get in music. And it has music along with it. But the visual arts are more static.

**Music has a vibration of a more obvious kind than the visual arts. So I think music is the most important of the arts, because of how it directly and powerfully affects our feelings and our consciousness.**

**Nirmala:** What you're saying is to take things that we habitually do in a less conscious way, and make them conscious. (Swami nods.) It's bringing it out. It's a subtle thing, and we're verbalizing it through music.

**Swami:** Yes. And we can keep verbalizing it through music to help people understand how the music can powerfully affect their way of living. Don't make music the end, but make it the hook or channel through which you can achieve a change in your consciousness and your life.

**(Question):** If they feel it, they will say "I want it, because I know for myself."

**Swami:** People already feel the music, but they don't know why they're feeling it. This will help them make it more dynamic to their consciousness, so that they can be more aware of what's happening and receive more of the power in it.

**Peter:** The words are the science of it, and the melody is the art.

**Swami:** I suppose. Although, for example, poetry is more than an explanation. But in a way, that's certainly true. (Sings *Walk Like a Man*.)

It's telling you a specific thing to do, and then the music also gives you that sense of courage – "I will do

it.” And even if the words aren’t saying anything, you feel something.

**So, yes, in that way, we can say that the words are the science and the music is the art. But in teaching yoga, we’ve given so much emphasis to the science of it. And I’ve been seeing, more and more, that the art of it is every bit as important.**

**So many people practice the techniques and don’t get the effect of them. And then there are people who have the art of it, but they don’t have the science, so they don’t understand how to channel it correctly. But with the two together, it can help them much more.**

The science of it is important, too. Music is a good example, because if you don’t know how the chords go together, you can’t make the music work. And it takes quite a while to learn.

People ask me, “How could you write music, without studying how to write music?”

The thing is, there are laws there to be discovered. And it isn’t that someone decided, “All right, we’re going to do it this way.” But once you experience what the science of it is doing, then you know it, whether anybody explains it to you or not.

**So that's something it would be good to talk about in teaching the science of music. That the science becomes most powerfully real to us when we experience it.**

Music and the art of living, is I think, a really excellent topic. And *The Mystic Harp* would be a good example, because each of those songs has something different to say in the melody.

And here's a very important aspect of it. *Deirdre's Sorrows* tells a tragic story of a woman who ends up committing suicide because her life has been ruined by treachery, and so on. And you'd think that it would be a real downer. Yet it doesn't feel like that, because the consciousness that I wrote it with was looking at it from a higher plane.

**And here's the point to keep in mind. To reach liberation, it isn't a simple matter of living through these things, but it's being able to look down on them from superconsciousness.**

When you reach the state of liberation, of *jivanmukta*, and you look back over your former lives and relive your former life as a pirate, or whatever it might be, it isn't as if you were suddenly going out again with lust for blood and gold. It's that you're seeing it from a divine

viewpoint, and seeing that it was God trying to express Himself and not quite making it in that lifetime.

Once you see that it was a divine impulse that took you in those directions, then you can release that karma into the Infinite and be rid of it forever.

**When we try to get rid of our problems with the primal scream type of therapy, which takes you into the emotions, it doesn't free you. And yet you do have to look back over your emotions. You don't want to suppress them, and you can't deny them. But you do need to go back in order to free yourself from that karma.**

That's why Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you."

That is to say, find the superconscious state, and then you can look back and see all of these things that you wanted in their true perspective. It isn't that once you've found God He'll make you a millionaire, but once you've found God He'll give you what you need, and you'll realize that you never needed any more than that.

So, with wisdom, you see that when you have God, all the riches of the world are given to you as true riches, because you see that what you need is there, and you don't want more than that, because it would be a burden.

It's another way of saying that this is the way to get out of all our problems. It's why Lahiri Mahasaya said, "Solve all your problems with Kriya Yoga."

Once you reach superconsciousness, or once you get deep into the spine, you can look back on all of these human emotions that we go through, but they're different, because they don't bind you anymore. You liberate yourself from them and even make them beautiful.

So this is something you'll notice in the songs I've written that talk of negative things, like *Where has My Love Gone?*

When Lakshman tried to sing *Where has My Love Gone* with a sense of pathos, I said, "No, don't sing it that way. It's not that kind of song." It's talking about knowing the emotion of human love, from a level where you can release it into the sea. And that's why it's not a sad song, and if it's sung with sadness, it misses the point.

**I think you'll find this is true with all of my songs, that I've written them from a level of showing people how to get out of these emotions rather than remain in them.**

**That's why this music is important. It's not just entertaining music, it's part of the art of living. When we listen to *Deirdre's Sorrows* we feel the pain, and we also feel, "Ah! It's just an episode that we're going through." It's not real, and we come out of it and it's gone.**

**Tim:** Is *Deirdre's Sorrows* looking at tragedy as the result of a misguided spiritual impulse? In the way that you could say a drunk is really looking for higher consciousness? Is there a spiritual side to *Deirdre's Sorrows*?

**Swami:** Yes, there is a spiritual side to it. You feel the agitation of it, and the bang of the drum at the end means that she's killed herself. And yet at the same time you look at it and see that it was all just an episode. Like looking at something through water, it doesn't have any clear reality.

**Music can help us in that way, not by taking us into the emotion, but if we do it right, it can take us past the emotion.**

**Seeing the emotion as real, seeing the tragedy as real, and yet it's not real, it's like the wind blowing leaves.**

So there's that in the music, too. There's a moment of great anguish, and yet it blows away, and we can see that it doesn't exist.

That's perhaps the strongest example of a tragic song that I've written. And yet it isn't so tragic.

Nirmala: It's uplifting somehow.

**Swami:** It's uplifting somehow. I've always enjoyed listening to it, yet I don't feel tragic listening to it. And there's another thing, and that is that God has given me this ability to tune in to a country and feel the soul of the country, and write music for that country. And with each country it's very different.

**For instance, if you listen to Irish music, there's an awful lot of it that isn't uplifting, just barroom kinds of music, or violent.**

**I've read reviews in Irish papers where it speaks of my music "capturing the soul of Ireland." And that's what I try to do in this music, is capture the soul of the country.**

**And what makes it interesting in relation to music and the art of living, is that it shows that it doesn't have to be just one thing. You can take that higher view of a variety of human attitudes, different human qualities, and still make it an uplifted viewpoint.**

The music in *The Mystic Harp* is an example of that, where it's using Ireland as the setting. For instance, *John Anderson*. Have you heard the classic melody of that song, Jeannie?

Jeannie: I think David sang it to me once, but I don't remember it.

Swami: You heard it, didn't you, Nirmala? No? I have sort of an idea of it, and it's really lovely, but it's a downer. (Swami sings the original melody.) I haven't got it quite right. Nonetheless, the feeling is completely different. If I had known there was a melody, I might not have written it. Thank God, I didn't know, because I've taken the words and brought them up to where there's a higher viewpoint. And I think it's good example to give in the classes.

On the one hand, you've got this elderly couple reaching the doorway of death, and they're looking back and saying, "It's been a sad life, but I've loved you, John, and soon we'll be buried under the cold, cold earth."

And my version gives the feeling of what a blessing it has been to live together, to have had days of laughter and difficulties, but there's dignity beneath it all in that old age.

And what a different vibration comes out when you listen to that melody! It would be a wonderful example to bring into your classes. And bringing it in from this point of view will give this entire teaching a fresh impulse. Which we won't get if we're just giving talks.

We can go through song after song and point out how they show us life from a higher perspective. And not just leave them with the music, but leave them with themselves.

When you teach a class, when you give anything to anybody, really, you've finally got to realize that it has to help them. And that's why I've always taught our ministers that when they answer a question, don't answer it.

Someone recently said, after I answered their question, "Yeah, but that's not what I asked." I said, "I know what you asked, but I'm not trying to answer you only. There are a lot of people here, and I don't want to waste their time answering just your question. I want to answer your question in such a way that they will get something out of it, too."

They appreciated that. But I broadened the answer to embrace a larger point. And it's the same with the music, if we leave it only with my music, or music in

**general, most of them won't sing, most of them won't compose, and most of them won't play anything but the radio. But if you tell them how this applies to the art of living, then you've got something tangible that they can hang on to.**

Just as a picture says more than a thousand words, so a piece of music, if they know what it's doing and why, or even if they don't listen to the music, if they remember that example, it will give them a better focus on what they're trying to change in their lives.

**I was trying to think about this, but my brain was too tired, so I meditated on it this morning, and I got really excited, realizing that this is an entirely new approach to the teachings, and it's tied in with learning to behave.**

**I wouldn't need to go through these different pieces with you, because you're sensitive enough and you've lived with them for years, and you can feel what they're doing. But I think that our centers would be thrilled to have classes like this.**

**Jeannie:** It's a big subject now in the world, "music therapy."

**Swami:** But most of it is just focusing on one tone at a time.

Jeannie: Yes, but this is something that people are wanting now, even maybe beyond our centers.

**Swami: But I don't want to concentrate on music. I want to concentrate on the art of living. I don't want you coming in as musicians talking about music and using the art of living to turn people on to the music. I want you to use the music to turn them on to themselves and how they can live their lives better.**

**And ultimately we don't want music that is going to do something for them – we want them to do it for themselves. That's what yoga is about – combining the art and the science of it.**

Jeannie: It seems like one of the most important things nowadays is for them to understand the difference between sentimentalism and inspiration.

Swami: Yes, right.

Jeannie: I can't always tell the difference.

Swami: Well, I don't know that the difference is hard and fast. You can take some songs that are sentimental and turn them toward God, and then they become devotional.

There was a song that I heard on the streets of Los Angeles. It was a Forties song, a strictly worldly song.

(Swami sings, “We played a game...”). And, well, it’s a very sentimental song (Swami starts to weep here), but when I turned it to God and realized that it’s what I’ve done for incarnations, it became very inspiring.

So who’s to say where the line crosses. In any case, every sentiment should take you toward God, and not just leave you in itself, weeping in your beer.

**Nirmala:** That melody, is that *Night and Day*?

**Swami:** No it’s another one.

**Nirmala:** But what you were just singing, the melody stretches upward, and if the melody stayed there, sort of grinding away at the heart, then it would be more sentimental.

**Swami:** Yes, like *Stardust*, it’s a very sentimental thing.

**Nirmala:** How does that one go?

**Swami:** That’s Glenn Miller. It’s really lovely but it’s very sentimental. (Swami sings.) It’s a very romantic kind of feeling, and it doesn’t energize you. It has you ending up sitting in a bower together and kissing. It doesn’t take you out to the universe. And we want something that can do that. But these examples can be helpful.

**Jeannie:** And if people can learn how to feel when something is taking them up or down.

**Swami:** Yes, and learn how to tie it to the chakras. That's very interesting. I would say that the tonic note begins in the lumbar chakra, which is the main center of meditation in Zen. This is where they concentrate. It's also *Nabi Kriya*, which gets you centered in the spine and the upper part of the lower chakras, so you can raise it, but always while doing *Nabi* you're looking at the spiritual eye. Then the heart center becomes the center of it. And in the more uplifted kind of music the tonic goes here in the heart.

**Jeannie:** Sometimes a melody going down can mean going inward, other times it can mean going downward.

**Swami:** That's right.

**Jeannie:** I guess one just has to feel what it's doing.

**Swami:** Yes. How does *Truth Can Never Die* go? (Swami sings.) Then it goes down, but it goes up again.

**Jeannie:** "Don't look back, just go on alone." It's more of an affirmation.

**Swami:** Yes, it's going down, that's what I was trying to say. It becomes affirmative if you come down with deliberation. Whereas if it's (Swami sings), that's how I

did *Dracula's Castle*. It was meant to be amusingly the opposite of uplifting. It was so exaggerated that I ... (Peter sings) ... yeah, like an ogre walking down the steps into the dungeon.

**Jeannie:** You can feel in modern music a hammering down.

**Swami:** It keeps you there. It's very lower-chakra. And it would be interesting to listen to popular music to see how it has evolved. The minuet, which is elegant but upper-chakra, and all of the dance movements in the minuet are this way. And how it evolved into the waltz, which was considered highly indecent in its day. I mean, men and women touching each other on the dance floor. It's certainly graceful, and it has this sort of uplifting ring. But in the 1915s you get more nervous – what did they call it, ragtime. (Swami sings.) It was getting nervous. And then jitterbugging was in the 1940s. And that was the time of the big bands. (Swami sings.) You know, and *In the Mood*, that's the beginning of *In the Mood*. That's the quintessential jitterbugging sort of piece.

**Nirmala:** And the Charleston was before the jitterbug, in the 1920s.

**Swami:** Yes, I think so. But you can see an evolution from grace and dignity, to a lack of dignity, to a total loss

of dignity, to almost a glorying in being without it, as you find in the music today. And popular music, more than any other music, shows you where human consciousness is.

When I was a child, I grew up in a country, Rumania, that was still medieval. They had very simple, charming folk music and dancing, and now they love rock and roll. It has lost its innocence, and there's this sense of "I want mine and I'm gonna get it, and I don't care who suffers, I'm gonna get it." That kind of thing.

Earlier, it was all, "We're having a good time together," and it was fun. The folk dancing in the villages – it wasn't spiritual, but at least it was gay. There's no gaiety today. Even the 1940s, with all that very restless music, with the swing bands and so on, at least it had a lot of humor in it.

Tim: Is the music a reflection of the times, or the other way around?

**Swami:** Both. I mean, an affirmation of something becomes more of the same thing. So if the consciousness of the times were not what the music was expressing, the music either wouldn't express it, or people wouldn't listen.

And then once you listen to it, you get more into it. So they feed each other, echoing back and forth.

**Tim:** We're starting the other way round, trying to influence the consciousness of the times through the music.

**Swami:** Well, what I think is that the consciousness of the times has made that music popular, which means that young people are growing up hearing that music and getting into that consciousness more easily. Sort of like a suit of clothes that you get used to and it feels comfortable.

**(Question):** We're also helping people understand what it does to you, and how to use it consciously.

**Swami:** Yes.

**(Question):** Because people don't understand what it does to you. And I think that if they did understand, lots of people would change the music they listen to and that they play for their children.

**Swami:** But now I want to emphasize a special point. If we leave it too much on the level of music, we are going to leave it with a very small group of people. But if you keep bringing it back to the art of living, and how it can help them where they are right now, and how this principle applies to lots of things besides

**music, and in your work, your business, your family – then it will have a larger effect.**

**Music is only an example that we can use to help people understand how they can use other things to draw them into that higher plane of consciousness.**

**Then you won't be making it just sort of an aesthetic extension of how they're living already, which will be interesting to them but which they'll leave behind in the classroom when they leave.**

**We have to make it real to them, and that's going to take the art of teaching. And that takes practice.**

**Tim:** How do you do that?

**Swami:** You'll have to learn to do it.

**Tim:** It's hard to teach someone to be an artist. You can teach them the skills, but they have to have it in them. How do you teach that?

**Swami:** Everybody has it in them, or people would never become artists. In some cases, it takes many incarnations. Other people have reached that point already. When it comes to living, most people who are likely to come to any classes we teach, where we're excluding the majority of people, they can understand it

on various levels – if not as music, then as salesmanship, all sorts of things.

**But we don't want to leave it at music. If music isn't their central interest, and they rarely like to listen to music, but they have to sell goods all the time, or they have to get along with their husbands or wives, or teach their children correctly – that's why we need to bring it into the art of living.**

**And music is our example in the music ministry, but other teachers at Ananda will use other examples. We're trying to get the music going, and therefore it's natural for us to begin with this whole approach of using the music.**

**In fact, we've been teaching relationships and all sorts of things for years, but now we're just giving it a whole new direction.**

And I'd like to say that we naturally want to approach it from where we've been already. But remember that you're approaching something new.

**Then I think you're going to be able to give music an importance that it's not had before. That it can become so central to the art of living that people will take it a lot more seriously.**

Then I think we can say to people at Master's Market that the important thing isn't that you enjoy listening to the music, but that this is our path. It's a hard message to get across at this point, but it won't be, once we've done this.

So that's what I had to say, and I think it's important.

**Tim:** The art of living is to draw us closer to God. And which comes first? Wouldn't the art of living be developing your inner attunement through meditation?

**Swami:** No, there are two things here, Tim. What you're saying is certainly the central aspect of what we want to do. And that's why talking about the chants can be helpful. Because the chants can take us into actual devotion, whereas *Deirdre's Sorrows* doesn't, nor do most of the pieces we're talking about. *Cloisters*, okay, but not by any means all of the music. It's meant to help us take into account the higher aspect of whatever the song is talking about.

As Master said, until you can win people's love, you won't be able to win God's love. And it's very important to live rightly. That's why Sri Yukteswar said, "Learn to behave."

Learn how to behave. It's not only the attitude you have in meditation, which is central, but if you don't

know how to translate that peace, that devotion, that harmony, that aspiration, that upliftment into how you're dealing with people, then you're missing an important cog in the wheel of your life.

So, although, yes, the purpose of life is to find God, nonetheless as long as we're living here we have to bring God to where we are,

That means we must learn how to relate to other people. That is what makes Master's path so broad, so universal.

Many saints have talked about how to pray, but the people who hear them go back and scold their husbands and their children. And what we want to do, and what Master gave us to do, as a very specific dimension of his teachings, is this idea of making all of life a unity.

That's why the Vedas give you techniques for achieving your worldly desires. You'd think, "Why would a scripture do that?" But Master said that a true scripture addresses all levels of human reality – body, mind, feelings, and soul.

**(Question):** And then one helps the other.

Swami: Yes. So what you're saying is essential. Nonetheless, if you're leaving out this broader view, you

won't get a true handle on it and it will become one-dimensional.

**Tim:** I'm trying to grapple with this. It's like the chicken and the egg. When I'm teaching school, I do it in a way where you get *yourself* ready instead of just getting the form ready, and then it flows out from that. I can't give someone a lesson plan, because the way I do it is that it comes from within.

**Swami:** That's how Master would lecture.

**(Question):** Years ago, you said when we were at your house one day that your music was more for daily life, and Master had chants and things that were more specifically for meditation.

I can see that *Walk like a Man* expresses a kind of encapsulated energy that a person can use. *Joy in the Heavens* uplifts their attitudes, their state of consciousness, their state of mind, so that people can use that music every day.

**Swami:** And they're an adjunct to the teachings because they round it out.

**(Question):** Exactly, and also, Swami, they give us the courage to live the teachings. They give us the things we need. It's why this is so perfect, because you've encapsulated in the music the things that people can

relate to the most, those particular states of consciousness.

**Swami: A thing that I've had all my life, and that you can feel in my music, is that there's always inwardly a sense of freedom. That anything I've gone through, I haven't felt touched by it. And that's in the music. You don't feel, "Here's somebody suffering." You feel, "Here's somebody who's experiencing this and feeling the freedom in it."**

(Question): The focus of it is toward freedom. So it has that. Where anybody else would say, "Let's have courage," it's courage in action in the world.

**Swami:** Yes.

(Question): It stops here rather than going up.

**Swami:** And these are all things that can be taught in the classes. I think you can develop a fantastic course this way.

**Nirmala:** So you're seeing the three of us going to all the centers.

Swami: And individually or together, as you feel.

(Question): And, Swami, we could go out to Unity churches. We can go anywhere that will have us.

Swami: Yes. Yes.

**(Question): This is a dynamic thing, and also for our own experience of learning, you go out and do it, and the more you do it the more you realize that this works. This helps me understand. I find in teaching that I learn more when I'm trying to help people**

Swami: Yes.

**(Question):** Because I have to put my mind to it that much more **deeply.**

**Swami: But so far, what we've had at Ananda is the thought, "Oh, this is music, it's a thing apart. It's an art."**

**And people haven't understood that it is a vital part of life. So I think we're on to something really important. The leaders of the colonies have thought, "Yes, but we have to deal with the 'real' things." And this will change that approach, because it's very real.**

**(Question):** You've done what you usually do, you've picked this up by the string that makes sense, makes it work from every angle.

**Swami: While you've been here, and before you came, I knew that we had to come to something, and I've been reaching for it. This morning I said, "Divine**

**Mother, it's time You give it to me. I need it now.”  
And so I understood.**

**Jeannie:** Swami, talking about picking it up by the string that takes care of everything. The people in the community will learn how to feel these things.

**Swami:** Yes.

**Jeannie:** We don't have to be telling them. There may be some of that, but they'll be trained to feel these things for themselves. These aren't just nice songs that bring us joy; there's a reason for them.

**Nirmala:** And a spiritual depth to them that they don't look for.

**Jeannie:** They'll learn to feel it.

**Swami:** I think it will create a new life for Ananda. We've needed something new. We've become stagnant. We've heard many people say that we've lost our innocence because of the lawsuits. Well, this will help us recapture it.

**Nirmala:** And the music is an indication of the consciousness of the community.

**Swami:** Yes.

(Question): But, again, this brings the focus of the music back to our teachings.

**Swami:** Yes.

(Question): We're saying to people, "These are the teachings. This is how they can help you." And that's very different than saying "We'd like to sing for you."

**Swami:** Even if you're tone-deaf, the things we're talking about will help you in whatever it is you're doing. Because music is not a separate thing. It's a human expression. And if people understand the arts in that way, it makes them altogether different from "This precious group of people who have the aesthetic sensitivity." Which is why we all feel we're not musicians.

(Question): No, Swami, we're not that at all.

**Nirmala:** Or artists.

**Swami:** We're just human beings that do music.

(Question): When people find something like this, they run to the booth afterwards to buy it.

**Swami:** Well, I'm for that, too.

**(Question):** If I find that something is there, I want to grab it and take it, and then it becomes something that they've taken into themselves, which is wonderful.

**Swami:** Yes.