

SANDEHA NIVARINI

CLEARANCE OF SPIRITUAL DOUBTS

Dialogues with
Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba



PRASANTHI NILAYAM

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A WORD TO THE READER

“I am the Sai Baba of Shirdi come again; then, I was mostly engaged in preparing the meal; now I have come to feed you all with the strengthening, purifying repast,” says Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He announced thus, in his fourteenth year, while casting away his school books and addressing the first gathering of devotees in 1940. Ever since, Baba has been consoling, correcting, and curing, with His Compassion and All-conquering *Prema* (love), an ever-increasing band of physical and spiritual sufferers and establishing the New Sai Era of Peace and Joy. As part of His Mission of *Dharma Sthapana*, Baba started in February, 1956 a monthly magazine to which He gave the significant name, *Sanathana Sarathi*. Evidently, He meant to declare Himself more clearly through that title, the fact that He is both Sanathana (Ancient) and Sarathi (the Charioteer of all physically-embodied beings). He announced that the Sanathana Sarathi is engaged in a campaign against falsehood of all types and varieties, and also against the Spirit of Selfishness. This series of dialogues with Baba, published in the magazine originally in Telugu, unravels the mysteries of spiritual Truth and lovingly removes the mist that hides the vision of aspirants. Perused with care and faith, these dialogues are bound to clarify, reinforce and convince. May the perusal lead you nearer and nearer the goal.

N. Kasturi, M.A., B.L.
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SANDEHA NIVARINI

I

Bhaktha : Swami, can we ask you freely about any topic concerning the spiritual path, which we do not know?

Swami : Certainly. What is the objection? Why this doubt? What am I here for? Is it not for explaining to you things you do not know? You can ask me without any fear or hesitation. I am always ready to answer; only, I want earnest inquiry with a desire to know.

Bhaktha : But some elders say it is wrong to vex the Guru with questions. Are they right, Swami?

Swami : That is not correct. Whom else can the disciple approach? Since the Guru is everything to him, it is best that he consults him in all matters and then acts.

Bhaktha : Some say that we should reverentially carry out whatever the elders ask us to do without raising any objections. Is that your command also?

Swami : Until you develop full faith in them and know that their words are valid, it will be difficult for you to carry out their orders reverentially. So, until then, it won't be wrong to ask them the significance and the validity of their orders, so that you may be convinced.

Bhaktha : Swami, whom are we to believe, whom are we to discard? The world is so full of deceit. When those, whom we believe are good, themselves turn out to be bad, how can faith grow?

Swami : Well, My boy! Where is the need for you in this world or any world to grow faith in others? Believe in yourself, first. Then believe in the Lord, *Paramatma*. When you have faith in these two, neither the good nor the bad will affect you.

Bhaktha : Swami, faith in the Lord too diminishes sometimes. What is the reason for that?

Swami : When one is deluded by the mere external world and when one does not attain success in such external desires, faith in the Lord diminishes. So, give up such desires. Desire only for the spiritual relationship; then you won't become the target of doubts and difficulties. The important thing for this is faith in the Lord; without that, you start doubting everything, big and small.

Bhaktha : Until we understand the Reality of Paramatma, it is important, they say, to be in the company of the great and the good and also to have a Guru. Are these necessary?

Swami : Of course, the company of the great and the good is necessary. To make that Reality known to you, a Guru too is important. But in this matter, you should be very careful. Genuine Gurus are scarce these days. Cheats have multiplied and teachers have retreated into solitude, in order to realise themselves undisturbed. There are many genuine Gurus but they cannot be secured easily. Even if you get them, you must thank your destiny if they vouchsafe to you more than one single *Sadvakya* (word); they won't spend time telling you all kinds of stories! There should be no hurry in the search for a Guru.

Bhaktha : Then, what in the world is the path?

Swami : Why, it is just for this that we have the Veda, Sastra, Purana and Itihaasa. Study them; adhere to the path they teach and gather the experience. Understand their meaning and the trend of their message from pundits. Follow them in practice. Meditate on the Paramatma as the Guru and as God; then, those scriptures themselves will help you as your Guru. For, what is a Guru? The Guru is that through which your mind gets fixed on God. If you consider Paramatma

as the Guru and do *Sadhana* (spiritual practice) with unshakeable Love, the Lord Himself will appear before you and give *Upadesa* (Spiritual instruction) just as a Guru. Or, He may so bless you that as a result of the *Sadhana*, you may meet a *Sadguru* (Philosopher and guide).

Bhaktha : But nowadays, some great big persons are granting *Upadesa* to all who ask. Are these not *Sadgurus*, Swami?

Swami : I won't say they are or they are not. I declare only this: It is not the sign of a *Sadguru* to grant *Upadesa* to any and every person who comes to him with praise, without considering the past and the future, without discovering the qualifications of the pupil and testing whether he is fit.

Bhaktha : Then Swami, I have committed a blunder! When one great person arrived at our village, and when all were receiving *Upadesa* from him, I too went and prostrated before him and asked him for it. He granted me a good *Upadesa*. I repeated the manthra for some time; but soon, I came to know that the great person was a cheat. Since that day, I lost faith in the Name he gave me. I gave up the *Manthra* (sacred formula). Was this wrong? Or, am I right?

Swami : Do you doubt the right and wrong of this? It is very wrong. Just as the Guru, as I told you now,

examines the qualifications of the disciple, the disciple too has to critically examine the credentials of the Guru before receiving Upadesa. Your first mistake was that you did not pay attention to this but hastily accepted Upadesa. Well, even if the Guru gave it without the necessary qualification, why did you break your vow and stop repeating the Name? That is the second mistake: casting the fault of another on the sacred Name of God. Before receiving Upadesa, you should have taken time and known his genuineness and developed faith in him. Then, when the desire to accept him as Guru emerged, you should have received the Upadesa. But once you accept, you must repeat it, whatever the difficulty. You should not give it up. Otherwise, you commit the wrong of accepting without deliberation and rejecting without deliberation. That wrong will be on your head. You should not accept a Name when you are still afflicted by doubt or a Name which you do not prefer. Having accepted, you should not give it up.

Bhaktha : What happens when it is given up?

Swami : Well, my boy. Disloyalty to the Guru and discarding the Name of God—on account of these, your one-pointed endeavour and concentration will wither away. As the saying goes, “The diseased seedling can never grow into a tree.”

Bhaktha : But if the Guru grants the Manthra though we lack the merit?

Swami : Such a Guru is no Guru. The result of his wrong act won't fall on you. The evil of that wrong will devolve on him only.

Bhaktha : If the disciple acts according to the promise made to the Guru, irrespective of what the Guru may turn out to be, and honours him as before, can he realise the goal?

Swami : Certainly, what doubt is there? Don't you know the story of Ekalavya? Though Dronacharya did not accept him as his disciple, he installed an image and took it as Dronacharya himself; revering as such, he learnt archery and achieved mastery of all arts. Finally, when the Guru, blinded by injustice, asked for his right thumb as his fees, he offered it gladly. Did Ekalavya take to heart the injury done by the Guru?

Bhaktha : Of what avail was that offer? His education was all a waste, that was all. What was the net result of his achievement?

Swami : Though Ekalavya lost all chance of using his skill, the character that he earned by that training was never lost. Is not the fame he acquired by his sacrifice enough compensation?

Bhaktha : Well, what is past is past. Hereafter at least I shall hold fast and try not to discard the name. Please grant me upadesa yourself.

Swami : Your attitude is just like that of the person who, after having witnessed the *Ramayana* being enacted throughout the night, asked someone at daybreak how Rama was related to Sita! I was telling you that the Guru and the upadesa will come when your qualifications ripen. It will come by itself. There is no need for you to ask! Really speaking, the disciple should not ask for upadesa on his own. He cannot be aware of his being ripe for it. The Guru will be watching for the proper moment and he will himself bless and help. You should not get upadesa more than once. It is not repeatable. If you give up one upadesa and take up another, whenever you feel like it, you will be like a married woman gone astray.

Bhaktha : So, what is my fate now? Is there no way to save myself?

Swami : Repent for the mistake committed, but continue meditating on the Name you received. For *Namasmarana* (Remembering God through His Name), apart from *Japa* (Repetition of the Holy Name), you can use as many names as you like. For *Dhyana* (meditation), the Name got by upadesa alone should be used, remember. Don't change that sacred Name. Transform yourself by persistent yearning and effort and proceed.

Bhaktha : Swami! Today is indeed a great day; for all doubts have disappeared by the message you gave.

As you said, upadesa created the doubt. Your *Sandesha* (message) dispelled it. If permitted, I will return now to my place and when I come again, I will bring some new doubts to be cast away in Your Presence in exchange for Peace and Joy. If you so command, I shall come next month.

Swami : Very good. That is exactly what I want—that persons like you should rid themselves of doubts, should grasp the real significance of life and welcoming the *Sandesha* with faith and steadfastness, dwell in constant remembrance of the Name of the Lord. Whenever you come, whatever comes, learn from Me the method and means of ridding yourself of grief and doubt and worry. Never suffer from grief. For with that pain inside you, you will not be able to do any *Sadhana*. Whatever *Sadhana* you do will be like rose water poured on ash. Very well, go now and come later.

II

Bhaktha : Namaskaram, Swami.

Swami : Happy to see you. You seem very tired; and in this summer, travel is even more exhausting. Take rest for a little while. We can converse thereafter.

Bhaktha : When there is no peace of mind where can rest be got?

Swami : Well my boy, rest is for the sake of peace of mind. Once you have that peace, where is the need for rest? There is need for a bandage until the wound heals; after that, what is its use?

Bhaktha: Swami, just now my mind is restless. I cannot decide upon anything. I do not know what the reason is. What shall I do?

Swami : Well, no effect can take place without a cause. You do certainly know the cause of your present condition....Well, nothing else need be done: At such times of mental pain, do Namasmarana for a while sitting in a lonely place; or sing Bhajan songs loudly in a raised voice; or if that is not possible, spread the bed and sleep for some time. Thereafter you can think about all this.

Bhaktha : You have told us that in this world, each one has some dearly loved thing or other, and that if any harm comes upon that thing, peace of mind cannot be had. How then can I have peace of mind, when something happens like this...another person either disrespecting my dearly loved thing, or finding fault with it? What am I to do then?

Swami : Well. A good person who has understood what is *Atmavichara* (inquiry into the nature of the Atma) will not blame like this the things that others love. Nor will he even associate with such men. For he would argue within himself, that when he blames another's *Ishtam* (chosen deity), he will feel as much pain as he himself feels when his own *Ishtam* is blamed. Therefore, be at peace with yourself, realising that those who abuse like this are people ignorant of *Atmavichara*. Engaged as you are in *Atmavichara*, you have nothing to do with ignorant persons who do not know *Atmavichara*. Well, let it go. What has really happened to cause all

this? The whole trouble will end if what is inside comes out.

Bhaktha : The world knows well how You are vouchsafing courage and daring and guiding men to do good spiritually, physically, and mentally; how You have rendered educational and medical help. You have never done any harm; nor caused harm to anyone in any form. How to suppress the persons who invent and spread all kinds of silly stories about such as You? Do they gain anything by this?

Swami : Oh, so this is the story! Well don't you know that good and bad are of the very nature of the world? If all are engaged in selling, who will be the buyers? With regard to God, fault finding has come down from the beginning of time; it is not new; only, present-day persons might manufacture some new tales. Well, why should you take to heart such abuse? Take it that they are only remembering Swami by this means. *Premasmarana* (Remembering with love) and *Dweshasmarana* (Remembering the Lord with hate) are two types. Of these, *Dweshasmarana* is *Avidyamaya* (absence of right awareness); it is related to *Rajo Guna* (Passion, violent emotion). *Premasmarana* is *Vidyamaya* (Right awareness); it is related to *Sathwa Guna* (Noble or pure quality). *Avidyamaya* results in *Dukham* (grief); *Vidyamaya* results in *Ananda* (Bliss). Their results are indicated there itself. Now, why should you suppress? You asked

about the gain isn't it? They don't need any gain. Finding fault with others has become their habit. They do it as their duty. As the saying goes, "What does the moth care or gain, whether the sari costs a hundred *tankas* or is cheap? To gnaw and tear is its nature." The moth tears equally a costly sari or a rag. Does it know the value of things? Its work is such. So be at peace, realising that the work of these faultfinders is the same as the work of these moths.

Bhaktha : Swami! What You said is the truth. We can take it that ignorant persons, when they behave like this, are of the brood of moths. But when people who are well educated, who are great, who know, when these are devoting themselves to spreading such stories, how can it be endured?

Swami : Learning means *Atmajnana* (Knowledge of the Self); it is not the knowledge of things related to the world, which trains for a living, and is useful as basis for a living. To compare *Atmajnana* with such *Vidyas* (Knowledge) is a great mistake. Great men are those who do not abuse others, who search for the reality with good intentions. Spiritual matters cannot be understood by those without the power of discrimination, who are puffed up with the authority they have; or by those who are unaware of any *Atmajnana*. So consider those whom you described as educated and great as belonging to the brood mentioned above and, without yielding place to such

ideas and worries, engage yourself in strengthening your belief.

Bhaktha : Many *Asthikas* (Pious, God-fearing people) in this world are changing into *Nasthikas* (Atheists) on account of such people, isn't it, Swami? Is there no weapon to put down these persons, who without any regard for their own learning and without any effort to know the reality, abuse the *Mahapurushas* (Great persons, saints)?

Swami : Why? There is. "A load of rags is placed on a ragged saddle," is the saying. The words of such persons will be listened to only by such persons; no real *Asthika* will associate with them. Even if they do, they will move far away as soon as they understand that those stories are fictitious. So the weapon to put down these persons is in their own hands. Haven't you heard the story of *Bhasmasura*? Placing his hand on everyone's head, he reduced them to ashes. Finally, placing it on his own head, he himself was reduced to ashes! Similarly, accusing others, they themselves will be finally accused by their own words.

Those who find fault with the Lord are of four types:

1. Persons who have no interest at all in matters related to God.
2. Persons who on account of individual spite cannot endure another's greatness.

3. Those who have neither personal experience, nor contact nor knowledge of anything and so merely manufacture stories based on hearsay to which they have become enslaved.
4. Persons who come with some worldly desire, and who accuse the Lord, as an excuse for the failure caused by their own destiny.

Only these four types of people clamour as you say; the others will not shout or jump about like puppets. Even if they do not have personal experience, when they hear such stories, they will just analyse them within themselves and arrive at conclusions, for their own satisfaction. They won't abuse others.

It is not the correct path—to disbelieve one's own mind and give room therein to another's words. Besides, there is no profit in discussing with those who do not know the Reality. As a matter of fact, Reality does not admit of any discussion at all. To argue with those who do not know either but who are in the intermediate stage is like seeing the trunk and believing it to be the entire body, as in the story of the Blind Men and the Elephant.

Well. Note this! It is not good to spend time in this type of conversation. Abuse and faultfinding are natural and common. Knowing this, those who aspire to become true *Bhakthas* should search only for bases on which to build their *Ananda*. All the available time should be used

for holy purposes, it should not be wasted. You have nothing to do with the good and the bad in others. Instead of wasting the time, it should be utilised to discard the bad and develop the good in you.

Ask me about some Sadhana or Sandesha which you need and seek something that is worth while. Hereafter do not bring near me such stories of faultfinding indulged in by others. You too should not take in such things.

Bhaktha: All this happened because we too have the same human nature. But now that I understand the subject from your answers, courage and joy have entered into me, driving away the doubt and sorrow I had. Through the talk of such men, even the little faith, devotion and earnestness that men have, are being reduced. That was the reason for my asking you these questions. Otherwise, I have also nothing to do with such topics. Pardon me, hereafter I won't talk on these lines to you.

Swami: Very good! During the little time available, if you don't think of some good subject, but merely recollect the ignorant prattle of others, it is as if you too joined in blaming those persons. That is harmful to Bhakthas. Whatever others may say, you should not give up your faith. Once you are firmly established in that, you will not be in want any day. One word following another produces anger and pain. *Bhakthi Marga* (Path of

devotion) is designed for suppressing, not developing these qualities.

You tell me that devotion and faith disappear because people listen to such accusers—but for how long? As soon as the truth is discovered, will they be trusted again? Will their words be valued again?

The talk of those faultfinders is as the sound of bronze. Cheap metals make more sound; gold which does not make sound is very valuable. True Bhakthas will be mute. They will follow the path of Silence. Their tongues will be so fully engaged in the repetition of the essential greatness of the Lord. It is best they have no respite for any other word. So do not permit the words of the bronze-voiced persons to enter your ears; but fill them with the name of the Lord, which is the *Pranavananda* itself.

Next month, if you get any problems regarding such useful topics as Sadhana or *Anushtaanam* (action), come here and have them solved. But do not bring with you bundles of such doubts!

Bhaktha: I am indeed blessed this day. On account of them, You have vouchsafed to me the light of wisdom. Seeing all this, I feel that the saying, “All is for our good” is true. Henceforward, whatever anyone may say, I will be patient and won't take it in because “All is for our good.” Namaskaram. Allow me to take leave.

III

SWAMI: Oh! When did you arrive? You were not visible anywhere outside. Are you well?

Bhaktha: 'Tis two days since I came. I see here number of people everywhere outside. I hear the incessant confusion of voices. Coming from my place to avoid that confusion, I find here too crowds everywhere. Therefore, I entered inside. There, it is fine, blissful, quiet. That is why I was in the Hall inside. It is as quiet inside as it is restless outside.

Swami: What is special in this? It is natural. Where there is jaggery, there gather the ants—and between outside and inside, this is the distinction! That is the characteristic. That is how it is.

Bhaktha: Swami! I do not understand what You say. If You tell me in detail, I shall listen and be happy.

Swami: You yourself said, didn't you, that there is an outside and an inside. Well. Those are what we call "*Bahyaprapancham*" and "*Antharaprapancham*," the external world and the internal world. Now, which is the internal? Give me your idea.

Bhaktha: You want it to come from my mouth itself? It would be so good if You speak.

Swami: Well. Making the questioner himself give out the answers is the *Sanathana* (Timeless) method of teaching. If those who question, themselves give the answers, they would clearly understand the subject. The lecturing style is different. In olden days, all the Rishis enabled their disciples to understand Vedantha only by this method. So, come on! Speak! Let us see.

Bhaktha: Do you ask me to speak of the objects I have seen with the eye?

Swami: Not only the eye. Tell me all that you have experienced and known through all the senses of cognition, the eye, the ear, etc.

Bhaktha: Earth, sky, water, sun, moon, wind, fire, stars, dusk, mountains, hills, trees, rivers, women, men, children, old persons, animals, birds, coldness, heat, the happy, the miserable, fishes, insects, diseases—like these I have seen many.

Swami: Enough, enough, that's enough! This is the *Prapancha* (Universe composed of five elements). Did you see it only today? Did it exist yesterday? Will it exist tomorrow?

Bhaktha: Why do you ask me so, Swami? It has existed like this for ages isn't it? Who knows for how long it will exist, or since how long it has existed?

Swami: "Since how long it has existed!", you said isn't it? That is what we speak of as "*Anadi*," Beginningless. This external world is beginningless. When there is "external," there must be "internal" also, is it not? Well, have you ever seen a cinema?

Bhaktha: Ever seen! Why, Swami, the cinema too is a part of the *Prapancham*, isn't it? I have seen many.

Swami: What did you see? Tell me.

Bhaktha: I have seen many wonderful "pictures"; I have heard numerous experiences of joy and sorrow.

Swami: "I have seen," you say. The screen is one; the "picture" is another. Did you see both?

Bhaktha: Yes.

Swami: Did you see the screen and the "picture" both at the same time?

Bhaktha: How is that possible, Swami? When the pictures are seen, the screen is not visible. When the screen is visible, the pictures are not seen.

Swami: Right! The screen, the pictures, do they exist always?

Bhaktha: No. The screen is permanent; the pictures come and go.

Swami: As you say, the screen is permanent and the pictures come and go. For this "permanent," and "impermanent" we use the words, *Sthiram* (permanent) and *Asthiram* (impermanent), *Nithyam* (indestructible) and *Anithyam* (temporary), *Ksharam* (changing) and *Aksharam* (unchanging). I shall ask on another subject: Does the picture fall on the screen or the screen fall on the picture? Which is the basis for what?

Bhaktha: The pictures fall on the screen; so, for the picture, the screen is the basis.

Swami: So too, the external world which is like the picture has no permanence; it changes. The internal world is fixed; it does not change. The external has the internal as its basis, its substratum.

Bhaktha: But Swami! I heard you say *Ksharam-Aksharam*, *Nithyam-Anithyam*.

Swami: Yes, my boy! You were speaking now of pictures; do these have names and forms?

Bhaktha: Haven't they? 'Tis only because they have names and forms that the story is understood. Then only do

we recollect Ramayana and Bharatham. There is no formless name and nameless form.

Swami: Good! That is well said! Where there is form there must be name. Where there is name, there must be form. Both these are connected with each other. When we say, “*Avinaabhaava Sambandha*,” (inseparable connection) it is to this relationship that we refer. Have you understood now the meaning of “prapancham”?

Bhaktha: I have grasped that it is identified with name and form, but Swami, I would like to hear you describe how it originated.

Swami: You should not fall into the tangle now. If we engage ourselves in describing that, it would be like getting into a mango garden and without eating the fruit we have plucked, calculating the number of trees in the garden, the number of twigs on each branch, the number of fruits on each twig, and what the total price of all the mangoes would be if the price of one mango is so much. Instead of senselessly wasting precious time in the collection of this information, we should, like the person who eats the fruit, find out what is of primary importance; and understanding that thing first, attain contentment and joy. Leave that alone. What did you say is the nature of this Prapancham? This Prapancham has another name too, do you know?

Bhaktha: I said that the Prapancham is identified with name and form. I have heard that it is known by another name, *Jagath* (moving, changing world).

Swami: This *Nama-Roopa* (name-form) Prapancham, this *Jagath* is like *Indrajala* or magician’s work, real only as long as you see it. So too the world is real only so long as you experience with your *Indriyas* or senses. That is to say, anything not experienced in the wakeful stage is taken as non-existent. Under such circumstances, we say “*Sath*” for existence and “*Asath*” for non-existence. Therefore, what do you say of this world? Is it “*Sath*” or “*Asath*”?

Bhaktha: It exists in experience in the wakeful stage, and so it is “*Sath*”; it does not exist in the deep sleep stage and so it is “*Asath*.”

Swami: Oh! *Sath*, *Asath*, did you say? When these two words are added, we get *Sadasath*, isn’t it? This is what is spoken of by us as *Maya*, do you know?

Bhaktha: Is that *Maya* similar to magic?

Swami: Is it not? “*Indrajalam idam Sarvam*”; all this is the magician’s work. That is what the Rishis have been saying since ages.

Bhaktha: Then, there must be a performer of all this *Indrajala*, isn’t it?

Swami: Certainly, there is. That magician is God. He is endowed with countless auspicious attributes. The Maharshis have formed a name on the basis of each attribute and a form on the basis of each name and attained Realisation meditating on those forms, making the Attributeless Attributeful and the Formless Formful? Is it not their experience that is being proclaimed through a thousand tongues? In the Sastras, Vedas and the Upanishads have they not declared how they have realised God in their Dhyana Samadhi, each in his own way, according to his attitude and devotion and worship; how each has been blessed with the Vision of the Lord and the actual consummation of Union with him?

Bhaktha: Yes Swami! I have understood that. But you said that name and form are based on attributes. Kindly explain this to me.

Swami: Certainly. We must now pay attention to such important topics only because the others are beyond your powers of imagination. Listen carefully. Since the Lord pleases all, He is known as Rama. So also He is *Premaswaroopa*, the embodiment of Love. He is *Bhaktavatsala*, full of affection to His devotees. He is *Krupasagara*, Ocean of Mercy. In each such name and form, He has vouchsafed *Sakshathkaara* (Direct perception of God) to Bhakthas and blessed them with *Sayujya* (Merger in the Divine). The Formless God assumes all forms in order to bless Bhakthas.

Bhaktha: I am happy. I am indeed so happy, Swami! Through Your Grace, I am understanding quite clearly. Just one doubt: The Formless Paramathma, you said, has countless names. Are all names and forms equal? Is there any difference?

Swami: What a question! All names and forms are certainly equal. Whatever name and form are worshipped, the Lord is of that Unique Real *swaropa* (Embodiment) only. It is possible to realise Him through that name and form. But the Bhaktha should pay attention to one matter. In whichever form the Lord is worshipped, the favour prayed for the purpose must be one.

Bhaktha: What type of purpose, Swami?

Swami: *Mumukshuthwam*. Desire for Liberation. The Lord alone should be loved, nothing else. Love That. Meditate on That. That should be concretised. Finally, resolve that you be merged in That. That type of acute desire alone one should have.

Bhaktha: True, Swami! I have understood well. As you said, I have heard many stories from the *Bhagavatha* and the *Ramayana* of people who asked the Lord all kinds of favours and brought about their own ruin. Hiranyaksha, Ravana and Bhasmasura and others are remembered for their ways from that day to this. You have said it clearly. It is something which Bhakthas should carefully consider.

Swami: Well! There is no use simply nodding the head for everything, relishing them as “true,” “true.” If it is firmly fixed in your heart that this is true and this is good, thereafter it is necessary to put it into practice. If you say that it is true so long as I speak and forget when you go away, this listening itself is useless. The food that is eaten is to remove hunger, not for being kept on the tongue, away from the stomach. Then hunger will start again. So also, hearing and not acting accordingly, is useless.

Bhaktha: So far, you have told some important things, (1) The External World (2) The Internal World (3) Bhagawan, the Lord. Are these then separate entities, like cause and effect? Or are they connected one with the other?

Swami: Think about it yourself! For this I have already sent the reply in *Prema Vahini*. It must have reached you today itself. Look into that. Look closely at what is said there of the relationship between “he that serves,” “he that is served,” and “the wherewithal of Service.”

Bhaktha: Swami, You said also Ksharam Aksharam; Nithyam Anithyam. Are there any other names too?

Swami: These two are known as *Purusha* (God or the Supreme Being) also. They are said to be *Chethana* (super consciousness) and *Achethana*

(nonconsciousness). They are referred to as *Jiva* (“I” consciousness, individual) and *Jada* (Insentient, inert) also. The *Kshara Akshara Purushas* are named in another context as *Para* (higher) and *Apara* (lower)-*prakritis* (nature, sensory world). If you contemplate with a clear intelligence you will find that only names change. The Thing does not change.

Bhaktha: Then, Swami, just as Kshara Akshara have as synonym Purushas, has Bhagawantha, the Lord, any such synonym?

Swami: Why? Bhagawan is well known by the very appropriate name, *Purushotthama*, since He is the Highest of the Purushas.

Bhaktha: Oh! How sweet! What a sweet name! Did the Purushas originate from the Purushotthama?

Swami: Here comes the big problem. Once before also you asked, did it *originate*? We must use correct words. Otherwise, we get wrong meanings. We should not say, “originating” from Purushotthama. In Him they shine. I told you before that these Purushas are indicated by the words, Para-Apara Prakriti, Jiva-Jada. This word Prakriti gives the sense of *Swabhava* (nature, reality) and *Sakthi* (divine energy), isn’t it?

Bhaktha: It does. I understand Purushotthama is one, His Prakriti is the second.

Swami: No. You are mistaken. Think again. Is there any difference between a thing and its nature? Is it possible to separate and see the nature apart from the thing? Still, you said “two.”

Bhaktha: 'Tis a mistake, Swami. It is wrong. No one can separate them. The two are one.

Swami: In current speech we say: sugar is sweet, the sun gives light, it is hot, etc. Sweetness is in sugar, light is in the Sun. They are not separate; they are one. Sweetness cannot be known unless sugar is placed on the tongue. Without seeing the sun, light and heat cannot be known. Thus, Bhagawan has two characteristics; when we speak of them as two, they are referred to as *Purusha* and *Prakriti*; but they are really one. Prakriti in the Bhagawan (this is what is known by the name *Mahamaya*) is unmanifested and inseparable, like sweetness in sugar. *Avinabhaavasambandham* means just this relationship. By mere Willing, this Maya envelopes Bhagawan and manifests in the form of Cosmos or *Brahmanda*. This is what is called *Samashti-Viswaroopa*, or Absolute-Full-World-Form. It is this Absolute that expresses itself as Jagath, through the power of *Avidya* (ignorance) according to the Divine Will.

Bhaktha: What is this, Swami? It was all so clear so far, but this word Avidya newly used has upset my train of thought! I didn't understand anything. Please explain.

Swami: Don't be in a hurry! Have you heard the word Vidya? Do you know its meaning?

Bhaktha: Certainly. Vidya means study!

Swami: *Vidya* means knowledge, *Jnana*. When “A” is added, it becomes Ajnana, Ignorance. Though one, Ignorance takes multifarious forms.

Bhaktha: Yes, Swami. How did this Avidya come about? Where did it come from?

Swami: You know, don't you, of light and darkness. Do they both exist at the same time?

Bhaktha: There can be no darkness when there is light nor light when there is darkness.

Swami: When there is light, where does darkness exist? When there is darkness, where does light exist? Think well.

Bhaktha: This subject is very difficult, Swami! Still, I shall reply as best as I can. Pardon me if I am wrong. Darkness must be in light; light must be in darkness; how else can it be?

Swami: I will ask another small question. Answer me. This light and this darkness; are they independent, or are they dependent on anything else?

Bhaktha: They are dependent on the Sun. When the Sun rises, it is light. When the Sun sets, it is darkness.

Swami: Well, my boy, Vidya and Avidya are dependent on Bhagawan. Vidya has another name, “*Chith.*” I shall describe to you all that, if you come next month. This is enough for today. Go and come. If all is eaten at the same time, it won’t be digested. It would lead to bad health. What we have heard, what we have eaten, requires time to get digested and assimilated. That is why I have given a month’s interval. If within that time all this is fully digested and practised, I shall tell you the rest gladly. Otherwise, you can imagine what that day would be like.

Bhaktha: Namaskaram. I am indeed blessed. To digest what is heard, and what is eaten—the power to do this should be vouchsafed by You alone. When everything is the Lord’s, how can this alone be ours? But I shall use the power and knowledge You have endowed me with, as much as possible, without any waste. Beyond that, it is all my Destiny and Your Grace. I shall take leave with your permission.

Swami: Placing your burden on Destiny and keeping quiet means diminution of effort. With effort and prayer, Destiny can be attained. Without effort and prayer, Destiny and Grace are not gained. Start the effort! Well, my boy, go and come gladly again.

IV

SWAMI: Oh, You have come! I was watching for long whether you have come or not. I knew you are a person who comes punctually. Glad to see you.

Bhaktha: Whatever else I may disregard, will I disregard Your command, Swami? In fact, I am eagerly looking forward to the sixteenth of every month to meet you. What greater happiness can I get? What better food can I take?

Swami: Very good! Such *Sraddha* (steady faith) and *Bhakthi* (devotion) are great helps in Man's true Path. Better than losing sleep and rejecting food in the fruitless pursuit of evanescent worldly pursuits, how much more joyful it is to attain the true, the meaningful and the holy goal! Leave that aside now. What do you want now? Speak, let me see.

Bhaktha: Swami, last month You said something about "Chith" (awareness) and You were pleased to say that You will explain more about it this month. Since then, I have been counting the passing days in order that I may know about it from You. The day has come at last. Please tell me about it.

Swami: Have you understood what has been told so far? Understanding does not mean mere mugging up! By practice and experience, have you realised in thought, word and deed, and with full equanimity, the true nature of the World, that the World is Unreal?

Bhaktha: It is only by understanding that, isn't it, Swami, that one can ever be immersed in thoughts of Sai, the Lord, giving up all other activities and duties? Had I not understood that much, I would have wasted this precious time.

Swami: Good, my dear boy! How sad will the ryot be if the seeds he has planted do not sprout and yield harvest! So too, if the seeds of True wisdom that I sow do not come up as good saplings and give good harvest, I too am affected. On the other hand, if they grow well and fructify into a harvest of Ananda, how happy I would be. That is My food. This is the *Seva* (service) you should do to me. There is nothing higher than this. Without flinging away the good words and true, spoken for your sake, if you practise them and derive joy therefrom, the essence of that joy is my

food. If you thus act according to My words and put them into practice, I will gladly tell you more, whatever may be the number of the things you ask. When what is said is allowed to deteriorate without being put into use, if people come and ask me to speak and speak again, what is to be said? If all start practising as you are doing, the world will not have any troubles. Untruth will not manifest itself.

Bhaktha: Swami! To practise the Divine Words too the Lord's Grace is the basic need just as for everything else. Without that, nothing can happen. It is ever-present, as You said. Just as the Sun is hidden by fog, Grace can be obstructed by the darkness of "I" and "mine." But these can be overcome by practice and discipline. That is why if we understand well the meaning of what we hear and follow, it is so easy. This is my experience; I do not know of others.

Swami: True. True. What you say is correct. You have understood it well. Without grasping the meaning, if various interpretations are given, that distorts Reality. And if a wrong sense is imputed, it falsifies Reality. But if it is clearly understood, practice becomes easy. Now consider this. Are all born at the same time? Do all die at the same time? Similarly, the highest Wisdom will dawn, in this person or that, at different times. If you go on singing, song after song, you learn music. So also, if I speak and continue speaking, all will

understand the Reality. It is not my mission to keep silent because people are not understanding. To such, it must be communicated once, twice and more times if necessary.

Bhaktha: Swami, we are like lumps of iron; the Lord is like the magnet. Both are related to each other. But if that lump of iron has to be changed into an article of use in God's hands, it has to be heated in the fire of anxiety and beaten by the hammer of pain, so that it may obey and respond. So in order to shape lumps of iron like us into instruments, You have to take much trouble. You have said that this is Your Mission. Now please tell me about the "Chith" which you mentioned last month.

Swami: Yes. "Chith" has also another name, *Suddha Sathwa*; i.e., Pure Consciousness. It is as opposed to the Impure Consciousness as Vidya is to Avidya. Impure consciousness is inherent in the Pure, as much as Darkness is inherent in Light. Since many words are spoken, don't get confused my dear boy! Vidya-Avidya, Jnana-Ajnana, *Suddha Sathwa-Malina Sathwa* (impure consciousness), all indicate the same idea, not different ones. I shall ask you another question. Have you heard the word, the opposite of "Prakriti"?

Bhaktha: I have heard the word, Swami. When I studied grammar, I learnt that the opposite of Prakriti is "*Vikriti*."

Swami: What does Vikriti mean?

Bhaktha: Vikriti means *Vikaaram*, changed, transformed, derived. *Agni* is the original; *Aggi* is the derived word. So, too, *Jama* is derived from *Yama*, *Janna* from *Yajna*, and so on.

Swami: So also, the Lord's Prakriti is known as Vidya, and its derived or lower form or Vikriti is known as Avidya. For Vidya or Suddha Sathwa, Avidya or Malina Sathwa is the lower form.

Bhaktha: How is that, Swami? Vidya is effulgent in the Lord and Avidya is apparent only because of Vidya. That is to say, the Universal Cosmic Principle is in the Lord, and this Universal Principle itself appears as individual different from individual (by the external characteristics of name and form, the appearance of individuals is caused). This *Avidyasakthi* or the power of Ignorance also manifests as an inseparable entity. For, the Lord is the only Existence. Therefore, that One Existence is the Basis or Foundation for the Universal and the Particular, the Totality as well as the apparent Parts. This is Your meaning, isn't it, Swami?

Swami: That is why the Lord is referred to as *Sathya* (Truth) and Brahman. This Sathyam is *Akhanda* or Indivisible. It is *Adwaita*, Non-dual. It is *Anantha*, without End. In the Upanishads, this Sathya (associated with the unmanifested Maya Sakthi) is called the *Purna*,

“*Adah*” and the Sathya associated with the manifested Maya Sakthi is called the *Purna*, “*Idam*”. This is the secret of the Upanishadic Manthra, *Purnamadah Purnamidam*....

Bhaktha: Oh, what fine teaching! Just like giving unto the hand a fruit peeled and ready to eat! This manifested total cosmos or Purna arose out of the Purna of Unmanifested Indivisible Reality, this is what you spoke of, is it not?

Swami: It is on account of this that we say *Vasudevas-sarvamidam*, *Sarvamkhalvidam Brahma*, etc. The words Vasudeva, Brahma are different but there is no difference in meaning at all. Did you understand?

Bhaktha: It is all like nectar, Swami. But so far you have not told me, who I am?

Swami: This is enough now. Next month I shall solve your doubts, with illustrative examples. Grasp well what has been told. Practise, don't forget and lay aside. Meditate on it. Well, you can take leave now.

V

SWAMI: Well, my boy, I am glad you have come. Are you reflecting on the answers I gave last time and practising what has been told with firm conviction? Are you deriving Ananda therefrom?

Bhaktha: Swami, will any Bhaktha like me allow your words, nectar-like words, go to waste? No one aspiring to attain real Ananda will throw away the ambrosial words that you confer in Your Grace. I do not know about others but I am reflecting upon your answers night and day and practising them with courage and conviction. I am awake all the time waiting for the next chance to meet you.

Swami: It is this alertness that devotees should cultivate. To attach oneself to the flimsy, paltry foolishness of the world and to run after them and worry when they slip out of the hands or jump about in glee when you

get them, all this is Avidya, Maya. But your counting of days, waiting for the chance, keeping awake for the opportunity of hearing the words of the Lord and imbibing their essence, that is *Vidyamaya* (Internal illusions). If Bhakthas fall into this Maya, they will attain fulfilment, without fail, some day or other. So, since this Vidyamaya has illumined you, you are fortunate. Develop this, that is to say, this dwelling on the thoughts of God. Don't give it up or reduce it for any reason, to any extent. You will become holy without fail. You will reach fulfilment and attain the goal.

Bhaktha: Swami! Last month, You said You will explain to me who "I" am. If I understand that also, I can be rid of the little delusion that I have and, without the slightest trace of doubt, meditate on You and be blissful. What greater fortune can I have?

Swami: Well, my boy! To speak about the real nature of "I" is very easy; but until it is experienced, full contentment is impossible. For me to tell you to my satisfaction and for you to grasp its full meaning, it needs some time. This month, even the allotted hours of the day are not enough for me! Though it is like this, I am using all the time for the Ananda of Bhakthas only; I have nothing of my own. Being useful for my Bhakthas, that is my selfish purpose. Throughout last month, I went to Nellore, Gudur, Venkatagiri and the villages around. Afterwards I went to Bangalore and returned. What little time was available, I used for

Prema Vahini! This month, I visited Hyderabad, Rajahmundry, Samalkot, Chebrolu, Nuzvid, etc. So there is no spare time. Next month, I shall tell you about who “you” are to your full satisfaction. For the present, try to grasp the meaning of this song, in folk dance style; you will understand who this “you” is, to a large extent. It is possible you will get *Vairagya* (detachment, renunciation) to a large extent through this. Later, you will understand the meaning of what I have to say more clearly and with greater ease. Do not merely read this song but think well on the meaning of each word. The song will certainly turn your brain!

Bhaktha : All right. Give me at least that. I shall satisfy my desire; I shall drink the nectar and digest it.

Swami : Listen, carefully.

- 1 Thai! Thai! Thai! Thai! Thai! Dummy
See the Tamasha play of this puppet doll.
O Jiva, listen to the long long tale
Of its past, its future, behind and front!
- 2 It rolled at first in mushy mire
Of mother’s womb, its prison dark.
It came with a whimper, but all around
They smiled in joy and feasts galore.

- 3 “O Tragedy! I am born again,”
It knew and wept, both loud and long.
But all the while, they caressed it
And laughed to raise a laugh!
- 4 In its own dirt it wallowed day,
Without a sense of shame;
It rose and fell, at every step,
Acting daily a childish play.
- 5 It runs and skips with gangs of chums
And learns a hundred tricks and trades;
It grows so tall and thick and broad;
From year to year, very fast and fair.
- 6 It moves in pairs, and bills and coos
In rosy rainbow style;
It sings in tunes unheard before,
And quaffs the cup, unique and strange.
- 7 ‘Tis Brahma who makes these dolls in pairs
And dolls and dolls in millions,
But this our puppet does not know
When it plays with dollies:
Thim! Thim! Thim!
- 8 This Maya Doll like the Holly Bull
Has the Thamas rope in nostril hole;
Lust and anger are the scorpion whips
Which whack the back of the Slave.

- 9 It gloats with glee, when others stop
Before it shuddering low;
It doles them pain; but cannot bear
A microscopic share!
- 10 It swears and shouts and waves its arms
And frets and fumes with blood-red eyes;
It is indeed a wondrous sight—
Possessed by Devil Ire!
- 11 It scans and spells, it scribbles and swots,
It does not know the reason why,
It runs in panic trying to glean
Fodder for belly, willy, or nilly.
- 12 Ah, did you see this queer little dummy,
With so many books in its tummy,
Turning and twisting in jealousy green
When a learned doll encounters it?
- 13 And, you should hear its secret cluck
When a shameful sensual urge,
A wicked lurking greed
Is satisfied in sin!
- 14 It proudly pats; what?, its own back!
For beauty, brawn, vitality,
While all the time and step by step
It moves towards senility.

- 15 It totters and blinks through wrinkles and folds;
and when the children cry,
“Old Ape” “Old Ape”
It gapes and grins a toothless grin—
Its bones do clatter so!
- 16 Unto the last, it is lost in fear,
Wear and tear and many a tearsome fray!
Of what avail, O Dummy Doll,
your gasp and groan,
You needs must meet the Doom.
- 17 Aha! The Bird! It shakes its wings!
It flies out, brrrr, from out the cage of skin.
Empty, it tightens; vacant, it straightens;
O, drag it out of sight; it bloats and stinks.
- 18 The elements join their parents five;
The doll’s desires are dust and ash;
Why weep, you fools, when one of you
Falls on the crowded stage?
- 19 Uncles, cousins, aunts and friends
March in gloom until door of room!
The Maya Doll, alas, forgot its kin,
The Divine Name, Redeemer True!
- 20 O Jiva, do not lean upon this slender reed;
Just a sneeze! This frail skin boat
Endowed with thrice three leaks
Will plunge you, middle stream!

- 21 This puppet weeps, it sleeps and wakes,
When the string is pulled by unseen Hand
The Lord it is, who stands behind,
But the Dummy swears, It is I, I, I.
- 22 Dharma, Karma are the hardy strings
He tightens or He loosens.
Unaware, the puppet swaggers
Criss-cross, on the planks.
- 23 It takes the world as stable—
This silly strutting Dummy!
A twinkle! He winds up the show!
Exit the pomp and pride!
- 24 O Jiva, you have waded
Through ant and snake and bird;
Seek and find without delay,
The road to lasting Bliss!
- 25 Bless your luck! You now can see
Sai Krishna, He has come!
Be kin with him and you will know
Your what and why and how.
- 26 A million words so clever and nice,
Can they appease your hunger's maw?
Light the Lamp of the soul instead,
And, freed from bondage, run out and play.
- 27 This song that tells of Dummy Doll
Makes Jiva sad and wise! I know;
But, Jiva! see the Leela grand of

Sathya Sai Nath
And..... Know Thyself!

Bhaktha: Ah! I have understood! I have clearly understood that “I” am not the Body, the *Buddhi* (intellect), the *Manas*, or the Chittam. When I am not any of these “I” must be only the Atma, and if “I” am the Atma, then “I” am the Paramatma and so everything is Paramatma! All this I have understood! Believing out of ignorance that “I” am this body and this intellect, this *Deha* (body) and this *Buddhi*, we are experiencing all these miseries. True, true. We are passing through all that you said now, one after the other, as beads in a string. Oh! What a truth! What a truth! Listening to this one song is enough; the brain, as you said, turns into Vairagya...Swami! I felt very disappointed when You said first that You had no time to spare. But that was due to my ignorance. Though I knew that our Swami will never disappoint anyone or cause trouble, I felt as if You have conferred even more Ananda now, than what I thought I would get. How is Your kindness to be described! They sing of you, “For a single drop of tear, Sai will melt”; and they say you can never bear to see us suffer; this is proof of the truth of these. Shall I take leave?

Swami: Very good. Go and come again. I too have no time to spare. I have to see and send those who are going to their places.

VI

BHAKTHA: Namasthe, Swami.

Swami: *Subhamasthu.*

Bhaktha: With Your Grace, everything is *Subham* (auspicious); without it, everything is *Asubham* (inauspicious).

Swami: Good, but have you realised how both these are based on Grace? In one, both subsist; both are conferred by the selfsame Grace. Well, let that topic stand by. Last time you got a folk poem to digest and it must have affected your thoughts deeply. Now, in what stage of equanimity is your brain?

Bhaktha: Ah. Everything appears as a puppet show now, Swami. But only off and on. The mind forgets and gets caught by the fascination of the objects. What mystery is this, Swami?

Swami: Well, the mind is associated with all kinds of activities or *vrittis*. It always follows the trail of the *Vasanas*, or trails of impulses and instincts. This is its very nature.

Bhaktha: That is as much as to say we cannot set it right. Then what is the hope? Ultimately, Swami, have we to get immersed in Vasanas and become degraded?

Swami: There is hope, my boy! No need to get immersed and lost. Though it is its nature, it can be changed. Charcoal has as its nature blackening all that it gets mixed with. But you should not take that as final. When fire enters it, the charcoal becomes red. So too, though the mind is always wandering in the illusion of darkness, when through the Lord's Grace the fire of Jnana enters it, its nature changes and the *Sathwic* (serene, pure) Nature pertaining to the Divine comes into it.

Bhaktha: Swami, they speak of something called *Antahkarana*; what is it?

Swami: The mind is referred to like that. Karana means Indriya. Antahkarana means internal Indriya.

Bhaktha: So, are there two types, internal Indriyas and external Indriyas?

Swami: Yes, of course. The external Indriyas are called *Karmendriyas*; the internal Indriyas are named *Jnanendriyas*.

Bhaktha: Swami, please tell me which are the Karmendriyas and which the Jnanendriyas.

Swami: Well, all acts done bodily are by Karmendriyas; they are five in number. Those which impart Jnana from inside are named Jnanendriyas. These are: hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. Both these are together called *Dasendriyas* (the ten organs).

Bhaktha: So, what is the work that both these do together? What is the connection between their function and the Manas or mind?

Swami: Well, really, whatever work they do, they can't achieve anything without the meditation of Manas. The Karmendriyas perform acts in the world and receive knowledge and the Jnanendriyas discriminate the good and the bad and offer them to the Atma, through the Manas. If there is no Mind at all, how can these transmit? When we have to reach the other shore of a flooded river, we rely on the medium of a boat or raft. When the Karmendriyas and the Jnanendriyas which are connected with Prakriti desire to attain the Atma, they have to accept the help of the boat, Manas. Otherwise, they cannot attain.

Bhaktha: If so, where do these other things you spoke about, Buddhi, *Chittam* (levels of consciousness) and *Ahamkaaram* (egoism) reside?

Swami: They too are in this only. The Jnanendriyas and Karmendriyas are both together called Dasendriyas. Of these, four are distinguished and referred to as *Antahchathushtaya*, or the Internal Four Indriyas. Those four are Manas, Buddhi, Chittam and Ahamkaaram.

Bhaktha: Very nice. That is to say, all are in the same thing. Life is indeed funny. But Swami, what is the function of these four?

Swami: Manas grasps the object; Buddhi examines arguments for and against; Chittam understands the object by means of these; Ahamkaaram changes the decision for or against and by attachment, slackens the hold of Jnana. These are the things they do.

Bhaktha: Excuse me, Swami, I am asking only to know; where do these exist in the body?

Swami: I am glad; don't worry. Manas is in the cupola, Buddhi in the tongue, Chittam in the navel and Ahamkaaram in the heart.

Bhaktha: Excellent. So, Buddhi and Ahamkaaram are in the most important places! These are the chief causes of all the world's miseries. Then, if we examine it with reference to Your Words, it looks as if there will be no misery when these two places are made pure!

Swami: You have indeed listened to me attentively. Yes, that is right. First, if words are used in a clean and

pure manner, that is proof of Buddhi treading the right path. When Ahamkaaram is suppressed and conquered, that is proof of the heart being pure. Therefore, be very careful as regards these two. Then, even your Manas and Chittam will come to have good Vrittis. Then only will you be free from pain and misery. They can never happen to you then.

Bhaktha: So, among all these, who is the “I”? Who is the experiencer of all this?

Swami: We have arrived at the right point. “You” are none among all these! All these exist only so long as the feeling, “This body is mine” exists. They are all associated with some activities or vrittis. The Atma which observes all these vrittis, that is “You.” The joy and sorrow, the loss and misery, the good and bad of these activities are all related to the body only; and so they are not yours. They will not be yours. You are the Atma. Until this Truth is realised, you sleep the sleep of “I” and “Mine.” In that sleep, dreams appear of loss, misery, sorrow and joy. The dreams persist only until you awake and after you wake up, the fear you had while dreaming, the sorrow you experienced, all disappear and are no longer true. Similarly, when delusion is thrown off and you “awaken” in Jnana, you will understand that all this is not “you”; that you are the Atma.

Bhaktha: Then, Swami, for whose sake do these, the Manas, Buddhi, Chittam, and Ahamkaaram, do all this work?

Swami: For no one’s sake! They are engaged in their own work! The Atma observes everything and its shadow the Jiva, which is deluded by the association of the body-consciousness, plays this drama, through all these Acts.

VII

BHAKTHA: Greetings, Swami.

Swami: Oh, you have come, is it? You didn't come for *Dasara* (Nine Day Festival celebrating the victory of the Goddess Durga over the demons).

Bhaktha: The number of Bhakthas then would be large I thought and so I was afraid I will not be able to speak to you to my heart's content. Hence, I came now, a few days prior to Your Birthday, so that with Your Blessings I could realise the Ideal which You teach and have both Bhakthi and Jnana born in my heart, on the auspicious day of the celebration of Your Advent.

Swami: Good! Very good intention, indeed! But do you mean to say that Bhakthi and Jnana will not be born in you on days other than my birthday? Is that your idea?

Bhaktha: No, no! That is not so! You come to this world on an auspicious day at a holy moment with an auspicious form, isn't it? My idea is that at least on such a Day I could establish in my heart Your Holy words and make it pure. The day is Holy and the moment auspicious.

Swami: Fine! What is the *Sandeha*, the doubt, you have today?

Bhaktha: I have come today determined to hear and put into practice Your Holy Words, Swami. As the saying goes, "Even if you go to Kasi, you have *Saneeswara* by your side!" So I did not bring the demon of doubt with me today when I came. Nor did that demon accompany me! It is all due to Your Grace.

Swami: Very good! Understand that when these doubts do not come of themselves, nor are entertained by you, then indeed the mind is pure. When these two happen, it can be called one-pointedness. When you have none, why should I remind you of doubts? Then tell me, what shall I speak to you about?

Bhaktha: Swami, tell me how we should, generally, conduct ourselves. What are the qualities we should possess? Which type of subjects should we try to understand? To receive the Divine Grace and attain Your Holy Presence, what acts should we perform? Please tell me the more important of these, the essential things, the chosen jewels.

Swami: Oh! It seems, Parvathi asked Iswara once, “It is difficult to retain in memory the *Sahasranama*, the Thousand Names of God. It takes a long time to learn them and repeat them; so, please tell me One Single Name which is the essence of all the thousand.” Similarly, you too perhaps find it difficult to grasp all that I write and explain and so you are also asking me to tell you about the MOST important, is it? But you see, Names have their essence, the subjects you ask about are different. Though their objective and final result are one, the practices, the paths of activity, cannot be one. They cannot all be summarised in one word! Still, I am giving you now some selected jewels, maxims of conduct, that are very important. Collect and treasure them well. Experience them well, put them into practice and derive joy therefrom. Wear these jewels and beautify yourself.

Bhaktha: Exactly what I wanted! How lucky I am!

Swami: Then listen carefully, I shall tell you.

1. Prema, Love, should be considered as the very breath of Life.
2. The Love that is manifest in all things equally, believe that the same Prema is Paramathma.
3. The one Paramathma is in everyone, in the form of Prema.

4. More than all other forms of Prema, man’s first effort should be to fix his Love on the Lord.
5. Such Love directed towards God is Bhakthi; that is the fundamental test, the acquisition of Bhakthi.
6. Those who seek the Bliss of the Atma should not run after the joys of sense objects.
7. Sathya, Truth, must be treated as life-giving as breathing itself.
8. Just as a body that has no breath is useless and begins to rot and stink within a few minutes, similarly, life without Truth is useless and becomes the stinking abode of strife and grief.
9. Believe that there is nothing greater than Truth, nothing more precious, nothing sweeter and nothing more lasting.
10. Truth is the all-protecting God. There is no mightier Guardian than Truth.
11. The Lord who is *Sathyaswaroopa* (Expression of Truth) grants His *Darsan* (vision) to those of truthful speech and loving heart.
12. Have undiminished kindness towards all beings and also the spirit of self-sacrifice.
13. You must also possess control of the senses, an unruffled character and non-attachment.

14. Be always on the alert against the four sins which the tongue is prone to commit: (1) Speaking falsehood (2) Speaking ill of others (3) Backbiting and (4) Talking too much. It is best to attempt to control these tendencies.
15. Try to prevent the five sins that the body commits: Killing, Adultery, Theft, Drinking intoxicants and the Eating of flesh. It is a great help for the highest life if these also are kept as far away as possible.
16. One must be always vigilant, without a moment's carelessness, against the eight sins that the mind perpetrates: *Kamam* or craving; *Krodham* or anger; *Lobham* or greed; *Moham* or attachment; Impatience; Hatred, Egoism, Pride. Man's primary duty is to keep all these things at a safe distance from himself.
17. Man's mind speeds fast, pursuing wrong actions. Without letting it hurry like that, remember the name of the Lord at that time or attempt to do some good deed or other. Those who do thus will certainly become fit for the Lord's Grace.
18. First give up the evil tendency to feel impatient at the prosperity of others and the desire to harm them. Be happy that others are happy. Sympathise with those who are in adversity and wish for their prosperity. That is the means of cultivating the love for God.

19. Patience is all the strength that man needs.
20. Those anxious to live in joy must always be doing good.
21. It is easy to conquer anger through love, attachment through reasoning, falsehood through truth, bad through good and greed through charity.
22. No reply should be given to the words of the wicked. Be at a great distance from them; that is for your good. Break off all relations with such people.
23. Seek the company of good men, even at the sacrifice of your honour and life. But be praying to God to bless you with the discrimination needed to distinguish between the good men and the bad. You must also endeavour, with the intellect given to you.
24. Those who conquer states and earn fame in the world are hailed as heroes, no doubt; but those who have conquered the senses are heroes who must be acclaimed as the conquerors of the Universal.
25. Whatever acts a good or bad man may do, the fruits thereof follow him and will never stop pursuing him.
26. Greed yields only sorrow; contentment is best. There is no happiness greater than contentment.

27. The mischief-mongering tendency should be plucked out by the roots and thrown off. If allowed to exist, it will undermine life itself.
28. Bear with fortitude both loss and grief; try and search for plans to achieve joy and gain.
29. When you are invaded by anger, practise silence or remember the name of the Lord. Do not remind yourself of things which will inflame the anger more. That will do incalculable harm.
30. From this moment avoid all bad habits. Do not delay or postpone. They do not contribute the slightest joy.
31. Try as far as possible within your means to satisfy the needs of the poor, who are really *Daridra Narayana* (The Lord in the form of the poor). Share with them whatever food you have and make them happy at least that moment.
32. Whatever you feel should not be done to you by others, avoid doing such to others.
33. For faults and sins committed in ignorance, repent sincerely. Try not to repeat the faults and sins again. Pray to God to bless you with the strength and the courage needed to stick to the right path.
34. Do not allow anything to come near you, which will destroy your eagerness and enthusiasm for

- God. Want of eagerness will cause the decay of the strength of man.
35. Yield not to cowardice; do not give up Ananda.
 36. Do not get swelled up when people praise you. Do not feel dejected when people blame you.
 37. If among your friends anyone hates another and starts a quarrel, do not attempt to inflame them more and make them hate each other more. Try, on the other hand, with love and sympathy to restore their former friendship.
 38. Instead of searching for others' faults, search for your own faults yourself; uproot them, throw them off. It is enough if you search and discover one fault of yours. That is better than discovering tens of hundreds of faults in others.
 39. Even if you cannot or will not do any *Punya* or good deed, do not conceive or carry out any *Papa*, or bad deed.
 40. Whatever people may say about the faults that you know are not in you, do not feel for it; as for the faults that are in you, try to correct them yourself, even before others point them out to you. Do not harbour anger or bitterness against persons who point out your faults. Do not retort, pointing out the faults of those persons

- themselves, but show your gratitude to them. Trying to discover their faults is a greater mistake on your part. It is good for you to know your faults. It is no good your knowing others' faults.
41. Whenever you get a little leisure, do not spend it in talking about all and sundry, but utilise it in meditating on God or in doing service to others.
 42. The Lord is understood only by the Bhaktha. The Bhaktha is understood only by the Lord. Others cannot understand them. So, do not discuss matters relating to the Lord with those who have no Bhakthi. On account of such discussion, your devotion will diminish.
 43. If anyone speaks to you on any subject, having understood it wrongly, do not think of other wrong notions which will support that stand but grasp only the good and the sweet, in what he says. True meaning is to be appreciated as desirable, not wrong meaning or many meanings, which give no meaning at all and cause only the hampering of Ananda.
 44. If you desire to cultivate one-pointedness, do not, when in a crowd or bazaar, scatter your vision to the four corners and on everything, but see only the road in front of you, just enough to avoid accidents to yourself. One-pointedness will become firmer if one moves about without taking

- one's attention off the road, avoiding dangers, and not casting eyes on others' forms.
45. Give up all doubts regarding the Guru and God. If your worldly desires do not get fulfilled, do not blame it on your devotion. There is no relationship between such desires and devotion to God. These worldly desires have to be given up some day or other; Bhakthi feelings have to be acquired some day or other. Be firmly convinced of this.
 46. If your Dhyanam or Japam do not progress properly or if the desires you have entertained do not come to fruition, do not get dispirited with God. It will dispirit you even more and you will lose the peace, however small or big, that you might have earned. During Dhyanam and Japam you should not be dispirited, desperate or discouraged. When such feelings come, take it that it is the fault of your Sadhana and endeavour to do them correctly.
- It is only when in your daily conduct and in all actions you automatically behave and act in this manner and along these lines that you can attain the Divine principle, very easily. Therefore, hold on to these maxims firmly. Chew and digest these spoken-sweets distributed on the Birthday Festival of your Swami and be happy! Have you understood?

Bhaktha: Your words are like *Amritha* (Divine nectar), Swami. Yes, Amritha! In all these ordinary dealings of life, man does not know the road; he follows the wrong track; there are no books also to tell him the means of a happy journey; for all such strugglers like me, what you have said is *Prana*, the very breath! We are indeed blessed! Bless me, that these words get imprinted on my heart and are realised in practice, every day. There is no good in simply listening or reading them. It is only when Your Grace accompanies them that we get strength. I shall take leave, Swami!

Swami: All right! Go and come for the Birthday Festival. There are just seven days more, isn't it? Today is 16th; the Birthday is on 23rd; so there are seven days left. Till that time let this sweetness fill and overflow your heart!

VIII

SWAMI: Oh! How is this? You have come so early this time?

Bhaktha: You made me come, and so I have come! Is there anything I can call mine?

Swami: That is true; but will even a scrap of paper move without some cause? So too, for you to come so early, there must be some reason.

Bhaktha: Nothing else, Swami! Hearing that You are proceeding to Trivandrum on the 16th itself, at the invitation of Sri Ramakrishna Rao, the Governor of Kerala, I felt that I may not get much chance to speak to you if I come on that day only. So, I came now, excuse me!

Swami: That is well done! But why do you ask that I should pardon you? Really speaking, one should not ask for

pardon, even when one commits wrong! Then, what is the fun of asking for it, when you have done the right thing?

Bhaktha: Why, Swami? Why should we not ask for pardon, when we commit wrong?

Swami: No, you must not ask, either for pardon when wrong is done, or for reward, when right is done! Doing right is but man's duty. It is its own reward. What other reward can there be? The joy of having done one's duty is your reward! Doing wrong is against the duty of man. So, one should pray repentingly, for the intelligence and discrimination necessary for not repeating the wrong already committed. Beyond this, it depends on His Grace, whether He punishes and protects or pardons and corrects.

Bhaktha: That is very fine. Henceforward, I shall do so, Swami.

Swami: Let that be. Are you treasuring the gems given on the Birthday and making good use of them?

Bhaktha: As far as possible! With my maximum effort, using the quality of Buddhi granted by You, I am putting them into action.

Swami: What do you mean by "as far as possible"? For Bhakthas like you, what other task is there greater than this? Why is it not possible? You only need Faith and

the Will. Then it should not be difficult at all to carry out the Duty.

Bhaktha: Swami, You have Yourself said that even when there is Faith and even when one has the Will, putting things into practice may be difficult for want of favourable circumstances and also because the meaning of things may not be grasped clearly.

Swami: Oh! That means that both these, want of favourable circumstances and want of understanding, are bothering you! Well if you have not understood, ask; and if you have no favourable atmosphere, tell me what is the obstacle?

Bhaktha: Doubt is the biggest obstacle. What can be bigger than that? Even after hearing so much, the demon catches hold of me off and on. I do not know why.

Swami: The first reason for that: your not having faith in yourself, born out of the conviction that you are really *Atmaswaroopa* (God Himself). The second reason: taking the Divinity in humanity as humanity only and getting lost in the pursuit of sense enjoyment. These demons pounce on you for just these two reasons only. Instead, if you establish yourself in God, understanding the Divinity in man as Divinity itself, this demon of doubt will not attack you. You simply must give up this *Adhyasa* which makes you mix things up.

Bhaktha: There! You use now and then ununderstandable words! That makes me even more confused, Swami!

Swami: I will never tell you ununderstandable words. You have no power to understand; so you feel worried. I use them, really, in order to make you understand their meaning! Now, in what I told you, which is the difficult word?

Bhaktha: You used the word, *Adhyasa*. What does it mean, Swami?

Swami: What? You do not know the meaning of that! “Seeing one form and taking it to be another, superimposing one thing upon another.”

Bhaktha: How is that? On which object do we superimpose another? Tell me.

Swami: Well, seeing a rope and imagining it to be a snake; seeing waves of hot air in the sun and imagining them to be horses; seeing a mirror shining in the sun and taking it to be a lamp.

Bhaktha: But what is it that I see and what do I take it to be?

Swami: You see Paramathma in this form of Prakriti, and take it to be mere Prapancha, or the world, and you are afraid. It is on account of this delusion that you have become the victim of all these varieties of

weakness, and you are declining through doubt and illusion. If you see it right, the delusion will vanish. The fear will disappear; the faith that it is Paramathma will be firmly and boldly established in you. To get that firmness, the lamp of *Viveka* (discrimination) is necessary. How much a man suffers, so long as he sees the rope as a snake! How much is the fear! The delusion! Can it be realised how all that vanished as soon as it was seen in the light? Similarly, these doubts and delusions too will vanish unawares, as soon as you know that Prakriti is Paramathma. Imposing a delusion on a delusion, imagining one object to be another, this is called *Adhyasa*, my boy!

Bhaktha: But, Swami, how can Prakriti be said to be Paramathma? When you ask me to discern this world, which appears as *Prapancha* to the eye, as Paramathma, doubt is sure to arise.

Swami: That is true. Still, if the reality is reasoned out, even what you now see will appear as Paramathma. Cloth cannot be formed without yarn, isn't it? Yarn is essential for cloth. In fact, it is all yarn. In spite of this, yarn is not spoken of as cloth, nor is cloth called yarn. This is exactly the relationship, between Prakriti and Paramathma. Paramathma is the yarn of which the cloth, Prakriti, is formed. Has the yarn and the cloth become separate? No. The yarn is used in one way, the cloth in another way. But for this reason only it would be wrong to consider yarn and cloth as different.

Bhaktha: Yes, Swami. Since Prakriti is formed of Paramathma, it is clear that they are not separate. Now, if both these are the same, which among these is Jiva?

Swami: That is exactly the doubt that is tormenting you, my boy. The Jiva is the "I" consciousness! The Jiva is associated with the limitations of body and the senses. But He is the Atma, *Jivatma*, (Individualised Soul) *Prathyagatma* (Inner presiding Atma), *Chidatma*, Doer, Enjoyer, everything.

Bhaktha: Again another word Jada is used to mean inert matter, etc. What is it, this Jada? How does it operate? Tell me.

Swami: From Buddhi to Body, all transformations of Prakriti are Jada. This is the unreal, the unconscious, the Asath, the Achethana. You must take everything that is not Sath and Chith as Jada. In essence the world is really Jada and nothing else. But Jada is inseparable from *Chaithanya*, or Chith and Sath, just as air is inseparable from the atmosphere. Why, it has been said in the Gita in the past, that all movable and immovable creation is due to the union of Prakriti and Purusha, don't you know?

Bhaktha: Then what is the relationship between Buddhi and Manas on the one hand and Atma on the other?

Swami: Well really, there is no special relationship between them and the Atma; Atma is pure and without blemish.

Buddhi too is pure and without blemish. And just as the Sun is reflected in a mirror, the splendour of the Atma is reflected in the Buddhi. Then the shining Chaithanya of the Buddhi is reflected in the Manas; the shining of the Manas falls upon the senses; the light from the senses falls upon the Body. Now, what is the connection between all these? The relationship of all *is* the splendour of the Atma, is it not? The activity of every other thing is caused by the fact that there is a Buddhi which can reflect that splendour, is it not? So, note how the Buddhi is related: this side with the Atma; and that side, with the Manas and the Indriyas, senses!

Bhaktha: Then, what is the relation between the Jiva which says “I” and the senses and the body?

Swami: There is no relation at all! The “I” is separate from the body, the mind, etc. The “I” simply superimposes on the Jiva, that is, Itself, the body-consciousness and the internal behaviours of the mind, etc. “I am fair” says the Jiva, superimposing upon itself something with which it has no connection. “I am dumb,” it says, making the same mistake about the senses. It says it has this desire and that and imposes on itself the activities of the Manas, etc. All this is mere superimposition. The basic truth is only One, the Paramathma, The *Paramjyothi* (supreme effulgence), The Eternal, the True, is only One! Understand this well.

Bhaktha: Ah, what superb teaching, Swami, if only this teaching of the Principle of the Atma, which even children can grasp, spreads over the whole world, the world will emerge from darkness to light.

Swami: That is the reason why I converse with you about every point and allow all to partake in it. The sun’s light falls upon the mirror, the light from the mirror falls upon the bungalow, the light upon the bungalow falls upon the eye. Similarly, this “Sandeha Nivarini” has been decided upon in order that the illumination of My Teaching may fall upon the Bhaktha mirror, and thence onto the “*Sanathana Sarathi*” bungalow; in order that from there its effulgence may shed Light on the Peace and Harmony of the world.

IX

SWAMI: O, you have come! Well. What is the news?

Bhaktha: What other news have we except yours? I heard that Your Kerala tour was most pleasant and wonderful. I am sad I was not destined to join.

Swami: Why are you sad for it? Listen to the account and be happy, that is all. Have the confidence and the hope that when next such an opportunity presents itself, you may be able to join. Do not be brooding over the past.

Bhaktha: What is the use of confidence and hope when one is not destined? Hope will only cause greater disappointment.

Swami: Has destiny a shape and a personality so that you can recognise it even before it shows itself? You should not hang on its favour, talking all the time of Destiny,

Destiny.... How can that destiny itself fructify without your will and wish, taking practical form, as action? Whatever be the destiny, it is essential to continue acting. Karma has to be done, even to attain one's destiny.

Bhaktha: If one is destined, everything will come of itself, isn't it?

Swami: That is a big mistake. If you sit quiet with the fruit in your hand, hoping that its juice will reach the mouth, how can you take it? It is sheer stupidity to complain that destiny denied you the juice, without squeezing and swallowing the fruit. Destiny gave the fruit into your hand; karma alone can make you enjoy it. Karma is the duty; Destiny the result. Result cannot emerge without action.

Bhaktha: So, Swami, we should not sit with folded hands, placing all burdens on Destiny, isn't it?

Swami: Listen. You should never underestimate your powers; engage yourselves in action commensurate with that power. For the rest, talk of Destiny to your heart's content. It is wrong to desist from the appropriate Karma, placing reliance on Destiny. If you do so, even Destiny will slip out of your hands. Whoever he be, he must engage himself in Karma.

Bhaktha: Yes, yes, Swami. In the Gita also Arjuna is told, "Even I do Karma. The Universe cannot go on if I

desist from Karma.” And so, if you withdraw from it, how can you realise the result?” I believe now that Karma is *Purushalakshana*, the hallmark of men.

Swami: And of women too. It is Prakriti-lakshana. All beings, men or women, trees or animals, worms, insects, all have to do Karma. Everything in the Universe is bound by this law. There is no escaping this obligation. Karma is the characteristic of Prakriti. Do not refer to it as Purushalakshana. Paramathma is the one and only Purusha. Prakriti is all Sakthi, Feminine. You are all not Purushas, remember.

Bhaktha: But Swami, there is that distinction in Nature; how is it correct to say that all are Feminine?

Swami: You may imagine it to be so, guided by your natural reason, but the reality is not that. All this is just secular experience, temporal, temporary. They are not the basic truth. This is simply play acting, mere impersonation. In some plays, men take the role of women. Sometimes women enact the role of men in plays. Are they, therefore, men? In the drama, Prakriti, all the actors are feminine, though there may be men’s roles too. The genuine Purusha is only one, that is Siva, the Atma. The Atma is immanent in everyone, but for this reason alone, all cannot be deemed masculine. The Prakriti theatre is like a girls’ school where all the roles of the play are taken up by girls. Sakthi, which is feminine, puts on all these parts. But do not take the drama as real, my dear fellow.

Bhaktha: Swami, even after hearing all this, the nature of the world remains an enigma to me. When one side is seen, it strikes me as Real. When the other side is presented, it strikes me as unreal. Nothing is definite.

Swami: That is exactly the nature of *Mithya* (apparent truth). It means that the world is neither Sathya nor Asathya, it is real as well as unreal. You are born in Mithya, you are enmeshed in it, and so you cannot distinguish this from that, the Sathya from the Asathya.

Bhaktha: Then setting aside this discussion of Mithya, tell me something, Swami, about that Sathya, that Purusha, whoever He is.

Swami: The Purusha has neither birth nor death, he undergoes no change. He is *Chith swarooopa*, *Jnanaswarooopa*. *Dharma* or codes of social conduct are not of His nature; so, he is not *Dharmaswarooopa*. The Jnana which is his nature does not change, is not corrected or supplemented from time to time; it is eternal wisdom. Light is its nature and so it does not admit of a dot of darkness. The sun does not have effulgence added to it from the world it illumines. It will emit splendour whether there are worlds or no.

The Purusha is self-luminous. He is always the object of knowledge; he cognises all vrittis or mutations of the chittha or consciousness; he is modification-less, *aparinaami*, unevolved. The Chittha is *parinaami*, it

changes and evolves. The Purusha is sentience itself; he is not affected by apprehension or non-apprehension. No *vyapara* or activity can affect Him. Even when unmanifested, effulgence is his nature.

The seed in the soil grows into a tree, the tree is the manifested form of the seed. This change from seed to tree and tree to seed shows that the Sakthi in the seed has *vyapara*. This is *parinaama*. But the Purusha is unchanging, unaffected; He is the See-er. He is completely apart from Prakriti. No deed can diminish His glory, nor exhaust His Personality.

Bhaktha: Then which is Prakriti? Who is Purusha?

Swami: The principle behind the Seen is Prakriti; the principle behind the see-er is Purusha. *Amoolam* (no root), *moolam* (root cause), it is said; the root cause has no root! Causeless, both Prakriti and Purusha have no beginning.

Bhaktha: Then this *Samsara* (birth-death cycle) too should be beginningless, isn't it Swami? It resulted from the union of the two.

Swami: That union is the result of delusion; prompted by delusion, it produces delusion again. That is the law of the seed and the tree.

Bhaktha: Union means what, Swami? What is the condition?

Swami: The reflection of the Purusha in the *Gunas*, which evolve from Prakriti, that is union. Listen, just an example. The Sun is not water, neither is water, Sun. Still, by their juxtaposition, reflection is produced. The image has the characteristic neither of the Sun nor of water nor can it be said that it is devoid of these. When the water is agitated, the image too gets agitated. The image also shines a little. Again, the magnet is distinct from the iron, but when the two are brought near, the magnet affects the iron and makes it similar to itself. This is the relationship called *Samyoga*, or union.

Bhaktha: Of these, which is the real Purusha and which is the active Purusha, tell me.

Swami: Did I not speak of the Sun and the Image? The Image-Purusha is the doer, the enjoyer, the experiencer. The original, the *Bimba* is unaffected. He is the Non-doer, the Non-experiencer. The Image-Purusha is known therefore, as the *Vyavaharikapurusha* or *Grihitha*, the Acceptor. The *Bimba* is the True, the Eternal, the Real, the *Atmaswaroopa*. The *Grihitha* is the knower and by that act of knowing, he has undergone modification.

Bhaktha: Right, Swami. Wonderful. How many books one should have conned in order to know all this! And even then, to grasp the meaning is so hard. I have now known that Purusha is not in the world, that all this is merely a drama, Paramathma being the One Purusha.

To attain Him, everything in Prakriti is striving; this is probably what is spoken of as Siva-Sakthi. Fine, fine.

Swami: You are right. It is also referred to as Jiva-Brahma Union. Everyone must strive for this Union. The Jiva cannot exist alone; *Moksha sadhana* has to be done, willy-nilly, by every living thing. Without it, there can be no Peace.

Bhaktha: What does Moksha mean exactly, Swami? And what is *Mukthi*?

Swami: Both mean the same. That which is burdened with the Manas is the Jivi; when the Manas and the Nama and Rupa which it spins from out of its substance, are destroyed, then the Jivi attains Moksha. Then it becomes one with Brahman; that is Moksha. When the Ganga or the Godavari reach the sea, their separate names, forms, tastes and limits all disappear and they acquire the name, form, taste and limit of the sea itself.

Until the Jivas attain the end of the Mind, they bear the Nama, Rupa and the *Ruchi* of Delusion, Myselfness and I-ness; when the Jiva nears the sea, these characteristics begin to disappear slowly; when the Gunas as well as the mutations of the mind are destroyed, then one can say that union has been accomplished with Brahman. How can the Ganga which has merged with the ocean be sweet? If it is said that one has merged in Brahman, he should not have the three Gunas, nor any taste of Manas. Such full union is known as *Sayujyamukthi*.

Bhaktha: Oh, how grand, Swami. Bless everyone to attain that union; then the world will really be happy.

Swami: What? For Me to bless so would be to go against the freedom you are endowed with. Take up the Sadhana prescribed for winning that blessing; gain the blessing by effort, that is the way. It is not something that is given away. You do not pray to the Sun to make the rays fall on you, do you? Shining is His Nature. He is doing it always. Remove the obstacles between you and the sun and the rays are on you. So too, keeping the obstacles of Delusion, Myselfness and I-ness between you and the rays of Grace, what is the use of complaining that they do not fall on you? What can the rays do?

Bhaktha: That is as good as saying that we must remove all traces of I-ness and Myselfness from our minds.

Swami: Why do you say, “As good as saying?” I am saying it emphatically, over and over again. If you seek the rays of Grace, try and remove the obstacles. Remember, even if you do not strive for it now, you will feel the urge sometime later; you cannot escape that urge. It has to happen some day, this shuffling off the coils of Delusion. Why postpone the day of joy, the day of liberation? Strive for this from this very day, nay, this very minute. You may leave now, my boy. But come again, I must tell you one more thing. Do not go to extremes; be steady; be patient.

X

SWAMI: Well! You look so full of joy today!

Bhaktha: You have yourself said that man is the embodiment of joy, isn't it?

Swami: Then you must always be in this mood; do you remain so?

Bhaktha: I am trying as far as possible.

Swami: Why do you say "trying"? Does not sorrow flee the instant Reality is known?

Bhaktha: But what is the Reality, Swami?

Swami: All that "is" is unreal! The efforts you undertake, the words you utter, are all unreal; when you know this, the Reality will be evident. Remove all the unreal ideas, opinions, acts and the Truth that is hidden can

be seen. Piling up all this on top, if you ask, what is Reality, how can it be seen?

Bhaktha: How is it possible to take all that is done, spoken, seen, felt, listened to, as unreal?

Swami: First, understand who is experiencing all these. You refer to the body as "I," "I," isn't it? That is unreal. When the experiencing "I" is itself unreal, how can the experiences be real? All have the same Atma. The person who experienced is not "you," the person who listened is not "you." You only witnessed all this.

Bhaktha: You said, Swami, that in everything there is Atma. Is there Atma in a dead man?

Swami: Oh! a good question indeed! Is it more to solve your doubt or the doubt of a dead person?

Bhaktha: Mine.

Swami: Well it is only when you have awakened from deep sleep or *Sushupthi* that you are aware there is an "I," isn't it? In the same manner, there is the Atma in the corpse also.

Bhaktha: Then how can it be called dead, how can death happen, when there is Atma?

Swami: If you discriminate properly, there is not dying and no living. A moving body is called living and a still one dead. In dreams any number of living bodies and

corpses are seen. On waking they do not exist. Similarly, this world, both moving and still, is non-existent.... Death means the fading out of the “I” consciousness. Rebirth happens when “I” consciousness comes again. This is what is called birth and death, my boy! Ahamkaara is born, Ahamkaara dies, that is all.

Bhaktha: So, I exist always, is it?

Swami: Of course, you do! When the “I” consciousness is there, you exist. When it is not there also you exist. You are only the base for the awareness. You are not the awareness.

Bhaktha: But they say, “attained liberation,” “attained Mukthi,” etc. What is that?

Swami: Understanding the root of death and birth, one must destroy completely the awareness of the separate “I”; that condition is “Mukthi.”

Bhaktha: So, when I die, I and You are One, isn’t it?

Swami: Who said “No”? That feeling of One when you are firmly established in it, there is nothing separate at all.

Bhaktha: Until then, in order to identify the real “I” in the unreal “I,” they say that the support of a Guru is wanted; how far is that true, Swami?

Swami: It is only when you have so many “I”s that you need someone’s support, is it not? When all is One,

why seek another? Still, until that *Aham* or that “I” fades out, this speaking “I” and this listening “You” have to be there. When that “I” is gone, whom to speak to? Who listens? All are one. The reflection of Atma, conditioned by Chith is Easwara: Easwara conditioned by the Antahkarana is the Jiva, is it not?

Bhaktha: But what exactly is this *Chidaabhaasa*?

Swami: Chidaabhaasa means the “I” awareness conditioned by the Chith; that One became Three, the Three became Five, the Five became Many. The “I” awareness (*Sathwa*) became Three on account of contact with *Rajas* and *Thamas*; in those Three the five *Bhoothas* or elements arose; and through those Five, the Manifold happened. It is this that causes the illusion that the “I” is the body. Speaking in terms of *Aakasa*, there are three: *Chidaakaasam*, *Chitthaakaasam*, and *Bhoothaakaasam*.

Bhaktha: What is Chidaakaasam?

Swami: That is the Atma.

Bhaktha: Chitthaakaasam?

Swami: Its deflection. That is to say, Chiththam. When that changes into Manas, Buddhi and Ahamkaaram, it is called Antahkaranam, a word which means the internal senses, the inner Indriyas. *Chidaabhaasam* having the Antahkaranam is the Jiva.

Bhaktha: And, Bhoothaakaasam?

Swami: Chidaakaasam conditioned by Chitthaakaasam. When it sees the elemental Akaasam, (the Bhoothaakaasam), it is *Manoaakaasam*; when it sees the object; the *Vasthu*, it is *Chinmaya*. That is why, my dear fellow, it is said, “The Manas alone is for Man the cause for both bondage and liberation.” The Mind manufactures any amount of delusion.

Bhaktha: How can that delusion disappear, Swami?

Swami: When you grasp its secret through inquiry, the many merge in five, the three in one, and the I exists as I. You get headache, you apply ointment, it disappears, you are as you were. The delusion that “I am the Body” is similar to this. It will disappear, if you apply the ointment of *Vichara* or Inquiry.

Bhaktha: Can everyone adopt this path of Inquiry?

Swami: No, my boy. It is only for those whose Chiththa has become ripe.

Bhaktha: Then what should we do to reach that ripe stage?

Swami: Now we have come to the place from which we started! Have you not got things like Japam, Dhyanam, Puja and Pranayama for this? Steadily, through these, you become ripe and become capable of understanding the “I” by inquiry into Reality. For such men, the Atma

is not something different from themselves or your self. All is Atman!

Bhaktha: But Swami, You mentioned only Japam, Dhyanam, Bhajana. etc. Some advanced persons adopt *Mounam*, the Vow of Silence. Of what use is it? What exactly is Mounam?

Swami: The illumination of the soul is Mounam! How can there be Mounam without the Atma being illuminated? Without that, merely keeping the mouth shut is not Silence. Some adopt the Vow of Silence, but communicate, writing on paper or slate; or they point successively to the letters of the alphabet on a chart! All this is pseudo-mounam! It is only another way of talking without interruption! There is no need to *attain* Silence. Silence is ever with you. What you have to do is only to remove all things that disturb it!

Bhaktha: But many persons do not open their mouth to speak. You mean that this is useless?

Swami: Who said so? If you do not use the tongue, if you are silent in order to keep out the external obstacles to Sadhana, you certainly can develop your thoughts, you can desist from disturbing others, you can escape criticism and worry from others, you will get concentration, your brain will be saved from unnecessary burdens and it can improve much. With such a brain, you carry on Smarana of the Lord’s name

better. All these advantages you will realise when you do Sadhana.

Bhaktha: Then for the full Jnani all this is unnecessary?

Swami: There is no full Jnani in the world! He is in no need of the world itself; then, why does he need all this?

Bhaktha: If that is so, who are those people called Jnanis?

Swami: The silent men I spoke about just now. Jnani is a term applied by courtesy. A full Jnani is non-existent in the world. The Jnani must know “All as one”! Your Jnanis are all either experts in logic, or experts in the knowledge of world; they have not known the Reality.

Bhaktha: Who are the real Jnanis?

Swami: He who knows the Atma as Atma will know himself, as milk added to milk, oil to oil, or water to water. When the physical body dies, they likewise merge in the Atma. But some may have some traits still persisting. They continue to have some resolutions and desires. Until these are exhausted, they will wander in the world, with body. Such men are called also “Bits of Divinity born as Men, *Daivaamsasambhuthas.*” This is also as per the Lord’s Will.

Bhaktha: Why should this difference arise, Swami?

Swami: It arises out of each one’s Sadhana and Sankalpa. Eat a mango and you belch its smell. How can you

prevent it? The belch brings the perfume of the thing eaten.

Bhaktha: Will such men too have limitations? *Upadhis*?

Swami: Without *Upadhis*, how can work get on? They too have it. But only in a subtle form, until they attain Transcorporeal Mukthi, *Videha* Mukthi.

Bhaktha: What is that, Swami?

Swami: Their acts are like the line drawn on water, seen while the line is being drawn; absent as soon as it is finished. While being done, you notice it, in an instant it is not noticeable any more.

Bhaktha: Swami, you said that a Jnani has Renunciation as his hallmark. How does this agree with that?

Swami: That is true! Renunciation is his hallmark. If out of the traits of previous birth he gets attached, he must know that it is only for the body and not for him. This attachment damages the bliss of *Jivanmukthi*; *Jnana* is most important for *Videhamukthi*.

Bhaktha: Even if one has no *Jnana*, can one attain *Mukthi* by mere *Vairagyam* (renunciation)?

Swami: What a foolish question! How can the fruit be sweet without ripening? *Vairagyam* cannot arise except from *Jnana*. There is no *Moksha* without *Vairagyam*. Be sure of that!

Bhaktha: Then where does Bhakthi come in?

Swami: We have come to the very beginning again! Earlier than Jnana it is in the form of Bhakthi. Earlier than Bhakthi it is in the form of *Anurakthi*, affection. All these are one. Anurakthi is the flower, Bhakthi is the fruit; it is ripe as Jnanam; Vairagyam is the sweet juicy final stage. Without one, you cannot have the next. In order to tend the fruit until the juice and taste are developed, you must practise daily prayer, etc., mentioned above. But from the first, have in view the Oneness of all. Understand that there is no “other.”

Bhaktha: At least, to keep up appearances in the world one has sometime to say “this is mine.” What is one to do then?

Swami: Of course, you may have to say so. But simply because you say so, what need is there for you to feel separateness between I and You? When you travel in a carriage, do you take the carriage as “I”? Look at the Sun. He gets reflected in a small pot filled with water, in a broad river, in a mirror, or on a polished pot. For this reason does the Sun feel that all these things are “He”? Does He get sad when the pot breaks, or the river gets dry? This is exactly like that. If you take “I” to be the body, then it is all bother! If you don’t take it so, you will shine like the Sun, independent of anything else. Besides, You will be immanent everywhere.

Bhaktha: That is as much as to say each must first discover for himself who he is.

Swami: Exactly. Inquire into that first. Of course for those who are not competent, this will be too hard. So, those experienced in this line say that such men should not be told these things. If you tell— “You are Yourself Brahman,” “You have attained Moksha, You are in that Stage,”—to those not competent, they will do no sadhana, they will act without any rule or order, and they will pay no regard to right and wrong. This must be revealed only by a Guru or by the command of the Lord! Those who have the thirst and the determination to undergo the discipline, of course, can ask about it! But it must be practised. There is no use simply hearing it and repeating, “All is One.” That is meaningless.

Bhaktha: Swami, Sankara has already said, “*Viswamdarpana drsyamaanaganaree thulyam hi anthargatham*,” etc. (the world, if you really penetrate into its inner meaning, is like a city seen through a mirror). This vision that the Jagath is unreal; that it is all Maya—is this for common people or for Jnanis also?

Swami: The Jnani’s eye sees all things as Brahman! The Ajnani or the person without Jnana cannot understand whatever is said! So, all Sastras are intended to benefit the middlings.

Bhaktha: This means that all Sadhanas are included in the *Vicharana Marga*, the Path of Inquiry?

Swami: Yes. The teaching of the Vedantha is about “Who am I?” And to make this inquiry, only those equipped with the Four Instruments are competent. The purpose of the four is to realise that the Atma is real and that all else is unreal; also, to discriminate between Atma and all else.

Bhaktha: How is that to be realised, Swami?

Swami: By inquiring into the nature of the Atma! First they do all varieties of Sadhana and finally enter upon this. While a child, they teach you A B C D isn't it? Even M.A., and B.A. curricula consist of the A B C D and their permutations and combinations! But to realise this fact one has to complete one's studies! The Sastras are based on *Akshara*; meaning both letter and the Imperishable. All margas are based on the Vichara Marga.

Bhaktha: But there are some who attain Samadhi. Will they have all this enquiry, etc. in Samadhi?

Swami: Wonderful fellow! How can there be inquiry in Samadhi? When you sleep soundly, do you have any thoughts about the world around you? This is also like that.

Bhaktha: There will be no Manas in Samadhi, isn't it?

Swami: The Manas that persists in sleep will be there also.

Bhaktha: They talk of a *Thuriya* Stage (a Beyond Stage) in Samadhi. What is that, Swami?

Swami: Beyond the Waking, the Dreaming and the Deep Sleep Stages.

Bhaktha: Why is it that those stages are absent there? What are the characteristics of that stage?

Swami: Those three are the characteristics of I-ness. *Ahamkaara*, the Person with Manas, who does all acts. That will not be present in the *Thuriya* Stage. It would have disappeared long ago. For them, it is all the same, with eyes open or with eyes closed. It is all One.

Bhaktha: Swami, without that *Aham*, how can they talk?

Swami: What was *Aham* in the beginning, when the Reality is grasped, is transformed as *swaroopaa*, the True Entity; this is referred to as the Destruction of the Mind, *Manonaasanam*.

Bhaktha: So, this *Nirvikalpa* Samadhi is all *Naasanam*?

Swami: Well, my boy, Samadhis are all Merging, *Laya*, not destruction. The *Sadhaka* stage is when you have both construction and destruction.

Bhaktha: This subject is very interesting, Swami.

Swami: Don't sit quiet, merely appreciating it. Practise it in daily life. All right, you can take leave.

Bhaktha: Very good Swami. Please bless me in that practice. I shall be back soon.

Swami: If you dearly love a dog, that dog too is Brahman! The dog has a name and form. If you remove both your name and form and its name and form, then Brahman alone remains. Name and form are “past obstructions,” *Bhoutha Prathibandha*. The absence of name and form is Brahman. In all the multifold Names and Forms, there is inherent just One Brahman. You have to recognise that “*is-ness*” in all. The *is-ness* is *Asthi*, the knowledge of the knower is the *Bhaati*, the effulgence, the shining splendour. That too is Brahman.

There is a yearning, isn’t it, to see it, experience it, to seek for it? That is due to the *Priyam*, the attraction, the charm. These three are basically characteristic of Brahman, my dear boy!

Bhaktha: What is this Satchidananda they speak of?

Swami: Atma itself is known as Sath-Chith-Ananda, because its nature is *Asthi-Bhaati-Priyam*.

Bhaktha: Swami, since “lovableness,” *priyam*, is also its nature, should not everything be loveable? But scorpions, snakes and wild animals, these do not evoke love!

Swami: You may not love them. But they love each other, don’t they? A thief likes another thief; a devotee likes another devotee; each loves his own kind.

Bhaktha: I do not understand all this clearly, Swami. Tell me some example, if there is any, of this *Asthi-Bhaati-Priyam*, from the present world?

Swami: My dear boy, why say, “if there is any”? When all is Brahman, which one is not an example of that? Now, you go to a picture. The picture exists on the screen; it persists, it is. That is “*Asthi*.” Who sees it and understands it? You. So it is “*Bhaati*.” The names and forms which are *Priyam*, loveable, come and go. Even if you set them aside without being deluded by them, the screen is always there. One point has to be noted here. The pictures fall on the screen, by means of a beam of light projected through a small slit in the wall of the machine room. But, if it comes from the entire room without the slit, escaping from that limitation, the figures will not be seen! The screen will be fully bathed in light! So too, if the world is seen through the small slit of one’s mind, the manifold multicoloured creation will be cognisable. If the floodlight of *Atmajnana* is poured, and you see it through the *Atma*, it will be One Unlimited Light and no individual picture can be cognised. That is to say, all will be cognised as the one indivisible Brahman. Do you understand?

XI

BHAKTHA: Swami! I have one doubt. Can I ask you?

Swami: Certainly. Why do you say, “Can I ask you”?

Bhaktha: Some people describe Brahman as Asthi-Bhaati-Priyam; what does it mean? How are these related to Brahman?

Swami: Is that the doubt? Asthi means “that which is.” Bhaati means “that which shines.” Priyam means—of course, you know it, don’t you?...pleasing, desirable, capable of satisfying. All that is Priyam to you is Brahman!

Bhaktha: I have understood it clearly, Swami. Now I know what is meant by the “obstruction of the past.” What are the “obstructions of the present?”

Swami: Good, I shall tell you. The obstructions of the present are of four types: attachment to sense objects, cynical criticism, dullness of understanding, and absurd conceit. The first is the cause of attachment to objects that attract the senses. The second makes men discover wrong meanings in the teachings of the Guru. The third causes confusion, because things explained by the Guru are not grasped at all. The last obstruction makes one feel that one is a great scholar, pundit, or ascetic, mistaking the body and the senses for the Atma.

Bhaktha: And the “obstructions of the future”?

Swami: Oh! They come always through sinful deeds. They come and obstruct unawares!

Bhaktha: How are we to meet them, Swami?

Swami: It is not possible for all. The aspirant can to some extent be cognisant of the approaching wrong and its wiles. It creates a desire, which puts on the cloak of want. Then you must recognise it as an “obstruction of the future.” It is difficult to be forewarned like this as the result of the effort of one single life. It may take many births to acquire this education.

Bhaktha: Are there any who have so learnt it?

Swami: Why, there are. The scriptures speak of Bharatha and Vasudeva. Bharatha required two or three births. Vasudeva had to be born once.

Bhaktha: That means these three obstructions cannot be overcome except after many lives. Can we not succeed without all that bother?

Swami: Why? The aspirant can, by reasoning out the nature of these three, escape from being worried by them. Otherwise, it may take many lives.

Bhaktha: Swami, how to get over the “obstruction of the present”?

Swami: There is a way for this also. Through Karma, the appropriate Karma. There is no obstruction that cannot be surmounted. Attachment to sense-objects can be removed by *Sama*, *Dama*, *Uparathi*, *Thithiksha*, by developing purity, self-control, withdrawal of desires and the ability to suffer. Dullness of understanding can be removed by listening again and again. Constant meditation on the things heard will abolish the habit of cynical criticism. All absurd conceit will vanish through the teachings one imbibes.

Bhaktha: Swami, to master all this seems impossible for everyone! To make it easy for all, tell me which is important?

Swami: My dear fellow, to know a thing, *Vijnana* (higher wisdom) is necessary. *Ajnana* (false knowledge) makes one ignorant, don't you know?

Bhaktha: So many people say so many things about this Vijnana and this Ajnana. What is the basic thing about

this Vijnana and this Ajnana? What is the basic thing behind both, tell me.

Swami: Now you have come again to the very first step. Ajnana is the mental attitude that has reference to the external Object and Vijnana is the mental attitude that has reference to the internal Subject. Ajnana is known also as *Manas* and *Chiththam*. When the activity and attitude turn inwards, they are called *Buddhi* and *Antahkaranam*.

Bhaktha: Some say that the Jnani will have only two things, the desire to attain the other world and the burden of the past Karma. Is that true?

Swami: Both the Jnani and the Ajnani will have desire, absence of desire for the other world, and the burden of past Karma, all in equal measure. Their experiences also will be in equal measure. Only, the Jnani will not have the consciousness that he is the doer; so, he will not be bound. The Ajnani is conscious that he is the doer and so he gets bound. This is the distinction. I have already told you, haven't I, that “the mind” is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation? The mind is the cause of everything.

Bhaktha: Mind, mind, they keep on saying. What is it? What is its form?

Swami: “Cognition,” “understanding” is its form. If you know the basis of that knowing, there will be no bondage at all!

Bhaktha: What is the basis?

Swami: The basis is what you refer to as I. Seeking for the I, if you are in that I state, however many “understandings” come or do not come, you will remain unaffected.

Bhaktha: Right. That is very good, Swami. Please make all this soak into our brains, so that we may realise the purpose of our lives. I shall take leave, Swami.

Swami: Do so. Depart gladly and return later. Take my blessings with you.

XII

BHAKTHA: Swami, at Venkatagiri, during the “Adhyatmika Sabha,” You said some things which I could not clearly understand: can I ask about them now?

Swami: I am happy when anyone asks Me about things which he has not understood. Of course, you have every right.

Bhaktha: You said *Sthula-rupa* and *Sukshma-rupa*, the gross form and the subtle form, isn’t it? These two, are they the characteristics of the Manas only? Or are they related to everything?

Swami: They are characteristic of everything. In fact, all the names and forms found in the gross exist also in the subtle stage! Why, the gross is there, only to make you understand the subtle!

Bhaktha: Well then, Swami, we see the gross firmament, the *Sthula-aakasa*; has it a subtle aakasa also?

Swami: My dear boy, all this exists in that subtle aakasa. The subtle aakasa is as imperceptible and as all-pervading as the gross aakasa.

Bhaktha: What is its name, Swami?

Swami: It is known as the *Sukshma Hridhayaakasa*, the subtle firmament of the heart.

Bhaktha: How can that be all-pervading?

Swami: Nothing else possesses the extent, the area, the breadth that this Hridhayaakasa has. See how many scenes, how many feelings, how many conjectures, are immersed and imbedded in it!

Bhaktha: Then, have we a Sun also in that subtle sky?

Swami: Of course! Who said, no? Without that, how can there be all this splendour, all this light and wisdom and brightness?

Bhaktha: What is its name, Swami?

Swami: When the heart is the aakasa, the Sun, naturally, is the Buddhi or the Intellect that illuminates that sky. The effulgence of the Buddhi is as bright as the rays of the Sun. So, the subtle Sun is Buddhi.

Bhaktha: Then it is possible that the Moon also in subtle form is in the aakasa of the heart.

Swami: Why do you ask about all these, one by one? Did I not tell you at the beginning itself? Every gross name and form has its corresponding subtle form and name. The Moon in its subtle form is Prema, with its cool rays pleasing to the heart. Love is the subtle form of the Moon.

Bhaktha: Excuse me, Swami; the Pandavas and the Kauravas waged a war, isn't it? How are they supposed to have waged the "subtle" war, these "subtle" Pandavas and their opposite number, the "subtle" Kauravas?

Swami: Why do you say "supposed to have waged?" They are waging it even today in the subtle form! In this war, the Evil qualities are the Kauravas; the Good qualities, Sathya, Dharma, *Santhi* (inner peace), Prema and *Ahimsa* (non-violence), are the five Pandava brothers. The evil qualities are many and so the Kauravas too are a horde. Each one under his own Hridhayaakasa, on his own *Chidbhumi* (causal world) is waging this struggle, every moment.

Bhaktha: Swami, they say the Pandavas are children of the King, Pandu, and the Kauravas are the offspring of the King, Dhritharashtra. In the "subtle" form, how are we to recognise them?

Swami: Both are disputants for the kingship of the selfsame Heart; they are in everyone as *Ajnani* and *Sujnani*, the Unwise Personality and the Wise Personality. The unwise blind ruler is Dhritharashtra; the wise Pandu is the father of all good qualities. Have you understood?

Bhaktha: But then, Swami, excuse me; in that war there were millions of soldiers and chariots, and the subjects; who are they in this "subtle" conflict?

Swami: Of course, they are all there, in man. The million feelings and thoughts and impressions are the soldiers and subjects. The ten Indriyas are the regiments; the five senses are the chariots. In everyone's heart there is this perpetual war being fought between Good and Evil, between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Is that clear?

Bhaktha: Well, who is Lord Krishna in the subtle war; He who was then neutral in that struggle for power?

Swami: Don't you know? He is the Witness, known as Atma. He is Sarathi of the Chariot of the Jiva.

Bhaktha: Another question. All these people had Hasthinapura as their capital then. In man, which is the Hasthinapura?

Swami: The basis for all these subtle manifestations, these men, chariots, Pandavas and Kauravas is, as you know, this Asthinapura, the City of Bones, this Body. This

skeleton is Asthinapura! Both have Nine Gates. There, both the Kauravas and the Pandavas were born. They played and were trained there. They grew up together there. So also, in this same Asthinapura all the qualities, good and bad, are born and do grow. They develop and subside, they watch and hate each other, all in the same Body. Are not the warring rulers in this body also Ajnani and Sujnani, the Unwise Personality and the Wise Personality?

Bhaktha: Yes, Swami. There is an intimate connection between the Mahabharatha war and the qualities and conduct of man. Really, the relationship is there, without doubt. What a fine comparison! As you said, this type of warfare is taking place in everyone, even now. Well Swami, when will this war end?

Swami: When will this war end, you ask? When both “bad qualities” and good qualities fade out and man becomes qualityless; then alone can man have Santhi.

Bhaktha: At that time, this battlefield, this Asthinapura, the City of Bones will not exist, is it?

Swami: When there is a battle, there must be a battlefield. When you have no battle, why bother about a field.

Bhaktha: Can we not avoid the battle altogether?

Swami: Why not? Kings develop the spirit of war because they have confidence in their subjects. The subjects

encourage the rulers to unleash the hounds of war. Delusions are the subjects, who push the individual into the battle. When there is a paucity of such subjects, war too will not be waged. So divest yourself of such subjects as delusions, illusions, feelings of “I” and “Mine,” and then, you can be at peace, enjoying undisturbed Santhi, my boy! You can go now! Wait! Let me tell you one thing: entertaining doubts of all kinds is also a delusion, *Vyamoha*! Strive to be free from even this trait! Well, go and come sometime later.

XIII

BHAKTHA: Swami, last time you spoke of the Mahabharatha war; in the same manner, does the Ramayana also happen in everyone's heart?

Swami: Undoubtedly! It does take place systematically and in the same sequence.

Bhaktha: Then, in what form does Rama come in this?

Swami: The Atma is Rama. He has come, in the character of Jivi, wearing the dress called body.

Bhaktha: Then, being a *Sankalpasiddha*, whose Will prevails, and being Omnipotent, who is all powerful, why does He suffer so much?

Swami: It is all play: His *Leela*, Sport. What can be Joy for Him? And what can be Suffering for Him? He is *Anandaswaroopa* (Embodiment of Bliss), who knows

neither. By His Will He can produce everything. He has enacted the Ramayana on the stage of the theatre of the World, with Himself taking a role and showing each quality or Guna as a separate Form. Such a Ramayana is taking place, in every heart. The Rama in the Heart, the Atmarama, is observing everything, as Witness.

Bhaktha: But the inert material Jada, the Jivi, how does it enter into this Ramayana?

Swami: This Jada accepts the Active Chaithanya, viz. the Knowledge of Brahmam. Chaithanya is born with the name of Seetha. The Jada-Chaithanya become One. This is referred to as Seetharama. So long as the Jada and the Chaithanya are One, there is no trouble and no suffering. It is the separation of one of these two that gives rise to all the bother.

Bhaktha: How is that, Swami?

Swami: Seetha, who is *Brahmajnana*, goes away from the Atma which is in the form of the Jiva; hence, falling into the Darkness or the Jungle is inevitable. Rama has acted in this way to show us this; if Seetha or Brahmajnana is allowed to be lost, one cannot escape wandering about in the Jungle of Darkness.

Bhaktha: If that is so, what is the reason, Swami, for this Lakshmana to be always with Him? In our life what does he stand for?

Swami: One should not be alone in the dark jungle of life. One should have the Manas ever by one's side. It is for this that Lakshmana is kept near, always.

Bhaktha: In the Ramayana, Vali and Sugriva are described. Who are they?

Swami: When wandering in the dark jungle one gets Despair when one should get Discrimination. They have vengeful hatred of each other. Vali who is Despair has to be destroyed; then only can success come. Despair is Vali. Discrimination is Sugriva.

Bhaktha: Hanuman, who appears between these two, who is he?

Swami: He who is of great help in the conquest of Despair, viz. Courage! That is Hanuman. He is Courage. Associated with Courage, it is possible to cross the Ocean of Illusion. That is why Rama built the *Sethu* or Bridge with the help of Hanuman.

Bhaktha: After crossing the Ocean of Illusion, what is to be planned?

Swami: Don't you know what Rama did after crossing over the Bridge? Conquering *Moha* or Illusion, He slew Rajo Guna and *Thamo Guna* (Quality of sloth) in the form of Ravana and Kumbhakarna. The remaining brother, the last, the Sathwa Guna, viz. Vibhishana was crowned King. The three gunas have been illustrated

in the characters and careers of the three brothers, Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana.

Bhaktha: After this, what has to be achieved?

Swami: Has to be achieved, do you say? Next, is the attainment of *Anubhavajnana* or Seetha; the Jnana reached after experience, Jnana realised in actual life. When both Jada and Chaithanya unite again, that is the *Pattabhisheka*, the Coronation; that is to say, *Jivanmukthi*, Salvation for the Jiva. Therefore, the fundamental teaching of the Ramayana is this: "The Jiva, Manas, Jnana, Despair, Discrimination, Courage, Delusion, Rajas, Thamas, Sathwa; these demonstrate themselves each in a different Form. It is to be learnt how and in what ways each of these can be either acquired or subdued. All this is done by the Atma, who has come in the form and with the name of Rama, by His acting, behaving, directing and guiding. So the Ramayana has not ended long ago. So long as in each one's life there is a struggle for achievement through these paths, and persons attain the Anubhavajnana in the end and Sathwa Guna is crowned at last, until then the Ramayana will continue to take place in the heart of Man. On one side the Mahabharatha war, on the other side the *Ramayana*; and on another the *Bhagavatha*; thus is life led perpetually. These are the Sukshma forms of the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharatha* and the *Bhagavatha*; do you understand?

Bhaktha: That means, in the Ramayana of actual life, Atma is Rama, Manas is Lakshmana, Brahmajnana is Seetha; and when that Seetha is lost, Rama falls into the forest of existence; there, in that forest, there are Despair and Discrimination. If we associate ourselves with Hanuman or Courage, we can go across the sea of delusion, with the army of zest, strength and steadfastness represented by Jambavan, Angada and other Vanaras. As soon as we cross it, we can destroy the Rajasic quality and the Thamasic quality symbolised by Ravana and Kumbhakarna. The Sathwic quality or Vibhishana can then be crowned; Anubhavajnana or Seetha is then attained. This union of Japa and Chaithanya, that is, of Seetha and Rama is the Ananda, the Jivanmukthi, Salvation for the Soul. Ah! What a splendid Ramayana! The Ramayana accomplished as the Son of Dasaratha is being enacted now as the Subtle Ramayana, through Gunas and Indriyas, qualities and senses in each individual so to say.

Swami: There is no “so to say” in this. It is happening as the subtle Ramayana!

Bhaktha: You said, Swami, that each Guna and each Indriya adopts in Ramayana a separate form. It causes some surprise to imagine that the Senses also put on some Form! In these, the gross and the subtle Ramayanas, in what form do the Senses appear? Please tell me this.

Swami: Whatever may be the Guna or quality how can it express itself, without the help of the senses? Gunas are bred in the senses. The Senses of Action are five; the Senses of Knowledge are five. These ten, with the help of the Manas, create attachment, isn't it? Otherwise, there can be no merging at all. “Born in Maya, bred in Maya, Man's mission is to master Maya,” it is said. So too, born in the Senses, bred in the Senses, the Jada Chaithanya has to master the Senses. That is their basic duty, don't you know? Do you know where Rama, the Jivi, was born? Whose son is He? Dasaratha has that name because he symbolises the Dasendriyas, or the Ten Senses. Whichever Guna or Rupa we consider, it cannot be unrelated to the Ten Senses, the Senses of Action and of Knowledge, the Karmendriyas and the Jnanendriyas, in the form of Dasaratha, we have the Ten.

Bhaktha: Four sons were born of Dasaratha. Of what were they the forms, Swami?

Swami: From the Ten Senses, not only four, but any number of Gunas and Rupas can originate. But only the chief, the four, symbolising the four faces of the Lord, originated by His Will. They are born as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Sathrughna. They are Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema in the subtle form. These are the Four Faces of the Lord.

Bhaktha: Who among these, Swami, is Sathya? Who represents Dharma, Santhi and Prema?

Swami: Can't you discover? Rama is Sathya. "The status and the honour should go to him who has the right, not to me," said Bharatha when he was offered the crown, and so he is Dharma. Placing complete faith on the Atma, that is, Rama, believing that there is no Ananda sweeter than its uninterrupted company,

Lakshmana followed Rama and so he is Prema. Having no individual separate ambition of his own, treading the paths followed by these three, Sathrughna was calm and unperturbed and so he is Santhi. Is that clear?

Bhaktha: Yes, Swami, but these four were born of three mothers; who are whose mothers?

Swami: As I said just now, "born in Maya, bred in Maya, one has to transcend this Maya"; so also, one is born from Gunas, one is brought up with Gunas; finally, one has to transcend the Gunas. The three mothers represent three Gunas! Among them, Kousalya is Sathwa Guna, Kaikeyi is Rajo Guna, and Sumithra, Thamo Guna; they play those roles, in the epic. Dasaratha in the form of Dasendriyas is associated with these Gunas and so he is *Indriyagunaswaroopa*. It is because man cannot easily grasp the truth through the senses and the gunas only that the Lord taught him through the Ramayana, the Lord teaching us even to this day. The Lord performed that day the gross Ramayana; and today He is performing the *Sukshmaramayana* on the stage of the heart of Man.

XIV

Bhaktha: Swami, the inner meaning of the *Mahabharatha* and the *Ramayana* which You explained is really very interesting. If only one probes deeply, what else is there in them? That kind of Mahabharatha and Ramayana is taking place in every heart, through the action and interaction of manas, chittam and buddhi. You said that the *Bhagavatham* is also occurring in the same manner. If you will kindly explain how that is happening, we can, after knowing its inner meaning also, start following the “Subtle” Ramayana and Mahabharatha and Bhagavatham, all three. So please tell me about the Bhagavatham.

Swami: Well, the *Bhagavatham* is not like the other two. It has no qualities and no Form! It deals with the Atma which is beyond and behind the qualities or gunas, senses or indriyas, the manas and the chittam. It deals

with the powers and prowess of the Atma, and Its apparent activities or leelas. The *Bhagavatham* contains the stories of the incarnations of that which is the Witness of Everything.

Bhaktha: What are the forms which that Witness assumed? Why did He assume those Forms?

Swami: Really speaking, He is all Forms, *Sarvaswaroopa*. There is no limit to the number or nature of His Forms. Still, if something must be said in conformity with what has happened, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Vamana, Narasimha, Rama, and Krishna, these are Its incarnations. In order to transact the Creation, the Preservation and the Destruction of the World, and to punish the wicked and protect the good, He assumes Himself the form He designs as best at the time and for the purpose He has set before Himself. When that purpose is realised, He is as before, the Witness, the *Atmarupa*.

Bhaktha: Rama and Krishna also punished the wicked and protected the good, isn't it, Swami? Then, how do you say that in the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha, there is the *Gunaswarupa*, while in the Bhagavatham there is no Gunaswarupa?

Swami: You see, Gunas have a beginning and an end; the Atma has neither. Rama and Krishna too have no qualities, essentially. They have demonstrated how,

being above Gunas, it is possible to keep all Gunas under control. The Ramayana and the Mahabharatha stories have an end, isn't it? In that sense, the Bhagavatham has no end. It speaks of the Lord who has no beginning or end. It tells of the forms which the Lord wore in the context of the age, the time and the object. The other two, on the other hand, teach the correct policies to be followed in this false, evanescent world and urge men to follow Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. Do you understand?

Bhaktha: Then, the *Bhagavatham* is of no practical use to us, so to say!

Swami: What! It is the *Bhagavatham* that is of most use to the Sadhakas. It alone explains the real secret of the Lord. His real Glory and His real Path! The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha* endeavour to some extent to uplift the common man, the ordinary man, by moral teaching and example. They show how man can deserve the Lord's grace. But those who seek to know the nature of the Atma and of Paramathma should study, more than anything else, the Bhagavatham.

Bhaktha: Swami, what is the relation between Bhagawantha, Bhagavatha and the Bhaktha?

Swami: The relationship between the Maharaja, the Yuvaraja and the Kumararaja! Bhagawantha or the Lord is the Maharaja, of course; The Bhagavatha is second in rank

because it has come from the Lord as a derivative, with the status of Yuvaraja; the Kumararaja is dependent on both these and so is the Bhaktha. The status of Kumararaja is not an ordinary one, he merits the position of the Maharaja. The rest are inferior to these three. Those who do not rise up to the status of Bhaktha or Kumararaja have no access to the Court of Maharaja.

Bhaktha: Then, Swami, the Yogis, the Jnanis, the Ascetics, do these not deserve that position?

Swami: Whoever he may be, without Bhakthi and the love of the Higher Truth, how can anyone become a Yogi, or a Jnani or an Ascetic? They too have Bhakthi in an equal measure. Take Laddu, Jilebi, Mysore Pak and a number of other sweets; in each of them, as the common cause of sweetness, there must be the one article, sugar, isn't it? How else can they be made? So also, in these three paths, the sweetness of the Lord's Name or Bhakthi is an ingredient. Without it, the very names of these objects become absurd!

Bhaktha: Another point, Swami! Can one approach the presence of the Lord, only if he has faith in the Lord and only if with that faith he performs Japa, Dhyana, Bhajana and Puja? That is to say, is it not possible to attain that position through the path of Truth, the path of Dharma, the path of Prema, the path of Service to others?

Swami: Well, how can the qualities you mention originate without the fear of sin and the fear of God? Are these paths and the qualifications needed for them, ordinary and common? No. They are the doors to the Inner Apartment of the Lord. Those that follow those Paths can easily reach the precincts of the Lord. But yet, there is a difference between relatives and friends! Those who develop only these qualities are friends; but those who practise them, along with devotion to the Name and Form, become relatives, that is the difference. The meditation on the Name and the Rupa helps to strengthen the Gunas also. Without that foundation, the Gunas cannot be strong and firm and pure. The Lord's Name and the Lord's Rupa remove the dross from the qualities of man.

Bhaktha: But the Bhaktha and the man with good qualities, both attain the same place, isn't it, Swami?

Swami: Certainly. The merely good man becomes a candidate who deserves the place. The good man who has Bhakthi has a title to the place, he cannot be passed over.

Bhaktha: Swami, there are many people who are active, doing various things under the slogan, "The Service of man is the Service of God"; do their deeds entitle them to the place?

Swami: Why do you ask so? Certainly; for those that do service with that attitude. But it is very hard to get that real feeling. Considering others as men, simply saying

that "serving them is to serve God," is not sincerity. The mind will then run in two channels. Grasp the glory of *Madhava* (God) fully; understand that Madhava is in every *Manava*; believe that service to Manava or Man is serving Madhava only. Then your actions will certainly entitle you to the place. What greater qualification is needed than that? Instead, if "service" is done for name and honour and fame, and if there is a craving in the mind for the fruits of one's actions, then the statement, "Service to man is service to God" has no meaning, nor will one get the result expected.

Bhaktha: It is very interesting, Swami! Speaking about the *Bhagavatham* evoked many holy ideas and morals today. So if one delves into It, what invaluable Truths will emanate! I am indeed blessed, this day.

Swami: Have you understood it all? *Bhagavatham* is the story of the beginningless, the endingless Atma. It is in both forms, subtle and gross. It is subtler than the subtlest; grosser than the grossest. It has no limit or measure. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharatha* are Ithihasas, historical epics. The *Bhagavatham* is different; it is the description of the Atma; it instructs in the Path of Bhakthi. It can never end, nor has it ever a "Finis." This is the significance of the *Bhagavatham*.

XV

BHAKTHA: You must remove a big load from my head, Swami. However much I try to forget it, in whichever direction I turn, I suffer from it; I am hearing only that! Then how can I dismiss it from my mind? Finding it impossible, I am praying to You. Please do not mistake my intention; kindly give me a direct answer, because if you do so, the weight will be lifted from the heads of all people like me and enthusiasm will increase for Sadhana. Otherwise, I am worried, we may lose even the little faith that we have in the Lord and I am afraid we may turn atheists. Your answer will be of immense help, not only to me but to all Bhakthas everywhere. Therefore, I pray to You to wipe off my doubts without hesitation and tell me the real truth, in very clear terms.

Swami: What is it? Tell me. What is the cause of so much headache?

Bhaktha: Swami, You have told us that man has Four Asramas: *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha* and the *Sanyasa*; and that those who reach the last stage are indeed blessed, for they attain Realisation. Now, please tell us what exactly is that Sanyasam?

Swami: So this has caused you all the worry! Is it? My dear fellow, the wearing of the *gerua* (orange) cloth, the shaving of the head, these do not make a Sanyasi. He is a person who has given up all desires. He must be fully immersed in desire, design and deed, fully in the One Godhead and in the discipline to attain Him. Whoever is so immersed is a Sanyasi. Instead, if they retain all kinds of desires, if they engage themselves in every activity to realise their desires, then they are *Sanyasis*, as the saying goes; that is to say, counterfeits, do you understand?

Bhaktha: But Swami, now we get sanyasis very cheap for a rupee, or for a paisa, or even for a cigarette! Among these, whom should we approach, whom should we accept?

Swami: Why are you concerned with all this? You are concerned with your advancement, your progress. You must crave for a person to point out to you the right path for your Sadhana. Or, if that is not possible, you approach and accept your Self; that is enough to give you what you require. Depend upon yourself and your doubts will be destroyed.

Bhaktha: In that case, Swami, what about the statement, “Gurules Vidya is Sightless Vidya”? It is essential to rely on some great person, is it not? To show the way, I mean.

Swami: Great men have not vanished from the face of the earth, my child! Do not think that all are of the type you mention. There are many great men even now; otherwise, how could the world have daylight, as the saying goes?

Bhaktha: Great men may exist among Grahasthas, Vanaprasthas or Brahmacharins, Swami! I haven’t much experience with such; but still, I have seen among them people with big name and fame. However, I can say this: it is very difficult to discover really holy men among Sanyasis. It is impossible to find a single Sanyasi without some desire or other. When Sanyasis have so much desire, what is wrong if householders have them? To whichever place we go, the one demand is, “Money, Money, Money!”

Swami: Really speaking, Sanyasis should have no desire, as you said. Lust and greed are their dreadful enemies. They should have no contact with them. They can accept only whatever little food is given, whenever it is offered, that is all. They can have no desire for more. That is the vow, the rule. They have nothing to do with money.

Bhaktha: Well, Swami, excuse me. Sanyasis are perpetually in need of money! No householder worries so much as they, for money! They exploit and extract from the disciples their hard-earned cash. Those who do not give are condemned. Is all this right, Swami? Is this just? Are these people, Gurus?

Swami: No wise person will say that these things are just. How can I say it is right? Why, can you not ask such Sanyasis once, “Sirs, why do you need cash? Is it not wrong for you to have this craving for the fame that comes through money?”

Bhaktha: Oh, I have asked them, Swami.

Swami: What did they say?

Bhaktha: Some said, they wanted money for their expenses. Others said, they wanted to develop their Asram further. Many such reasons were given. For those who have learnt to argue, reason-giving is not very hard. It is only when it comes to believing, that we have to choose and discriminate, isn’t it?

Swami: The Guru must engage himself in the progress of the disciples who come to him for guidance, and not the Asram; the *Asritha* (disciple) is more important than the Asram. The excitement, the anxiety about the Asram, becomes itself a huge *Sramam* or burden. It is on account of this that people lose even the little faith and devotion that they have and are transformed into

atheists. Such Gurus, instead of giving up all ties, have yoked themselves tighter; they are beasts of burden, rather. My dear fellow, listen to Me, do not cast your looks upon the Guru who inflicts pressure on a disciple to extract money. Keep as far away as possible from such persons. Do not lose Faith by contact with them. Preserve it and develop it, all by yourself.

Bhaktha: We go to such people eager to learn the higher things of life and to know the path for the attainment of the Lord. We seek and search for them, for we do not know which snake lives in which hole; but we find these cobra sanyasis and are shocked! The anxious desire that they exhibit for the Asram, is not that also wrong, Swami? If they want to serve the public like that, they can as well be just ordinary people and retain their original names and go about collecting funds and spending them, isn't it? Calling themselves Sanyasis, and wearing that dress, getting *Upadesam* (spiritual instruction), taking upon themselves numerous vows at the time of initiation into monkhood, declaring that they have destroyed all desire...if later they follow the path of accumulation, is it not spoiling the very sacredness?

Swami: That individual may be spoiled, that is all, my dear fellow; the sacredness of *Sanyas* can never be diminished! Do not run away with that idea. Of course, there are such men in the world today. But please do

not include them in the list of Sanyasis or Swamis. They have no relationship with these two categories. They only do harm to their disciples by retaining those designations. Do not even spend a single thought on them.

Bhaktha: All right, Swami. But there are some who have built Asrams and who are established as Gurus: for them, this desire for money, etc. is wrong, is it not?

Swami: Why do you ask? Have these people any special adornment like horns on the head? Really speaking, these people have to be even more careful. For they train many disciples, and so they must make a special effort to see that the trainees acquire the right attitudes and get fully immersed in the contemplation of the Lord. Otherwise, much injury will be caused. If the Guru pays attention to the spiritual progress and inward joy of the disciples, the disciples themselves will struggle for the development of the Asram. No one need exert any pressure. Instead, forgetting *their* progress, if he clamours for so much of money from this disciple and so much from this devotee for the development of "his" Asram, he will lose the Asram itself! The disciple will lose devotion and the Guru will lose his institution!

Bhaktha: Besides all this, Swami, if anyone points out to them that it is wrong, they get wild and threaten severe punishments. Is that right, Swami?

Swami: This is an additional wrong. How can it be right? It is not correct for any Guru to weaken the heart of any disciple; he must please it and satisfy it. People who frighten and extract are not teachers, but cheaters. They are not shepherds, but sheep.

Bhaktha: Then what do you advise us to do? How are we to deal with these people? Please tell us.

Swami: My dear child, give up all talk of people who have lost their way. Speak of *your* reaching the path. Give up all contact with such persons, and cultivate contact with such persons and cultivate contacts with places where there is neither lust nor greed nor any other desire. Seek for the Guru who looks on all with equal Prema. The real Guru must have certain qualities. Note this. If those qualities are present, go there and be happy. If you do not get such a place, meditate on God within yourself. Do Dhyanam and Bhajana. That is enough, you need not search for another place at all. Whenever you have leisure, read good devotional books. Even from these books, take what you need and discard the rest. Be careful; do not get entangled in all kinds of nets and traps.

Bhaktha: What are the qualities of those Great Men, Swami?

Swami: They will not have the craving for wealth, nor the ambition to develop their Asrams. They will neither love those who praise them nor hate those who blame

them. They will not prevent their disciples from approaching them. They will not prohibit anyone from approaching them. They will look upon all with equal Love. They will not relish the defamation of others. They will not be vengeful against those who point out to them their own mistakes and wrongs. They will always spread Sathya, Dharma, Santhi and Prema. They will ever yearn for the joy, welfare and progress of the devotees. Seek such persons. They are the true Gurus. Do not even cast a glance at those who are afflicted with anger, anxiety, hatred, envy, etc., or those worrying about name and fame and honour and status, however pompous their personality, however resounding their reputation.

Bhaktha: All right, Swami. It is all very good. But just one little doubt. These big Gurus, highly learned, giving long lectures for hours together, how is it that they do not realise all this? Cannot these big men see their faults themselves and set them right?

Swami: Well, even an ounce of experience is useful! But a ton of learning may prove useless. Many people lecture in Colleges, and pour forth hour after hour, things they have learnt by rote. Can one become great by merely the length or grandeur of his lectures? That is like vomiting the swallowed meal. You must see how much of what is spoken is practised. Those who give advice must follow it themselves. If you cannot avoid doing a thing, do not ask others to avoid it. So, however

learned a person may be, unless he has experience and practice, it will be simply a nine-days wonder, and after that he will be neither here nor there. Of course, the qualities I mentioned are to be noted, not merely in the Gurus, but in all. So give up this talk about others being bad or wrong; develop your faith and devotion. Strengthen your discipline for meditation on the Lord. Engage yourself in beneficial deeds. Speak only what will bring good. Worship the Lord, keep Him ever in the memory. Do Japam and Dhyanam. If you are immersed in these, you will not worry at all about the right and wrong of others.

Bhaktha: Swami, you explained the relationship of the Guru and the *Sishya* (aspiring disciple). Looking at present conditions, he who reveals the reality is not liked at all. Many of the Gurus, Swamis and Sadhus are, as you said, behaving wrongly and in many ways ruining their very name. Besides they are acting contrary to the vows of Sanyasa and the Dharma relating to the Lord. Such people may not appreciate your statements. They may even develop animosity, for your laying bare their defects. Or, what is worse, they may try to justify their conduct and invent stories and arguments to make their actions appear correct. Your remarks apply only to the wrongdoers, they do not refer to those who are engaged in good activities. So, really good Sadhus and those interested in upholding the ideas will be happy that You have spoken thus. But regardless of

what people might say, please Swami, help Sadhakas to progress and reveal to us the glory of the Lord.

Swami: Well, what does it matter to Me how people talk? How can falsehood be supported, fearing comment? As the burden so the bearer, says the proverb. Only fakes will resent and comment adversely. The genuine Gurus will rejoice. Only a thief will feel his shoulder, when someone announces the theft of a gourd (as the saying goes) because he is afraid, whether at the time, he has the stolen gourd actually on his shoulders! Those who do not steal gourds will not feel their shoulders. Those who are genuine will have no fear or anger. The others can learn a lesson if they develop a sense of shame and resolve to mend their ways, at least, hereafter. For deeds done in ignorance, repentance is the way to make amends and to earn pardon. Not to repeat the same deed is the sign of the morally strong.

XVI

BHAKTHA: Swami, I have a few doubts concerning the subject of Dhyana which You are now writing about: can I ask You?

Swami: Of course, you can ask and have your doubts removed. It is good for you and it gives Me joy.

Bhaktha: Some people practise Dhyana, but they are unable to know whether the Dhyana has progressed or not. What do You say about that?

Swami: Progress in Dhyana means the attainment of *Ekagratha*, Concentration. Each one can judge for himself without doubt, how far he has been able to succeed in Concentration, can't he?

Bhaktha: Some say that they see all sorts of things during Dhyana; some hear all types of sounds. Do these indicate progress?

Swami: They are delusions. They handicap progress. They implant conceit and disperse Concentration. The distraction of sights and sounds is no sign of Dhyanam.

Bhaktha: Then what is to be done when such are seen?

Swami: Don't allow the mind to wander onto them. Never lose sight of the Divine Form which you have pictured for yourself. Be convinced that these are but obstacles designed to scatter your attention from the Divine Form. If you permit these sights and sounds to creep in, the Original Form will be dimmed, your Ahamkaara will increase and you will lose your way.

Bhaktha: But, Swami, some people do say that these things are signs of progress in Dhyana!

Swami: That only means that they themselves are not practising Dhyana properly! Besides, not knowing what Dhyana is, they delude their disciples also by talking like this, to please them. That is the only profit earned.

Bhaktha: Well, does it mean then that, by means of Dhyana, we cannot see the Lord?

Swami: Why not? Certainly, it is possible. If you fix your attention on the sublimely beautiful Form of the Lord and concentrate on That alone, you will receive His Grace in that Form Itself in various ways. While doing so, many a disturbance might intervene. You should not be deluded; be on your guard, never forget the

auspicious Form. Picture to yourself that all Creation is immersed in it.

Bhaktha: But really, can we not know at anytime what stage we have reached in Dhyana?

Swami: You can identify the progress or decline of Dhyana only when you know this is stage number so and so, this stage is such and such, etc., isn't it? The *Dhyaanaroopam* (form for meditation) is Beginningless and Endless and so its Fruition also cannot be declared, complete and finished.

Bhaktha: Then, do You say that Dhyana is endless?

Swami: What is generally called the End is the end of the I and the merging of all in the One Form. Dhyana has no end.

Bhaktha: How are we to understand its stages?

Swami: You can have an idea of the stage if you examine daily how you are able to concentrate, how far you have subdued the wandering nature of the mind, and how deeply you taste the Divine Form; that is all. The stage reached cannot be cognised. What you receive and at what time, depends on His Grace. The Sadhaka's mission is to practise Dhyana, without deviating from the path. The rest is all His Grace. It does not depend upon the number of days or the length of time. Some may require many births. Others may

realise the goal in a few days even. It depends on each one's Sraddha, Bhakthi and Sadhana. It cannot be calculated and reasoned out.

Bhaktha: That means, we should not worry about our Sadhana, its progress, its stage, possible decline, etc.

Swami: Exactly. Worry about the discipline needed for the Sadhana, but not about its fruition. The reality, the realisation of the reality, these have no steps or limits. Do not yield to all sorts of delusions or desires for this stage and that. Stick to the goal and the journey. Never give up the discipline of the Sadhana. Do not change the time of Dhyana. With one aim and unchanging attitude, strive to attain it. That will vouchsafe the Fruit. That will bless you with the Bliss. Do not be led away by what others speak about their imaginary experiences. For you, nothing can be as genuine as your own experience. Therefore, first attempt to gain undeviating Concentration, Ekagratha; let that be your one aim.

Bhaktha: Dhyanam means vision of the Form of the Lord, isn't it, Swami? When such a Form is actually seen, they say it is not real and genuine! What do they mean by this?

Swami: Seeing the Form of the Lord is the goal of Dhyanam. To achieve that, is the aim. But before that goal is reached, there are some obstacles in the way. These are to be guarded against.

Bhaktha: What kind of obstacles are they? How are we to guard ourselves?

Swami: You have boarded a train to reach a village. You have heard that the particular village has a station. Many a station of the same type come during the journey and the train halts at each of them. But just because the train halts, you do not get down at any of them with your luggage, do you? If you get down, you will not be reaching the place where you have to go, is it not? It is no good, alighting at intermediate stations; for you miss your goal and suffer many hardships, not to speak of delay. The wiser course is to note even before starting on the journey, the names of the intermediate stations, etc., by approaching some persons who have travelled on the same route before.

Bhaktha: Everyone appears as if he is a seasoned traveller on the route! How are we to distinguish between those who pretend and those who know?

Swami: Of course, this has to be pondered over. Each one might have travelled by a route of his own. Some might tell you the details of the route, the stations, etc., with the aid of maps only. If that is so, you should not follow their directions on that basis. Consider wherefrom they started and wherefrom you are starting. Consider the route they traversed and the route you have to take. Moreover, it is impossible to consult those who have travelled as far as the goal, for they will not

come back; they won't be available for consultation, at the stage where you are. Therefore, you need not take the trouble to search and secure persons who can tell you their own experience of the route. It is best to take the help and the advice given by the veterans, in the Gita, the Sastras, the Vedas and the Upanishads. Rely on the words of the Lord and follow the Upadesa of the Avathara Purushas. Besides, there are countless great men who can guide you, as far as they themselves have travelled, and not beyond. For, how can they tell you things they have themselves not experienced?

Bhaktha: Well then, how can we get the opportunity to reach that path and attain that goal?

Swami: If they are destined for it, it won't be difficult at all. The chance will come seeking them. You must have heard the saying, "The man who went in search of a creeper, tripped over it on the way." You need not doubt, this will happen.

Bhaktha: Swami, some people say that if we do not get some visions and sounds and lights during Dhyanam, we can take it that our Dhyanam has not progressed! Do You say that they are wrong?

Swami: It is the image of their own idea. Perhaps they do Dhyanam in order to get such sights and sounds! Therefore, they experience them. They are things by which each one of them is deluded; they do not analyse

the truth underlying the visions! Really speaking, they should not seek these impermanent delusions.

Bhaktha: Then what are we to seek, Swami?

Swami: Seek and desire the Principle of everything: that which, if known, everything is known; that which, if seen all is seen and understood; do not seek for the drops, in your attempt to know the flood. When you have attained the Ocean (the basis of all the drops), you will not have the delusion of the drop.

Bhaktha: Some Sadhakas picture to themselves during Dhyanam, the Guru; is that correct?

Swami: The Guru shows the path. He teaches what is beneficial. So he has to be shown respect and gratitude, of course. But the Guru should not be taken to be all-powerful and all-inclusive. Of course, the Lord is in everyone, as the Atma; give each one the status that is his due and not more.

Bhaktha: But some great men declare that the Guru is both father and mother; that he is Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara, all in one.

Swami: Based on the Atma, that is correct. But such Gurus are rare. You can speak of him as father, mother, God, etc., on account of love and regard, that is all. How can he be so in fact? As loving as the mother, as protective as the father, you can say. But then, what

do you say of those who gave you this body and brought you up, even before you got the Guru? First and most important, be grateful to the mother and the father; serve them; make them happy; respect them. Respect the Guru as the person who shows you the path, who looks after your progress and is interested in your welfare. Worship the Lord as the witness of everything everywhere, as the master of Creation, Preservation and Dissolution, and as the All-Powerful One. Remember, you can consider only the Lord as the Universal Form and as the Universal Friend and Protector. All others have to be treated for just their individual status: the mother as mother, the father as father, the Guru as Guru. In truth, these cannot be one. Ponder over this. If you seek *Atmasaakshaatkaara* (the vision of the Atma), you have to install in your Dhyanam the Form of the Lord (the Universal Atma) which you like most, and not the picture of your Guru. It is not proper. The Lord is of a status higher than the Guru, is it not? Of course, have his words as the foundation and try to attain the Origin of all things. That will give the fruition of all efforts.

You are asked to treat the pebble as a gem, the gem as a pebble! Of course, through compulsion and bound by order, people may obey and accept but can that feeling be genuine? It is no sign of Dhyanam to have one idea outside and another inside. Unless this conflict is resolved and there is the same idea outside as well

as inside, there will not be any stability in Dhyanam; nor will there be any success.

Bhaktha: Very good, Swami. Without knowing matters fully, many a Sadhaka is wasting years in what he calls Dhyanam. They observe no law or limit. For all such, Your advice shows the Reality. It will establish them in the Eternal. Today I am indeed blessed, Swami.

separate incomplete Jiva and...suffering from that error. That delusion is the cause of all your sufferings.

Bhaktha: How, then, did this delusion come about?

Swami: You slept and so you dreamed. You slept the sleep of Ajnana and Moha and so you dreamed this Samsara. Awake, and you will have no more dreams. When the dream is gone, the delusion also goes.

Bhaktha: Swami, what is this ignorance? What are its characteristics? How does it operate?

Swami: That which is attached to the body and feels as “I” is the Jiva. The Jiva is outward-faced. It believes all this mutable Jagath and Samsara. It is immersed in both. When the Jiva ignores its *Adwaitaswarupa*, and forgets it we call it Ajnana. Is that clear?

Bhaktha: But Swami, The Sastras, all of them, say that Samsara is caused by Maya. You are now saying it is due to Ajnana. What is the distinction between the two?

Swami: Ajnana itself is known variously as Maya, *Pradhana* (primordial matter), Prakriti, *Avyaktha* (unmanifest), Avidya, Thamas, etc. Hence understand this well, Samsara is the consequence of Ajnana.

Bhaktha: How can Ajnana produce this Samsara, I want to know, Gurudeva, from you.

XVII

BHAKTHA: I have been anxious for a long time to ask You some things and to learn the answers from You. Today, I have the chance. This Manas and its Principle are unknown categories. Their meanings do not get fixed and clear without actual experience. But Swami, this delusion of Samsara, it overpowers us, thick and strong, like the darkness of clouds in the rainy season. What is this mighty force that drags us along? This is what has been bothering me. I feel persons like me should understand these things clearly in the very beginning. Will you kindly enlighten me?

Swami: Well, my boy. What am I to say? You are suffering from fright, imagining a tree stump seen in the park to be a man. That is, you are mistaking the non-dual, the full, the Adwaita, the Purna, which is Brahmam as a

Swami: Know that Ajnana has two powers: *Aavaranasakthi* and *Vikshepasakthi*, the veiling power and the projecting power. It veils the reality and projects upon it the unreal. The Aavaranasakthi also acts in two different ways: *Asathaavarana* and *Abhan-aavarana*. When a Jnani and an Ajnani meet, though the Jnani teaches that the Atma is One and Non-dual, the Ajnani denies it. He cannot grasp the reality so easily. Even when he hears the truth, he has not got the faith and the steadfastness to imbibe it and he will dismiss it with a shrug of indifference. This is the Asath-aavarana. Now about the Abhan-aavarana. Even when the person believes by his study of the Sastras and by the grace of Providence that there is Non-dual Atma, he dismisses it as non-existent, carried away by cursory and superficial arguments. Though he has Chith or the Consciousness which is aware of that very thing which he denies, the Moha makes him declare that it is non-existent. This is the sinister role of Abhan-aavarana.

Bhaktha: You spoke of the Vikshepasakthi also. What is meant by that?

Swami: Though you are Formless, Changeless and your nature is Ananda or Bliss, you are deluded into believing, feeling and acting as if you are the body, which has form, which changes and which is the seat of pain and grief. You refer to your self as the doer and enjoyer; you speak of I, you, they, this, that, etc., deluded into

believing variety and multiplicity, where there is only One. This illusion projecting many on the one is called Vikshepasakthi or *Adhyarupa*, superimposition.

Bhaktha: What is that?

Swami: When you superimpose the object “silver” on mother-of-pearl, when you see not the stump but the human form, you have superimposed on it, or when instead of the stretch of desert you see a lake, you have superimposed the unreal on the real. This is *Adhyarupa*.

Bhaktha: Well, Baba. What is the real, what is the unreal? Please explain that too.

Swami: The One and Only, Non-dual, Sath-chith-ananda Parabrahma is the Real. Just as the Name and the Rupa of the snake are superimposed on a rope, this Jagath (inclusive of everything from Brahma to a blade of grass, all creatures, all inert objects like the earth) is superimposed on that *Parabrahmavastu*. The Jagath is the *Avastu*, the Unreal, that is the superimposed thing.

Bhaktha: This superimposition of the Nama Rupa Jagath on the *Adwaitavastu*, how is it caused?

Swami: By Maya.

Bhaktha: Maya means....

Swami: The Ajnanasakthi of the above-said Parabrahmam...

Bhaktha: Ajnanasakthi means....

Swami: I told you, did I not? The incapacity to understand Brahman...though you are fundamentally Brahman....That is Ajnana.

Bhaktha: Well how does that Ajnana produce all this Jagath?

Swami: The Ajnanasakthi does not allow you to see the rope, instead it imposes the snake upon it. It makes you see the Jagath, where there is only Brahman.

Bhaktha: Swami, when there is only the Adwaita Non-dual One, how did the creation of all these worlds happen?

Swami: You have come back again to where we started from! Even if I tell you now, it is very hard to grasp. Still, since you have asked, I shall tell you. Listen. The Ajnanasakthi exists in the latent form in the rope itself. That is to say, it is latent, unmanifested in the Brahman. This is also called Avidya. It has as its base, Brahman which is Chith and Ananda. Of the two powers that Maya has, the Aavarana and the Vikshepa, the Aavarana veils the Brahman and the Vikshepa makes it manifest as Manas. The manas creates all this panorama of name and form through the exuberance of Vasanas.

Bhaktha: Wonderful, Swami. How wonderful is this Prakriti! What is the distinction between the waking stage and the dream stage?

Swami: Both are of the nature of illusion; in both, we have the Vasanas operating. The Jagath is the stable illusion; the dream is the unstable illusion. This is the distinction, there is no other.

Bhaktha: Swami, how can it be said that this Jagath is unreal, when it is concrete and capable of being experienced in a variety of ways?

Swami: It is a delusion that hides the reality from the understanding, the Jagath is as much a superimposition on Brahman, as a series of pictures on the wall.

Bhaktha: Avidya is said to be *Anaadi* (beginningless), isn't it? Why then is it blamed so much?

Swami: The beginningless Avidya is ended when Vidya dawns. This is only logical. Darkness is destroyed by Light. Every object has five parts: Origin, nature, function, period, result. But in the case of the Paramatma these cannot be enunciated, though everything that has evolved as if from Him, has them. Maya alone has no explicable origin. It is its own proof. It is there in Brahman, with Brahman: it is An-adi. No cause can be given to explain how it manifested itself, so luxuriously. As a bubble rises through the force of its own nature, up from the water, a force which takes the form of Namarupa emerges from the Limitless, the Full, the Paramatma. That is all. It is only the ignorant who will speak ill of Avidya: really there is no well or ill.

Bhaktha: How can it be said the Maya has no origin or *hethu*? Just as the potter's handiwork is the hethu for the clay to take the form of the pot, the sankalpa of Iswara is essential for the force latent in Brahman to become patent.

Swami: In the final dissolution, or *Mahapralaya*, Iswara too will become non-existent. Brahman alone will exist, isn't it? Then, how can the Sankalpa of Iswara be the hethu? It cannot be. While considering this subject, you should not take Brahma, Vishnu and Iswara as three separate entities. These three are forms shaped by the three Gunas. All three are One Paramatma. But since it is difficult to understand the working of the world, it is explained and grasped as three: three forms engaged in three types of actions, bearing three names. At the time of Creation, dissolution is absent. Both can coexist only beyond time. Man who exists in Time, Action, and Cause can never hope to grasp it. When you transcend the three Gunas, you too can attain that, but not till then. So, without spending time in such ununderstandable problems, engage yourself in the things you urgently need, traversing the path which will lead you to the Goal.

GLOSSARY

Meanings of Sanskrit words used in discussing religious and philosophical topics, more particularly used in the writings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, reproduced in this volume, are given in this glossary. While the English equivalents for the Sanskrit words have been given in the text with reference to the context, this glossary attempts to provide comprehensive meanings and detailed explanations of the more important Sanskrit words, for the benefit of lay readers who are interested in Hindu religion and philosophy.

Aavaranasakthi - The veiling power.

Abhan-aavarana - Dismiss as non-existent.

Achethana - unconscious; form of inertia.

Adhyarupa/adhyaroopa - superimposition of the unreal on the real.

Adhyasa - Seeing one form and taking it to be another, superimposing one thing upon another.

Adwaita - Non-dualism. The philosophy of absolute oneness of God, soul and Universe.

Agnirava deva yonih - Agni is the Divine Principle.

Agri - First.

Aham Brahmasmi - "I am Brahman." This is one of the great Vedic dicta (Maha Vaakyas).

Aham - That "I."

Ahamkaara - Egotism resulting from the identification of one's self with the body. It causes the sense of "I do" and "I experience."

Ahimsa - Non-violence.

Ajnana - Ignorance (which prevents perception of the Reality).

Ajnanasakthi - Incapacity to understand Brahman.

Ajnani - Unwise Personality.

Akasha/Akasa/Aakasha - Ether, Space, Sky.

Akhanda - Indivisible.

Akshara(m) - Meaning both letter and the imperishable.

Amoolam - No root.

Amritha - Divine nectar; immortality-granting nectar.

Anaadi/Anadi - Beginningless.

Ananda - Divine bliss. The Self is unalloyed, eternal bliss. Pleasures are but its faint and impermanent shadows.

Anandaswaroopa - Embodiment of Bliss.

Anantha - Without end.

Anantho vai Vedaah - The Vedas are infinite.

Anithyam - Temporary.

Antahchathushtaya - Internal four indriyas.

Antahkarana - Mind, intelligence and ego together. One's own inner equipment, inner consciousness. The internal indriyas (sense faculties). This is what moves from one world to another, from one birth to another, according to the accumulated merit.

Antharaprapancham - Internal world.

Anubhavajnana - The Jnana reached after experience.

Anurakthi - Affection.

Anushaanam - Action.

Aparinaami - Unevolved.

Asath - Non-existence.

Asathaavarana - Dismiss with indifference.

Ashrama Dharma - The life of a Hindu consists of four stages as ashramas. Ashrama Dharma is the code of

disciplines laid down for the blossoming of spiritual consciousness during the four stages—Brahmachari (the student celibate), Grihastha (householder), Vaanaprastha (the recluse in the forest), and the Sanyaasin (the ascetic or the monk).

Asritha - Disciple.

Asthi - That which is.

Asthika - One who believes in God, scriptures and the Guru.

Asthiram - Impermanent.

Asubham - Inauspicious.

Asuras - Evil forces, the evil-minded, demonic.

Asuric - Asuric character is that of a person infused with pride, pomp, vanity, anger, harshness, and absence of discrimination.

Atma - Self; Soul. Self, with limitations, is jiva (the individual soul). Self, with no limitations, is Brahman (the Supreme Reality).

Atmajnana - Knowledge of the Self which is held out as the Supreme goal of human endeavour.

Atma Suddhi - Purity of Action.

Atma Swaroopa - Self-embodied; of the nature of Self. The real man in us is the Self which is pure consciousness!

Atmarama - Rama in the Heart.

Atmarupa - Witness.

Atmasaakshaatkaara - The vision of the Atma.

Atmaswarupa - God himself.

Atmathatwa - The Atmic Principle.

Atmavichara - Inquiry into the nature of Atam; Examination of self.

Avathar - Incarnation of God. Whenever there is a decline of dharma, God comes down to the world assuming bodily form to protect the good, punish the wicked and re-establish dharma. An Avathar is born and lives free and is ever conscious of His mission. By His precept and example, He opens up new paths in spirituality, shedding His grace on all.

Avidya - Ignorance, Absence of wisdom.

Avidyamaya - External illusion.

Avidyasakti - The power of ignorance.

Avinaabhaava Sambandha - Inexplicably interpenetrative, indissolubly knit together.

Avyaktha - Unmanifest.

Bahyaprapancham - External world.

Bhaati - Knowledge of the knower; that which shines. Capacity to attract and confer knowledge.

Bhaavanasana - End of ideation.

Bhagavad Gita - The Song of God, the Lord's teachings.

Bhagavatha - A sacred book composed by Sage Vyasa dealing with Vishnu and His incarnations, especially Sri Krishna.

Bhaktavatsala - Full of affection to his devotees.

Bhaktha - Principle of Godhead. A devotee who has intense selfless love for God.

Bhakthi - Devotion to God; intense selfless love for God.

Bhakthi Marga - Path of devotion.

Bhoothaakaasam - Atma conditioned by its own deflection i.e. when the Atma sees the elements of nature.

Bhoothaanaam - Being, Creation, Living beings in the universe.

Bhoothas - Elements.

Bhoutha Prathibandha - Past obstructions.

Bimba - Original.

Bodha - Perception; knowledge; consciousness.

Brahma Kanda - Totally spiritual stage.

Brahma - Supervisor of ritual.

Brahma Thathwa - The Brahman Principle.

Brahma Vidya - Spiritual attainment, the science of the awareness of reality, the truth that jnana reveals.

Brahma/Brahman - The Creator; the First of the Hindu Trinity.

Brahmaikyatha - Godhead.

Brahmajnana - One who has knowledge of identity of the individual self.

Brahman - The Supreme Being; the Absolute Reality; Impersonal God with no form or attributes. The uncaused cause of the Universe; Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute (Sath-chith-ananda); The Eternal Changeless Reality, not conditioned by time, space and causation.

Brahmanda - Cosmos; Macrocosm, Moving and non moving materials.

Buddhi - Intellect; intelligence; faculty of discrimination.

Chaithanya - Consciousness, life consciousness, unconscious of the world outside. The active entity in nature, the divine nature, without joy or sorrow, ever in perfect equilibrium.

Chethana - Super consciousness.

Chhandas - Poetic metre.

Chidaambhaasa - The "I" awareness conditioned by the Chith.

Chidaakaasam - Deflection of Atma.

Chitthaakaasam - Pure unalloyed consciousness that flows from the Aathman. The subtle region of one's consciousness.

Chidbhumi - Causal world.

Chith - Full knowledge, awareness.

Chith Swaropa - The embodiment of consciousness.

Chiththam - Past impressions.

Chittam - Levels of consciousness.

Chittha - Consciousness.

Daivaamsasambhuthas - Bits of Divinity born as Men.

Daridra Narayana - The lord in the form of the poor.

Darsan - Seeing the holy person.

Dasendriyas - The ten organs, ten senses.

Deha - Body.

Deha Dharma - Dharma of the body.

Deva Mandirs - Temples of God.

Dama/Dhama - Self-control; restraining the sense organs which run after sense objects seeking pleasure. This is an important discipline for an aspirant practising yoga.

Dhana - Wealth.

Dharana - Wearing (as a cloth), concentration, single-mindedness, fixing the mind steadily on some desirable objective.

Dharma - Righteousness; religion; code of duties; duty; essential nature of a being or thing. It holds together the entire Universe. Man is exhorted to practise Dharma to achieve material and spiritual welfare. The Vedas contain the roots of Dharma. God is naturally interested in the reign of Dharma.

Dharma Karma - Righteous activity.

Dharma Sastras - Righteous weapons.

Dharma Swaroopa - Righteousness personified.

Dharmakarthas - One who is responsible for Dharma.

Dharma Sthapana - Restoration of righteousness.

Dharmyaamritham - Nectarine Dharma.

Dhyaanaroopam - Form for meditation.

Dhyana - Meditation; an unbroken flow of thought towards the object of concentration. It steadies and stills the mind and makes it fit for realisation in the course of time.

Dukham - Grief.

Dweshasmarana - Remembering the lord with hate.

Easwara - The Supreme Ruler; the Personal God; He is Brahman associated with Maya but has it under His

control, unlike the jiva who is Maya's slave. He has a lovely form, auspicious attributes and infinite power to create, sustain and destroy. He dwells in the heart of every being, controlling it from within. He responds positively to true devotion and sincere prayer.

Gayatri/Gayathri - The very sacred Vedhic prayer for self-enlightenment repeated piously at dawn, noon and twilight devotions. That which saves when repeated.

Gerua - Orange.

Gopi - A person who has subdued the senses.

Gopis - Cowherd maids who were devotees and worshipped Lord Krishna in Brindavan.

Grihastha - The worldly life of a Householder.

Guna - Quality, property, trait; one of the three constituents of Nature (Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas). They bind the soul to the body. Man's supreme goal in life is to transcend the gunas and attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Guru - Spiritual guide; a knower of Brahman, who is calm, desireless, merciful and ever ready to help and guide the spiritual aspirants who approach him.

Hiranyagarbha - Cosmic Womb.

Hotha - Reciter of prayers.

Hridhayaakasa - Firmament of the heart.

Iccha - Yearning, likes and dislikes, preferences.

Iccha Shakthi - The will that man is endowed with.

Indrajala - Magician's art.

Indriyas - Senses.

Ishtam - Chosen diety through which a devotee contemplates god.

Itihaasas - Epics, Ancient legends.

Jada - Insentient.

Jagath - This passing show. The moving, changing, transitory, untrue world; the universe, creation, world of change.

Japa/Japam - Pious repetition of a holy name or sacred manthra, practised as a spiritual discipline.

Jiva/Jivaathma - The individual soul in a state of non-realisation of its identity with Brahman. It is the self-deluded, bound spirit unaware of its own true nature. It is subjected to sensations of pain and pleasure, birth and death, etc.

Jivanmuktha - Realised soul.

Jivatma - Individualised soul.

Jnana - Sacred knowledge; knowledge of the spirit, pursued as a means to Self-realisation. It is direct experience of God, as the Soul of the souls. Jnanam makes a man omniscient, free, fearless and immortal.

Jnana Kanda - The section of Vedas dealing with Jnana.

Jnana Yoga - The path of wisdom.

Jnanaswarupa - Embodiments of wisdom; realise the Atma whose nature is wisdom.

Jnanendriyas - Internal senses.

Jnani - A sage possessing Jnanam (unitive spiritual knowledge and experience).

Kamadhenu - Celestial cow that grants all boons.

Kamam - Craving.

Kamy Karma - Desirous activity.

Karma - Action; deed; work; religious rite; the totality of innate tendencies formed as a consequence of acts done in previous lives. Every karma produces a lasting impression on the mind of the doer, apart from affecting others. Repetition of a particular karma produces a tendency (vasana) in the mind. Karma is of three kinds: (i) Prarabdha: which is being exhausted in the present life: (ii) Aagami, which is being accumulated in the present life, and (iii) samchitha, which is stored, to be experienced in future lives. Akarma is action that is done without any intention to gain the consequences; Vikarma is action that is intentionally done.

Karmendriyas - External senses, organs of action.

Krodham - Anger.

Krupasagara - Ocean of mercy.

Ksharam - Permanent.

Laya - Merging.

Leela - Sport.

Lobham - Greed.

Madhava - God, the Lord of the Universe, divine entity, master of Maya.

Mahapralaya - Final cosmic dissolution.

Mahath - Cosmos, meaningful.

Manava - Man, descendent of Manu, the law-giver.

Mithya - Apparent truth.

Moha - Illusion.

Moham - Attachment.

Moksha/Mukthi - Liberation from all kinds of bondage, especially the one to the cycle of birth and death. It is a state of absolute freedom, peace and bliss, attained through Self-realisation. This is the supreme goal of human endeavour, the other three being, dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth and power) and kama (sense-pleasure).

Moolam - Root cause.

Mounam - The Vow of Silence.

Muktha Purusha - Liberated Soul.

Mumukshuthwam - Desire for liberation.

Nama - Name, name of God.

Nama Sadhana- Repetition of the Name of God.

Nama Yajna - The offering of God's Name.

Nama-roopa - Name-form.

Namasmarana - Remembering God through His Name; one of the important steps of spiritual discipline (sadhana) to obtain God's grace and to make progress in the spiritual journey.

Nasthikas - Atheists.

Nithyam - Indestructible, timeless.

Papa - Bad deed.

Para - Higher.

Parabrahma - God, Supreme vastness, universal oversoul.

Paramatma - The over-soul, the universal soul, the sovereign Atma, God. Creator, the Supreme Self, the Universal Absolute, the Lord. The absolute from which everything has emanated, in which all exists, into which all this merges, the yarn of which the cloth prakriti is formed.

Parameshvara - The Supreme God.

Paramjyothi - Supreme effulgence.

Parinaama - Evolved.

Parinaami - It changes and evolves.

Pattabhisheka - The Coronation.

Praanaagni - Vital force in living beings.

Pradhaana - Primordial matter.

Prakriti/Prakruthi - Nature; the Divine Power of Becoming; also known as Maya Avidya and Shakthi; the world of matter and mind as opposed to the Spirit. Prakriti has three dispositions or gunas (sathwa, rajas and thamas) that go into the makeup of all living and non-living beings in the Universe, in varying proportions leading to the appearance of infinite multiplicity in form, nature and behaviour.

Prana - Vital air, vital breath, vitality, the vital essence.

Pranamaya Kosa - Sheath of vital energy. It consists of five vital principles and five subtle organs of action. It is endowed with the power of action.

Pranava - Om; the sacred seed-sound and symbol of Brahman; “the most exalted syllable in Vedas.” It is used in meditation on God. It is uttered first before a Vedic manthra is chanted.

Pranayama - Regulation of breath. The sadhana or practice by which you hold the prana or breath. There are five different vital airs, namely: prana, apana, vyana, udana and samana. The process by which these vital airs are controlled is called pranayama and this gives us an amount of inner vision.

Prapancha - Universe composed of five elements.

Prasanthi Mandirs - Temples of Supreme Peace.

Prasna - Question, purity, sanctity, charity.

Prathyagatma - Inner presiding Atma.

Prathyahara - Withdrawal into one’s inner consciousness. Withdrawal of the senses from the external objective world and turning them towards the internal mental consciousness or intelligence.

Prema - Ecstatic love of God; (divine love of the most intense kind).

Premasmarana - Remembering the lord with love.

Premaswarupa - The embodiment of love.

Priyam - Pleasing, desirable.

Punya - Good deed,

Purusha - Man, persons, humans, eternally masculine (God).

Rajas/Rajo Guna - One of the three gunas (qualities or dispositions) of Maya or Prakriti. Rajas is the quality of passion, energy, restlessness, attachment and extroversion. It results in pain.

Rajasic/Rajasika - The red quality: active, passionate. The active and potent aspect of the primal energy. Rajasic behaviour is anger, greed, hatred, etc.

Ruchi - Sweetness.

Ryot - Farmer.

Saadhaka - An aspirant for spiritual progress. One who is practicing the disciplines of conquering his egoism and greed, the sense of “I” and “mine.” A person in the process of overcoming the bonds of the elements by detachment, one by one.

Sadasath - This is what is spoken of by us as maya.

Sadhana - Spiritual discipline or effort aimed at God realisation. The Saadhaka (aspirant) uses the spiritual discipline to attain the goal of realisation.

Sahasranama - The thousand names of God.

Sakalaiswarya - Supreme Treasure

Sakshatkara/Sakshathkaara - Direct perception of God; Self-realisation, visualisation of the Lord, actual realisation (of Brahman), ultimately reached as the highest stage of samaadhi.

Sakti/Sakthi/Shakthi - Divine energy. Power, ability, capability, physical health and mental alertness, the strength needed for acquiring unshakeable joy. The goddess who energises the universe, the mother of the universe.

Sama - Purity, Good counsel, Control of the senses, equal.

Samaadhi - It is the superconscious state transcending the body, mind and intellect, attained through rigorous and protracted Sadhana. In that state of consciousness, the objective world and the ego vanish and the Reality is perceived or communed with, in utter peace and

bliss. When in this state, the aspirant realises his oneness with God, it is called Nirvikalpa Samaadhi.

Samashti-viswarupa - Absolute-full-world-form.

Samsara - Worldly life; life of the jiva through repeated births and deaths. Liberation means getting freed from this cycle.

Samyoga - Union.

Sanathana Dharma - Eternal religion. A descriptive term for what has come to be called Hinduism. It has no single founder or text of its own. It is more a commonwealth of religious faiths and a way of life.

Sanathana Sarathi - Ancient charioteer.

Sandeha - Doubt.

Sandesha - Message.

Sankalpasiddha - He whose will prevails.

Santhi - Peace, undisturbed peace of mind, equipoise, equanimity, non-attachment, the perfect equanimity of realisation.

Sanyaasi - One who has renounced everything, given up all desires. He is unmoved, unaffected by the temptations of sound, touch, form, taste, smell and other attractions of the senses.

Sarvaswarupa - He is all Forms.

Sath - Truth, reality, existence, that which suffers no change. Immortal existence, that which persists in the past, present and future, unaffected by time.

Sathwa - One of the three gunas (qualities and dispositions) of Maya or Prakriti. It is the quality of purity, brightness, peace and harmony. It leads to knowledge. Man is exhorted to overcome thamas by rajas, and rajas by sathwa and finally to go beyond sathwa itself to attain liberation.

Sathwa Guna - Quality of calm serenity.

Sathwic/Sathwika - Pure, good and pious, calm, unruffled, unagitated. The “white” quality, unaffected. One’s talk, conduct and behaviour are untinged by passion of emotions like hate or pride.

Sathya - Truth, truth that is not modified by time or space or gunas. Sathyam is that which is the same in the past, present and future, the same in the waking, dreaming and deep stages.

Sathyaswarupa - Expression of truth.

Sayujya - Merger in the divine.

Sayujyamukthi - Full union.

Sethu - Bridge.

Seva - Service.

Sraddha - Steady faith.

Sramam - Burden.

Sthiram - Permanent.

Sthula-akasha - The gross firmament.

Sthula-rupa - The gross form.

Subha - Progress.

Subham - Auspicious.

Suddha sathwa - Pure consciousness.

Sujnani - The wise personality.

Sukshma Hridhayaakasa - The subtle firmament of the heart.

Sukshma-rupa - The subtle form.

Sukshmamayana - Subtle form of Rayamana.

Sushupthi - Deep sleep.

Swabhava - Nature, reality.

Swaroopa/swarupa - Embodiment. The true entity, self form.

Tamas/Thamas - One of the gunas (qualities and dispositions) of Maya or Prakriti. It is the quality of dullness, inertia, darkness and tendency to evil. It results in ignorance.

Tamasic/Thamasic/Thamasica - Dull gunas or attributes, the “black” quality, inert. Craves objective pleasures through attachment of the senses.

Tapas/Thapas - Austerity, the sacrifice and asceticism that wins God’s grace, detachment. Disciplined spiritual practice to control and co-ordinate the functions of the body.

Thamo Guna - Dullness, ignorance, and all the evils that arise from these. Thamo Guna cannot grasp the reality. A sign of Thamo Guna is the giving up of action since you cannot benefit from the fruit.

Thithiksha - Ability to suffer.

Thuriya Stage - The fourth stage that cannot be described by words or even imagined by the mind for it is beyond both buddhi and manas.

Upadhi(s) - Condition or limitation, encasement for the soul i.e. the body.

Uparathi - Withdrawal of desires.

Vairagya - Detachment; desire and ability to give up all transitory enjoyments.

Vanaprastha - Life as recluse in forests.

Vasanas - Tendencies, impulses and instincts.

Vasthu - Object.

Vichara - Inquiry, discrimination, continuous self-examination.

Vicharana Marga - The Path of inquiry.

Videha - Without body, Transcorporeal Mukthi, One who has no attachment to the body.

Vidya/Vidya - Education, knowledge. The same as jnana, it has two aspects, vijnana (understanding the world around us, science) and prajnana (the higher learning), the art of controlling the inner feelings and the many layers of consciousness.

Vidyamaya - Internal illusions.

Vidyas - Knowledge.

Vijnana - Higher wisdom.

Vijnana Mandirs - Temples of learning.

Vikaaram - Changed, transformed.

Vikshepasakthi - Illusion projecting many on the one.
The projecting power.

Vrittis - Activities or mutations.

Vyamoha - Delusion.

Vyapara - Activity.

Vyavaharika-purusha - The Grihitha, the Acceptor.