

PREMA VAHINI

(The Stream of Divine Love)

by
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



PRASANTHI NILAYAM

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PREFACE

Dear Reader,

Addressing a mammoth gathering at Gudur some years ago, Bhagavan Sri Sathya Sai Baba said, “You will not be wrong, if you call Me Prema-Swaroopa.” In fact, Baba showers *Prema* (Love), seeks Prema, and establishes Prema in the heart of the individual, the fabric of society and the complex of nations. Humanity which has lost its way and is shivering in terror unable to control the evil that it has generated by its insane pranks, needs Baba’s Grace and Prema, to allay its neurosis and bring it back to the Light. Baba had said twenty-two years ago that He would inaugurate His Task of recreating and reforming Man on the true basis of *Dharma*, when He should have completed thirty-two years of stay here upon the Earth. In 1958, when He reached that moment, He blessed the venture of a monthly magazine, and he named it

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Sanathana Sarathi, a name full of the fragrance of the Gita and the Lord’s Role as the Charioteer of whoever selects Him as the Guide. It is significant that the very first series of articles that Baba wrote for the *Sanathana Sarathi* was *Prema Vahini*. These discourses are collected in this book, as they were first presented, in English translation. *Sathya* (truth), *Dharma* (righteousness, code of duties, essential nature of a being or thing), *Santhi* (peace) and Prema (Love) are the Four Pillars of the new World of the Sai Era and under Baba’s guidance, humanity has to discover *Santhi*, through Prema. For that task, this book will be of great help. While reading it, you are in touch with the very source of Prema. While translating its message into action, you are visibly led on by the Grace of the Lord Himself and while enjoying the thrill of *Sadhana* (spiritual practice) prescribed here, you are responding to the majesty of the very Ocean of Mercy.

N. Kasturi, Editor,
Sanathana Sarathi



Noble Qualities Form The Path for The Aspirant

More than all the previous *Yugas* (ages), the Kali Yuga offers multifarious paths through which man can acquire discrimination or *viveka*. If it is education that is needed, there are as many schools and institutions as you need. If it is wealth that one is after, there are various avenues by which, with effort, it can be honourably earned. In spite of this, however, we do not find any increase in human happiness or peace. Indeed, there is much more misery than in previous ages!

What then is the reason? The reason lies in human behaviour, in man's way of living itself. Human life is undoubtedly the highest in evolution and to give it meaning, spiritual endeavour is essential, endeavour that is pure and holy. For this way of life, character is all important. Character makes life immortal, it survives even death. Some say,

knowledge is power, but it is not true. Character is Power. Even the acquisition of knowledge demands a good character. So everyone must yearn to attain flawless character, without any trace of evil.

Note that Buddha, Jesus Christ, Sankaracharya and Vivekananda, great Sages and Saints and Devotees of the Lord, all these are treasured in the memory of man even unto this day. What quality made them all memorable for all time? I say, it is the character of each one of them.

Without character, wealth, education, social status, all these are of no avail. It is the fragrance of the flower which gives it value and worth. Poets, painters, artists and scientists may be great, each in his own field; but without character, they can have no standing in Society.

Doubts will certainly arise whether all those who are now greeted with respect by society have the character which we consider essential to greatness. But I am speaking of a society and a character, which cling to certain unchanging values. Ordinarily, society attaches varying importance to certain qualities from day to day and fashions in character change with the vagaries of society. But the basic nature of a flawless character is eternal, it is the same, whatever the vicissitudes of society. In that sense, it is immortal, being associated with another immortal entity, the *Atman* (Self, soul).

Among the qualities that make up a flawless character, Love, Patience, Forbearance, Steadfastness, Charity—these are the highest, these have to be revered.

The hundred little deeds that we indulge in every day harden into habits. These habits shape the intelligence and mould our outlook and life. All that we weave in our imagination, seek in our ideals, yearn in our aspirations, leave an indelible imprint on the mind. Distorted by these, we form our knowledge, our picture of the world around us, and it is to this picture that we get attached.

Man's present is but the result of his past and the habits formed during that long period. Whatever be the nature of the character that he has come by, it can certainly be modified by modifying the accustomed process of thought and imagination.

The wickedness of no man is incorrigible. Was not Angulimala, the *dacoit* (thief), turned into a kind-hearted person by the Buddha? Did not the thief Ratnakara become Valmiki, the sage? By conscious effort, habits can be changed and character refined. Man has always, within him, within his reach, the capacity to challenge his evil propensities and to change his evil habits. By selfless service, by renunciation, by devotion, by prayer and by ratiocination, the old habits which bind men to earth can be discarded and new habits which take us along the divine path can be instilled into our lives.

To discuss the nature of this character, its ways and vagaries, and to inform about the process of reshaping it, this is the purpose of all spiritual literature, poems, epics, books and periodicals. The *Sanathana Sarathi* has just this aim in view, it does not seek either the exhibition of erudition or the acquisition of name and fame.

But it has to be said, that the mere reading of a book or a journal will not vouchsafe viveka or discrimination. That which is seen, heard or read must be put into practice in actual life. Without this, reading is mere waste of time. If anything is read to pass time, it passes the time and nothing remains.

The Study of Books and One-pointedness

Books are available in plenty and at very cheap prices. Vedas, Sastras and Puranas can be obtained and read by everyone. There is also no dearth of *Gurus. Vidyapeeths* (seats of learning) abound and are ostensibly granting the boon of knowledge. Facilities for training the mind are plentiful and within reach. But yet, from nowhere is heard the note of contentment at having partaken of the nectar of *Jnana* (Sacred knowledge).

When I see the heaps of books that lie around everywhere, I feel that the wisdom inside the book cannot succeed in penetrating the heavy binding and emerging into the light. God is hidden by the mountain ranges of lust, anger, envy, and selfishness. So too, the Sun of Wisdom is hidden by these huge heaps of books. Though these books have spread to all corners of the earth, we cannot say that

culture has increased or that wisdom has increased. Man is still not far from the ape. An attractive binding and title, a beautiful picture, these are what the reader seeks, viz. transitory pleasure and momentary contentment. Only those who, by means of discrimination, select the books they read and practice what they read can realise the Truth and enjoy everlasting Bliss. Only these live worthwhile lives. So those who seek the highest path and who revel in thoughts of God should strive to read only the life histories of saints and sages and books which help the contemplation of the Divine. Aimless reading of books all and sundry and whatever comes to hand will make confusion only more confounded. It gives no profit, confers no peace.

5 More than all, cultivate one-pointed steadfastness, *ekaagratha*, in whatever you do. *Samadristi* (equal sight) is *Subhadrishti* (equally auspicious).

The Lion, though it is the King of the Forest, while walking through the wood, turns back every few steps; for, it is afraid of being pursued. Fear in the mind makes the vision falter. Violence within the heart distorts the vision and distracts the sight.

Man must have *Samadristi*, equal sight. All creation must appear to his eyes as equally auspicious. He must look upon all beings with as much love and faith as he has in himself. For there is nothing evil in creation, no, not even an iota. Evil appears as such only through faulty vision. Creation gets coloured by the nature of the glasses we wear. By itself, it is eternally pure and holy.

Sadhana—The Way of Life

There have always been, there are, and there will always be teachers who reveal to man and who instruct him to attain the heights which he can reach by the fullest manifestation of his physical, mental and intellectual powers, through one-pointed steadfastness. The mind of man revels in external objects and in purposeless observation and criticism of the outside world. How then can it be trained to be steadfast?

Each one should ask himself the question: Mahatmas and *Mahapurushas* were also persons like me, they were also embodied beings. When they could attain perfection, I can also succeed, if I follow their method. What profits me if I spend my time in discovering the faults and weakness of others?

Therefore the first sadhana (spiritual practice) is, search for the faults and weaknesses within thyself and strive to correct them and become perfect.

The unceasing toil of each succeeding day has as its aim and justification this consummation; to make one's last days sweet and pleasant. But each day, too, has its evening. If the day is spent in good deeds, then the evening blesses us with deep sleep, invigorating refreshing sleep, the sleep about which it is said that it is akin to *Samaadhi* (superconscious state, transcending the body, mind and intellect).

6 Man has only a short span of life, here upon earth. But even in this short life one can, by wisely using the time with care, attain Divine Bliss. Two men, in appearance the same, ostensibly of the same mould, grow under the same conditions, but one turns out to be an angel while the other stays on with his animal nature. What is the reason for this differential development? Habits and the behaviour formed out of these habits, and the character into which that behaviour has solidified. Man is the creature of character.

The Real Nature of The Life of Man

To a superficial observer, the life of man appears as a rotation of eating and drinking, toiling and sleeping. But verily life has a much greater meaning, a much deeper significance. Life is a sacrifice, a *yagna*. Each little act is an offering to the Lord. If the day is spent in deeds performed in this spirit of surrender, what else can sleep be, except samaadhi?

Man commits the great fault of identifying himself with the body. He has accumulated a variety of things for the upkeep and comfort of the body. Even when the body becomes weak and decrepit with age, he attempts to bolster it up, by some means or other. But how long can death be postponed? When Yama's warrant comes, each has to depart. Before Death, position, pride and power, all vanish. Realising this, strive day and night, with purity of body and mind and spirit, to realise the Higher Self, by the service of

all living beings. The body must be preserved as a vehicle for this service. But remember, you are not this body. This body cannot be you. *Thath Thwam Asi*. Thou art That. This is the highest and holiest *Mahavakya* (Divine axiom). You are the indestructible *Atmathatwa* (Principle of the Eternal Self). It is for the sake of that *Atmathatwa* that you have this body and so in the attempt to realise *Parameshwara* (The Supreme Lord) here and now, you must be prepared to offer this body, at any moment, as a sacrifice. Utilise your authority over this body to foster the welfare of the world. This body is but an instrument, an implement given by God. Let it serve its purpose.

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But until the realisation of the purpose for which the implement is given, it is your duty to watch over it vigilantly and protect it from injury and disablement. During winter, woollen clothes are worn to withstand the rigor of the cold gales. But when the cold subsides they are discarded. So too, when the cold gales of material life do not affect us in the least, the material body is no longer essential. One is conscious of only the incorporeal body.

When the rains come, earth and sky are one in the sheety downpour. It is indeed a beautiful inspiring scene, a scene by which creation itself is teaching you to become One, in unison with it. There are three lessons that can be learned—the impermanence of created things, the role of Man as the servant, and God as the Master. This creation is the wherewithal of the *Puja*, Man is the worshipper, and

God, the worshipped. The game called Life is played with these.

Man must be happy that the *Purushothama* (Lord of all) has placed around him newer and newer materials for serving Him and gets done through him Puja in various forms. He must pray for newer and newer opportunities and exult in the chance that his hands receive. This attitude gives immeasurable joy. To lead a life suffused with this joy is indeed bliss.

Whatever is done from sunrise to sunset must be consecrated, as if it is the worship of the Lord. As care is taken to pluck only fresh flowers and to keep them clean and unfaded, so too ceaseless effort should be made to do deeds which are pure and unsullied.

If everyday, this vision is kept before the mind's eye and life is lived accordingly, then it becomes one long unbroken service of the Lord. The feeling of I and Thou will soon disappear; all trace of self will be destroyed. Life then transmutes itself into a veritable *Hariparayanam*. "I am the *sevaka* (servant). This world is the offering. God is the master who is worshipped"—when one attains this stage of thought, feeling and action, all difference between mine and thine will disappear.

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Identity of Bhakthi and Jnana

There is no distinction between *Bhakthi* (devotion) and Jnana (wisdom). Just as *Saguna* (formful) becomes *Nirguna* (formless), Bhakthi too becomes Jnana. I will not agree that *Karma* (action), Bhakthi and Jnana are separate. I do not even like to classify one of these as first, the other as the second and the next as the third. I will not accept a mixture of all the three or even a *samuchchaya*, a merger of the three, Karma is Bhakthi and Bhakthi is Jnana: A block of Mysore-pak has sweetness, weight and shape. The three cannot be separated, one from the other. Each little part of it has sweetness, weight and shape. We do not find shape in one part, weight in another and sweetness in a third. And when it is placed on the tongue taste is recognised, weight is lessened and shape is modified, all at the same time. So too, the *Jiva* (individual soul), the *Atma*, and the *Paramatma* (Godhead) are not separate. They are one and the same.

Therefore each individual deed must be full of the spirit of *Seva* (service), of *Prema* (Love) and of Jnana. In other words each group of life's activities must be saturated with Karma, Bhakthi and Jnana. This is verily the Purushothama (Highest of the Purusha) Yoga. It has to be acted in practice, not merely spoken in words. Sadhana (spiritual practice) should be done constantly with an ever-expanding heart full of Bhakthi and Jnana. The sweetness of nectar of the Lord's name is the charm of life. The internal joy derived from the Name is akin to the external joy of the outer life.

When one performs a *kriya* (action) as an offering to the Lord, his good, the higher good and the highest good, *Swartha*, *Pararatha* and *Paramaatha*, all become one. First I and you become we. Next we and He become identified. The *Jiva* (i.e., the Individual soul, I) should accomplish identity, first with the Creation (i.e., the *Prakriti*, You) and then with the *Paramatma* (i.e., the Supreme Soul, He). This indeed is the significance of the *manthra* (sacred formula, mystic syllable), *Om Thath Sath*.

Today, yesterday and tomorrow *Om Thath Sath* is, was and will be. "He" and "I" are there always. The Sadhana is also there always. Just as the sun is inseparable and is never apart from its rays, under no circumstances should any aspirant be without his sadhana. It is only when the *Saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) adheres to his sadhana in such an incessant manner can he be said to be one with *Om* (the *Pranava*, the original sound).

in and promptly drives out darkness from within. When His help is asked for, He is present by the side of man, with hands extended to render assistance. So, what is wanted from man is only the viveka (discrimination) to pray to the Lord, the Jnana (wisdom) to remember Him.

The Duties of Life

The blemishes of the heart have to be washed by the moral life and the doing of one's duty. A time may come when man becomes tired and weak but he should then pray thus: Lord, things have gone beyond my capacity. I feel further effort is too great a strain. Give me strength, O Lord!

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At first, God stands at a distance watching man's efforts, like the teacher who stands apart when the student writes out answers to his questions. Then when man sheds his attachment to *Bhoga* (enjoyment) and takes to good deeds, and *Seva* (service), God comes encouragingly near. For He is like Surya Narayana, who stands waiting outside the closed door; like the servant who knows the rights of the master and his own limitations. He does not announce his presence or bang the door. He simply waits. And when the Master does but just open the door a little, the sun rushes

Sadguna Is Jnana

Jnana means understanding, but it is not just an intellectual feat. “Eating” does not mean the placing of food on the tongue. Eating is worthwhile only when the food is chewed and swallowed and digested and assimilated in the blood stream and transformed into muscle and bone, into strength and vigour. So too, understanding or Jnana, must permeate and invigorate all the moments of life. It must be expressed through all the organs and senses, through all the *Karmendriyas* (five senses of action) and all the *Jnanendriyas* (senses of perception). To this high stage man must reach.

Mere accumulation of learning is not Jnana. Only *Sadguna* (virtue) is Jnana.

In order that one might do seva, a little Bhoga (festivity) too has to be gone through. Such Bhoga is a part of *yajna*

(spiritual exercise, sacrifice). To make this body-machine function, the fuel of *Anna* (food) has to be used. Anna is not yajna, but it makes yajna possible. Therefore, eating food is not to be laughed at as catering to greed, as *udaraposhana*. It is part of worship.

Puja is not merely the plucking of a flower and placing it on top of the image. The gardener who toiled to nurse the plant that gave the flower is also a worshipper. It is only when food is given that the body can function. Even the means for a sacrifice is yajna.

All Karma done for the sake of three entities is sacrifice, viz., to utilise the world for the worship of the Lord, to establish peace and justice in society and to control and coordinate the functions of the body. The first is called Yagna, the second, *Dana* (charity) and the third, *Thapas* (penance). All human acts must subserve these three needs.

Truth is God

For attaining this stage, an ethical life is the foundation. This ethical life is based upon discrimination between Truth and Falsehood. Just as the pearl is retained while the shell is discarded, the Essence which is Truth must be accepted and the nonessential rejected. Then again, individual exertion and Divine Grace should both be existent. One should also constantly practice the great lesson that the Body and the Atma are separate. This is a highly beneficial exercise. Such viveka or discrimination is necessary for all aspects of life secular as well as spiritual. It is indispensable for realising the Truth, the Truth that persists in Creation, Existence and Destruction—the Truth which is God Himself.

To serve this supreme Lord, purity of food has to be observed. As regards food, the question is not how much, but of what quality. Of course, quantity too cannot be

overlooked. But why is food necessary at all? It is needed for acquiring the strength required for Seva. In order that Seva Yajna may yield fruit, food is needed and such food must be pure. Attention has to be paid to this aspect of food.

In this way, each one should pay constant attention to his habits and to the traits of his character. Then, the attachment to the body will fall off and the task of securing *Atmananda* (Bliss of realisation of the Self) will be made easy.

Man has all these various duties to perform before he actually attains realisation; for it is only through such spiritual life that he can acquire purity and through that pure nature alone is it possible for him to realise the Soul Supreme. Without getting himself engaged in them, it is no use crying in agony that he has not been able to know the Paramatma (Universal Soul, Creator).

In this material world, one cannot appreciate the value of spiritual endeavour if he has had no experience in such a spiritual life and its purity. It may be said that one can undertake spiritual endeavour only after appreciating its value but this is like saying that one would get into water only after learning swimming. Swimming can be learnt only by getting into water, with a float attached to the body. In the same way, with some float attached to the mind, plunge without fear into spiritual sadhana. Then you will yourself understand the value of spiritual endeavour. The nature and

conditions of the spiritual path are known only to those who have journeyed along the road. They know that the path of Sathya (truth) and Viveka (analytical reasoning) leads to Paramatma. Those who have not trodden that path and those who are not aware of its existence cannot explain it to themselves or to others.

Paramatma alone is real. Paramatma is Truth. Paramatma is Love, Meditate on Him as Truth, as Love. It is possible to realise Him, in whatever form you meditate upon. Be always in the company of his devotees. Through this *sathsanga* (company of the good), viveka and *vairagya* (detachment, renunciation) will be implanted and increased. These will strengthen the spirit and endow you with inner Peace. Your mind will then merge in Paramatma.

In everything that you do, use all the strength and talent with which you are endowed, speaking and acting truthfully. At first, you might fail in this and you might encounter difficulties and sufferings. But ultimately, you are bound to succeed and achieve victory and Bliss. (I remember here the true statement, *Satyameva Jayathe, Nanritham*). By your behaviour, through your way of life, you can realise the Truth, you can realise Paramatma.

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deluding oneself that the little power one has acquired is one's own, this indeed is selfishness, conceit, pride, *Ahamkaara*.

If a person is a genuine vehicle of power, he can be recognised by the characteristics of truth, kindness, love, patience, forbearance and gratefulness. Wherever these reside, *Ahamkaara* (egoism) cannot subsist, it has no place. Seek, therefore, to develop these.

Ahamkaara Causes Asanthi

Man creates and develops in himself an abounding variety of selfish habits and attitudes, and he causes great discontent for himself. The impulse for all this comes from the power-complex, the greed for accumulating authority, domination and power, the greed for things which can never be eternal and full. In fact, it is impossible for man to attain them, up to the level of satiation. Omnipotence belongs only to *Sarveswara*, the Lord of All. A person might feel elated that he has become the master of all arts, or owner of all wealth, or possessor of all knowledge or repository of all the Sastras, but from whom did he acquire all these? They must indeed be greater. He might even claim that he earned all this through his own efforts, his labour and his toil. But surely someone gave it to him, in some form or other. This he cannot gainsay. The source from which all authority and all power originate is *Sarveswara*. Ignoring that omnipotence,

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The effulgence of the Atma is obscured by *Ahamkaara*. Therefore when *Ahamkaara* is destroyed, all troubles end, all discontents vanish and Bliss is attained. As the sun is obscured by mist, feeling of *Ahamkaara* hides Eternal Bliss. Even if the eyes are open, a piece of cloth or cardboard can prevent vision from functioning effectively and usefully. So too, the screen of selfishness prevents man from seeing God, who is, in fact, nearer to him than anything else. Many an aspirant and recluse, many a *saadhaka* and *sanyaasi* has allowed all excellences won by long years of struggle and sacrifice to slip away through this attachment to the self. For power without the bliss of God-realisation is a wall without a basement. Mere panditry is of no use at all. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Sastras are doctrines for living out in daily practice. So, without this practice, whatever the wealth of words, whatever the standard of scholarship, it is all a colossal waste. To bring the teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads and Sastras into one's actual life, one has to scotch the feeling, "I know," and open one's eyes to the

real Essence and introspect on it. Then, one can attain Bliss, without fail.

The *Panchanga* (almanac) might indicate that ten units of rain will fall, but even if the calendar is folded ten times and squeezed, not even a drop of rain can be extracted. The purpose of the calendar is not to give rain but only to give information about rain and its quantity. Its pages do not contain the ten units of rain. Rain is in the clouds above. So too, the Sastras can give only information about doctrines, axioms, rules, regulations and duties. The sublime characteristics of the Vedas and the Upanishads and Sastras are that they give instruction in the methods of attaining peace and liberation. But they are not saturated with these essences of Bliss, so that one can collect them by squeezing the texts. One has to discover the path, the direction and the goal as described in them. One has to tread the path, follow the direction, and reach the goal. If however, the I-consciousness produces the pride, “I know all,” a fall is inevitable; the delusion causes death. The secret of salvation lies in the realisation of this danger. Rebirth is inevitable if this danger is not averted.

Aware of all this, if you get immersed in spiritual practice, the world and its worries will not affect you. It is only when you are far from this truth, that you suffer, feel pain and experience travail. At a distance from the bazaar, one hears only a huge indistinct uproar. But as we approach it and walk into it, one can clearly distinguish the separate

bargainings. So too, until the reality of Paramatma is known, you are overpowered and stunned by the uproar of the world. But once you enter deep into the realm of spiritual endeavour, everything becomes clear and the knowledge of the reality awakens within you. Until then you will be caught up in the meaningless noise of argumentation, disputation and exhibitionist flamboyance.

Aspirants On The Bhakthi Path

Every aspirant who seeks the Eternal through the path of Bhakthi should strive to acquire the following characteristics: He must keep away from the turmoils, the cruelties and the falsehoods of this world and practice truth, righteousness, love and peace. This is indeed the path of Bhakthi. Those who seek union with God, those who seek the welfare of the world should discard as worthless both praise and blame, appreciation and derision, prosperity and adversity. They should courageously keep steady faith in their own innate reality and dedicate themselves to spiritual uplift. No one, not even a Mahapurusha or *Avatar* (incarnation of God) can ever escape criticism and blame. But they do not bend. They hold on to truth. Truth will not yield to threats. The real nature of the Mahapurusha or the Avatar is realised by those who indulge in criticism or blame only after wading through unbearable trouble, and then they too start to praise. The

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weakness of ignorance is the cause of this failure. So let the aspirant keep away from all such waverers and ignorant persons and desist from discussing with them his belief and his conviction. Let him immerse himself in holy books and in the company of the devotees of the Lord. Later, rich with the experience of realisation and courageous on account of that contact with reality, they can mix in any company without danger and even endeavour to direct other minds onto the truth he himself has seen.

Three types can be recognised among those who seek to do good deeds and tread the path of self-realisation. (1) Those who are too frightened by the troubles, losses, and difficulties, to begin the endeavour; they are of the lowest or *adhama* type. (2) Those who, after having undertaken the journey and proceeded some distance, are depressed and defeated by obstacles and disappointments and who therefore give up, in the middle. They are of the middling, or the *madhyama* type. (3) Those who steadfastly adhere to the path with calmness and courage, whatever the nature of the travail, however hard the road. These are, of course, of the highest or the *uthama* type. This steadfastness, this faith and constancy is the characteristic of the Bhaktha.

Deluded by attachment to this illusory world and attracted by temporal joy, do not barter away the means of achieving permanent and complete happiness. Carry on your spiritual duties with full devotion.

Paramatma cannot be known without faith and steadfastness. Only through Prema (Love) comes *Sraddha* (faith). Only through *Sraddha* comes *Jnana* (wisdom). Only through *Jnana* comes *Para-bhakthi* (transcendental devotion to God). Only through *Para-bhakthi* is Paramatma attained.

How then is Prema to be cultivated? It can be done through two methods, (1) Consider always the faults of others, however big, to be insignificant and negligible. Consider always your own faults, however insignificant and negligible, to be big, and feel sad and repentant. By these means, you avoid developing the bigger faults and defects and you acquire the qualities of brotherliness and forbearance. (2) Whatever you do, with yourself or with others, do it, remembering that God is omnipresent. He sees and hears and knows everything. Whatever you speak, remember that God hears every word. Discriminate between the true and the false and speak only the truth. Whatever you do, discriminate between the right and the wrong and do only the right. Endeavour every moment to be aware of the omnipotence of God. The body is the temple of the Jiva; so whatever happens in that temple, is the concern of the Jiva. So too, the world is the body of the Lord and all that happens in it, good or bad, is His concern. From the observed fact of the Jiva and the body, know the truth of the unobservable fact of the Lord and the world.

The relationship of the Jiva and the Lord, the kinship between the two, can be grasped by everyone who acquires

three chief instruments, (1) a mind unsullied by attachment and hatred, (2) a speech unsullied by falsehood and (3) a body unsullied by violence.

Joy and peace do not inhere in external objects; they are in you yourself. But people, in their foolishness, search for these outside themselves in a world from which, today or tomorrow, they are bound to depart. Therefore, awake soon. Try to know the essence of everything, the eternal truth. Try to experience the Love which is Paramatma itself. Discriminate at every turn, accepting what is true and discarding the rest. So long as one has worldly desires in view, he cannot escape sorrow.

Image Worship

There are many who slander image worship, but its basis is really man's capacity to see the macrocosm in the microcosm. The value of image worship is testified by man's experience, it does not depend on man's imaginative faculty. What is found in the *Viraat Swaroop* (Cosmic Form) of the Lord is found, undiminished and unalloyed, in the image *Swaroop* (Form) also. Images serve the same purpose as metaphors, similes, etc. in poetry. They illustrate, amplify and make clear.

Joy comes to man, not through the shape of things but through the relationship established. Not any child but her child makes the mother happy. So also with each one and with all things. With each and everything in the universe, if one establishes that kinship, that *Ishwara* (personal God) Prema, verily, what an overpowering joy can be experienced! Only those who have felt can understand.

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Study

Vedas and Puranas deserve to be read and heard. God's name is to be recited and listened to. For some ailments, medicines are prescribed for external application while for others, they are given for internal use. But for this universal ailment of *Bhavaroga*, the cycle of birth and death, *Sravana* (hearing stories of the Lord) and *Kirtanam* (singing name of God) and other medicines are prescribed, for external and internal use. One has to utter as well as hear the Lord's name. An aspirant might win God's grace, and the Guru's grace and the grace of the devotees of the Lord. But all this grace would be of no avail if he does not secure also another grace, the grace of his own inner consciousness, his *Antahkarana*. Without this grace, he falls into perdition, for all the rest are of no account whatsoever.

The grace of God is not easily attainable. The feeling of I-ness, *Ahamkaara*, which makes one say "I am the Doer,"

should be plucked by the roots from the heart. Everyone, be he learned or illiterate, should feel an overwhelming urge to know God. God has equal affection towards all his children, for to illumine is the nature of light. Utilising that illumination, some can read good books and others can do their daily tasks, whatever they are. So too, uttering God's name, one can progress in the realisation of God, another can even do wicked deeds! It all depends on you how you use the light. But the Lord's name is without blemish, always and forever.

The Need for Sanathana Vidya

Have not men trained themselves in countless arts and skills and sciences? Have they not devised countless machines? Have they not accumulated vast tonnes of knowledge? Nevertheless, man has not attained peace of mind, which is so essential for happiness. Instead, with every passing day, this *Vidya* (learning) is dragging man into deeper and deeper waters and peace is receding more and more into the distance.

The reason can be stated thus. These arts and sciences have only transitory value. These machines cater to worldly comfort. This knowledge is all about temporary, transitory things. This *Vidya* does not reveal to one the Innermost Secret of the Universe. There is one secret which if known, lays bare all secrets; if that problem is solved, all are solved. There is one knot which if untied, all knots are loosened.

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There is one science, which if mastered, all are mastered. That key science is *Sanathana Vidya* (ancient wisdom).

If a tree has to be destroyed, its tap root has to be cut. There is no use trying to kill it by plucking its leaves one by one. It takes too long a time, besides, it may not work. The ancient Vedic seers knew this *Vidya*, but Indians are getting ashamed to claim them as their kith and kin. They saw God through their ascetic endeavours and won His Grace. They expounded the Science which they so boldly discovered. Seekers from other countries perused these books and said that India had blazed a trail for the whole world. This is a well-known fact. The lamp illumines the house; but just at the very foot of the lamp, there lurks a dark circle. India does not know or care for that treasure. Can we ascribe this to the play of Fate and keep quiet?

In the past ages Indians performed their daily rites, sat in a purified place surrounded by sacredness, and immersed themselves in the study and the practice of the teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Besides, they recorded their experiences in order to guide others and in order to bring those experiences back again into their own consciousness. But their children and grandchildren placed those books on the altar and duly worshipped them. Neglect has reduced them to dust or lumber, the palm leaves have disintegrated and rats have eaten into them. But eager students from the West have sought out this lumber and realising that it enshrines incomparable sources of illumination and priceless

pearls of wisdom, they lift it reverentially above their heads and acclaim it as the precious gift of Bharath to themselves and their children. They carry it across the seas, with joy in their eyes and thankfulness in their hearts.

Now shall I reveal what the children of India have been doing? They neither open the pages nor peruse the contents nor even concern themselves about them. Only one in a million reads them, but even he is ridiculed as a fool and as a crank. The books are laughed at as a conglomeration of lies and legends, and they argue about the historicity of the books and their authors. They dismiss the Sanskrit language as “very hard to learn” and pass on the treasure to scholars from other lands. What a sad spectacle is this. It would have been some compensation if they attended carefully to the study of their mother tongue; but even this, they do not do. It is neglect, neglect everywhere.

No, I do not condemn worldly happiness. I feel glad when people are happy. But please do not believe that this happiness is permanent. I want that you should study all the arts and sciences for acquiring worldly happiness. But I want all to remember that this happiness is not everlasting.

Permanent happiness can be secured only through one Vidya, the Upanishad Vidya. That is the science of God-realisation, that is the teaching of the Rishis. That alone can save man and grant him peace. There is nothing higher than that, this is an indisputable fact. Whatever your joy and sorrow, whatever the subject you have specialised in for a

living, have your eyes riveted on Brahma Vidya. If intelligence alone is sharpened, without the growth and practice of virtues, and if mere information is stored in the brain, the world cannot progress and its welfare will be in jeopardy.

But people now seem to be losing faith in virtues, for the educational system does not assign any place for spiritual teaching or training. True education does not mar or pervert the beautiful virtues of boys and girls, it does not content itself with filling the brain with cumbersome junk. That education alone is beneficial which gives full scope for the blossoming of all the virtues which distinguish man.

The Objective World Is Not Real

Actually, men see the shadow and take it to be the substance. They see length, breadth, height and thickness and they jump to the conclusion that they have an object before them. They experience a series of sensations and memories and, adding them all up, they infer that there are some objects producing them. This mistaking of Appearance for Reality is misnamed Jnana. How can it ever be Jnana? Can the image of a person ever be “he”? If the image is taken to be “he,” can we call it knowledge? Such is the nature of all knowledge, now what is cognised as an object, is not real at all. Its reality is not cognisable.

The *Adwaithin* (non-dualist) believes *Aham Brahmasmi*, I am Brahman. How has he acquired that conviction? Why does he state so? Ask him and the reply is, “The Sruthi declares so, the Guru taught like that.” But

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learning it from these sources does not entitle him to make that profound statement. If a person is a master of these three words: Aham (I am), Brahma (The Creator) and Asmi (process of merging, union), does he attain the unity with Brahman? No, ceaseless striving through countless births, loyal performance of scriptural duties, these purify the mind. In such a mind, seeds of devotion sprout and when tended with care and knowledge, flowers bloom, fruits appear and ripen and get filled with sweetness and fragrance. When the fruit is eaten, man becomes one with the Supreme, the power that permeates all things, all regions, and which is eternally present and conscious and blissful.

A person may enunciate the formula, Aham Brahmasmi, correctly. His etymology may be perfect; but when he is ignorant of the “world,” unaware of “I” and completely in the dark about “Brahman,” can he ever taste the rare joy of a *Jnani* (liberated person)? It is not mastery of words and their meanings that counts: it is awareness, experience—these are the fundamentals.

Clay alone is real. The pot-consciousness is born of ignorance regarding clay. Clay is the basis, the substance of the pot. How can a pot exist without clay? How can effect exist apart from the cause? The world appears as multiplicity only to the ignorant. To a *Jnani*, Brahman alone, Brahman upon which all else is superimposed, exists. The Atman alone is cognised by him. There is nothing else. That is the Adwaithic experience.

If the world is real, it must be cognised even during the stage of dreamless, deep sleep; but we are not conscious of it at all. So the visible world is as unreal as the dream world. Just as through illusion, a snake is imposed on a rope, the world too is imposed on Brahman. The snake and the rope are not seen at the same time, the entire rope is the snake. So too, Brahman is all this world, all this vast variety of name and form. But this imaginatively conceived variety is fundamentally false. Brahman alone is true.

The sky might be reflected in a pot of toddy, but the toddy does not defile it. Similarly, in this vehicle, the body, the Atman dwells pure and undefiled. The fruits of action, good or bad, fair or foul, adhere to the vehicle, not to the Indweller, the Seer.

When such Jnana dawns, the dark shadows of the three types of Karma—the *Agama* (Karma of the future), the *Samchitha* (Karma of past), the *Prarabdha* (Karma we are presently undergoing)—flee before it. Yes, even Prarabdha karma can be overcome. For, the Will of God is omnipotent and for omnipotence there can be no limit or exception. When through Sadhana (spiritual practice), you win the *Sankalpa* (resolve) of the Lord, you can with that Sankalpa achieve victory over Prarabdha also. Do not be discouraged on any score.

The suffering and travails of this world are illusory and transitory. Fix your mind firmly on this great fact and set out bravely on the path of Sadhana, the Sadhana of Devotion.

Life is a Journey Depending on Samskaras

Men are immersed in many activities and they are engaged in various undertakings. This is a well-known fact. They are so many in number that sometimes one may feel that the span of twenty-four hours is too short for his daily activity. Drinking, eating, reading, walking, sitting and besides, dreaming, hating, boasting, praising, weeping, laughing, moping, hoping—all types of activities go on without end. They fill up the span of life. These activities are all intimately attached to the mind. This makes life a mere collection of *Samskaras* (worldly existence, flux), which makes an impact on character and personality.

There are two types of activities, good and bad. The effect of both on the life of man has to be considered. The acts of a boy during that tender age fade away like the writing

of that boy on slate. When the events of one's own boyhood are thus consigned to oblivion, how can the events of the past life be retained in the memory? Leaving this point aside, it will be wrong to infer that only such events as are remembered have happened, or have shaped character. The acts and activities that have transpired and that have been thrust back into forgetfulness by subsequent events have left a trace of their consequences in the mind. The residue is there. When you try to bring back to memory at bedtime the events of the day, everything that happened from the insignificant to the significant will not answer the summons. Those which are meaningful, those which are deeply embedded inside, these alone can be recalled.

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When such is the case with the happenings of a single day, when we forget all events that are not associated with joy or pain, what shall be said of the events of last week or month or years? Only the chief events are registered clearly. The rest turn hazy and recede and disappear. These few are the Samskaras.

Performing innumerable deeds, gathering vast experience and knowledge, learning a wide variety of lessons from a wide variety of activities, man retains as his capital only a mere four or five of them, strong, deep-rooted, vital.

Engrossed in the Business of Life, Man Earns Just These Samskaras

A merchant calculates the debit and credit at the end of a week or month or year and draws up the balance sheet, to arrive at one figure—his earnings. So too, in this business of life, everything ends in some bit of net earnings, after all the giving and taking concludes. At the very end of life, it is this small quantity that will come into the memory. Those experiences that persist to the very last moment, the two or three that well up into consciousness when one recalls all that has happened in life, these are the real sustainers, the genuine achievements.

This does not mean that all other acts and all other experiences have been a waste. Forgetting them means only that their work has been accomplished and their value realised.

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When business is done with thousands of rupees, one's heart freezes if a loss of a few thousands is sustained. The heart leaps in joy, when a few thousands are gained. Such is the story of the business of life. If at the point of death, one yearns to cater to the tongue, it is proof that throughout life the tongue has been the master. If at the point of death, the woman remembers the child and seeks to fondle it, the Samskara of child-love has been predominant, all through life. It proves that all other experiences have been thrown into oblivion.

Thus, of the Samskaras of life, some one or other, stronger than the rest, stands out to the last. Life is like that, this has to be learnt. The net result of all this living and toiling is that which comes to memory at the last moment of life. Therefore, direct the entire current of life towards the acquisition of that Samskara which you feel best for the last moment. Fix your attention upon it, day and night. The feeling that dominates the moment of death works with great force in the coming life. This truth must guide man for the journey of this life too, for Samskaras are the wherewithal for this journey, as well as for the journey after this.

Therefore, from tomorrow, keep always before the eye of memory, death which is inevitable, and engage yourself in the journey of life, with good wishes for all, with strict adherence to truth, seeking always the company of the good, and with the mind always fixed on the Lord. Live, avoiding evil deeds, and hateful and harmful thoughts, and do not

get attached to the world. If you live thus, your last moment will be pure, sweet and blessed. Disciplined striving throughout life is needed to ensure this consummation. The mind has to be turned over to good samskaras. Everyone must examine himself rigorously and spot out his defects and struggle to correct them. When man realises his own defects and uncovers them, it is like being reborn. He then starts anew, from a new boyhood. This is the genuine moment of awakening.

Life is eternally stalked by Death. But yet, man does not tolerate the very mention of the word “Death.” It is deemed inauspicious to hear that word, though, however insufferable the word, every living thing is every moment proceeding nearer and nearer to that event. Intent on a journey and having purchased a ticket for the same, if you enter a train, whether you sit quiet or lie down or read or meditate, the train takes you willy-nilly to the destination. So too, each living thing has at birth received a ticket to Death and has come on a journey. So whatever your struggles and safeguards and precautions, the Place has to be reached someday. Whatever is uncertain, Death is certain. It is impossible to change that Law.

Man has taught the eye, the ear and the tongue, the luxury of constant novelty. Now, he has to teach them the opposite tendencies. The mind has to be turned towards the good, the activities of every minute have to be examined from that standpoint. Each such deed is the stroke of a

chisel, by which the rock of human personality is being shaped. A wrong stroke may spoil and disfigure the rock. Therefore even the tiniest of acts has to be done with great care and devotion.

For a drowning man, even a reed is some support. So too, to a person struggling in the Sea of Samskara, a few good words spoken by someone might be of great help. No good deed can go to waste; no, not even a bad deed, for that too has its consequence. So strive to avoid the slightest trace of evil activity. Keep your eyes pure, fill your ears with the words of God, and the stories of Godly Deeds, do not allow them to listen to calumny. Use the tongue for uttering good words and kind and true words. Let it always remind you of God. Such constant effort must grant you victory. It is to earn these holy Samskaras that one has to maintain the flow of high thoughts and feelings, uninterrupted.

The hands should be used to perform good deeds. Have the Lord’s name within, and the practice of *Swadharma* (One’s natural duties) without. With the hand busy with Seva, let your mind be engrossed in all this—there is no harm. When the rains pour on the mountain peaks and the water hurries down the sides, no river emerges therefrom. When however, the waters flow in a single direction, first a brook, then a stream, then a torrent, and finally, a flooded river is formed, and the rains reach the sea. Water that runs in one direction reaches the sea, water flowing in four directions gets soaked and lost. Samskaras

are of this type. Of what use are they if they merely come and go, this way today and that way the next? The holy stream of good samskaras must flow full and steady along the fields of holy thoughts and finally abide in the great Ocean of Bliss at the moment of Death. Worthy indeed is he who reaches such a Goal!

Twenty hammer-strokes might not succeed in breaking a stone, the twenty-first stroke might break it. But does this mean that the twenty blows were of no avail? No, each of those twenty strokes contributed its share to the final success. The final result was the cumulative effect of all the twenty-one. So too, the mind is engaged in a struggle with the world, both internal and external. Needless to say success might not always be your lot. But man can attain everlasting bliss by getting immersed in good works and by saturating the mind with the love of God. Infuse every moment of life with that love. Then evil tendencies dare not hamper the path. Since his mind ever dwells with the Lord, he will be drawn automatically towards good deeds only. The object of all sadhana is the destruction of the mind and someday, some one good deed will succeed in destroying it, just as the twenty-first blow broke the stone. For this triumph, all the good deeds done in the past have contributed. Each little thing counts. No good deed is a waste.

While struggling in the spiritual field, you should take on Parameshwara Himself as your protector. To instil courage in the child, the mother persuades it to walk a few

steps and turn about, but she will not allow it to fall. If it totters and is about to lose balance, she hurries from behind it and catches it ere it falls. Ishwara too has His eyes fixed on the Jivi. He has in His hand the string of the kite which is man. Sometimes, He may give it a pull. Sometime, He may loosen the hold. But whatever He does, be confident and carefree, for it is He that holds the string. That faith ever present, that feeling hardening into a Samskara, will fill you with *Premarasa* (flavour of love).

The string is the bond of Love and Grace. The kite or Jivi is thus bound to Iswara. You must do and earn auspicious Samskaras in order that the bond of Love and Grace may exist and get tightened.

The Samskaras make or mar the Jivi. They are the steps which take all Jivis to the goal. Samskaras make the Jivi wade through loss and grief. Through good Samskaras alone can man attain the Lord. So every Jivi has to be wholly engaged in *Sathkarma* (good works). Sathkarma is the authentic Puja. It is the best form of remembering the Lord. It is the highest *Bhajan*. It spreads love, without distinction and difference. It is service done as the duty of the Jivi.

Be engaged in such Karmas. Revel uninterruptedly in the thought of the Lord. This is the royal road to the goal you have to reach.

Sanathana Dharma Is The Divine Mother Of Humanity

S*anathana Dharma* is the mother of all religions, all ethical codes and all Dharmas of this world; and *Bharatha Desa* (India) is the home where the Mother was born. Oh! How fortunate are the *Bharathiyas*! How sublimely splendid is this Bharatha Desa!

The world in its entirety is the Body of the Lord of the world, and this Bharatha Desa is that Body's unique organ, the Eye. Without the eye the body is not master of itself, is it not? Again, it can be said that Bharatha Desa has been beautified by the two eyes, the Vedas and the Sastras. On account of this it can be declared without doubt that the Samskara attained by the Bharathiyas has not been acquired by the people of any other country. Sanathana Dharma which teaches the truth of all religions and tolerance of all religions

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is the Dharma of all mankind. Born in various areas, flowing through various paths, the rivers at last reach the ocean. So too, born in different lands, practising different ways of Dharma, people reach the Ocean of the presence of the Lord, through different modes of worship. Sanathana Dharma is the central location in which all these various paths, moving in different directions, converge. Followers of the different religions can practise this Sanathana Dharma, by being truthful in speech, by avoiding jealousy and anger, and by acting always with a loving heart. All those who so practise Sanathana Dharma and, without faltering, achieve it, are entitled to be called "Bharathiyas."

The Hindu religion is the only religion that has achieved and maintained the foremost position among all religions from earliest times and established itself permanently. The only people who have survived without being destroyed, throughout the historic age, are the Hindus. In this religion, more than in any other, people have practised lives of love, equality and gratitude. The Hindus have earned their Dharma through the discovery of philosophic principles and through the Vedas. They have drunk deep the essence of the Vedas which are without beginning and without end. A land so holy is a veritable spiritual mine to the world. Just as the bowels of the earth reveal, in each area, mines of different metals, in Bharatha Desa is found the mine of Sanathana Dharma, the essence of all the principles of all the Sastras, all the Vedas, and all the Upanishads.

As if by the good luck of the Bharathiyas, along with the emergence of the mine of Sanathana Dharma which is as a home to them, from that moment and for that very purpose, leaders, thinkers, commentators, apostles and teachers have been originating in this land itself. Also from this very Bharatha Desa arose seers, selfless Karma Yogis, wise men, realised souls, and Divine personages connected with this religion. It is through these persons that spiritual wisdom guaranteed by experience flowed all over the country. In this way loaded with essence, Sanathana Dharma progressed throughout the world. But to whatever land it spread, the “original home” is Bharath itself. Look at the world today: machines, cars, engines of some new type or other come to light in one country and are exported to others. But their original home cannot be forgotten. Such cars and engines are manufactured only on the basis of its experience. Nothing can be done without that basis. So too Sanathana Dharma arose. Bharatha Desa and people of other countries benefited from its waters through the great personages and the books they composed. Hence, the basis of the original home cannot be ignored. That is impossible. But it is a matter of some concern to see today, in this Bharatha Desa the birthplace of those holy persons who nursed and fostered this sacred Dharma, new modes being accepted as one’s Dharma, and the Sanathana Dharma itself being assigned and kept aside for people of other countries, by the persons who have not even tested the sweetness of the Dharma, who have not grasped its meaning, and who have smothered

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it in empty disputation. The reason for this is, of course, the absence of proper guides who could show the way. But even when there are such guides, people yield to these modern modes and get attached to them. These are really like bazaar pakodas. They attract by their smell, and are bought by persons who do not discriminate. Though their Swadharma is the pure Sanathana Dharma, the fascination exercised by outward show is absent and so it gets neglected. Truth has no need for such decorations. Taste is the important thing. The basic reason for this is the fact that men today are motivated by mere whim and fancy. It has become the habit to reject the reality and accept the Dharma of another. This is a great mistake. It is against Dharma for Bharathiyas to be attracted by external forms and by outward show. No other Dharma has, or will have, Truth and Highest Love, above and beyond that contained in Sanathana Dharma. Sanathana Dharma is the veritable embodiment of truth. It is the heritage of all. There can be no boundary for Holiness. Holiness is one, without a second; is it not?

Those who have attained Liberation in this life by adherence to this Sanathana Dharma, who have earned the grace of God, who have understood the nature of Truth, who have achieved Realisation are all Bharathiyas. Bharathiyas have adored those who have reached that holy stage, without distinction of caste, creed, or sex. The holiness of that stage burns to ashes all such limitations. It is only until that stage is reached that it becomes impossible to

consider everything as equal. So, it is necessary to embark boldly on the realisation of Sanathana Dharma. This is the birthright of Bharathiyas.

If we examine history since its very beginnings, we can know in detail what great personages were born, in which sections of the Hindus. Incarnations, Divine personalities and *Jivanmuktas* (one who is liberated) like Rama, Krishna, Balarama, Janaka and Parikshith, Raja yogis like Viswamithra all arose among the *Kshatriyas* (warrior class). Brahma Rishis, great Pandits, Sastric Scholars, Vedic Rishis, originated in the Brahmin section. Sudras predominate in the epical books, like *Bharatha* and *Bhagavatha*. Among the great devotees of the Lord, members of the lower castes form a large number. To attain holiness, without being affected by the world, and to reach Paramatma, each one's sadhana is important. Other things like caste will not be a hindrance at all. But one should deserve the Grace required for it, one should become regular and disciplined in practice.

Such holy Bharathiyas, however, now bring endless disgrace on the Hindu religion by neglecting the principles of life of the above-mentioned great personages, by not studying them and following their instructions, by modifying their way of life to suit the changing times and (as the saying goes, "the hour of ruin brings wicked thoughts"), by becoming slaves to name and fame and the craving for power and position and an anxiety to promote the well-being of their wives and children through selfish means. Still, there is

no dearth of persons who love all in equal measure, who are devoid of selfishness, who are engaged in the promotion of the welfare of all, who have dedicated themselves to the service of mankind and who sacrifice everything. But they are suppressed. They are not appreciated or placed in positions of high authority for fear there will be then no place for the wicked, the crooked and the unjust.

However broad and deep the ocean, when the earth quakes underneath, the waters part of themselves, and when the commotion subsides, they resume their original position. So too these good men keep away without being caught up in it during the earthquake of injustice, unrighteousness, selfishness and ostentation. As soon as the hullabaloo subsides, they re-enter the world. Evanescent authority and self-glorification cannot be permanent. "To grow is only to decay," it is said. The present peacelessness is decay not growth. For, see how the Bharathiyas who from the beginning, grew up in righteous ways with pure feelings, with self-control and reverence for the good name, who were fed on the breast milk of the Vedas, Sastras and Upanishads, who welcomed and honoured even races driven out of their own country and vouchsafed to them Love in equal measure, today, for love of power and self, accuse their own brethren, one person impatiently envying the prosperity of another, deceive their own brothers maddened by selfish greed, keep at arm's length their real well wishers, pursue only each one's selfish end, multiply bad qualities hitherto unheard of in the Hindu fold, follow wrong paths

and ways of life and become the target of conflict and restlessness, on account of the absence of fear of sin, fear of God, discipline, reverence and faith. The fall is indeed incredible.

Hindu Brethren! Children of Bharath! Followers of the Sanathana way! Where have the manly qualities of old gone? Truth, Tolerance, Morality, Discipline when would you accept? Arise, Awake. Establish once again *Rama Rajya*, resplendent with mansions of Sathya, Dharma and Santhi. Love your Bharathiya brethren. Practise the Sanathana Dharma, quench the burning flames of Ignorance, Peacelessness, Injustice, and Envy with the waters of Love, Forbearance and Truth. Develop the feeling of Mutualness. Sweep away all jealousy and anger. Remember the rule of the holy personages, the characteristics of the most eminent and of the reign of God. Each one should realise his own faults, and understand that there is no use in searching for faults in others. That is mere waste of time, it also breeds quarrels. So, give up that trait. If this opportunity is missed, what else can be done? Do not yield to dejection, but say “Finis” to all the unrighteousness of the past. Repent sincerely and tread the path of Prayer to God, Good Deeds and Brotherly Love. Establish the eternal Rama Rajya.

The *Sanathana Sarathi* has been started to win this Rajya, its army will help this effort by word and deed. Draw that chariot forward! Gird up your loins and begin *Narayanasarana* (Surrender to God)—Bharathiyas are all

the children of one Mother, Her name is Sanathana Dharma. Redeem the debt due to the Mother. He is no son who forgets the Mother. He cannot be good who says the Mother is bad. Her breast-milk is the very breath of our life. The giver of this Life, the Father of all is Paramatma.

All are the children of the same parents. So, without blaming and accusing each other, without wishing evil for one's kith and kin, understand that your other brothers have the same attachment to the objects they love as you have towards the things that you love. One should not find fault with what another loves, nor should one laugh at it. He should, on the other hand, try to love it. These are the characteristics of the Truth and Love of Bharathiyas.

Sarvaantharyaami is One and Only One

The Vedas, the Sastras, and the messages of the Rishis, all have proclaimed uniformly and without any possibility of doubt, from that day to this, that Paramatma is *Sarvaantharyaami* (the Eternal Witness), present and immanent in everything. So too questions like the relationship between “He who is served,” “he who serves,” and “the wherewithal of service, viz., Prakriti,” have also been the subject of endless discussion. Every *Asthika* (religious person) has heard the *Bhagavatha* verse in which the great Bhaktha Prahlada, states out of his own experience that Paramatma, the Sarvaantharyaami, need not be searched far and wide and that He is very near the seeker himself.

He is here, He is not there: give up such doubts.
Listen, Oh! Leaders of the *Danavas*!

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Wherever you seek and wherever you see,
There...and there...He is!

People speak of the Lord as having a particular nature or characteristic, as having a particular form and so on. These statements are true only to the extent that imagination and guesswork can approximate to Truth, they are not the fundamental Truth. Such conceptions are valid as far as practical worldly knowledge goes. They cannot be considered as valid knowledge of the Absolute. For, it is impossible to see the *Poornam* (fullness) or speak about it.

In spite of this, however, Bhakthas and aspirants have been framing, each according to the stage of his own inner progress, some form or other of the Divine as the basis of his devotion. They worship Paramatma as existing in some Ayodhya or Dwaraka and nowhere else, as found in places where some image or picture exists and nowhere else. They worship that form itself as *Poornam* (fullness). Of course, it is not wrong to do so. Only, Bhakthas should not proclaim that their belief alone is the Truth, that those names and forms which they have ascribed are the only names and forms of the Divine and that all other forms and names are worthless and inferior. It should be realised that the names and forms which are the ideals of others are as dear and sacred to those others as such names and forms are to oneself.

When a form is idealised like this, it really becomes a symbol of the Universal; but how can a mere symbol of the

Universal ever become the Universal itself? Conscious always of this, everyone should acquire, without giving room to senseless hatred, the vision that all forms of the ideal are equally valid and true. Without this, it is impossible to realise the Poornam. All these gross forms of the ideal are fully saturated with the subtle Divine Principle. The taste of the vast ocean is to be found, complete and undiminished in every single drop of its waters; but this does not mean that the drop is in the ocean. Though we recognise the “drop” and the “ocean” as separate entities, the nature and taste of both are identical. Similarly, the *Sarvaantharyaami* (inner motivator of all) Paramatma and the gross form and name which Paramatma assumes and through which He is realised are not separate entities. They are identical.

When the All-pervasive, All-inclusive Pure Existence is described, the matter and method depend on the principles of the speaker and the tastes of the listener. When the individual name and form imposed by the Bhaktha are transformed into the Attributeless and the Formless, it is referred to as Brahman. When this same Brahman appears with attributes and forms, it is referred to as Rama, Krishna, Vishnu or Siva. Do not the followers of even other religions agree that when the devotee attains the Ecstasy of Mystic Union, all distinction between him and God disappears? The Yogis, philosophers of other lands and other faiths, too, accept without demur that this distinctionless experience can be earned through Para-bhakthi. Even if some little trace of difference is retained, it is due to the individual's own

taste and desire and not anything specially basic. It is only when name and form come in that it is named differently as Prakriti, Paramatma and Bhaktha. When name and form are absent, doubt and discussion whether it is masculine, feminine or neutral will not arise at all. Then any description fits. For something that is above and beyond imagination, any name and form can be ascribed. In fact, It has no attribute and no form. It is All pervasive, Omnipresent. When this Subtle Omnipresence is systematically worshipped through a gross form and as having attributes, the devotee will clearly realise its nature through the sadhana itself. To vouchsafe the knowledge of this sadhana and that Truth, and to bless the Bhakthas with that Bliss, the Attributeless Paramatma incarnates in this world, assuming name and form, and gives scope for all embodied beings to have concrete experience and joy. Through these experiences, the Incarnations facilitate the realisation that Paramatma is Sarvaantharyaami and *Sarva Bhootha Antharatma*, All-pervasive, the Inner Atma of everything in Creation. Lord Krishna showed in his own form the entire Creation. Until he saw with his own eyes how Lord Krishna had contained in His gross form the entire Creation, even Arjuna failed to understand that Krishna was Sarvaantharyaami.

Love, Lover and the Loved, all three are One, and the same. Without Love, there can be no lover. Even if there are both Love and the Lover, without the Loved, Love has no function. In all three, Love is the chief ingredient. That which is saturated chiefly, and uniformly in everything, that is

Paramatma. So there is no difference between these three. In all three, Prema is discernible as the Sarvaantharyaami; (the inner motivator); therefore, can it not be realised that everything is *Paramatma Swaroop*a? Certainly, it can be realised without fail. Everything is suffused with Prema. So, we can unhesitatingly declare the Paramatma is *Premaswarupa*. In the entire creation, in all living things, Prema is manifesting itself in various forms. The nature of Prema cannot alter, though it is known under different names like *Vathsalya* (affection of mother to child), *Anuraaga* (love, attachment), *Bhakthi* (devotion), *Ishtam* (Love of God), etc., according to the direction in which it is canalised. But whatever the form the essence cannot alter. On the basis of this knowledge and experience, the conclusion becomes clear that Paramatma is Sarva Bhootha Antharatma, the inner Atma of all created things.

That which teaches the highest knowledge of this Unity is known as Adwaitha. That which teaches the principle of the Lover and the Loved, the Jiva and the Brahman is known as *Dwaitha*. That which teaches about all three, Love, Lover, and Loved, Prakriti, Jiva and Brahman, is known as *Vishishta Adwaitha*. But these three are one. The child that is born changes into the student. The student changes into the householder; but all three are one and the same person, are they not? While the manners and the attachments change in various ways, He remains the same. From milk, butter and buttermilk emerge. Milk, which contains all, is Adwaitha (non-dualism). Butter, which contains the two categories, is

Dwaitha (dualism). After that is separated, the buttermilk which remains is Vishishta Adwaitha (qualified monism). But though their tastes differ the colour of all these is the same, always. This, which is the same, in all, is the Nirguna (formless) Brahma.

Seeds for The Bhakthi Sprouts

The attitude of the worshipper and the worshipped is the seed of Bhakthi. First, the worshipper's mind is attracted by the special qualities of the object of worship. He tries to acquire for himself these special qualities. This is the sadhana. In the early stages of sadhana, the distinction between worshipper and worshipped is full; but as the sadhana progresses, this feeling will diminish. When attainment is reached, there will be no distinction whatsoever. Whatever may be the object of worship one has grasped and loved and sought by sadhana, one should have firm faith that Jivatma is Paramatma. There is only one wish fit to be entertained by the Saadhaka; and that is the realisation of the Lord, Ishwara Sakshathkaara. There is no room in the mind for any other wish. That is why Kunthi Devi prayed thus to Lord Krishna, "Let us have always, Oh Jagadguru, distress and misery, if only You grant us Your Darsan, the Darsan which destroys rebirth."

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The Bhaktha who desires the Supreme and seeks to attain it should have this mental attitude. Then, regardless of joy and sorrow, without any worry about one's own satisfaction, he will engage himself in sadhana firmly, uninterruptedly, and with conviction, and after understanding the Reality, he will have full contentment.

From this point of view, there is no difference between a Jivanmuktha and a Bhaktha, they are both beyond Ahamkaara, Prakriti with its three attributes, and *Varna Ashrama* Dharma. The hearts of such will be full of compassion and the urge to do good to the world. It is their *Brahmananda* (supreme bliss) which impels them to act in this way. Such a Bhaktha will have no desires, for, desires are the products of "I"-and-"mine" feelings. It is only after they are uprooted that a person becomes a Bhaktha, isn't it? So, there can be no room in him for desire. He is a Bhaktha of *Amritha Swaroopa*, Immortal Nature. For one with that Amritha Swaroopa, there can be no appetite except for the sweetness of Ananda.

For A Saadhaka, Today Is His: but Tomorrow?

Y*ama* (God of death) is as Omnipresent as Siva! Yama is associated with the *deha*, or body. He cannot affect the Jiva. Siva is associated with Jivi; but He will not allow the body to subsist for any length of time. The body is the essential vehicle for the Jivi to understand its real nature. Still, who knows when it becomes the target for the attention of Yama, the Master of the Deha? Who knows when this body will get entrapped in the coils of Yama's ropes? The Jivi, burdened with this easily-destructible body, must grasp the above-mentioned caution and be all eager to merge in Siva, whatever the moment, that very moment! No single moment that is passed by can be turned back. People usually delay doing some things, today's till tomorrow, and yesterday's till today. But the tasks of sadhana are not of such a nature, for them,

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there is no yesterday and no tomorrow. This very moment is the moment! The minute that has elapsed is beyond your grasp; so too, the minute that is approaching is not yours! It is only that Jivi which has engraved this understanding on its heart that can merge in Siva. Without assimilating this truth in the heart, the Jivi is immersed in aims of today and tomorrow, based on the assumption that the body is all important. It thus lays the foundations for worldly attachment; and so, it is born again and again with body and continues to have the Darsan of Yama! It is the right of the Saadhaka to have Siva-darshana and not Yama-darsan! He will not wish for it, nor even contemplate it. Only those who have this relationship of the Deha and the Jiva are Men. Those who have realised this principle will not flag, even to the slightest extent, in their sadhana. These days, man is content with visualising and experiencing evanescent worldly joys. He has no rest. Spending the nights in sleep and the days in eating and drinking, he grows and grows, until, in his old age, Death pursues him. Then, he cannot decide where to go or what to do. All his senses have weakened. No one, nothing can rescue him; so he ends as obedient meat to the jaws of Death!

How sad it is that this human life, precious as an invaluable diamond that cannot be priced at all, has been cheapened to the standard of a worn-out worthless coin! There is no use repenting, after wasting time without profit, without meditating on God, or practising any sadhana to realise Him. What is the use in planning a well, when the

house has caught fire? When is it to be dug? When will water become available? When is the fire to be extinguished? It is an impossible task! If at the very start, there was a well ready, how helpful it would be on such critical occasions! Beginning to contemplate on God during the last moments is like beginning to dig the well. So, if from now on, one equips himself by the contemplation of God off and on, it will stand him in good stead when the end approaches. Start today the sadhana that has to be done tomorrow! Start now the sadhana that has to be done today! One does not know what is in store the next moment. Therefore, there should be no delay in engaging oneself in the sadhana that has to be done. Physical stamina is also necessary for this sadhana, and so, the body has to be tended, though overtending causes damage. To the degree that is essential, it should be looked after with great care.

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Path for A Bhaktha To Become A Mukta

This human birth is very difficult to attain. It cannot be got for a song. The body is as a caravanserai, the mind is its watchman, the Jivi is the pilgrim. And so, no one of these has any kinship with the others. The pilgrim is bound to Salvation City, Mokshapuri. For a trouble-free journey, there is nothing so reliable as *Namasmarana*, the remembrance of the name of the Lord. Once the sweetness of that name has been experienced, the person will not have exhaustion, unrest or sloth. He will fulfil his pilgrimage of sadhana, joyfully, enthusiastically and with deep conviction. Still, for achieving this sadhana, *Sabdhava* or righteousness is very important. Without fear of sin, righteousness cannot originate; love of God, too, cannot develop. This fear produces Bhakthi which results in the worship of the Lord.

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Stupidity is the root cause of man's downfall. It is like sheepishness! When one rolls into a pit, all fall into the same pit. That is ruinous. Avoiding this, it is better to think about the good and the bad, the pros and cons of whatever is done and then jump. Death will not leave off anyone, whatever he be. It continues to threaten all, that, if it is another's turn today, it is yours tomorrow. Look at the blossoms in the garden! When the gardener plucks the flowers, the buds exult that tomorrow is their turn to be gathered into his hands, and their faces are so full of joy when they unfold in that hope. Do they feel any sadness? Do their faces droop? Are they any the less bright? No, the moment they know that the next day it is their turn, they make themselves ready with great gusto and excitement. So also, one must be ready on the path of sadhana, enthusiastically remembering the name of the Lord, without worrying and feeling sad, that one's turn is tomorrow or so, because someone died today. The body is like a tube of glass. Inside it the mind is ever changeful and restless. Seeing its antics, death keeps laughing. The bird Jiva, is in the nine-holed pot. It is a wonder how the bird has a body, how it came into the pot, and how it rises up and goes. The *Suras* (Devas, Gods, angles), the *Munis* (the sages) and *Naras* (human beings) of the Nine *Khandas* (continents) and the Nine *Dwipas* (Islands) are all undergoing the sentence of carrying about with them the burden of the body. Now, of these, who are the friends and who, the enemies? When egoism dies out, all are friends. There are then no enemies. This lesson has to be remembered by all.

Man is experiencing joy and misery, through the ear. Therefore, avoiding the cruel arrows of hard words, one should use words that are sweet, pleasant and soft; and with that softness, add the sweetness of Truth. To make the word soft, if falsehood is added, it would only clear the way for some more misery. A person who has become a Saadhaka should use very soft, sweet, true and pleasant words. Such persons can be recognised by their good qualities themselves. Thus, of those who have become Saadhakas, the *Manas* (mind) is Mathura, the *Hrudayam* (Heart) is Dwaraka, and the *Deha* (Body) is Kasi. At the seat of the tenth gate, it is possible to realise the *Paramjyothi*, the Supreme Effulgence. All efforts are of no avail if the heart is not pure. Look at the fish! Living as it does perpetually in water, has it rid itself of its foul smell to any extent? No. The *Vasana* (cravings, attachments) of man will not disappear even if he is immersed in many heart-purifying sadhanas, so long as the heart is full of the illusion of egoism. Such a man, if he is desirous of getting rid of the feeling of “I” and “Mine,” must worship Hari. He must become a Saadhaka, without likes and dislikes. *Vikaras* (agitations of the mind) like these cannot coexist in the same heart, with the Sadhu nature. Light and darkness can never coexist at the same place, at the same time, isn't it? He whose heart is ruled by the group of Six Passions can have only Ahamkaara, as his *Manthri* (minister)! Those who have such a Manthri are worse than foolish men, however great they claim to be as Pundits, Sadhus, or Sanyaasins.

“Can a donkey carrying perfume become an elephant?” Can an ass change into an elephant, simply by carrying a bundle of sandalwood? It can appreciate the weight and not the scent! But the elephant pays no regard to the weight, it inhales the sweet scent. So too, the Saadhaka or the Sanyaasin or the Bhaktha will take in only the pure truth, the pure essence of good activities, of Godliness, and of the Sastras, Vedas and Upanishads. On the other hand, if for the sake of mere scholarship, learning and disputation, one goes on arguing, he will know only the weight of logic, missing the scent of Truth! The onlookers may praise them as the embodiments of the Sastras and the Vedas; but where even the essentials are lacking, how can there be an embodiment? For those in search of the essence, the burden is no consideration. If mere reason is employed, nothing worthwhile is gained. Love (Prema) is the one big instrument for the constant remembrance of the Lord. To keep that instrument safe and strong, the Saadhaka needs no other appliance than the scabbard of Viveka, discrimination.

There are many in the world who utilise their vast learning in disputations and believe they are superior. This is a great mistake. If they are really so learned, there will not be so much disputation at all. They will assume silence as the honourable course, because, those exalted in learning will have experienced the essence of the Vedas, Sastras and Upanishads. They will see that the nature of that essence, its core, the purity of the Godhead it proclaims, are all One, however one may realise It. They know that God appears in

whatever form He is taken to have, and that He manifests in action to anyone, the feelings which he associates with Him.

Of these two, what is important is the acquisition of single-mindedness, equanimity, free from Vikara, i.e., likes and dislikes, and not the acquisition of argumentativeness. Why have we all these sadhanas, all this *japa* (repetition of Lord's name), *dhyaanam* (meditation), bhajana, etc.? Is it not for acquiring single-mindedness, one-pointedness? Once that one-pointedness has been earned, human effort becomes unnecessary, its inner significance will then be revealed to him. So, those eager to become Saadhakas, to attain salvation, should not yield to arguments and counter-arguments. They should not be enticed by the wiles of bad feeling. They should see their own faults and not repeat them again. They should guard and protect the one-pointedness they have acquired, with their eyes fixed on the goal they are after, dismissing as trash whatever difficulties, defeats and disturbances they might encounter on their path. One must dwell on such subjects as would give enthusiasm and joy, and not waste valuable time, building up doubts regarding all things, big and small. Whatever else is unimportant, these two have to be attended to as essential: (1) The conceit that one knows everything. (2) Doubt, whether it is, or is not. These are the two chief enemies of the Saadhaka. What does it matter who these enemies are? One should decide for oneself that one is firmly fixed in one's Reality. If that is pure, everything is pure. If that is true, everything is true. If you wear blue eyeglasses, though

Nature is resplendent with many colours, you see only the colour you have worn, isn't it? If the world appears to you as with differences, that is due to the fault in you only. If all appears as one Prema, that too is your Prema only. For both these, the feeling in you is the cause. It is only because one has faults within himself, that he sees the world as faulty. When there is no knowledge of fault in oneself no fault can be found even by search, for should they not know which are the faults?

Now, a question may arise whether the Lord Himself has faults, because He too searches for faults? But how can it be said that the Lord is searching for faults? He searches for goodness only, not for faults and sins. Those are based on the standard of the *Gunas* (qualities) of each. The Lord will not examine the wealth, the family, the *Gothra* (lineage), the status, or the sex. He sees only the Righteousness, the *Sadbhava*. Those endowed with such *Sadbhava*, He considers as deserving His Grace, whoever they are, whatever they are.

Therefore, develop *Sadbhava*, goodness and righteousness. Live and act in joy and love. These two are sufficient; salvation can be attained without fail.

Manava and Danava. The Differences In Character

M*anavas* or Men are full of Prema or Love. Their hearts are springs of Mercy. They are endowed with True Speech. Peace is the characteristic of the mind of Man. That is the innate quality of the mind. In order to search for peace there is no need to go anywhere else. As gold and silver lie hidden under the earth and pearl and coral under the sea, peace and joy also lie hidden in the activities of the mind. Desirous of acquiring these hidden treasures, if one dives and turns mental activities inward then he becomes full of Prema or Love. Only those who have so filled themselves with Love and who live in the light of that Love can be called men. Those devoid of prema are Danavas, monsters, subhumans. That holy quality of Love will not remain unmanifested off and on; it will be ever present, without change. It is one and indivisible. Those

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saturated with Love are incapable of spite, selfishness, injustice, wrong and misconduct; but in those who have no Love, the above qualities are always above everything else. Danavas are those who trample on Love and consider inferior qualities as important, while Manavas are those who consider those inferior qualities as snakes to be destroyed and Love alone as the quality to be fostered. Bad conduct and bad habits distort the humanness of Man. Hearts filled with the nectar of Love indicate genuine humanity in man. By Prema or Love is meant love which is unsullied, unselfish, devoid of impurity and continuous.

Between Manava and Danava, the difference is only Ma and Da! But the letter Ma is soft, sweet and immortal in symbolism, while the sound Da is merciless, lawless and burning. Are they men, who have no sweetness in them and who endeavour to suppress the craving for immortality? Theirs is the nature of Danavas, though the form is human! For it is not the form that is primary, it is the character. How can those with human form be called men, if they have no kindness and no rightness, and if they have the nature of Danavas? No, they cannot be called so. Now, the sentences in my discourse are not addressed on the basis of form, they are based on the qualities of men. Among men, there are Danavas in plenty! They both look alike, but their qualities make them distinguishable as Manava and Danava. The Manavas engage themselves in the soft and sweet deeds of kindness, rightness, love and truth and they are witnesses to the possibility of realising, and manifesting one's

immortality. Their good nature is resplendent on their faces as *Ananda* (bliss); but without that goodness even if he is infatuated with joy, his face will indicate only the destructive fire of the Danava. It will not have the Grace of Ananda.

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Today's Words Are Only The Works of Yesterday

During the Thretha Yuga, when Narada asked Sri Ramachandra about the nature and characteristics of His Dasas and of the Saadhakas or spiritual aspirants, He answered as below:

“Listen Oh Narada, men who are My Dasas are full of Love; they always stand by Dharma or righteousness. They speak the Truth. Their hearts melt with mercy. They are devoid of wrong. They avoid sin. Their nature is well-founded. They will renounce everything gladly, They eat in moderation. They are engaged in doing good to others. They have no selfishness. They are worried by no doubts. They will not lend their ears to flattery. They are eager to listen to the praise of the good nature of others. They have beautiful, strong and holy character. Saadhakas are those who endeavour to acquire such qualities and possess such a

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character. Now, I shall tell you about those who are *priya* (dear) to Me. Anyone who is engaged in Japa (repetition of Holy Name), Thapas, and *Vratha* (observant of vows), who has *Samyama* or Self-control, *Niyama* or discipline, anyone who has faith, patience, comradeship, kindness, and joy as well as unalloyed prema towards Me, is *priya* to Me.

“Now, about My real *Bhakthas*. Whoever, with *viveka* and *vairagya*, and *vinaya* and *vijnana*, (with discrimination and renunciation, with humility and wisdom) are aware of the knowledge of Reality, whoever are always immersed in the contemplation of My *leela* (sport, play), whoever dwells on My name at all times and under all conditions, and who sheds tears of love whenever the Lord's name is heard from any lip, they are My genuine *Bhakthas*.”

Thus answered Sri Rama to Narada. So, the Lord will protect in all ways and at all times those who worship Him in complete and uncontaminated *Bhakthi*—just as a mother protects her infants, a cow saves her calf from danger, and the eyelids guard the eyes, effortlessly and automatically. When the infant grows up into an adult, the mother will not pay so much attention to its safety. So too, the Lord does not pay much attention to the *Jnani*. The *Saguna Bhaktha* is like an infant of the Lord. So, it has no strength except the strength of the Lord. For the *Jnani*, his own strength is enough. Therefore, until one can rely on one's own strength, one must be an infant in the Lord's Hands, as a *Saguna Bhaktha*, isn't it? No one can become a *Nirguna Bhaktha*,

without having been a Saguna Bhaktha. So, Bhakthas should grow up like infants in the lap of the mother and thereafter, become Jnanis who can rely on their “own” strength and be free. Still, both have the same source of strength, the Mother. Those indeed are really fortunate who grasp this secret of the path of Devotion, who develop one-pointed Bhakthi and straighten the traits of their character, who transform themselves into infants in the lap of the Lord and who get everything done by him as He wishes.

Therefore, those who yearn to be Dasas, Bhakthas, Priyas and *Ananya Bhakthas* should take up the corresponding path and name and act and live accordingly; the Bhaktha should develop the above-said characteristics of devotion. The Priya should follow the Prema of the Lord. The Ananya Bhaktha has to surrender completely to the Lord. Mere reading and rolling on the tongue are of no avail. Ananda is the result of action only. This Ananda is not dependent on castes or race or sex. Even in those days, when Sri Rama came to Sabari, she asked him in the following manner, while Sri Rama was gladly partaking of the feast of roots and fruits, selected and reserved by Sabari for him after herself tasting every individual item. “Lord! I am but a woman, in addition, I am of feeble intellect. Above all, I am low-born. How can I praise You? I do not know what to do or how!” Then, Sri Rama smiled and said, “Sabari! My mission is only the kinship of Bhakthi. I have no kinship of race or caste. Of what use is it to have status, wealth and character, without Bhakthi? Like the cloud that

does not bear rain, which wanders about in the sky, these people without devotion are at the mercy of the winds, however much of status in caste, wealth, power, and fame they may possess. Bhakthas reach me through nine paths. Any one of them takes them to Me.” Then, Sabari prayed Sri Rama to tell her about the nine paths, and Sri Rama responded:

Sravanam (Listening to stories of God),
Kirtanam (Singing Name of the Lord),
Vishnohsmaranam (Remembering God),
Padasevanam (Serving the Feet of the Lord),
Vandanam (Reverence toward nature and all life),
Archanam (Ritual Worship),
Dasyam (Path of dedication and surrender),
Sneham (Befriending),
Atmanivedanam (Path of surrender).

If the devotee sincerely practises any one of these paths, he can attain Me. I am bound by these nine forms of Bhakthi. That is why you have been able to so easily obtain this opportunity of seeing, touching and speaking with Me, an opportunity which even Yogis find too difficult to get. You have realised Life’s purpose today. See! Today’s Words are only the Words of Yesterday!

Bhakthi Is of Two Kinds

Those who follow the above-said Ninefold Path are of two kinds. (1) The followers of the Hard Path. (2) The followers of the Safe and Easy Path. These are sometimes referred to as (1) Bhakthi (Path of love of God) and (2) *Prapatthi* (absolute self-surrender). That is to say, the practice of the *Markatakisora* or the young of the monkey is Bhakthi and the practice of the *Marjalakisora* or the young of the cat is Prapatthi.

Devotion has to be unintermittent, uninterrupted, like the flow of oil from one vessel to another. Though the two kinds are basically the same, the practices are different. Without Prema nothing can be acquired in this world. It is only when there is Prema, the anuraaga or attachment, in its turn, produces the desire to protect and guard. In both the above kinds, Prema is equal, no doubt; but in actual manifestation, there is difference. In the Markatakisora Marga,

the child has to rely on its own strength to protect itself, wherever the Mother might jump about, it has to attach itself fast to the mother's belly and should not release its hold, even if pulled apart! So the Bhaktha too has to stand the tests at the hands of the Lord; and hold on to the Lord's name at all times and under all conditions, tirelessly, without the slightest trace of dislike or disgust, bearing the ridicule and the criticism of the world and conquering the feelings of shame and defeat. The example of this type of Bhakthi is that first among devotees, Prahlada.

The *Prapatthi Marga* is not of this type, it is like the way of the kitten, the *Marjalakisora*, *Sarvabhara Samarpitha* attitude. As the kitten simply continues mewling in one place, placing all its burdens on the mother cat, the devotee puts complete trust on the Lord. The mother cat holds the kitten in its mouth and removes it to more elevated places or transports it safely through even very narrow passages. So too the devotee places all his burden on the Lord and surrenders fully to His Will. Lakshmana is the witness of this path.

The discipline of Prapatthi is much superior to the discipline of Bhakthi. The characteristic of Prapatthi is complete self-surrender, in all aspects. To serve Sri Rama, Lakshmana renounced all obstacles in his path, like wealth, wife, mother, home and even sleep and food. And this, not for a day or month or year but for full fourteen years. He felt that Sri Rama was his all, his happiness and joy, that He

would grant him everything that he needed and that his life's purpose was only to follow Him and serve Him, and surrender his will to Him. So, if all burdens are placed on Him and if He is followed ceaselessly and unforgettingly, He will certainly provide everything. This is the nature of the Prapatthi type of devotion.

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Vaanaprastha

After being a householder and experiencing the sorrow, happiness and joy and learning the true significance of all these, man has to retire into the forest, when he reaches the age of 45 or 50, leaving the house he has built and the place where he lived. If his wife is alive then, he has to take her consent and entrust her to the care of the son or her parents or take her also with him and treat her like a brother, himself being immersed in *Brahmacharya*. There is a great change even in diet. He has to eat roots and fruits and drink only milk. Things should not be baked full but only up to a third. Rice should not be used much. If it is not possible to arrange diet for oneself on these lines, he can visit the village near by and collect food by begging. But he has to bring the food into the forest and eat it there, in his own habitation. He has to give to his dependants the same food that he takes, for they

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cannot prepare food they prefer, or get it supplied. If they do not relish it, they have to be content with milk and fruits only, for he must not change his routine for satisfying others. However troublesome it may be, the discipline should not be modified, or given up. This is to be specially noted. He cannot have any worship, or alms giving or any such duties. Even if he gives food or articles to others, it cannot be regarded as alms or Dana. He cannot also receive as Dana anything from others. He must have the same pure Love towards all in equal measure. Discarding old clothes once a year, he must don new clothes, in the Aswija month. The *Chandrayanavrath* is the most important of the Vanaprastha vrathas (vows). During that month, he must eat for the first fifteen days, every day a morsel less and for the remaining fifteen, a morsel more every day. He has to take only conjee on the New and Full Moon days. In the rainy season, he must do Thapas standing in the rain. In winter, he must wear wet clothes while engaged in Thapas. Performing such asceticism systematically, he has to bathe three times a day. The various Upanishadic statements are to be studied, their meanings understood and experienced. If such a Vanaprastha falls victim to any disease, the diet routine has to be cancelled and he has to live on air and water. He shall walk on and on, in the north-eastern direction until he dies. On the other hand, if he has no bodily disease and if he is hale and hearty, he will experience, after he has adopted the above disciplines, the spontaneous Dawn of True Knowledge. By means of this Knowledge, he will attain *Moksha* (liberation).

Many argue how can this discipline result in the Dawn of Knowledge? Are these not mere bodily limitations, they ask. Knowledge can arise only by the realisation of the Principle. How can something that does not contain the Principle which guarantees self-realisation be called Knowledge, they argue. But this is based on a big mistake. Through these physical regulations, Vasanas or traits are destroyed and concentration is established. The Upanishadic statements serve to foster and strengthen this one-pointedness, step by step, the experience of the Upanishadic *vakyas* (word) alone will bring about the Dawn of Knowledge. Are not Upanishads the very Knowledge itself? With that *Jnanaswarupa* (Embodiment of wisdom) as companion, realising It in one's own experience, what need is there to search for Knowledge elsewhere? To establish Jnana firmly in the heart, one-pointedness is essential, and this can easily be gained by the above-mentioned bodily disciplines and Thapas. External control helps internal control in many ways. To succeed in external controls is by comparison more difficult than to achieve success in controlling the internal! A turn of the steering wheel in one's hand in any direction makes the wheels of the car, which are not in one's hand, move in the same direction. The wheels will not turn in another direction, when the steering is turned in one. The introspective wheels are based on the extrospective steering itself!

It is the natural basis. Sometimes, when the steering is turned one way, the wheels may drag another way, but this

is due to the giving up of the natural characteristic. The internal wheels, if they have no air, which is the true essence, may behave as if there is no relationship with the steering. But they cannot go beyond the bounds of steering. The steering in the hand is related to the wheels below. If there is no such relation, the journey becomes impossible. The connection is inevitable. Therefore, for him who has struggled with the external tendencies and conquered them, the internal tendencies become easily controllable. The external tendencies have name and form and are attracted by becoming objects of experience. So, to overcome them is a matter of some difficulty. But internal tendencies have no form, though they may be endowed with name. They are also experienced as Ananda; and so, they can be overcome more easily. They can be tamed with greater ease. The bother is more for external conduct and behaviour. These are associated with taste, form and heaviness. The internal tendencies have no form, taste or weight. Pure water has no form or taste or heaviness. Impure water is different in all these respects. So, to purify impure water is indeed difficult; but pure water can be given any form required, with very great ease.

Similarly, the difficulty is all about purifying the mental behaviour, which is spoiled by the delusions of the world. There is no need to set right the mental behaviour which is free from such delusions. Delusionless behaviour is necessarily pure. It is without any trace of defect and doubt. Why should such be set right? Therefore, if men first control

and conquer the external delusion, as much as possible, the internal tendencies will easily move in the direction of *Atmananda*. Yoga and thapas are only others names for the path of the control and conquest of these external tendencies and delusions. The rules of Vaanaprastha are but methods to succeed in this Yoga or thapas. When man subdues delusion of all types in the Vaanaprastha stage, the journey ends in Moksha. But we cannot say that Moksha has only this one path. Through whatever path Grace is obtained, that Path may be chosen. Liberation is achieved by these rules and observances of Vaanaprastha and it can be secured by following this Path. It also makes a man delusion free. It gives him one-pointedness.

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Mukthi Is of Four Kinds

Worship, with fixity of consciousness and purity of feeling and free of all extraneous thought, becomes itself *Bhavasamaadhi*. As a result of this *Bhavasamaadhi*, the Lord appears before the inner eye of the devotee, in the form which he has chosen for worship. The vision is not merely a matter of imagination, it is a “face-to-face” experience. Without difference of location, he can abide in the presence of the Lord, in the selfsame place. This is called *Salokyamukthi*. Besides being always with the Lord, as in *Salokyamukthi*, Bhakthas realise all that they see as the glory of the Lord. The experience is referred to as *Samipyamukthi*. Existing ever with the Lord, witnessing always the glory of the Lord, and becoming suffused with God-consciousness is *Sarupyamukthi*. This is the final fruit of Bhakthi Sastra. But at this stage, there is yet a trace of differential feeling. So, the Adwaitha Siddhantha will not admit it as the highest. Simply because

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the Bhaktha has Sarupya or the same Rupa as the Lord, we cannot take it that he has the powers of Creation, Preservation and Destruction, which the Lord possesses. It is only when all trace of difference disappears, and unity is attained that the highest stage is reached. This is what is called *Sayujya*. This comes of Divine Grace, won by the Essence of the sadhana of each. It cannot be claimed as the fruit of effort. The Bhaktha will aspire for this merging or *Aikyam*. He wishes to serve the Lord as he pleases and to experience the joy of the Form which he has attributed to the Lord. But the Lord out of His Grace, gives him not only *Salokya*, *Samipya* and *Sarupya* but also, *Sayujya*! Bhakthi Marga results also in the attainment of Brahma Jnana. Even if the Bhaktha does not crave for it, the Lord Himself vouchsafes it to him. The *Sayujyamukthi* is also referred to as *Ekanthamukthi*.

Sath-Sankalpa Is The Path for Attaining The Presence

For Maya-constituted beings, there are two Maya gates: the appetite for sex and the appetite of the tongue. These two have to be conquered by every man; so long as they persist, they cause sorrow. All worldly desires are comprehended by these two. So, only those who have mastered these two can be said to have successfully waded through the world. These are the causes of all sins; and sin is the manure on which Maya thrives. Really speaking, this *Maya-prapancha* or world has to serve only the purpose of just sustaining the body. Those aspiring for Liberation have to subdue the senses. “Food for guarding the body, dress to ward off the cold,” says the *Uttara Gita*. If Man, however, gets immersed in these pursuits, he will forget the purpose for which he has come and the goal of all activity and holy endeavour. Instead, whatever activity a person may be engaged in, he must, as automatically as he

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takes in breath, be contemplating on these lines and should always be aware of this: “I am born to serve God and to realise my true Self.” All acts—wearing, eating, walking, studying, serving, moving—should be performed in the belief that they take one into the Presence. Everything should be done in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

A farmer clears and levels the land, removes the stones and thorns, ploughs and prepares the field, manures and strengthens the soil, waters and fertilises it, and sowing, transplanting, weeding, spraying and waiting, he reaps the crop, and after winnowing and threshing, he stacks the corn. All these various processes are for the sake of the stomach. So too, one must feel that all the hunger, thirst, joy and sorrow, grief and loss, suffering and anger, food and appetite are but impulses helping us towards attaining the Presence of the Lord. When one has this attitude, sin will never tarnish these activities. The appetites too will vanish, without a vestige of name or form.

The taste of food or of anything eaten cannot be grasped if the person is ill or even if the mind is immersed in something else. So also, even if one is engaged in Namasmarana, Bhajana, Japa or Dhyaanam, if the heart is full of *Thamas* (dull attributes), or if it is wayward, no joy can be experienced. Joy can never well up under such circumstances. The tongue will be sweet, so long as there is sugar upon the tongue. If there is the pillar of light, Bhakthi, in the corridor of the heart, so long as that lamp burns,

there will be no darkness. The heart will be illumined in Bliss. A bitter thing on the tongue makes the whole tongue bitter. When qualities like greed and anger enter the heart, the brightness disappears and darkness dominates the scene and Man becomes the target of countless griefs and losses. Therefore, those who aspire to attain the holy Presence of the Lord must acquire certain habits, disciplines and qualities. The usual, accustomed ways of life will not lead to God. They have to be modified somewhat, by means of sadhana. Look at the crane, it walks about pretty fast in water. But during the walk, it cannot catch any fish. It must, for that purpose, become slow and quiet and stand motionless. So also if one proceeds with greed, anger and similar qualities, one cannot secure the fish of Sathya, Dharma and Santhi. Whatever sadhana a person may or may not have, he must practise uninterrupted Namasmara. Then only can he master the natural attributes of greed, anger, etc. All the Sastras teach but this one lesson: since the Lord is the universal Goal and this Journey of Life has Him as the destination, keep Him constantly in view and subdue the mind which makes you wander from the path. All the good qualities automatically gather around the person who practises control of speech and the constant contemplation of the Lord. See! In the Dwapara Yuga the Kauravas, even while experiencing the fruits of their previous *Punya* (meritorious acts), were engaged in *Papakarma* (evil activity). The Pandavas, on the other hand, even while undergoing the sufferings due to their previous *Papakarma*, were thinking and doing only *Punya*! This is the difference

between the wise and the unwise. The Kauravas were slaves of the appetites of hunger and sex and the Pandavas did every act for the sake of the Lord, having Sathya and Dharma as their Charioteer. Those who are overwhelmed in grief can never feel interest in either a feast or a fight. Similarly, the real aspirant who is immersed in thoughts of God can never taste or even think of worldly objects of enjoyment.

A Good Character Is The Jewel of Human Life

One must realise in this body itself, before death takes its toll, the Eternal Truth and the Relationship between Man and that Truth. The *Kathopanishad* exhorts: “*Uththishtatha! Jagratha! Praapyavaraanni-bodhatha!*” Arise, Awake, Get initiated from the great. Those who are agitated by doubts about what to accept and what to reject, those who are blinded by illusion, and those who cannot distinguish between darkness and light, death and immortality, all such should approach great persons who can show the path to understand the eternal Truth, the Self-illuminated Basis of all Creation. Then, this world and heaven both will be merged in the same effulgence! For the sake of this realisation, man should have deep yearning and hard disciplined practice. This human birth itself is the consequence of countless good deeds and it should not be cast aside, the chance must be fully

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exploited. As the *Kenopanishad* says, “*Nachedihavedin Maha-thovinashtih,*” the jewel in the hand should not be dropped aside. When there are many chances of saving oneself, is it not a big loss if no thought is spent on ways of escape? For all those who are really animals in human form, slaves of pride and animal traits, this awareness in time is most important; delay is fruitless. It will be as silly as starting to dig a well when the house catches fire. Therefore, the discriminating individual will endeavour by all means at his disposal to understand the underlying Principles, to master the teachings of the great men who practised the spiritual path, and to bring all this, as much as possible, into the ken of one’s own experience. Without this effort, if one discards the Path and wastes his life, it is an insult to the very name of the species! Instead of getting enslaved to the evanescent and the false and wasting precious time in their pursuit, dedicate every minute to the discovery of Truth, the contemplation of the Everlasting, Ever-true Lord. Such dedication is the real function of the soul. The spending of time in illusory appetites on the other hand is the drag of the world. One should not fall a victim to the poisonous attractions of worldly luxuries, or the wiles of seductive beauty. One day, all these fascinating scenes will vanish as a story unfolded in dream!

Whatever happens to man, education and the rest, to make him grow and become big, these are of no use for his spiritual progress. They bring about only his spiritual downfall. That is why this is *Maya-prapancha*. Truth, in

whatever Maya it is immersed, will only shine more effulgently. For such is the nature of Truth. How can we say that the objective world, undergoing modifications every minute, waning and wasting, with the waywardness of appearing and disappearing is Eternal Truth? So, the characteristic of a Saadhaka is the attainment of Truth, not the search of the Unreal in this evanescent world. In this false world, there can be no *Sathyachara*, true living. There can only be *Mithyachara*, unreal living. True living consists in the realisation of the Lord. This must be borne in mind by every man, every moment of his life.

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Sahajamarga, Sadhanamarga, Not The Same

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The Saadhaka should note the distinction between the conduct of the natural man and the aspirant. Sahaja man is one without Sahana or Fortitude, with Ahamkaara, or conceit, and one who is full of desires relating to the *Jagath* (changing world) by which he is trying to have a contented *Janma* (birth). The Sadhana man is he who is engaged in *Sarveswara chinthana* (contemplation on the Almighty) as ceaselessly as the waves of the *Sagara* or sea, who accumulates the *DHANA* of Equality and Equal Love to all, who is content in the thought that all is the Lord's and nothing is his. The Sadhana man will not, like the Sahaja man, easily bend before grief or loss, anger or hatred or selfishness, hunger, thirst or fickleness. One should master all the above things as much as possible, and journey through life in fortitude, courage, joy, peace, charity and

humility. Realising that the tending of the body is not all important, one has to bear patiently even hunger and thirst and be engaged uninterruptedly in the contemplation of the Lord. Instead, quarrelling for every tiny little thing, losing one's temper, becoming sad at the slightest provocation, getting angry at the smallest insult, worried at thirst, hunger and loss of sleep, these can never be the characteristics of a Saadhaka. Rice in its natural state and rice that is boiled, can these two be the same? The hardness of natural rice is absent in the boiled one. The boiled grain is soft, harmless and sweet. The unboiled grain is hard, conceited and full of delusion. Both types are Jivis and men, no doubt. Those who are immersed in external illusions and *Avidya Maya* are "Men." Those who are immersed in internal illusions or *Vidya Maya* are "Saadhakas," and God is immersed in neither, devoid of both. He who has no external illusions becomes a Saadhaka and when he is devoid of even internal illusions, he can be termed a God. Such a person's heart becomes the seat of God. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that all is pervaded by God. Though, of course, the Lord is situated in every heart, sadhana is necessary so that they may discover it for themselves, isn't it? It is not possible for us to see our own face! We must have a mirror to show us its image! So too, a basic *Marga* or path, a sadhana method is necessary to become devoid of gunas (human characteristics, qualities).

The Harvest Of A Saadhaka

There is, in this world, no thapas higher than fortitude, no happiness greater than contentment, no punya (meritorious act) holier than mercy, no weapon more effective than patience.

Bhakthas should consider the body as the field, good deeds as seeds and cultivate the Name of the Lord, with the help of the Heart as the *ryot* (farmer), in order to get the harvest, the Lord Himself. How can one get the crop without the cultivation? Like cream in milk, like fire in fuel, the Lord is in everything, more or less. Have full faith in this. As the milk, so the cream; as the fuel, so the fire; so also, as the sadhana, so the *Sakshathkaara* (Self-realisation), is it not? Even if the attainment of Mukthi is not directly realised as a consequence of taking up the Lord's name, four fruits are clearly evident to those who have had the experience. They are (1) The company of the great, (2) Truth, (3) Contentment

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and (4) The control of the senses. Through whichever of these gates one may enter, whether he be a householder or recluse, or a member of any other class, he can reach the Lord without fail. This is certain. Men crave for worldly happiness. Analysed properly, this itself is the disease and sufferings are but the drugs we take. In the midst of these worldly pleasures, one rarely entertains the desire for attaining the Lord.

Besides, it is necessary to analyse and discriminate every act of man for, the spirit of renunciation is born out of such analysis. Without it, renunciation is difficult to get. Miserliness is like the behaviour of a dog, it has to be transformed. Anger is enemy Number One of the Saadhaka, it is like spittle and has to be treated as such. And untruth? It is even more disgusting. Through untruth, the vital powers of all are destroyed. It should be treated as scavenging itself. Theft ruins life. It makes the priceless human life cheaper than a *pie*. It is like rotten foul-smelling flesh. Moderate food, moderate sleep, Prema, fortitude these will help in the upkeep of the health of both body and mind. Whoever he may be, in whatever condition he may be, if he gives no room for dispiritedness, if he has no fear at all, and if he remembers the Lord with unshaken faith and without any ulterior motive, all suffering and sorrow will fall away from him. The Lord will never enquire at any time the caste to which you belong or the *Achara* (practice) which you traditionally follow.

Bhakthi does not consist in wearing *Kaashaya* cloth (ochre robe), the organisation of *Uthsavas* (festivals), the performance of Yajnas (sacrifices), the shaving of hair, the carrying of *Kamandala* (water pot) or *Danda* (stick), the matting of the hair, etc. With a pure Antahkarana (inner consciousness), uninterruptedly (whatever one may be doing) contemplating on God, feeling that everything is the Lord's creation and therefore One, unattached to sense-objects, embracing all in equal Love, dedicated to true speech, this is, indeed, the characteristic of Bhakthi.

Of the various types of Bhakthi, Namasmarana Bhakthi is the best. In the Kali Yuga, the Name is the Path for saving oneself. Jayadeva, Gouranga, Thyagayya, Thukaram, Kabir, Ramdas, all these great Bhakthas attained the Lord, through just this one Nama. Why speak of a thousand things? Even Prahlada and Dhruva were able to enjoy the *Darsan*, *Sparsan* and *Sambhashana* of the Lord through Nama only. Therefore, if every Saadhaka will consider the name of the Lord as the very breath of his life; and having complete faith in good deeds and good thoughts, if he will develop the spirit of service and equal Love for all, then there can be no better Path for Mukthi. Instead of this, if one sits in some solitary nook and holds his breath, how can he master his innate qualities? How is he to know that he has mastered them? *Ambarisha Bhakthi* (Devotion based on surrender as that of Sage Ambarisha), and Durvasa (A great sage who used quality of anger to prevail Divine Will over human circumstances), the combination of these two will result in

the fate of Durvasa himself; at least, in the end, Durvasa must fall at the feet of Ambarisha. May you avoid becoming such *Thrisankus* (he who was hung between heaven and earth). May you experience the eternal Truth, achieving the genuine State.

The Qualities A Saadhaka Should Cultivate

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Every person is apt to commit mistakes, without being aware of it. However bright the fire or light, some smoke will emanate from it. So also, whatever good deed a man might do, there will be mixed with it a minute trace of evil. But efforts should be made to ensure that the evil is minimised, that the good is more and bad, less. Of course, in the present atmosphere, you may not succeed in the very first attempt. You must carefully think over the consequences of whatever you do, talk, or execute. In whatever way you want others to honour you, or to love you, or to behave with you, in the same way, you should first behave with others and love and honour them. Then only will those honour you. Instead, without yourself honouring and loving others, if you complain that they are not treating you properly, it is surely a wrong conclusion.

Besides, if only those who advise others about, “Which principles are right, which are true and good, which conduct is best, etc.?” themselves follow the advice they give, there would then be no need for giving that advice at all. They will learn the lesson simply by observing their actual behaviour. On the other hand, if Vedantha is spoken parrot-like to others, without any attempt to put it into practice in one’s own conduct, it is not only deceiving others; it is even worse. It is deceiving oneself. Therefore *you* must be, as you want *others* to be. It is not the nature of a Saadhaka to search for faults in others and hide one’s own. If your faults are pointed out to you by anyone, do not argue and try to prove that it is right, or do not bear a grudge against him for it. Reason out within yourself how it is a fault and set right your own behaviour. Instead, rationalising it for your own satisfaction or wreaking vengeance on the person who pointed it out, these are certainly not the traits of a Saadhaka or Bhaktha.

The Saadhaka should always seek the truthful and the joyful. He must avoid all thoughts of the untrue, the sad and the depressing. Depression, doubt, conceit, these are as Rahu and Kethu (mythical snakes that supposedly swallowed the moon and sun during lunar and solar eclipses) to the spiritual aspirant. When one’s devotion is well established, even if these appear, they can be easily discarded. They will only harm one’s sadhana. Above all, it is best that the Saadhaka should be under all circumstances, joyful, smiling and enthusiastic. Even more than Bhakthi and Jnana, this

pure attitude is desirable. Those who have acquired it deserve to reach the goal first. This quality of joy at all times is the fruit of the good done in past births. When a person is ever worried, depressed, doubting, he can never attain bliss, whatever sadhana he may do. The first task of a Saadhaka is the cultivation of enthusiasm. Through that enthusiasm, he can derive any variety of Ananda. Never get inflated when you are praised, never get deflated when you are blamed. Be a spiritual Lion, regardless of both. One must oneself analyse and correct one's faults, this is most important.

Now, even in matters relating to the realisation of God, one has to be careful. Whatever inconveniences one may encounter, one must try to carry on one's sadhana, without any break or modification in the disciplines. One should not be changing the Name that one has loved and cherished and selected for *Smarana* (remembering). Concentration is impossible if the Name is changed once every few days. The mind will not attain one-pointedness. All sadhana has this one-pointedness as its ultimate aim. So, avoiding constant adoption and rejection of Names and Forms of the Lord, one single Name must be used throughout for japam and dhyaanam. And one has also to get the strong conviction that all the Lord's Names and all the Lord's Forms are but the Name and the Form which one is repeating in japam and meditating on, during dhyaanam. That Name and that Form must not give any the slightest feeling of dislike or disaffection. Taking all worldly losses, sufferings and

worries as merely temporal and transitory, and realising that all this japam and dhyaanam is only to overcome such grief, the Saadhaka should keep the two things separate, without mixing up that with this, and this with that. He must understand that the loss, suffering and worry are external, belonging to this world, and that japam and dhyaanam are internal, belonging to the realm of the love for the Lord. This is what is called *Pathivratha* Bhakthi, or Chaste Devotion. The other variety, where the Saadhaka selects one Name and one Form and after some time discards them for another Name and Form, is called *Vyabhichara* Bhakthi, or Unchaste Bhakthi.

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It is not a fault if it is done in ignorance; but having once known that it is wrong and harmful, and after continuing dhyaanam and japam with that *Nama* (Name) and *Rupa* (Form) faithfully, if they are subsequently changed, it certainly is wrong. Sticking faithfully to the Nama and Rupa is the highest vow, and the highest austerity. Even if elders advise you, do not give up the Path approved by your mind! Of course, which elder will suggest to you that you should change the Name of the Lord and give up the Name that you adore? Do not consider those who tell you to do so as an elder. Consider them as dullards. Again, see that as far as possible, the time and place of dhyaanam and japam are not changed and shifted. Sometimes, as while travelling, even if it becomes necessary to change the venue, the time at least should be kept unaltered. Even if one is in a railway

train, or a bus, or some such inconvenient surrounding, at the specified time, one must, at least, recall to one's mind the dhyaanam and the japam done by oneself, at the same time in the past.

In this way, accumulating spiritual wealth, one can surely become the Master, and attain the Atma.

Every man should so lead his life that no pain is caused by him to any living thing. That is his supreme duty. Also, it is the prime duty of everyone, who has had the chance of this human birth, to spare a part of his energies, occasionally to prayer, repetition of the Lord's Name, meditation, etc. and must equate Living with Truth, Rightfulness and Peacefulness to good works which are of service to others. One must be as afraid of doing acts that are harmful to others or deeds that are sinful, as he now is afraid to touch fire or disturb a cobra. One must have as much attachment and as much steadfastness in carrying out good works, in making others happy, and in worshipping the Lord as he now has in accumulating gold and riches. This is the Dharma of Man. It is to strengthen this type of goodness that the Lord incarnates Himself in human form. But the question may arise, how can a non-existent thing be strengthened and developed? Indeed, these qualities are not non-existent, they are there in man! When these existing qualities decline, and wither, the Lord comes with the purpose of promoting them and bringing about the decline of the forces that work

in the opposite direction. It is to make clear this purpose that Sri Krishna, in the Dwapara Yuga, while teaching Arjuna, said:

*Parithranaya sadhunam
Vinasaya cha dushkritham
Dharmasamsthapanarthaya
Sambhavami yuge yuge.*

That is to say, all incarnations of the Lord are for the protection and promotion of Sadhus. This word, Sadhu, does not refer to any single religion, or caste, or family or stage of life, or community or even any single species, like the human! It refers to all religions, all stages of life, all races, and all creatures. The Lord has revealed in the Gita, His Universal Mind. It is because of this universal message that the Gita has become so essential and so famous. Why! Sri Krishna Himself has declared in plenty of situations and places, that He is the dutiful servant of His devotees. An example of this is His accepting to be the Charioteer of Arjuna!

If the culture of the ordinary man himself results in such elevation, each one can judge for himself how much more purified and holy will be the character of those who are engaged in spiritual exercises and the incessant contemplation of God! For both these types of people, the quality of their character is the important criterion.

There is a great difference between the *Brahmanishtas* (those established in God-contemplation) of the past and the *Brahmanishtas* of the present day. First, it is necessary to grasp the greatness of *Brahmanishta* itself. It is because this has not been done by the present-day holy men, that poverty has come upon us. In the past, this greatness was realised, and they were immersed in experiencing holiness. The question may arise why such holy feelings do not arise now, but they are not absent. For fire to increase or decrease, fuel is the only cause; there is no other reason. The more the fuel, the more the illumination! In all humanity, every individual has the undisputed right to feed his fire with fuel! Fire has the power to give light, by its very nature. So too, in the fire of the *Buddhi* of the aspirant and spiritual practitioner, the fire which emanates the light of wisdom, the fuel of renunciation, peacefulness, truth, mercifulness, forbearance and selfless service has to be constantly placed. The more they do this, the more efficacious and effulgent the *Saadhakas* can become. Only trees growing on fertile soil can yield good fruits. Those which grow on saline soils will be poor. So also, it is only in hearts which are unsullied, that such holy feelings, power and gifts can shine in splendour. The difference between the *Brahmanishtas* of the past and the present is just this: the present-day *Brahmanishtas* are practising the same *dhyaanam* and the same *Pranava* as their namesake in the past, the difference arises in the decline in self-control, so far as the field of *sadhana* is concerned. When the number of *Mahapurushas* who engage themselves in unflinching meditation of God in

solitary places declined, then many a suffering descended upon the world. Those who exist today are damaging their *Brahmanishta* by themselves arranging for the accumulation of all obstacles for the carrying through of their *sadhana*, by getting enslaved to mean praise and fame, by becoming entangled in delusion, and by restless endeavour to earn glory and to expand the institutions they have founded. But those who yearn to establish themselves in *Brahmanishta* must seek solitude, and practise *dhyaanam* and *japa* at specified times, and acquire one-pointedness through these spiritual exercises, and always be anxious to do deeds that will bring about the welfare of all created beings, ever engaged in performing work without any concern for the fruit thereof. It is only when such men come upon the earth that all suffering will cease. This is the mark of *Kritha Yuga*.

Just as in the world, kindhearted doctors run medical institutions here and there, and serve the diseased and cure the afflicted, if, here and there, we also have *Ashramas* of holy personages, who are experts in the treatment and cure of the “birth-and-death disease,” then, people can be cured from the afflictions of ignorance, untruth, immorality and self-aggrandisement. The ignorance produces wickedness and it can be cured only by the medicine of *Brahma Jnana* with supplementary doses of the drugs, *Santham*, *Sama*, *Dama* (Peacefulness, Fortitude, Self-control), etc. Instead of this, the “great men” of today give those who approach them the medicines they demand, and the drugs their patients relish! They thus become the instruments of their followers;

and for the sake of name and fame, they behave like doctors dictated to by the patients! The so-called “great” fall into perdition, even before they taste the Bliss themselves, on account of their weakness and foolishness, becoming a prey to the wiles of the greed for name and fame! The main reason for the contemporary poverty is just this. Present-day Sadhus and “great” men have not understood this fact and do not act according to it.

That holy essence has to be experienced and realised. One’s selfish needs have to be sacrificed. There must be constant effort to do good to others. One’s desire should be to establish the welfare of the world. With all these feelings filling the heart, one must meditate on the Lord. *This* is the right path. If “great men” and those in authority are thus engaged in the service of humanity, and in promoting the welfare of the world, the thieves of passion, hatred, pride, envy, jealousy, and conceit will not invade the minds of men. The divine possessions of man, like dharma, mercy, truth, love, knowledge and wisdom will be safe from harm. The police and the rulers can overcome only external foes, they have no power to destroy the internal enemies; they will find the task impossible. They are not the authorities for that. The internal foe, the six enemies that operate inside man, the *Arishadvarga*, can be uprooted only by the teachings of good men, the Love of God and knowledge of the Lord, and the company of the Holy and the Great. Just as when the police and the authorities responsible for apprehending thieves become themselves dependent on

them, the world will suffer harm at the hands of wicked men. If the Brahmanishtas and the “great” Sadhus give up the path of the world’s welfare and become the victims of sense enjoyment and ambition to earn name and fame, the world will become enveloped in darker ignorance and Dharma will be destroyed. Now, both are as described. Hence, the daily increase of suffering also. The whole world will bask in peace and joy only that day, when both these groups realise the right attitudes, and with the welfare of all at heart, ponder over the Omnipotence of the Lord. Both these are two governments for man’s two States. Spiritual elders are the rulers of the internal State. Administrative authorities are the rulers of the external State. If both these groups act and direct properly, both States will function to create happiness. The fault of causing the present misery must therefore be shared by both. It is at such times that the Lord resolves to vouchsafe happiness to all States and to suppress ignorance and injustice. It is to make this clear that the Lord said in the Gita:

*Yada yada hi dharmasya glanirbhavathi Bharatha
Abhyuththanamadharmasya thadatmanam
srijamyaham.*

“Oh Bharatha, whenever Dharma declines and adharma raises its head, then I make myself born.”

Really speaking, even for the advent of the Lord the prayers of the great act as the invitation. In the external

world, when the subjects need any convenience or help, they approach the rulers and inform them of their request. So also, in the internal State, when there is no possibility of achieving and acquiring Bhakthi, charity, peace and truth, the great and good men, who desire to achieve them pray to the Lord within themselves. Then, listening to their prayers, He himself comes into the world and showers His grace on them. This fact is well known to all. Did not Rama and Krishna incarnate because the Lord heeded the prayers of the sages? Many have read this in the *Ramayana* and the *Bhagavatha*. Why, even Ramakrishna, though he was Divinely-born, prayed to Kali (for he could not bring it about) to send someone who could preach to the whole world the Dharma that will uproot injustice and selfishness. This is known to all who have read his life history. Thus, prayers should be offered again and again for the realisation of the task. No one should become desperate and give up prayers if they do not result in the advent of the Lord. In the external State, how often, has a person to write and how much he has to wander about for his work to be done; and perhaps at the end, it may not fructify at all!

Now, how is one to know the consequence of the soul's yearning? Since this cannot be known, one has to pray until the world is established in happiness. The happiness of the world is the sign of His arrival. If this is understood, then it is easy to recognise the Avatar immediately. It is then that the religion of Sathya, the religion of Daya, the religion of Jnana and the religion of Prema will grow and prosper. So,

until these are firmly rooted, people must continue their prayers. That is the responsibility of the people. The roadway laid out by holy men has to be repaired now and then, by either those who travel through it or those claiming authority over it. That is what is called "Teaching" or *Bodha*.

It is for the sake of such repairs that the Lord sends occasionally some authorised individuals, sages, and divine personages. Through the *Sadbodha* or good teachings of these, the path opened by the Godmen of the past is again made clear and smooth. Thus, when the Lord's Will and the needs of Sadhus, and the teachings of great persons produce their combined effect, the happiness of the world will be assured, and it will be undiminished. If all humanity prays in one voice that unrest, injustice, disorder and falsehood might be transformed into peace, truth, love and mutual service, things will certainly become better. Now, there is no other way out. Worrying is fruitless. This is no occasion for despair. It is against the essential nature of man to plead weakness and want of strength. Therefore, giving up the search for other means, men must try prayer, service to others, and mutual love and respect. They should delay no longer. They will soon acquire contentment and joy.

People say that the service of Man is the service of God, that *Manava Seva* is *Madhava Seva*. That is a true statement. But though the service of humanity is holy, unless it is merged in the bigger ideal, men will not benefit, however

huge the service. Mere repetition of the slogan is useless if service is done without faith in the divinity of man and with an eye on name and fame and the fruits of one's action. Whatever actions one undertakes, if one has constantly as a companion the contemplation of the Lord, and if one has faith in the essential divinity of man, then, the statement about Manava Seva and Madhava Seva being the same is justified. Without thoughts of Madhava, how can Madhava Seva originate? All such talk is mere show. I won't agree to that. Instead, whatever is done with the Lord in mind, along the path of truth, and according to the aspects of Dharma, has to be considered as the Seva of the Lord. Whatever is done for name and fame and for the fruit thereof shall not be referred to as Madhava Seva.

In fact, those who are immersed in the uninterrupted contemplation of the Lord need not do any other task at all. The fruit of their prayer itself can make the world holy. But all cannot be thus engaged, and so all must endeavour to prepare for that stage by purifying their mind and diminishing their desires. The Sadhus who have achieved this can realise things for themselves. Others cannot grasp the sameness of Manava Seva and Madhava Seva.

But this does not mean that one can sit quiet. Grasping it is dependent on each one's destiny, and past actions, and on each one's sadhana. Until that happens, do dhyaanam and japam so that the mind will become free from the waves of feeling and is full of the divine form. Also, carry out

deeds for the good of others. Devote your time to the service of the world, irrespective of the results thereof; thus, you can become blessed. Otherwise, though the body may be inactive, the mind will be very busy, committing acts on its own. Such men fall a prey to karma, in spite of their not doing anything! When a person has his mind fixed on the contemplation of God and the pursuit of Truth, though his body and his senses do acts that are of service to the world, they will not be affected by them. Though they do karma, they are still non-doers of karma. The lesson of the *Bhagavad Gita* is embedded in this. The heart of the person who does not strive to cultivate his mind with holy thoughts is certain to be the paradise of evil and wickedness. This has to be borne in mind by all those who aspire for salvation, who seek one-pointedness, and who hope to rise to greatness. To realise this knowledge of the Atma, caste is not a criterion, nor monkhood, nor rituals, nor scholarship gained by study of the Sastras. Brahmanishta is the only criterion. It is this that the Upanishad text too emphasises:

*Naasramam kaaranam muktheh,
darsanaani na kaaranam
Thathaiva sarvakarmaani jnaanamevahi
kaaranam.*

Jnana alone is the cause of liberation, not Ashrama or philosophy.

For the establishment of oneself in the contemplation of the Omnipresent Lord, there are no limitations of time or

space. There is nothing like a holy place or a special time for this. Wherever the mind revels in the contemplation of the Divine, that is the Holy Place! Whenever it does so, that is the auspicious moment! There and then, one must meditate on the Lord.

That is why it has been announced already before: *Na kaala niyame yaathra, na desasya sthalasya cha Yathraasya ramathe chiththam, thathra dhyane na kevalam.*

For meditation on God, there is no fixed time or place. When and where the mind so desires, then and there, is the time and place.

The world can achieve prosperity through such disciplined souls whose hearts are pure and who represent the salt of the earth. Everyone should pray, from this very minute, for the advent of such men and try to deserve the blessings of the great and endeavour to forget the sufferings of the day in the attempt to promote the welfare of the world.