



PRASANTHI VAHINI

Readers! May this stream of *Prema* (love) put down the burning fires of disquiet, ignorance, injustice, and irreligion that is consuming you and may it slake your thirst. May it shower on you Peace, Joy and Happiness.

There are many people who are not aware of even the meaning of the word, Prasanthi. It is as the backbone, to each individual, and for the *sadhaka* (aspirant) it is as the very breath. The word is taken by each to mean something different. Many feel that they have Peace when some worldly desire that was vexing them is satisfied! But that is not Real Peace. It is but a temporary short-lived interval between one worry and another. The syllable *Pra* in Prasanthi means, expanding, enlarging, *vikasa*; and so Pra-santhi means that type of *santhi*. That is to say, the absence of desire and anger, greed and hatred.

Prasanthi means success in the elimination of these qualities, grouped under *kama* (desire) and *krodha* (anger). This process called *sama* (control of senses) is very essential for all. The *sadhaka* (spiritual seeker) must be constantly engaged in practising it. What does the *sadhaka* strive for? Fulfilment, is it not? In other words, he strives for *santhi*. Now this *santhi* is the innate nature of Man. *Santhi* is the force which comes to the aid of those who try to develop *viveka*, *vairagya* and *vichakshana*, discrimination, renunciation and keenness of intellect. It is but a phase of the *Atma* itself. Just as the *Atma*, it too has no beginning or end, no blemish can mar it. It is equalled only by itself. It cannot be compared with any other.

Santhi must be manifested in feeling, word, posture and deed; *manas*, *vak*, *kaya* and *karma* in the same uniform equal measure. Then, *santhi* becomes Prasanthi, the Real *Santhi*. Bereft of such Peace, one cannot hope to get either worldly, other-worldly, or transworldly bliss. *Santhi* is the nursery of all happiness and all joy. Thyagaraja¹ knew this, for he sang, “No *santhi*, no *soukhya* (happiness).” All men need it, whoever they are, be they Daanthins or Vedaanthins, ascetics or scholars, pious men or philosophers.

But man is unable to stand still even for a moment! Absence of mere anger cannot be taken as peace. The winning of a desired object and the satisfaction one gets then, should not be confused with *santhi*. The *santhi* that

¹ Thyagaraja - a great saint. - Composer of Carnatic Music.

has pervaded the heart must not be shaken subsequently for any reason. That type of santhi alone deserves to be called Prasanthi. Prasanthi has no ups and downs, it cannot be partial in adversity and complete in prosperity. It cannot be one thing today and another tomorrow. Maintaining the same even flow of *ananda* (bliss, joy) always, that is Prasanthi.

Prasanthi Vahini tells you and makes you understand how to earn it, how it can be utilised, and what its attributes are. Every single sadhaka (aspirant) has the legitimate right to earn this Prasanthi. So he must learn the path by which it can be earned. The world today is suffering from selfish politics, nihilistic religion and heartless competition. This is indeed a disgraceful state of affairs. Man has completely forgotten his fundamental divine nature. At such a crisis, the thing that is most urgent is santhi, prema.

There are the drugs which will cure this dreaded disease. No other specific can ameliorate the illness. To get santhi, prema is the only means. The fuel prema yields the divine flame of santhi. Prema brings about unity of all mankind and this unity combined with spiritual knowledge will bring about world peace.

The discipline of the self is the basic foundation for successful living. Through that alone can man attain real and lasting Peace. Without peace there can be no happiness. Santhi is the very nature of the *Atman*. It coexists only with a pure heart. It is never associated with a greedy heart full

of desires. Santhi is the distinguishing mark of Yogis, Rishis, and Sathpurushas. It does not depend on external conditions. It will flee away from the selfish, and the sensual. It hates the company of such persons. It is the characteristic of the Inner Atma, wonderful, unshakeable, and permanent.

Santhi is full of spiritual uplift and the wisdom that is the natural accompaniment of bliss. Genuine santhi is won by the control of the senses only. Then it can be called Prasanthi. The experience of that stage is as the Stream of Peace. Calming the mental agitation that surges like waves levelling the swirls and whirls of likes, dislikes, love, hate, sorrow, joy, hope, despair, santhi is earned and maintained, without disturbance. Santhi is of the nature of the Atman. The Atma is imperishable. It does not die like the body and mind. It is universal, it is subtle and its very nature is knowledge. So, santhi also partakes of these characteristics. Knowledge of the Atman destroys illusion, doubt and sorrow. Hence, *Atma Jnana* (Self-knowledge) confers the steadiest santhi, and with it holiness and happiness.

The Atma is not the object of Knowledge. It is the very source and spring of knowledge. *Jnana* (wisdom) is that which shows the way to the ripening, the fruition, the freedom, the immortality, the eternal happiness, the eternal peace. He who is carried away by the vagaries of the senses cannot attain the Atman. Brahman is the one, unchanging, in this changing world. The Atman is not tarnished by the external transformation or changes, or modifications. Glory of the body is not the Atman. The Atman is, really speaking,

nothing positable. It is neither this nor that. It can be said to be only It, the Atman, the Brahman. Brahman itself has become *sathya* (truth), prema, light, santhi, jnana, and *paramananda* (supreme bliss). Through any of these paths, you can attain Brahman; have no doubt about that. It is the Truth.

The Atman is not these five senses, nor *buddhi* (intellect), nor the *pranas* (vital breath), nor the life-force. It can only be described as what it is not, not by what it is. No one can say It is thus, etc. If anyone says it is thus and thus or it is this or it is that, we can take it that he does not know a wee bit of it at all. About something unknown, much can be said. Anything, any name can be ascribed to it. In short, the Atman cannot be communicated by words. It is impossible to describe it, whoever may try.

Ananda (bliss, joy) is the innate nature of Man. But the pity is, he is searching for it everywhere except where it is available. Ananda is not something lifeless and inactive. It is another name for purposeful living. Santhi is the authority under which the rule of ananda prevails. It lays down the limits and laws for all activities. It must be made so stable that it is unaffected by the ever-wandering mind or the outward-bound senses. It can only be experienced, personally, through the natural state of jnana. It is the most precious treasure. He who grasps that which is deathless, that which can not be destroyed, that which is not modified, he is the enjoyer of santhi. He too has no death.

Santhi is a shoreless ocean. It is the Light that illumines the world. Having it, is having all. It confers knowledge of both this world and that. It leads to the understanding of Brahman, the very fulfilment of human life, which Vedantha tries to teach.

Pure love can emanate only from a heart immersed in santhi, for it is an atmosphere that pervades and purifies. Santhi is not a conviction arrived at by means of logic. It is the Discipline of all disciplined lives. The mind of man is a blank sheet of white paper when he is born. As soon as thinking, feeling and acting starts, the process of tarnishing the mind also starts. The body depends on prana. It depends on the mind and the desires that agitate the mind. Right and Truth are befogged by the needs of manners, fashion, convention, custom, etc. and the individual is thrown into a crowd. His solitariness is invaded and taken away.

Therefore, the mind must first be calmed and quietened. Then only can the body be healthy and the intellect sharp. The mind is projected at one time only on a single object, not on many. But it is still a conglomeration of thoughts, desires, fancies, imaginings and the rest. In fact, the mind has inside it, in a nutshell, the entire history of creation. That is the *Maya* Mould of man. The mind is the *Kurukshetra*² where good and bad, right and wrong contest for supremacy. Iron has to be beaten flat by iron alone. So

2 Kurukshetra – It was where the wicked offsprings of Dhritarashtra and the righteous offsprings of Pandu fought the battle of Mahabharata in which the latter emerged victorious.

too, the inferior, low mind has to be shaped better by the superior mind itself. One has to make his mind superior and stronger for the task of personal uplift.

That is the purpose of this *Prasanthi Vahini*. Drink deep the waters of this Stream, the waters of discipline indicated therein. Immerse yourself in it and become cleansed. May its coolness refresh your sorrows and your pains, and quench the fires of sin.

Another disease has now begun to spread in the world to weaken and lessen santhi. There are plenty who, parrot-like, purvey wholesome advice on morals, religion and discipline. They do not practise even a single bit of it themselves. The so-called elders know only how to speak, not how to act. How can those who teach how to act, know to speak about it? Words devoid of experience—that is the illness which afflicts the world today.

This must first be treated and removed, for Peace is warped thereby, for mankind. To speak is easy for all. The real sadhaka, however, is he who acts and then speaks from experience. He who merely speaks but does not act is the person who brings about disaster. Such dangerous sadhakas and *Sadhus* (wise aspirant) have multiplied and they have confused the true path. Innocent and simple-minded devotees who attach themselves to such are also being led astray and duped. Let the readers and the sadhakas watch first the conduct, and then choose. If there is no observance of the advice given, treat them with the respect due to a

phonograph record; nothing more. The record is to be treated as a record only, not as Godhead, until you reach the stage when the truth of “Everything is God” becomes patent to you. It is a greater mistake and sin to say, “All is God” in mere words only and while doing so, treat some as unholy in actual practice.

Many take sweet diction and elocution as important. Of course, they are, to some extent; but the sweetness of the words must be there, whenever the speech is recalled to memory. It should not turn bitter with the passage of time. Then only are those words *Amritha* (divine nectar). Now, the sweetness does not persist. It turns bitter soon. The reason is there is no co-ordination between the speaker, the subject and conduct. Therefore, instead of *amritha*, the words now become *anritha* (invalid). The impression will be changeless and permanent when a good subject is clothed in a fitting style and presented with appropriate feeling on the basis of actual experience.

What sadhakas have to do now is this: First viveka (discrimination) is to be developed: that is to say, the capacity to distinguish the eternal from the transitory, and to decide which is worthy. Second, a sincere attempt has to be made to experience what is so chosen as worthy and true. Third, that attempt should not be given up, whatever comes in the way. These three can be called genuine *tapas* (austerity). From this *tapas* alone is born real santhi and joy.

Now, everything from ant to Almighty is undergoing some change or other, every minute. There is no object, no

live thing that is an exception to this law. Creation is ever changing. But this change is of two kinds, external and internal. The external change can be easily cognised. The internal is not so patent, not so easy to understand. That is why it is necessary to first train oneself to understand the external changes which are clearer; and then, gradually approach the problem of controlling the changing interior. Of these two, whichever you are at, do it with a full heart, to the satisfaction of your own conscience, not to earn the esteem of others, or to please them, or to get praised by them as a great *bhaktha* (devotee). Such an attitude is treason to the Self, *Atmadroha* (going against the dictates of the soul).

The Lord loves the Inner, not the Outer. But you should not neglect the outer; even in the outward behaviour and act, you should manifest the inner feeling. That gives a chance for experiencing the feeling of quietitude and santhi in fuller measure, for the taste of that santhi must be enjoyed through thought, word, gesture and deed. It is only when santhi is enjoyed in all these four, that it becomes *paripoorna*, or complete. In other words, then the manas (mind) fades away and the stage designated as genuine santhi or yoga is reached.

Philosophy that cannot be understood, scriptures that are not practised—the present world is full of such—it is a waste to talk of these. Real change must be made in the daily conduct and behaviour of man, for these are within

the experience of all. They can be easily practised and their purpose can be clearly grasped. It is only when these are transformed that the inner Atma, deeper, more mysterious and more essential, can be understood. In every little act, activity and word, one should discriminate and adopt the best. That is the sign of the genuine sadhaka.

Neither santhi, nor the bhakthi (devotion) that gives it, can be got through another. It has to be created and developed, each one for himself. Still, one should have also the grace of the Lord, which is fundamental. As said in the Upanishad, “*Yameva vrunuthe thena labhyah.*” (He whom He chooses, He gets it.) But the sadhaka may doubt, “What then is the need for *sadhana* (spiritual discipline)?” He who thinks of the Lord with devotion can overcome any type of *Prarabdha* or *Sanchitha*, inherited or accumulated karma. With His Grace, he can experience even unattainable ananda. Do not doubt the usefulness of sadhana. It can never be fruitless, no, for anyone. Hold firm to that conviction. Unshaken bhakthi will win the grace of the Lord. Gajendra³ is an example of this.

Each is born for some task, but all can exist only on the self-same food and drink, santhi; for without it, there is no ananda. Santhi embellishes every act. It softens the hardest core of man. It takes you to the footstool of the

3 Gajendra - The elephant king which, when whole heartedly prayed to the lord, was saved from the clutches of the crocodile.

Lord and wins for you the vision of God. It knows no distinction. It is a force that establishes equality. It is the honey of prema in the enchanting flower of Life. It is a prime need for the Yogi and the sadhaka. Having acquired it, they can realise the Reality, tomorrow, if not today. They should put up with all the obstacles in the way and santhi will give them the strength needed for it. Through santhi alone can bhakthi expand and *jnanam* (highest wisdom) strike root. Jnanam, born of santhi is the one and only means of living the full life or the life that knows no death; for, the inquiry, “Who am I?” clears the path for Realisation. So, man must wait patiently and quietly, placing his faith on the Grace and Wisdom of the Lord. Such an inquirer will be ever earnest and penitent. Man becomes fearless and therefore full of santhi through another conviction also—that the Lord is everywhere, visibly present.

To earn santhi, its inveterate enemy, anger, must be laid low. Anger is the harvest of the tantalising mind. It enslaves man and fogs his understanding. Understanding becomes easy when you are full of bhakthi, and your devotion is deep-rooted. The form of bhakthi called *Santha-Bhakthi* (Devotion expressed through peace) is the best path for attaining eternal, everlasting ananda. Become the messengers of the santhi that has no beginning or end. Hold forth for humanity the Light of santhi. Live the ideal life, ever contented, ever joyous, ever happy.

The sadhakas and bhakthas of old reached their goal through santhi only. Santhi gave Ramdas,⁴ Tukaram,⁵ Kabir,⁶ Thyagaraja, Nandana, etc., the fortitude needed to bear all the calumny, torture and travail that was their lot. If sadhakas base their efforts on these examples, they will be free of anger, despair or doubt. The accounts of their struggles and successes, if contemplated upon, are more useful to the sadhaka than the contemplation of the powers and accomplishments of the Lord. They will help him to try out in their own experience the methods which these others developed. One can attain santhi by recalling how they overcame handicaps, bore troubles, and what paths they trod to cross over to the other bank.

It will be found that santhi was the main instrument which saved them from the coils of anger, pain, conceit, doubt and despair. Therefore listen, Oh sadhakas! Acquire the instrument, santhi, by the Grace of the Lord. Direct all efforts to that end.

Whatever the trouble, however great the travail, persist and win, by means of *Smarana* (memory). Remember Bhishma⁷! Though prostrate on a bed of arrows, he bore

4 Ramdas - a great Bhaktha of Lord Rama .

5 Tukaram - a Vaishnava saint of western India, who emphasized Japa as a spiritual practice.

6 Kabir - an Indian mystic teacher and poet of the weaver caste, who lived in 15th century. He was revered by both Moslems and Hindus.

7 Bhishma - Patriarch of the Kuru dynasty who allowed himself to be wounded by Arjuna in the Mahabharatha battle. He awaited the advent of Uttarayana for his death on the bed of arrows built by Arjuna.

the pain patiently, waiting the dawn of the auspicious moment. He never called out to God in his agony, asking Him to put an end to his suffering. "I shall bear everything, whatever the pain, however long the agony. I shall be silent until the moment comes. Take me when it dawns," he said. For Bhishma was the chief among the Santha-bhakthas. He lay firm and unshakeable.

Santhi is essential for everyone, having it is having all; not having it, takes away the joy of everything. Though santhi is the very nature of Man, anger and greed succeed in suppressing it. When they are removed, santhi shines in its own effulgence.

Man must always have calm thoughts. Then only can his mind have equanimity. It is just a question of the discipline of the mind, difficult in the beginning, but once mastered, capable of conquering all troubles and worries. An unruffled mind is very necessary for every aspirant who is marching forward. It is one of his beneficial qualities. Such a mind gives real strength and happiness. Strive to gain it, though you may fail even in seven attempts. You are sure to succeed in the eighth if you refuse to be dispirited. The story of Bruce⁸ who drew inspiration from a spider, and won the honours of victory at the eighth attempt, is worth remembering. What is it that gave him the victory? Santhi, the unruffled mind. He did not yield to despair, cowardice

8 Bruce - King Robert Bruce of England who observed a spider fail seven times but succeed at last.

or helplessness. He was calm throughout, and he secured success. Even if calamity befalls, the sadhaka should not lose heart. The mind must ever be pure, untarnished and calm, full of courage. No weeping for the past, no faltering in the performance of the task at hand, that is the mark of a sadhaka. Be prepared to have gladly any obstacle in the path. Only such can realise the goal.

Elation at profit, joy and cheer; dejection at loss and misery, these are the natural characteristics common to all mortals. What then, is the excellence of the sadhaka? He should not forget the principle: Be vigilant and suffer the inevitable, gladly. When difficulties and losses overwhelm you, do not lose heart and precipitate some action; but meditate calmly on how they ever came to be. Try to discover some simple means of overcoming them or avoiding them, in an atmosphere of santhi.

When the blow is directed to the head, see that the turban alone gets it, this is the mark of keen intelligence. Santhi is essential for this sharpness of intellect. Haste and worry will confuse the intelligence. Santhi develops all the beneficial characteristics of man. Even farsightedness grows through santhi. Through that, obstacles and dangers can be anticipated and averted. Sadhakas have to pay attention to some subtle points here. He has some special problems, viz., his failings, mistakes, drawbacks, etc. The *Ichchasakthi*, or the Will to Feel can be so purified and strengthened that these failings will never more be recollected. If thoughts run after the failings and begin to

dwell on how they came about, when they came about, etc., you are prone to commit a few more. Once they have been recognised as failings, why worry about their birth and ancestry? Allow your mind to dwell on good things, instead. Of what profit is it to spend time on things that are no longer necessary? Do not think of them any more. The sadhaka will find this attitude useful.

If the sadhaka is unsuccessful in following one discipline, he has to seek and know the cause of his defeat. This analysis is necessary. He must then see that, in the second stage, the trait is not repeated. He should try his best to guard himself against it. In such matters one must be quick and active, like the squirrel. Agility and vigilance must be combined with sharpness of intelligence, too. All this can be earned only through santhi.

Steady and undeviating earnestness is very important for avoiding conflicts in the mind and for overcoming them. One has to be calm and unruffled. Courage, wise counsel and steadiness, these will make the Will, the Ichchasakthi (the will to feel), strong and sturdy. Lustre in the face, splendour in the eye, a determined look, a noble voice, large-hearted charity of feeling, unwavering goodness, these are the signposts of a developing and progressing Will-Force. A mind without agitations, a joyous and unblemished outlook, these are the marks of a person in whom santhi has taken root.

The bhaktha can well pray for and ask from the Lord, the gift of such a santhi, and also the *Sadgunas* (virtues,

good qualities) necessary for its growth. Why, the sadhaka has as his capital for earning any of his goals, only this one thing, prayer.

Some people may have some doubts related to this. Of what avail is prayer? Will the Lord gratify all that we ask for in our prayers? He can give us only what, according to Him, we need, or what we deserve. Is it not? Will the Lord like to give us all that we ask for, in our prayers to Him? Under such circumstances, what is the use of prayer? Of course all these doubts can be resolved.

If the bhaktha has dedicated his all, body, mind and existence, to the Lord, He will Himself look after everything, for He will always be with him. Under such conditions there is no need for prayer. But have you so dedicated yourself and surrendered everything to the Lord? No. When losses occur, or calamities come, or plans go astray, the bhaktha blames the Lord. Some, on the other hand, pray to Him to save them. Avoiding both these, as well as the reliance on others, if complete faith is placed on the Lord at all times, why should He deny you His Grace? Why should He desist from helping you? Men do not rely fully and unswervingly on the Lord. Therefore, though you have to be the agent and the instrument doing everything, keep on praying with devotion and faith. Faith is the product of santhi, not of haste and hurry. For the acquisition of the Grace of the Lord and the resulting Awareness of the Reality, the quality of santhi is the prime need. Every sadhaka is aware how

Droupadi⁹ deserved the Grace of the Lord, through her *dharma* and her santhi. Though her husbands were mighty heroes, and far-famed monarchs, she sought refuge in Lord Krishna, feeling that all others are of no use. But Prahlada¹⁰ did not seek refuge, under similar circumstances. He had surrendered *all* at birth to the Lord. He knew that the Lord was ever by his side and that he was ever by the side of the Lord. So he had no need to call out to Him, for protection. Prahlada was unaware of anything except the Lord. He could not distinguish between one function of the Lord and another. So, how could he pray for protection, he who did not know that, He was punished? For all such God-intoxicated and dedicated souls, prayer is unnecessary.

But until that stage is reached, prayer in an attitude of santhi is essential for sadhakas. Prayer of this type will promote equanimity, or *samarasa*. The Lord can be prayed to by means of *kirthana* (concentrated contemplation of the glory of God), *japa* (repetition of the name of the Lord), *dhyaana* (meditation) or *bhajana* (spiritual songs). In every one of these, the chief item is the Divine Name. That is why Krishna spoke in the Gita of Japa Yajna. When japa is done, it is better to recite aloud, and make it bhajana. This will

9 Droupadi - The daughter of King Drupada. The royal princess, who became the wife of Pandavas.

10 Prahlada - Son of the demon king, Hiranyakshipu, mentioned in the Bhagavatam, who remained steadfast in devotion to Vishnu, his chosen Ideal, despite repeated torture and attempts on his life devised by his evil father.

inspire the gathering. If bhajana is sung in a sweet voice, people will be drawn towards the Lord. Gradually, it will develop into the Love for God, and His Grace will follow in due course. One should patiently wait for that Grace.

Even for being blessed by the Lord's Grace, one must have santhi and await patiently. Serenity alone succeeds in bringing about the result of sadhana. Add this lesson to the practices you are engaged in, night and day and to the Santhi Manthra.

“*Asatho maa sadgamaya; thamaso maa jyothir gamaya; mrityor maa amritham gamaya,*” this is the Santhi Manthra. The meaning of this manthra is given variously by various people, some elaborately, some succulently. “Oh, Lord, when I am deriving happiness through the objects of this world, make me forget the unreal objects and show me the way to permanent happiness,” this is the first prayer. “OH Lord, when the objects of the world attract me, remove the darkness which hides the all-pervading Atma, which every such object really is.” This is the second prayer.

“Oh Lord, bless me through Your Grace with Immortality or Paramananda, resulting from the awareness of the Effulgence of the Atma, immanent in every object.” This is the third prayer. This is the real meaning of the Manthra.

The true bhaktha will always be dwelling in God. He has no time to know or feel his welfare or worries. Attaining

the Lord, is the one and only idea in his mind. It is hard to understand this nature, except by examples. A small child runs about in fear shouting, “*Amma, Amma,*” searching for its missing mother. The mother takes it up in her arms and places it on her lap. The child stops crying and is free from all fear. But can the child calculate and find out the difference between its previous state and its present relief? No. Nor is it necessary to do so.

So too, he who seeks ever to serve the Lord will immerse himself in it when the glorious chance comes. In that Presence, no anxiety or trouble can disturb him. Anxiety and trouble pester only until the moment of attainment. Then, all attention is diverted to the Experience. The past struggle and travail are forgotten.

Therefore, sadhakas and bhakthas must ignore and forget all the thousand troubles that have gone before, and be engaged in the thoughts of the Lord only. Immerse yourselves in them and derive joy therefrom. Bhakthi has no other reward. It is the cause and it is also the effect: there are no two. Bhakthi is itself the Realisation. Through the Jnana Path also, when the veil of *Ajnana* (ignorance) is removed, the self-same Realisation occurs. In the Bhakthi Path, one derives no jot of joy from any source, except the Lord. Every obstacle in this Path can be overcome by *Chithsakthi* (Grace, principle of intelligence). The Chithsakthi is weakened by *ahamkaara* (egotism) and *mamakaara*: the feeling “I am the enjoyer,” “These things are mine,” etc. So long as one has this consciousness one

can have no real contentment. One will be driven to seek for things which will give even more joy.

Every bhaktha hopes ultimately to experience the joy of Supreme Bliss, as a result of his sadhana. But that Bliss is not something newly earned or acquired, some *new* experience to be won by sadhana. It is always with him, in him. Only he is not able to taste it now, due to the obstacles of the Ego, which acts as a screen hiding it from view. One has to rend that veil asunder. Sadhana, that is all that the sadhaka has to do. Then the ever-existing Bliss can be cognised. It does not arise anew. It is there always. What comes and goes is the screen of “I” and “mine” which covers the Bliss.

While trying to remove the screen of *ahamkaara* and *mamakaara*, the sadhaka should not hasten frantically and worry overmuch if he does not discover the Bliss expected. At such times, santhi is an unfailing help. If santhi is cultivated well at first, then you can succeed in any task, however difficult. Everyone is entitled to acquire and benefit by santhi such as this. All are children of santhi; however many the progeny she is “mother” to each of them. For every one of them, old or young, great or small, she is “mother” in an equal measure. When they call her, each one has to address her as “mother.” Children brought up by santhi avoid all pain and sorrows, bear all varieties of happiness, and at last, lay their heads on the lap of the “mother” in perfect security.

To win such perfect security, one has to follow the path of full bhakthi, dedicating oneself to the Lord. It cannot be got by any other means. The path of Jnana is possible only for one in a million, is beyond the reach of all. Is it possible to negate the body and the objective world, so patent to the senses, by repeating, “Nethi,” “Nethi,” “Not this,” “Not this?” And unless this is possible, how can the Nethi, Nethi argument be applied? Under present conditions, *Jnana Marga* (Path of knowledge) is indeed very difficult. Then, the *Karma Marga* (Path of action) too is not quite so feasible. It is also full of difficulties. To do work in the proper spirit, love and devotion, bhakthi and prema are essential for success. So too the *Yoga Marga* (Path of yoga), it also bristles with obstacles. Therefore, the *Bhakthi Marga* (Path of devotion) is the smoothest, the most conducive to success and the most bliss-yielding.

Even this Bhakthi Marga, no one can define and demarcate, as such and such. Since it has many forms, many roads and many types of experience, it is impossible for anyone to describe it accurately and fully. Each bhaktha gets ananda only through his individual experience. Through the experience of other bhakthas, he can get, at best, only encouragement and guidance. The experience changes from one person to another, and so it eludes comparison, and even description. If anyone is able to describe it by examples and limits, then one can be sure that his experience is not real. The limited soul is immersed in the limitless Love of the Lord, and how can words describe that experience called

by the Upanishads as “*Akhandaikarasa*,” the Unbroken Uniflow of Sweetness? Man cannot express in human language that state of Unbounded Bhakthi. By outward signs which can be cognised by the senses, one can feel that the bhaktha is in a high state of Bliss; but who can gauge the depth of that Joy? That has no relation with the senses at all. Bhakthi has to be realised in your own experience, though great souls can illumine the path a little for you by their examples. You can grasp something of the Path, with their help. But always remember that words fail, when they approach the Beyond. They are useful only for purposes of the objective world. They are instruments of no value in regions of experience where comparisons are impossible. Still consider a few such illustrations. Maitreyi,¹¹ one of the foremost of bhakthas among women, compared the mind of a bhaktha to a still lake, that is to say, all agitation is stopped, the mind becomes *Jada*, inactive, ineffective so to say, worn out into nothing. Kapilamaharishi,¹² speaking of the same bhakthi, compares it to a flowing stream. Streams, and rivers like Ganga and Godavari, flow uninterruptedly without rest or any other thought towards the sea. So too from the very moment of birth, the bhaktha yearns to reach the sea of the grace of the Lord. Bhakthi is that unbroken relationship. Whatever the task on hand,

11 Maitreyi - The more spiritual of Sage Yajnavalkya's two wives. He taught her Self-knowledge before he entered into Sanyasa. Refer to Brihad-Aranyak Upanishad.

12 Kapilamaharishi - Sage who is the author of the Sankhya-sastra and founder of the Sankhya school of philosophy.

whichever road is trod, the mind dwells on the goal alone, the goal of attaining the Lord. Again in the Devi-bhagavatham,¹³ it is said that bhakthi is as the flow of oil, from one vessel to another, *thailadharavath*. This is more or less like the image of the river. Sankara characterises bhakthi differently, in the *Sivanandalahari*.¹⁴ Like the piece of iron that is drawn towards the magnet, the *Jivi* (resident of the body) is drawn towards the Lord and it attaches itself firmly to the Lord. All modifications of the mind get merged in the Feet of the Lord. Ramanuja¹⁵ explained that bhakthi as well as dhyana done through prema are essentially the same. Though each interprets it differently, all interpretations are correct, for they are all based on actual experience, which cannot be negated. These statements do not exhaust the types. There are many more, for bhakthi is of a thousand forms. It flows along a thousand streams, to reach the ocean of the Lord's Grace. The goal of all the forms is the merger of Jiva and Brahma, an absorption which is an experience.

Many people are disheartened by the fear that such merger is beyond their reach in this Kali age, however much they may try. But this is a type of weakness and nothing more. It is not a question of the path of yoga adopted.

13 Devibhagavatham-Scripture describing the glory of the Lord as the universal Mother.

14 Sivanandalahari - Book written by Shankaracharya explaining the bliss derived by merging with Shiva.

15 Ramanuja - Founder of Visishtadwaitha (Qualified Monism).

Whatever the yoga path, if one has Faith in Oneself and Faith in the Sastras, the goal is bound to be won. Some people pretend to have Faith in both, all the while doubting them in the heart of hearts. Each one can discover for himself the measure of his faith by the results. If the experience of merger is absent, it is due to the absence of these two. They must be in one, as the very breath of existence. Then only can they succeed in sadhana and attain the *Aikya* (oneness with God). Of course, those without Faith are without anything. They cannot benefit by advice. The present state of affairs is due to men losing Faith in themselves and in the Sastras. Even those who claim to have the Faith do not conduct themselves according to the Sastras and nourish them. Consequently, goodness and the sathwic quality have gone out of the world and wicked habits and degradation have gained the upper hand. If this atmosphere is to be transformed, and if the world must enjoy security and peace, every Asthika, every pious God-fearing person, must cultivate Faith in himself and in Sastras and practice in one's own life the disciplines enjoined in the Sastras. Naturally, some modifications may have to be made out of consideration for the place, time and individual, but the fundamental outlook and significant meaning should not be changed. The means by which those ideals are to be reached may be changed, but not the ideals themselves.

A child may refuse to swallow a pill, when it is in bed suffering from fever. It may clamour for a plantain instead. Do you know what to do at that time? Do not omit the pill.

Insert the pill inside the plantain and offer it to the child to be swallowed. Its desire is satisfied. The fever, too, comes down. The fundamental has not been discarded. It has remained unchanged. Only the method of administering it has been modified.

So too, in the midst of the crazy habits and behaviours of today, there is no use presenting the Sastras in a language which most people are unfamiliar with. They can be explained in easy understandable language. The fundamentals of the Sastras will not be affected by this. Then it can be practised, understood, experienced and enjoyed. As a consequence, the Faith in the Sastras will also be strengthened, and Peace too will be stabilised upon the Faith. So, every *Asthika* must practise the important direction of the Sastras and demonstrate in his life the sweetness of such dedicated lives, so that all others might appreciate the truth and value of the ideals and the disciplines.

Big personages, claiming to be great, declaim about the Vedas, the Sastras and the Atma. They freely quote the similes and metaphors contained in the books but by their conduct, they diminish their lustre. Of what use is it when the eyes are closed, to fill the rest of the body with vital consciousness? Not even a single step can be taken forward. Similarly, with the eye of Faith in the Sastras closed, what can one practise, if asked to carry on?

Therefore, from today onwards, readers who are sadhakas in the spiritual plane should try to grasp the basic

meaning of the Sastra. It is a sacred guide along the road. If it is not believed in, the Reality will elude them. To understand it, one must have peace and fortitude. Santhi is of great assistance in this. If only the great personages explain it in simple easily understandable language to the ignorant, then discontent and disquiet will disappear and belief in God will increase. Concord will grow between man and man. The nourishing of the Sastra will promote the nourishing of the welfare of the world.

To nourish the Sastra, *Sathyam Vada*, “Speak the Truth,” to nourish the world, *Priyam Vada*, “Speak pleasantly.” If these two are kept in view and practised, there is no greater discipline needed. It is only in an atmosphere of santhi that such sacred maxims can be put in action.

To earn that calmness, steady effort and concord are essential, in the same manner as for the nourishing of the Sastra and of the world. When santhi is acquired, then, it is all concord, samarasa. Samarasa (equanimity) is the very nature of santhi. Everyone should be endowed with that santhi and that samarasa and establish an Age of Belief or *Asthikam* devoid of unsastric behaviour, attitude, conduct, habits and character.

For this purpose, an army of sadhakas has to be trained in *Asramas* and Centres of *Asthikam*, working in various parts. This is the responsibility mainly, of those who run the asramas, for they must have faith in themselves in order to train the army along sound lines. Otherwise, things will get

more confounded. The elders and the “great,” the so-called big personages, they by their practices are responsible for the evident loss of faith in Sastras, in oneself and the consequent discord and disquiet. Hence, they must all gird up their loins to re-establish and restore santhi.

Bhakthi is the very fountainhead of this santhi, and so, if everyone plants it in his heart and nourishes it with care and constant attention, a harvest of goodness and concord can be reaped. The path of bhakthi is the best, under present conditions.

That is why the *Bhagavatha* is saturated with bhakthi. Without bhakthi, the Lord cannot be understood. Sakthi, however high and mighty, if it intends to protect and foster the world, has to assume the human form itself. That form alone will be suitable for all to listen to and learn from, honour and serve. Those who have no bhakthi will take that form as merely human, for they cannot grasp the Absolute Principle, the *Para Thatwa*. This is the reason why it is said in the Gita:

*Avajaananthi maam moodha maanusheem
thanumaasritham
Param bhaavamajaanantho mama
bhoothamaheswaram*

Men are failing to keep steady faith in such an invaluable declaration. This is the worst sacrilege. Judged properly, Bharathadesa (India) is, of all countries, the holiest. The

meaningful *Yajna* (spiritual sacrifice) and yoga that originated in Bharathadesa, the way of life followed by the people here are not found in any other country or the history of any other people. Such intensive cultivation of the spirit, such supremely useful spiritual literature, arose out of the experiences of the people of this country! It holds the very first place in this field. The Four Vedas, the Six Darsanas, the Eighteen Puranas, the Bhashyas of the Acharyas, and besides these, the Disciplines and Methods of sadhana expounded by the great souls, who have answered questions like: What is meant by life? What is the meaning of God? What transformations take place on death, in the Jivi? etc. No other place is so congenial for Rishis and Mahatmas as this country. Here, there are persons who have tasted the entire gamut of spiritual bliss. This country played the chief role in spreading the doctrine of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) taught in Buddhism. The land that gave birth to Buddha is Bharathadesa. When the spiritual experience, the essence of the Sastras of the *Sanathana Dharma* of this sacred Land is being treasured by other countries, what about the fate of those who do not realise its worth but are engaged in squeezing the essence out of it, and making it dry?

So arise, all ye who aspire to take up the *Adhyatmic Sadhana*! Immerse yourselves in actual practice! Strengthen your Faith! Cultivate it! Make santhi your secure possession! Saturate your lives with ananda! Enjoy the Vision of *Atmarama*! Arise and delay not!

The mind should not be permitted to wander as it fancies. It must be controlled without the least tenderness of mercy. Why? If possible, one should aim even at its destruction, that is to say, making the mind keep away from contact with worldly objects. It is only when that is done that man can grasp his real identity. The realisation of that Reality is the state called *Mukthi* (Self-realisation). Then all varieties of troubles and travails, doubts and dilemmas, come to an end. Man then overcomes sorrow, delusion and anxiety and is established in the holy calmness of santhi.

First, give up all impure impulses and cultivate the pure ones. Afterwards, try step by step to give up even these and render the mind objectless, *Nirvishaya*. Santhi thus attained is effulgent, blissful and associated with Wisdom. It is indeed the experience of the Godhead, God Himself.

The sadhaka who wants to attain this santhi has to constantly practise a virtuous life, overcoming all the initial obstacles. Santhi is a mountain of rock. It can stand up against the continuous floods of temptation from evil. This Prasanthi need not be sought anywhere outside: it emanates in the *Antahkarana* (inner consciousness) itself. It is the very basis of the urge towards liberation. It is the root of deep-grounded dhyana. It is the prerequisite for *Nirvikalpa* (agitationless) *Samaadhi*. Established in santhi, the Reality can be known and experienced: impulses and mental waves can be stilled. *Atmananda* or the Bliss of Realisation of the Self is proportional to the decline of I-ness and the identification with the physical body.

Do not shape your conduct with an eye on the opinion of others. Instead, follow bravely, gladly and steadily, the sweet and pleasant promptings of your own sathwic manas, your own awakened conscience, your own Inner Self. Associate yourself with those who are richly endowed with Truth. Spend every second of your life usefully and well. If you possibly can, render service to others. Engage yourself in nursing the sick; but when thus engaged in service, do not worry about either the result, or the act of service, or the person to whom it is rendered. The service is made holy and pure if you ignore both the good and the bad, and keep on silently repeating in your heart of hearts the *manthra* that appeals to you. Do not enter upon a task through momentary compulsion of some impulse. The impulse might appear very respectable, but you should not let yourself be dragged by it. You have to be always vigilant in this matter, always steadfast and strong.

A joyful outlook helps santhi to grow. It should therefore be cultivated by the sadhaka. His nature should be free from pomp and show. He should understand the secret of character, and strengthen his will for betterment. If he moves in the world intelligently and with care, he can demonstrate the truth of the statement, "Man is truly of the nature of santhi." For example, valuable time should not be wasted in worthless talk. Conversation must be pleasant and to the point. Then, it can be kept polite and simple, and santhi will become firm.

If everything is dedicated to the Lord, there will be no room for worry or sorrow or even joy. If you rid yourself thus of attachment, santhi can never be disturbed. I, my, mine, my own, your, yours—when these ideas take hold of the mind santhi suffers a setback. To get the attitude of sincerely offering all to Him, prema is essential, prema combined with faith in oneself. That is what is called bhakthi. Cultivate it steadily every day and derive joy therefrom. Again, one should also have a mind filled with samarasa, a vision of equality, the conviction that fundamentally all are the same. The spiritual life is not a matter of meaningless talk. It is really life lived in the Atman. It is the experience of pure ananda. It is just another name for the Full Life.

For a life of santhi, you should keep your promises and never forget them. You should be courteous and well-mannered. You have to be impartial in your dealings. You should be immersed in the ocean of bhakthi, and as immovable as the Himalayas. Remove from the garden of your heart the thorny bushes of greed and anger, jealousy and selfishness, the evil breed of “I” and “Mine.” Uproot them even when they emerge as seedlings. All this discipline is truly discipline for earning santhi.

First, be convinced that you are the Universal, Immortal Atma. That will make every subsequent sadhana easy. Instead, if you fondle the illusion that you are the body, the senses, or only the jivi, this individual self, any sadhana that you do is just tender rot-ridden fruit. It will never grow and become ripe, the sweet fruit of santhi cannot be won even

at the end of many lives. To experience yourself as the embodiment of santhi, you must proceed from the faith that you are such an embodiment. Give up the theory that you are the body and the senses. This will lead to the receding of *vasanas* (desires, tendencies) also. When *vasanas* recede, you acquire mastery and gain santhi.

Santhi can also be defined as true prema towards the Lord, towards Truth itself and towards true dharma. Hence it makes realisation of the Lord possible. Have, therefore, the Lord as your sole aim, hold fast to the desire to realise Him in this very birth, remain unaffected by lust or greed, and by joy and pain, praise and abuse or any such pair of opposites. Fortitude such as this alone leads to Realisation.

Resolve that the purpose of human birth is to reach the Lord through worship. All experience, all knowledge, all actions are towards that end. All that is eaten, all that is heard, must be dedicated towards that goal. The Lord’s name is like a mountain of sugar. Approach that mountain, have faith in it, taste it anywhere and experience the ananda. The highest bhaktha is he who ever revels in that ananda. Others there are who live beside the mountain, enjoying for some time the Bliss of the constant remembrance of the Lord and at other times experiencing the objects of the world. Such bhakthas are of the middle class. Some among the rest devote a quarter of their time to the Lord and three quarters to the world. These are of the lower class of bhakthas. There are also others who take shelter at the foot

of the mountain (the Lord's name) when calamity hits them but move far away from it when the crisis is over. Of these four grades, the highest type of bhakthas steadily cling to the path and enjoy the Bliss throughout their lives. To persist on that path, santhi is the best comrade. With its help you can render your life holy and fulfil its purpose.

But one point has to be carefully noted here. When the body suffers from fever or when the mind is otherwise distracted, you do not feel the taste of the things you eat. So too when the Lord's name is uttered, if the heart is tainted by *Thamo Guna* (Quality of sloth), or if the mind is otherwise distracted, you are not aware of the sweetness of the name.

So long as the sugar is on the tongue, you feel the sweetness in the taste. Similarly, so long as the heart has bhakthi, santhi and prema, you feel ananda.

Instead, if the bitter qualities of lust, anger and envy germinate in the heart, fear, anxiety and sloth will be the fruits thereof. You must have noticed the crane walking silently or standing motionless in order to catch fish. If it plunges headlong or runs about helter skelter, can it get the fish? Similarly, the Lord in the fish-forms of sathya, dharma, santhi and prema can never be won, when the hullabaloo of lust, anger, egoism and envy is rampant in the heart.

The ananda that transcends all ananda can be achieved if a single sadhana, the constant remembrance of the Lord's

Name is practised; and if as a consequence, santhi is attained. By this, the evil tendencies of the lower nature can also be conquered. Know that Paramatma is the goal of Man. Direct all attention on that goal. Control the mind that wanders away from it. This is the essence of the teaching of all the Sastras. Practise this one discipline, and you have practised all the Sastras.

Note this: the Kauravas¹⁶ enjoyed the benefits of the *Punya* (meritorious deeds) that they did in previous births, but while so engaged, they revelled in evil deeds. The Pandavas,¹⁷ on the other hand, while suffering from the evil deeds of their past births, engaged themselves in *Punya*. This is the difference between the wise and the unwise. When hardships overwhelm you, know that it is the consequence of your own past deeds. Do not lay the blame on the Lord and develop a grouse against Him. Do not pay heed to trouble or take it as such, but engage yourself in the service of others and in deeds of merit. Continue relying on the Name of the Lord as support. That is the sign of the wise. That is acting Pandavalike. To strengthen this attitude, santhi is a great source of help. Basking in the happiness born of

16 Kauravas - "The sons of Kuru" usually referred to Duryodhana and his brothers, who are unrighteous and are the enemies of the righteous Pandava brothers.

17 Pandavas - "The sons of Pandu" collective for Arjuna and his four brothers, Yudhishtira (Darmaraja), Bhima, Nakula and Sahadeva. The Pandavas are in conflict with the Kauravas, both claiming the ancient throne of Hastinapur. The Gita is delivered on the eve of the battle that will decide this conflict. The Pandavas are looked upon as the forces for good and the Kauravas as wicked usurpers, greedy for wealth and power.

Punya, you should not be tempted to commit deeds of evil. You should strive to perform even more meritorious deeds. Then you can make your lives holier and purer and reach the Divine Presence. Such striving is the sign of the highest character. Establishing oneself in santhi through this type of character and attaining liberation or moksha—this is the secret of a successful life, the duty of every individual.

For, what exactly is moksha, liberation? It is the samaadhi (or santhi) attained through the sadhana of *Chittasuddhi*, or cleansing of the Inner Man—the sadhana of negating the impressions that one gets through seeing, hearing, reading, learning, doing and getting done. A person suffering unbearable physical agony does not take any interest in an entertainment, does he? Similarly, a sincere seeker and devotee can have no interest in the world's theatre of objective pleasure, and petty passion. These inferior desires have first to be renounced and checked. They lie at the root of all misery. Passion is the product of delusion. It dwells in the mansion of Raja. Renunciation or vairagya is resident in the *Sathwic Guna* (Quality of calm serenity). Passion is *asuric* (demonic) in nature. Passion, ignorance, egoism, all are born of delusion. Passion brings about death, while vairagya brings about liberation. It is Wisdom.

Stabilising oneself in vairagya is itself the highest thapas (austerity), the most exacting vow. One has to be ever alert in that thapas and strive again and again. Like a child endeavouring to walk, you might toddle a few steps, falter

and fall; but like the child, you must lift yourself up with a smile and start again. Santhi is essential for such persistence. Failures are not boulders that block your way; remember, they are stepping stones to victory.

Be bound to the Atma in you. Take rest and refuge in That. Meditate on That, without interruption. Then, all bonds will loosen of themselves, for the bond with which you attach yourselves to the Lord or the Atma has the power of unbinding all other bonds.

The “unattached” has real love towards all. Their love is not only pure, it is Divine as well. It is the embodiment of santhi. One can attain the Lord without doubt if one becomes devoid of all *raga* or passion or attachment and if he engages himself in the actions detailed above.

Vairagya, of course, does not mean the giving up of hearth and home, or of high estate and even kingdoms. It is the understanding of the Divinity immanent in everything, the fading away of all the distinct names and forms, the ananda of experiencing in everything and every place the Divine which is its Reality, that is the true meaning of the *Mahavakya*, vairagya, raga-lessness. So long as one cognises the world of name and of form, one is burdened with raga. How can it be raga-lessness when the mind is immersed in thoughts, feelings and experience of the objective world? One might have given up all but yet be full of these. Such cannot be said to have vairagya. Surely, even

for the acquisition of this pure spirit of vairagya, santhi is very necessary.

The ocean is one and indivisible; but it is called here, the North Sea and there, the South Sea! So too, the Lord, the Ocean of Grace is one; but He is assigned various names according to the Age or Era of Time. The holy rivers seeking to reach the Ocean flow from all directions; so too, humanity seeks the Lord through various spiritual disciplines and finally merge themselves, all of them, in Krishna.

Mankind can win happiness only through unity and not through diversity. If thoughts and feelings run along the routes of distinction and division, happiness is beyond reach, and santhi cannot be experienced. Without santhi, man has no chance to be joyful. Consider the One Indivisible Ocean as the goal. Then, what does the direction of the flow matter? What does the name matter? They merge in the selfsame sea, is it not? Sadhakas and bhakthas, adopting the path of yoga or bhakthi, or the path of santhi, dharma, sathya and prema, when they reach the Ocean of Grace at last, Name and Form fade away, distinctions disappear. They are blessed with the merger in the sea of santhi. So, unity must ever be kept before the eye; never nourish ideas of difference, of distinct names and forms of the Lord, of paths which are divergent. Such ideas are obstacles for the attainment of ananda. Avoid these obstacles. Develop the equal vision. Remember, santhi is the royal road to strengthen that vision and reach the Ocean of Grace.

To enjoy santhi, mankind must be controlled and directed by ideals of dharma. This depends on mutual toleration in the family. That again is based on individual conduct which is sathwic, and aims at pleasing everyone. Such conduct has a charm, all its own. Avoid in your behaviour, your actions and your speech all trace of the desire to pain others, to insult others, or to cause loss or misery to others. Find out the best means of reforming yourself thus, practice this type of living, desist from injury to yourself and your own good, and walk always in the path of Truth. That is verily the path of Beauty, that is conduct that is really charming.

For this, large heartedness is essential. One can acquire it only if he has (1) inborn impulse or samskara and (2) bhakthi in every act. Through bhakthi or devotion to the Lord one gets humility, fear of sin, and faith in scriptures. Through these qualities, littleness of mind is wiped out and man becomes large-hearted. Therefore, Oh, ye Seekers, first direct your efforts towards acquiring Faith in God and Fear of sin. These two will promote meekness; and remember, meekness is santhi.

Some persons, the sort that have no experience and that do not put their words into practice, go about declaring that the way to santhi is to keep samsaara at a distance. That is no santhi. It is just the opposite. If the seed is taken far away from the tree, will it not grow into a tree again? If you do not want it to, you will have to boil it or fry it over a

fire. So too, the impulses and vasanas (desires, tendencies) that germinate have to be fried over the fire of discrimination or *vichara* and then, real santhi can emerge. Instead, if one escapes only from the responsibilities of samsaara or life in society, santhi cannot be enjoyed; it will never come. But if vasanas are controlled and eliminated, there is no need at all to run away. Content with what one has, refusing to be worried by the absence of things which one has not got, trying as far as possible to reduce and eliminate vasanas and passions and hatreds, one should strive to cultivate sathya and dharma, prema and *sahana* (fortitude). Cultivate, and at the same time, practise them systematically.

This is the real duty of man, the real purpose of human birth. If the above-mentioned four qualities are cultivated and practised by each for himself, there will be no envy between man and man. Selfish grabbing will cease. The interests of others will be respected, and world peace can be stabilised. Instead, if you yourself have no peace, how can you ensure world peace? Those enthusiastic about world peace must first learn how to experience and enjoy that peace themselves. Later, they can spread that santhi to the world outside them, and help to promote it.

Everywhere now, one can hear the cry, “World Peace,” “World Peace,” but the number of persons who can tell how it can be attained is very small! There is no one who can even picture correctly what exactly is meant by santhi or peace. For, if one has acquired true santhi and experienced

it, the turmoil and confusion of the world will not be cognised at all. You cannot be aware of its absence if you have it. Santhi means, “the giving up of the activities of the senses.” How can such santhi be spread and “promoted” by anyone who has gained it? It can be experienced, but it is incapable of being exchanged from person to person. The best that can be done is to show the way to others, to inform others of its sweetness. How can another’s hunger be appeased by your eating your food? The diner alone derives satisfaction from the dinner. Santhi too is of such a nature. Each has to earn and experience it for himself, so that all may have it. Love and fortitude are enough to confer santhi. But you should not concentrate on mere outward show. Let these virtues saturate your thought, word and deed. That is the way to establish world peace also.

Certain others declare that prayer can bring about world peace and they ask people to pray. Of course, it is good to pray; but santhi can never be gained by that alone. Prayer must be united with practice. You should not pray for one thing and practise another. Such prayer is only a means of deception. The words you utter, the deeds you do, the prayers you make must all be directed along the same path. While repeating prayers for World Peace or *Loka Santhi*, if you cannot patiently put up with others, if you slander others, and look down upon them, you yourself will have no santhi. You will have turmoil instead; and with the turmoil, all the attendant sorrow and pain!

Through world peace, individual peace too can be cultivated. When food is taken by the hand to the mouth,

chewed and swallowed, the essence spreads to every part of the body. So also, if the hands are engaged in acts promoting peace, and the tongue engaged in prayers for peace, by these two means, the essence of santhi will spread into all parts of the World, which is but the body of the Lord. The santhi of the World is the basis for genuine santhi.

Many do not know the meaning of the statement, *Deho Devalayam*, “The Body is the Temple.” For what reason did the temple arise? For the Lord worshipped within. If there is no such Lord, it cannot be called temple. But the actions of man are now all against this plain fact. Now all worship is being done to the temple, forgetting that the temple is not God. The temple is to be preserved and cleaned and decorated for the sake of God therein, it should be made a good means of realising Him. That is all. Similarly, the body is the temple of the Lord, the *Atma Swarupa* (pure consciousness). Forgetting the need for faith in the Atma, for the bliss derived from the Atma, for the worship of the Atma, for dedication to the Atma, people are now immersed in faith in the body, bliss of the body, decoration of the body and dedication to the body. In spite of everything, the body is evanescent; but through the temple, the Lord can be seen. Through the body, the Atma who is within can be realised. That is the main task of man. Conscious of this, try always to keep watch over the body and protect it. Do not neglect the Lord within. Do not hold fast to the unreal, temporary, outer building. Of course, you should not ruin the temple, either. Its maintenance is also essential. Only,

you should never forget that what gives value and purpose to it, is the Atma within.

Similarly, with *Lokasanthi* and *Atmasanthi*, world peace and individual peace. The temple is Lokasanthi, the Lord within is Atmasanthi. World peace is a means to subserve the santhi of the individual. The World is the Lord’s Mansion. Know it as such. He is moving about in that mansion, in its many rooms. God’s worship can be done well only if the temple is clean and pure. So engage yourselves in winning the two, santhi for the world and santhi for yourselves. Do not ignore the Lord whose mansion is the world. Without Him, it is a tomb, not a temple, *savam* not *Sivam*. If you always remember Him, that is joy and victory, that is *sarvamangala*.

Lokasanthi is the life-breath of all beings, so strive ever for that. The Lord can be won only when the sacred motherland is immersed in santhi. When *prakriti* merges in Paramatma, it is called moksha. So seekers of moksha must yearn for the santhi and prema of prakriti as much as they yearn for the prema and Grace of Paramatma. Without the Grace of both prakriti and Paramatma, the strong and subtle evil of the senses cannot be conquered. That is, the destruction of the mind, the stilling of the agitations of the mind cannot be done. Therefore, everyone has to achieve santhi, as his chief duty.

There are many who argue that Self-respect is santhi. But they confuse Self-respect with the respect given to the

inferior vehicle, the body, or to one's status. That is, respect to the person, not respect to the Self or Atma. The respect given to the Lord within, the Atma, that is real Self-respect, not anything else. Truth is Atma. Pure prema is Atma. The Lord is Atma. Selfless service is Atma. Respect for these is Self-respect. Self-respect of this type is, of course, santhi; not the other types. Keeping the All-merciful Lord, the Personification of Truth, the Lord whose very nature is prema, always in the memory, that is real Self-respect. To earn this, one has to cast aside as worthless, the respect that the world accords to wealth and status, to ignore praise and blame, derision and flattery, and engage in sadhana with full faith in Truth and the Lord. That is real santhi, pure santhi, eternal santhi.

There is no status higher than that of the Lord, no embodiment of His, higher than Truth, no beauty of His, higher than santhi, no, not even in all the fourteen Lokas and in the entire Creation, now, in the past and for ever and ever. This is the truth, and I repeat it. Truth enveloped in the darkest Maya (illusion) will still shine brilliantly. However strongly you may imprison it in darkness, its effulgence cannot be suppressed.

Truth can never die. Untruth can never live. You must all get firmly established in this belief.

Of what can man say, "This is permanent"? Yes, how can he ever believe that anything is permanent? Truly, when he sees from his birth all things changing around him, his

experience itself undergoing various transformations, and the atmosphere in which he grows constantly being transformed, when he grows up in an environment that has no permanency, how can that belief arise? Observing all this, it can be declared without any fear of contradiction that this is an unreal world. For, if this is Real, how can it change? All that suffers change is unreal. Reality alone is changeless, stable, permanent. The changeless, permanent entity is the Atman alone. That alone is real, that alone is permanent. The Atman is the Form of the Lord, it is the Power of the Lord.

Man alone has the capacity, the credentials for the realisation of that Power, for earning that *Shakti* (energy). It is indeed tragic that, even after achieving human birth, persons do not realise that eternal Reality, nor even make an attempt to understand It. If this chance is missed, when can they attempt it?

Why, they do not concern themselves with the very purpose for which they have come! Did they come only for living like all other animals or birds or insects—eating, wandering about, sleeping and seeking pleasure? If the answer is "No," then, for what else? Can we say that man is just another animal, like the rest? He has three things that they have not, the power to reason out, the power to renounce, and the power to decide on right and wrong. These are special powers in man. But of what use are they, unless they are applied in actual practice? If they are used, then the name "Man" is apt, otherwise the name "animal" has to be used.

The three powers mentioned above should be applied not only in worldly matters by man, but even in the investigation of the Ultimate Truth. Really speaking, if discrimination and renunciation and inquiry are carried out while passing through the joys and sorrows of life, the conviction is bound to dawn in a moment that all this is Unreal, that all this has no basis in Truth. When such knowledge dawns, man is certain to tread the path of religion and sadhana and take up the inquiry that will lead him to the Truth. This is the task which Man must be engaged in.

Well, if only everyone asks the questions, “Who are we? Whence did we come? Where have we come to? How long will we be here?”, the truth can be easily grasped. That questioning is the sign of discrimination, or viveka. When by means of this viveka, the idea that the world is impermanent gets deeply rooted in the mind, all attachments cease automatically. That is the stage of renunciation, or vairagya. Is it worthwhile to be caught up in this unreal world? one asks. This is false, misleading, one tells himself. He then turns his efforts to the realm of the Lord, the Sathyaloka. That is the right decision, *Vichakshana*.

It is through viveka and vairagya that man understands who he really is. Without them, it is impossible to know it. The Lord has blessed only man with these two. He has endowed him so that he might use them for that purpose. Hence man is truly fortunate. But alas, man has forgotten the task for which he has come, ignored the question whence he came, closed his eyes to where he is, diverted his

intelligence towards amusement and creature comfort, and wasted all his powers. What a tragedy, this! If in this most propitious human birth itself the Godhead is not sought after, when else are they to succeed?

If today is squandered so

Will tomorrow help you?

If one’s real nature is first understood, the rest can all be easily grasped. One will thereafter know where one is, whence one is going, how long one exists, etc.

These four issues are dependent, one on the other. If one is solved, all the rest can be known; but not one of these can be ignored. For example, suppose you write a letter to somebody. Whatever be the contents of the letter, if it is put into an envelope and posted, whom will it reach? It won’t be given to anyone. Well, will it come back to the person who wrote it? No. In the end, it will be neither here nor there. Instead, if on the cover the address of the person whom it should reach and the address of the person who wrote it are both written, one can even predict when the letter will reach its destination, is it not? So too, what do you do with your letter, your life? To whom do you address it? Where do you write it? When can it reach? Whom should it reach? Ignoring all these, not caring even for the time, if you simply worry yourself, how can you ever hope to know the Reality?

First, you must know your own full address. Who are you? The Atman. Whence did you come? From the Atman.

Where are you going? To the Atman, itself. How long can you be here? Until you merge with the Atman. Where are you, now? In the Unreal, the Ever-changing. In what form? As Anatma. What are you engaged in? In evanescent tasks. Therefore, what should you do hereafter? Give up these three and try the other three—to enter the Eternal, to engage in Never-changing tasks, and to enjoy the Bliss of the Atman. This must be the chief effort of the Jivi, its perpetual aim, the greatest adventure in this world. All other tasks are humdrum and silly. They glitter a moment and vanish. You will realise this truth if only you turn your back on them and watch wisely.

There is a short story which illustrates these points. There was once a Raja, who had transferred all responsibility of ruling to his *Manthri* (Minister), and who was spending his time in ease. He never worried about anything, be it big or small. He had a personal companion, whom he had always by his side, more or less as a bodyguard. This fellow was very wise, for he never did anything without deep deliberation about the how and the why and the wherefore. The Raja took all this deliberation to be just foolishness and he nicknamed the companion, "*Avivekasikhamani*" or "The Crest-Jewel of Fools." He went to the length of actually engraving the title on a plate of gold and compelling him to wear it on his forehead for all to see! Many people were misled by this and they took him to be an ignoramus at court. They did not heed his words.

Meanwhile, the Raja fell ill and took to bed. The kingdom was combed for physicians who could heal the king. Messengers went to the eight corners, seeking drugs and doctors. A hundred were busy round the royal patient, but all efforts failed. The illness worsened day by day. The Raja was at the very door of death.

The Raja suspected that his end was near. So he hurriedly made some dispositions, spoke to all those whom he wanted to meet, and was immersed in sorrow. He had no thought of God or any other auspicious Power. He was in terrible fear of Death and could not think of anything else.

One day, he called *Avivekasikhamani* to his bedside and whispered feebly in his ear, "Well, I am going soon, my friend!" Then the Fool asked without any compunction, "What? You are weak and cannot walk a few steps. I shall order a palanquin, please wait till it is ready." "No palanquin can take me there," said the Raja. "Then, I shall order a chariot," entreated the Fool. "The chariot too is of no use," replied the Raja. "Of course, then the horse is the only means of journey," wailed the companion, who seemed eager to come to the rescue of his master, and spare him the toils of travel. The Raja said that the horse too could not enter there. The Fool was at his wit's end. Then suddenly an idea struck him, he said, "Come on master! I shall carry you there." The Raja became sad. He said, "My dear friend, one has to go alone to that place, when one's time has come. No companion can be taken." The Fool was thrown in great

doubt. He asked the Raja, “It is curious, is it not? You say that the palanquin won’t reach there, that the chariot can’t go there, nor the horse. You say that no second person can join you! Well, can’t you tell me at least where that place is?” The Raja replied, “I do not know.”

Immediately, the Fool unwound the Golden Plate with the engraving of the title, “Avivekasikhamani,” and tied it round the brow of the Raja, saying “Raja, you know so much about the place, even which things cannot go there, but you do not know *where* it is, and still you are going there soon. Oh, *you* deserve this title much more.” The Raja was overcome with shame, “Alas,” he said to himself, “I wasted my years in eating and sleeping and pursuing pleasures, never caring to inquire who I am, whence I came, what I am doing, whither I am going, and why I came. The precious time allotted to me has come very near its end. There is no time for me any more for all that inquiry. Death is knocking at the door. Children have started weeping. My subjects are in great anxiety. Can I, under such conditions immerse myself in inquiry? Can a thought that I never entertained throughout my life suddenly arise now, during my last moments? It is impossible. Yes, I deserve the title, Avivekasikhamani, more than anyone else, for I wasted my life in useless pursuits without any thought of the Reality.” The Raja let it be proclaimed that inquiry is the best means of knowing the Truth. The inquiry must be directed to separating the true from the untrue, the eternal from the temporary. The people should arrive at the conclusion that,

“God is the only true and eternal Entity” and that by their own independent investigation, his subjects must not only grasp the entity intellectually but must also attain the Grace of God, by their pure lives. Announcing this lesson to his subjects, the Raja breathed his last.

Note how the Raja, blinded by material power and pleasures, misdirected his energies towards the world, away from God, and ended his days in agony.

Every sadhaka must needs enter on the path of inquiry. Then only can the conviction dawn and grow, that nature and all learning connected with nature are unreal. Then only will these be given a relative, not an absolute value. They are of course to be learnt and experienced as necessary for existence, as a kind of daily routine. They should not be mistaken to be the Highest knowledge, the unchanging Eternal Truth. That mistake, if committed, leads to asanthi, an agitated mind. Agitation produces worry and anxiety. They in turn destroy peace.

If you aspire for santhi, peace, equanimity, the basic thing is have faith in the temporary nature of Nature, and be engaged in the uninterrupted contemplation of the changeless Godhead.

Therefore, do not be bound by selfish attachments. Engage yourself in the discharge of your duties, do not allow yourself to be gladdened by success or saddened by failure. Be ready to renounce all that is harmful; and then,

through discrimination, you can beat the Drum of Victory! Great Declarations like these, reveal the Highest Truth and the Glory of Godhead.

If the two paths, Jnana and Bhakthi, are compared, it can be said that the Lord's Grace is won more easily by bhakthi, than by the other path. In bhakthi sadhana, there is the need to grasp the reality and its inner meaning, fully and clearly. For this, the objective world is itself the proof and argument, the effort and the means. To know this, spiritual inquiry has to be pursued. Such an inquiry will grant unshakeable santhi. Inquiry alone can reveal the Truth behind all the objective world. It is your experience, is it not, that when you do some task carefully for a long time, correcting your mistakes as and when you discover them, avoiding the repetition of the same while continuing with the task, you invariably achieve even more success than you hoped to get? What is wanted is just the unflagging desire to achieve victory. That will lead you to discover the means thereof, to develop earnestness and care in the pursuit of those means, and to get success. The wish must be strengthened by the will, and the will by the effort.

Well, take the example of a person anxious to become stronger. If the wish is powerful, he will first learn the means of realising his aim—the exercises, the diet, the disciplines, etc. Then, when he practises them his will is changed to steadiness in effort. But one important thing must be noted. There are many who say that the absence of wish and will is the best. This is not so good as having one wish, more than

all others; or, rather “one wish” and one alone, to the exclusion of all else. Even more superior is the person who has steadiness of effort, in realising that one wish. For he can promote not only his own good, but even the world's good. Let your wish and will and effort be directed to your own good. Do not divert them to worldly pleasures, for that will cause harm and destroy santhi.

Man is a bundle of impulses and intentions. He reduces his innate divinity and inner peace by giving free vent to these two. The impulses are the fuel, the intentions are the fire. The fire can be put out only by placing the fuel aside. The dying down of the fire is the attainment of peace. Dive deep into the ocean of peace and earn the invaluable pearl Atmananda, the Bliss of the Atman. When that opportunity is seized, man becomes the personification of the effulgent, holy state of peace. That is why the Vedas declare that Man is the embodiment of santhi. Therefore, you should not delude yourself by imagining that you are the seat of disquiet and untruth. Know that you are the embodiment of santhi, that prema is the blood that flows in your veins, and that your very nature is Joy. Realise this by actual practice and experience.

Without santhi, it is impossible to see the Truth. As the rays of the Sun are for the blossoming flower and the ripening fruit, so are the rays of santhi necessary for the full development of man. Then only can he ripen into the realisation of the true, the eternal, the blissful Brahman.

Brahman is a shoreless, bottomless ocean. That ocean is the basis for the ever-shifting waves, the evidence and result of its power. The wave emerges from the sea, leaps forth from it, falls back into it and dissolves itself into it. Though the power of the sea is thus manifested in ups and downs, rise and fall, the sea is steady and fixed. But the world is concerned more with the temporary and the shifting, and thinks that the waves are very important. So also, the sadhaka is more concerned with attainments that are evanescent and changing and not with the unchanging experience of the principle behind the Brahman. All the senses, all the impulses rise up in overpowering strength like waves from the sea, roar in fury, and subside in the waters. They do not confer peace. The wise thing is to forget these waves and to direct attention towards the sea beneath which is without change. Then only can you attain santhi and swim about happily in the deep undisturbed waters.

Why are those denizens of the deep sea so happy? The reason is they have water all around them—above, below, on all sides.

They cannot survive even a second, outside it. Even when they have perforce to come out of it, they struggle frantically to reach water again, for the disaster will bring about death itself. So too when man is immersed in santhi he will experience the joy and exhilaration of that state, in all ways. A person who has tasted that joy and exhilaration can never tolerate even for a second the state of asanthi,

and he will never desert the santhi stage. If it ever happens that he is forced into asanthi, he will struggle furiously and desperately to return to the state of santhi and might even die in the attempt. But why should such a person ever be thrown on the shore of asanthi and ever risk his life in escaping back into santhi? He can ever be in a state of bliss, immersed in the ocean of santhi, isn't it? He should not float on the upper waves of impulses and intentions of vasanas (desires, tendencies) and sankalpas (intentions, resolves). He must dive deeper and try to revel at the calmer levels. This is the most urgent task. Then, you will not endanger yourself by being thrown out and beyond, upon the dry shore.

This type of pure and holy santhi alone will remove the walls that now divide man from man. It will transform all the absurd hatreds, misunderstandings, disgusts and prejudices that warp human behaviour. Santhi is the manifestation of the greatness of prema (love). It will endow all who come under its authority with tremendous power for good. It can place God within man's grasp and man within God's grasp.

Sadhana can confer no higher power. It is the very secret of the life-principle in creation. It is the highest individualisation of the glory of the Atman. It is the magic wand in the hands of the bhaktha, with which he can master the entire world. Besides, it confers the greatest degree of contentment.

But santhi does not mean inactivity, the mere inert life of eating and squatting. You should not spend your time in eating and sleeping, saying to yourself that the Lord will come to your help, when the need arises. You must arise and work. God helps those who help themselves, and He will help no other. Learn from the life-history of Prahlada the lesson, that the Lord alone is to be loved. Learn also the technique of that process. Do the work that has fallen to your lot, sincerely and efficiently. Give up everything that is outside the service of the Lord. Follow the footsteps of Prahlada. You can win, through the Grace of the Lord the joy of santhi, the thrill of Fullness and the Bliss of Immortality.

Work has to be undertaken, in order that time might not hang heavily on you and be a burden. Work is the mission of man. Without it, man will get lost in the darkness of ignorance and he will be overwhelmed by *thamas* (inertia, dullness). Ignorance will multiply his doubt. These have to be chopped off with the sword of jnana.

On one occasion, when such mystic subjects were taught to Arjuna, he got puzzled and asked Krishna, “At one time You say that we should renounce all karmas. At another time, You say that Karma Yoga has to be adopted. Now, tell me which among these two paths is the better?” For this, Krishna answered thus:

“Sanyasa and Karma Yoga both lead you to the same goal of liberation, Oh Arjuna, but know this. There is greater

joy in doing work than in giving up work. Sanyasa and work are not contradictory. They are interdependent, complementary. By giving up work, man will only decline, without the progress derived from activity, and the training achieved through it. The real *sanyasi* is he who does not desire one thing or hate another. The word *sanyasa* can well be applied to work done without regard to success or failure, profit or loss, honour or dishonour, to any activity engaged in as offering to the Lord. Mere inactivity announced by the *gerua* (ochre) cloth and the shaved head is no *sanyasa* at all. He who has avoided the duality of joy and grief, of good and bad, he alone deserves the name. So, better than the giving up of karma, is the renunciation of the fruits of actions; it also yields greater joy. That is the best path. Therefore, of these two, Sanyasa and Karma Yoga, whichever is followed, the fruit of the other too, can be won. For there is ananda in karma. There is ananda too in renunciation.”

Sanyasa devoid of Karma Yoga will lead to grief. For, how can anyone get away from karma? However much you may avoid karma, is it not necessary at least to engage yourself in the remembrance of the Lord, in *dhyaana* or *japa*? That too is karma. If these are given up, there is no joy in life. Whoever he be, man has to do some karma, whatever the form of the work. He who engages in Karma Yoga, renouncing all idea of action and following the discipline of silence, can, within a short time, realise Brahman. Karma will not stick to such. Karma for them is akin to

breathing. Life is impossible without the karma of breathing, so too for the sadhaka, work is essential. Asanthi comes only when the fruit of action is desired. If the fruit is disregarded and joy is derived from the very karma itself, then one gets *Prasanthi* (undisturbed, inner peace). No one thinks of the results and benefits of the karma of breathing, is it not? So too, when karma is done, never worry about its result. That gives real santhi.

Many and many an idea takes shape in the human heart. They wander to the very ends of the eight directions. Some of these are mutually supporting. Some are mutually destructive. But without leaving them free, they must all be canalised and disciplined to subserve some one high purpose. Then only can you be established in santhi. You must have the cleverness needed for this canalisation. It is not merely cleverness in the use of external things. It lies more in the control and subjugation of the mental faculties. This is essential for the blossoming of the Atma. For understanding the faculties of your own mind, you must move with elders experienced in that line or in the sublimation of the vagaries of the mind.

Until you intelligently fix upon a certain direction for all your thoughts and activities, you will be only building shadow castles in the air and roaming about in them. Why, even your senses will be pursuing contradictory paths and distracting your attention to such an extent that you cannot easily come to a decision regarding the ideal. They make you feel that their paths are the best, but you should always

strive to change the course of the senses and the imagination, to subjects and desires that are conducive to the ideal, whatever be the difficulty, however serious the crisis. That is the sign of real intelligence. That is the road to real santhi.

Everyone has, by virtue of human nature itself, the discrimination needed to strive for the ideal. You should not allow the slightest idea of neglect to hinder you, or stand in your way. The santhi based on jnana can arise only out of actual experience. The end and the consequence of each and every act is and must be jnana. The progress of the individual consists in activity done with discrimination.

Take one small example: Even if a person has all the means of comfortable travel through the grace of the Lord, namely cars, planes or other conveniences, he has perforce to walk, in spite of everything, for the sake of his health! So too, whoever he is, whatever the sadhana he is engaged in, he has perforce to experience the activity and learn the consequence himself for the sake of his mental health! Otherwise, mental weakness cannot be cured.

In order to achieve this, one must move with experienced men and men who are basic supporters of the good life. One must grasp the Reality with their help and experience the Reality oneself. Then only can peace be established in the personality.

In this created world, wisdom is enveloped in ignorance, jnana in ajnana. That is inevitable at all times. So

long as the lamp is burning, there will be a shadow beneath it. So too when the flame of Illusion is burning, the shadow of ajnana is inevitable. If the ignorance surrounding the Atman is destroyed by jnana, then everything will be illumined as at sunrise, and santhi will be the result.

If the above result has to be got, some effort has to be made to provide the necessary conditions. The mind is conditioned into good or bad, by the environment. Hence, man has to create for himself, the environment he needs. The reformers of today do not strive to transform the qualities of man. They try to bring about equality in economic matters, in outer life. But these can be lasting only when the qualities of character are built on the basis of equality. If the quality of equality is not developed, even if everything is divided and shared equally, that state of equality cannot last. So, there is need to reform the character by means of the knowledge of the Atman. This reform alone will bear fruit, the fruit of santhi.

Therefore, culture must be directed towards the reform of character. Along with that reform and to the extent it is gained, the outward standard of economic life too can be adjusted. First, man must be trained in the technique of santhi and *santhosha*, peace and happiness. These do not depend on the outer, the external, the visible objective world. So there is no profit in worrying about or debating about these matters. You must take refuge in the Atman and the contemplation of the nature of the Atman, that is to say, in

the real “I.” All this objective world shines, only through the glory of the Atman. The body does not deserve to be identified with the immortal. It is inert matter, and nothing better. You are not the thing connoted by the word, “I.” You are the One, without a second. The body is subject to change, it is evanescent, liable to decline. How can it be the Atman? No, Atman is One and Only. It cannot coexist with another entity. It is only when every sadhaka, every man, is aware of this that equality, equanimity and the exhilaration can be established on earth.

Therefore, contemplate on the *Thathwa* (principle). Leaving aside the seen, concentrate on the seer. That will illumine the Truth.

The nature of Light is to reveal objects, by illumining them. But Real Illumination is the property of the Atman only. The Sun and Fire can only “penetrate” Darkness: they do not destroy it completely, because Darkness and Light are opposed to each other. But the effulgence of the Atman has no opposition at all. All objects, all natures are favourable to it. It illumines all. Hence the statement: *Tham Devaa Jyothishaam Jyothih*. “The Gods acclaim It as the Light of Lights.”

Its form is jnana, wisdom; not things, like the physical body. The body is ever-changing. It is not eternal. The Atman shines equally everywhere and illumines everything without any distinction. It is of the nature of ananda and of *Chaithanya* (life giving vital power). So, it becomes

automatically Brahman! This conviction is the essence of jnana.

He who sees a pot can know that it is a pot clearly, by himself, is it not? But how is it that one identifies oneself with the body, simply because, attachment makes one feel that it is one's own body? This is the ajnana; the My-ness, the I-consciousness. Jnana which is of the nature of the Atman is indestructible.

The Atman is Formless. Hence, the Threefold Affliction, the *Thaapathraya* does not affect it. The Sixfold Mutation¹⁸ will not affect It, for, It is always *Sath* (true), always It and It alone. It is a guest, distinct from the body which It inhabits. The body is subject to illness, growth and decay. The Atman is free from all mutations. The Atman has no desires, impulses or intentions. It is above and beyond the *Thamasic*, *Rajasic*, and *Sathwic* qualities. The prakriti is the Doer. Purusha is as the lotus on the water, unaffected, unattached; "*Prakritih karthaa, Purushasthu pushkara palaasavannirlepah.*"

The Atman is misleadingly denoted by the word, I, *Aham*. How can the seen be the seer, the eternal? How can the body be the real I? When this mistake is made there can be no peace and no joy. It is only when this truth is understood and experienced that one can have santhi.

18 Sixfold Mutation - Birth, growth, change, old age, death and decay.

The Atman has to be realised, as distinct from this *drisya* (objective) world, all this that is "seen." This is possible only when one has the viveka (discrimination) to be freed from the bondage to prakriti, and to release oneself from the *avidya* (ignorance) that tells him that the "seen" is indeed the real. Such viveka has to be acquired by the practice of the *Ashtanga*, the Eightfold Discipline,¹⁹ which cleanses the *avidya* that darkens the intellect. Then, the intellect becomes pure and sharp and it gets directed towards the Atman. Ignorant people, to whom the understanding of the Atman is beyond reach, delude themselves by the belief that they can derive joy from the objective world which their senses can experience. If only one reflects a little, even the little joy thus derived will be found to be only the same Atmananda and not something separate! For, everything everywhere is ananda, is amritha (Divine nectar). All ananda is Atmananda.

But when one can rest in the endless coolness of the actual Full Moon sailing in the sky, who will be content with the painted moon and its painted light on a piece of canvas? Who will care even to cast a glance at it? As the saying goes, "Will a honey-sucking bee ever drink the bitter juice?"

So too, the sadhaka who has tasted the nectar of self-knowledge, the knowledge of the Atman, can never relish,

19 Eightfold Discipline - Also called the Eightfold Yoga – Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

thereafter, the sensory objective world. The person engrossed in a painted moon can never know the real moon. So too, men deluded by the attraction of prakriti (nature) grope about in their ignorance of the Atman, and wallow in the unreal manifold world shaped by the three *gunas* (qualities). On the other hand, the learned man who seeks the reality gives up glittering falsehood and revels in the Atman, deriving santhi therefrom.

So, never mistake the drisya the “seen,” to be permanent or true! You cannot exult in anything else except the Ocean of the ananda of the Indivisible, Undivided Atma, or Brahman. You can get real and full contentment only in the significant, sweet meaningful experience of the *Parabrahmam* Itself. Only *that* can give solace from this cycle of birth and death. These unreal things can never afford contentment; the present is without existence and significance. Nothing other than the Atman can ever, at any time, in any manner confer any benefit, or bring about any santhi. It cannot put an end to sorrow and shower ananda.

Everything other than the Atman is *Asath* (untrue), like silver in the mother of pearl, a delusion, like water in the mirage, a mistake, with no real silver which one can take or real water to slake one’s thirst. So too, when you base your life on the sensory objective world, which is anatma, and produced by ignorance or avidya, you can never derive happiness or joy. Such pictorial products of fancy cannot appease hunger or slake thirst or satisfy desire. Only the Real can produce those results.

So, too, the removal of the recurring sorrow of *Samsaara* (birth-death cycle) can be effected only by the attainment of Brahman. Genuine santhi cannot be earned by means of desires and intentions, study and scholarship, pomp and publicity. It can come only by experiencing the Atman, to however small an extent.

By mere force of intention, one can imagine in an instant a scene in America, but can it also be experienced in actuality, at that very instant? No. There is no use imagining and framing in the fancy. It must be experienced, in mind and word and body. Then only can one claim to have genuine santhi. Therefore, merely knowing about Brahman, or santhi or sathyam or *Saakshaathkaara* (goal of life) leads nowhere. You may even know that there is ananda in these, but all that is of no use. You have to dedicate your life to win that ananda and experience it and enter upon the discipline needed to acquire it. Then only do you deserve the Grace of the Lord and the attainment of Brahman. Then only can you get the true ananda.

It is this subject that the Vivekachudamani²⁰ also teaches in many ways. He who follows its teaching, without deviation, can taste the nectar of Atmic Bliss, can attain the goal of Life. Devoid of the sorrow that is inevitable in dealing with sensory objects, having no intentions and desires, one should be immersed in the Bliss of One’s Own Real Reality.

20 Vivekachudamani - A great Adwaita text written by Sri Shankaracharya.

Man alone, of all creation, has the qualification to achieve this Supreme Joy. What a sad tragedy that he should neglect his right and wander about seeking petty pleasures, empty tinsel! Like children playing with dolls and sticks, calling them elephants and horses, man plays; but does not make them real elephants and horses. Ignorant men play in all seriousness, imagining the objects of the world to be real, and they laugh and weep, in joy and in sorrow, they blossom and droop while up or down. But that does not make the *Maya Jagath* (world) less unreal!

When you are immersed in *Sushupthi* or deep sleep, what happens to your joy and sorrow, your profits and losses? They have no reality then; nor have they any reality, later. At both times, they are but the creations of your fancy. He who knows this secret, will always exult in the Joy of Companionship with Oneself, the Contemplation of One's Own Inner Reality. That is real permanent Joy.

Therefore, listen, all sadhakas! You, whose Real nature is Atmic! Seek to discover your true Self, your genuine Reality. Attain the knowledge that You are the Atman itself. Exult in the Atman alone. Taste the Undiluted, Incomparable, Unlimited Bliss of the Awareness of the Real Self. Let Time merge in Him whose Form is Time; that is the legitimate task of Man. As taught in the *Viveka Chudamani*,

*Jnaana rakshaam samaadrthyaa Jnane
sudrdhavaan bhaveth
Sa eva niratham svasmin svaanandamanu-
bhunjathe.*

“With the amulet of jnana around his arm, one can escape the evil influence of the vile stars called sensual attractions.” But one should not, out of the boldness born of the consciousness of jnana give free vent to the senses. One should be always vigilant regarding the external world. One should always be immersed in the contemplation of one's own Inner Reality. That is the sign of the knower of the Higher Truth. When one is ever in that stage, the self-illuminating Truth will ever be before the mind's eye and the drisya or the objective world will melt away. If the seen or drisya world is superimposed on that undivided, indivisible Brahman, it will only be as real as the turrets and bastions of a city among the clouds. Can anyone build castles on the air and live in them? The *Akasa* (sky, ether), of course, is your basic form, or *rupa*; but for that reason, you cannot erect a city hereon. The turrets and bastions you seem to see in the clouds are unreal, baseless creations of your own fancy. So too, in the akasa-like formless Parabrahman all this superimposed jagath (transitory world) is false, baseless. Everything is but the Chaithanya (life-giving vital power) of the non-dual, unequalled, bliss-pervaded Parabrahmam.

Always enjoy the santhi that is the result of the stoppage of all mental agitations. Do not allow the mind to run after this and that. Train it to keep quiet. Keep away and afar, the mental reactions caused by contact with the external world. Then, you can become mere Existence, Sath. That is the state of the *Muni* or the state beyond the realm of the senses, where their fiat does not run. That is the real Saakshaathkaara, that is the Goal of Life.

“*Mounam bhajaswa*” it is said. But what is mounam? Not the keeping of the mouth shut. It means, the getting beyond the influence of all the senses and getting established always in the consciousness of one’s own Reality. Perpetual ananda is also perpetual santhi. When the mind withdraws from the external world, the tongue too becomes silent. All senses follow suit, that is the genuine Mounam.

This stage cannot be described in words. It cannot be communicated to others as “such and such.” It belongs to the realm of experience. Mounam means “the Parabrahma swarupa that is beyond all this.” He who has reached it will be in the highest santhi and the highest ananda. If the activities of the intelligence are stilled, and if the intelligence is harboured in Brahman, one will become suffused with Brahman, “*Parabrahma-mayam*.” One has to observe all this world as from afar, with an uninterested attitude. Prakriti can be overcome only by this means. Such persons will escape the wiles of the intellect, which breed doubts, delusions, and dualistic diversions, away from the Atmic reality.

The buddhi or the intellect is the prime instrument. It should be cleaned of the rust of the sensory world of prakriti, and made to shine in its own pristine effulgence. Buddhi should not be wavering, or agitated or even activated; for, when it is so, the world appears manifold and multiformed. When the buddhi is tranquil, santhi envelops man. He is immersed in *tejas*, splendour. He is in the *Akhanda*

paripurna ananda. This stage is also called Nirvikalpa, the *Nirvikalpa-mounam* (eternally established in the divine).

Therefore, may all sadhakas, by their disciplined lives and ceaseless effort, establish themselves in the knowledge of their own Swarupa, their own Reality. May they keep their minds away from the drisya world, contemplate on the Paramatma always, acquire peace of mind, withdraw from all contact with the sensory world, saturate themselves in ananda, and know themselves as the One, without a Second.

This is the *Udaaseenabhava*, the stage of Disinterestedness, the condition of the person who has grasped the Truth. There will never more be, *another*,²² everything that *is*, is himself. The holy Suka,²¹ Sanaka,²² Sananda²³ and others achieved the Bliss of this incomparable santhi. They have no affliction or doubt or distraction, because they have no need for further thought or inquiry. They are not bothered by any change or modification, for the Atman has no such! Once a person has tasted this sweetness, he will never more give ear to any other word or disturbing argument. He will never more entertain any distracting thought. He will never more be drawn towards any diversionary attachment. He will hold on, steadfastly, to his conviction.

21 Suka-A great sage, son of Vyasa.

22 Sanaka - A great sage.

23 Sananda - A great sage.

The special characteristic of man among all created beings is his viveka, his power of discrimination. He is therefore bound to act always, using his discriminating capacity. But there are two forces putting obstacles in his way: one, the ignorant who prompt towards inaction and two, the Teachers of *Sankhya* (Inquiry into nature of material objects). The first set of people, though they may desist from activity through their senses, are unable to withdraw their minds and they continue to commit acts in their minds. So, their inactivity is meaningless and unreal. It is *mithya* (mixture of truth and falsehood).

The Sankhyans use a number of arguments against action or karma. “Karma causes both punya and papa, good and evil,” and so, it is said, “the wise must give up all karma.” In the Gita, Krishna has met this argument and shown the way to get the good out of karma and avoid the evil. They further say that if karma is engaged in, the results are a mixture of pain and pleasure, of benefit and loss, and it leads the doer either to heaven or hell or back again to the earth, that is to say, to bondage of some sort. So, they ask people to give up karma and take to inaction. The Gita has a reply for this also. Karma will bring about bondage only when it is engaged in with a view to the fruit thereof. When done without any *thought* of the fruit, it leads, on the other hand, to liberation, or Moksha itself! Why, even liberated persons engage in karma, though they do not derive any benefit therefrom, just for promoting the welfare of the world! Or rather, whatever a liberated man does must

automatically be conducive to the welfare of the world. Karma has to be engaged in, that is the means of securing the santhi already won.

If there is anything sweeter than all things sweet, more auspicious than all auspicious things, holier than all holy objects, verily, it is the Name of the Lord...or the Lord Himself. Give up the company of the worldly minded, the association with those infected by asuric qualities. Keep away from every type of wrong doing. Seek always the company of the wise, the good. Take refuge in Narayana. He, the Pure One, is the perfect Embodiment of santhi, of happiness and of jnana. He, the Sri Hari, is seated within everyone. He stays constantly in the place where devotees honour His Name, sincerely and with single-mindedness. Therefore, first, you have to practise intense bhakthi towards the Lord. Then, you can certainly attain real and permanent happiness and wisdom.

Of what use is it to pursue the fleeting pleasures of the senses? Worship the Hari who lives in the cavity of your heart, nearer to you than your thickest friend, your father, mother or guru, who is all these and more to you. The physical body for whose sake you crave all this comfort and luxury is subject to damage and decay. One day, it becomes food for dogs and jackals. Hari, on the other hand, makes for joy and the thrill of Holy Love. Surrender your heart to Him. He desires naught else from you. He can be won by no other means, neither by unlimited scholarship, nor by pompous vows and colourful ritual.

Of the span of human life, one-half is wasted in sleep. The other half is frittered away in satisfying stupid desires, in the inanity of old age, the helpless ignorance of childhood and boyhood, in misery, travail, and illness. You can devote some years to some worthwhile activity. Beware of misusing even these for the silly pursuit of sensual pleasure. Use at least these precious years for the contemplation of the glory of the Lord, for fixing your mind on His Lotus Feet ever more firmly, and for thus transporting yourself across the vast ocean of Birth and Death.

Therefore, practise at all times and under all conditions the remembrance, with love and devotion, of the Name of the Lord. That name is the thunderbolt which will pulverise mountains of sin. It is the unfailing cure for the dread disease of sheer worldliness. Surely that name will endow you with santhi!

The name of Hari is as the effulgence of the Rising Sun, which scatters the darkness of delusion. It is as luminous, as universal, as sacred. Do not misuse that sacred Name even for a second. Do not let pass even a second, without bringing that Name to mind. Remember, the sweetness of that Name, when repeated by Prahlada overpowered the hearts of the Asuras who heard him. The children of the Asuras repeated the Name along with Prahlada, and led by him, they began to sing and dance with joy, arming themselves with axes to defend their leader!

The Name of the Lord that can transform the asuric character and purify it into nectar is verily the heaven of santhi for all, for the world. To repeat that Name without break, to love that Form and that Name with intensity, that is what deserves to be called bhakthi. Bhakthi means the highest, purest prema, directed towards the Lord. Anyone can attain this bhakthi. The door of Bhakthi Yoga is open to all. The only passport needed is the desire for liberation, for moksha. That desire entitles man to his heritage.

Of course, such prema will dawn only after knowing the glory and the splendour of the Lord as well as His Innate Characteristics of Omniscience, Omnipotence and Immanence in all Creation. He who is endowed with prema of this nature, who lives always with the Lord, he will certainly be liberated.

What does it mean, the expression: “to know God”? It means “to love God.” Knowledge without devotion produces hatred. Such knowledge leads to power that is misused. It is not knowledge worth the name. It is ignorance, mistaken for its opposite. It is only through bhakthi that jnana becomes stabilised and deep-rooted.

What is the sign of a Jnani? It is prema, the possession of ever-widening prema. When bhakthi or, in other words, love towards the Lord dawns, ignorance will vanish, step by step. Bhakthi and hatred cannot coexist. They are contradictory. Bhakthi and Love, however, are of the same nature.

The worldly man is infected with love towards material objects only, but the same love when it assumes the form of bhakthi or Love of God leads one on to the realisation of Godhead itself. The word, *Rasa*, indicates the attraction of worldly objects as well as the longing for the joy of God-realisation.

The consequences of karma are diminished by undergoing them, and then you are born again. But the fruits of bhakthi are never diminished at all. They last forever. Liberation lasts, it does not end. Verily, bhakthi is the real technique for human liberation. That is the sadhana *par excellence*. Every other technique is built upon that.

Bhakthi and jnana are like the pair of bullocks for the cart, both have to pull in unison. Each must keep pace with the other and help the other to drag the weight quicker. Jnana has to help the increase of bhakthi. Bhakthi has to contribute to the growth of jnana.

It is on account of this mutual help, this collaboration, that the *gopis* (cowherds) of Brindavan were able to attain moksha. Their bhakthi towards Lord Krishna endowed them with the Highest Jnana also. Now, the essence of bhakthi as well as jnana is santhi the highest type of santhi, Prasanthi. Prasanthi leads one on to *Prakanthi*, the Glory of Spiritual Effulgence, and thence to *Paramjyothi*, the Super-effulgence of the Highest Revelation.

Jnana is a concomitant of bhakthi. It is its component part. Love fixed on God is most beneficent. It produces

the greatest *subha* (good). It will not bind man to the earth. It will take him, by the hand, along the road to moksha. It will release one from all types of bonds and attachments, automatically. One has to strive only to avoid evil company. Constant association in good company will promote the feeling of detachment.

More than the adherent of the path of karma, jnana or yoga, the follower of the path of bhakthi is declared fortunate and superior. He is better than the yogi, the sanyasi, the jnani and the sadhaka who takes up the discipline of karma.

This is the reason why Krishna directed Arjuna in the Gita to become a great Yogi. He also said besides, “Among Yogis, he who meditates on the Self as merged in Me, steadfastly, is indeed with the highest bhakthi.” Then, Arjuna asked Him, “Among these, those who worship Thee ever like that and those who worship Thee as Indestructible, Imperceptible, etc....who among these, Oh Lord, have triumphed in yoga more?” For this, Krishna replied, “Whoever fixes his mind on Me, and worships Me, whoever is steadfast and exulting in this, he has achieved greater success.” So *sraddha* (faith) is ever essential, in matters spiritual, related to God. *Sraddha* has no limitations and so, its results too have no decline. The fruits of all acts done in the pursuit of God-realisation depend upon sadhanas, jnana more on internal sadhana and bhakthi more on external sadhana.

When Brahman itself is the object, it becomes jnana. *Sravanam*, or listening to discourses on Sastra, etc.,

mananam or calling to mind what has been heard and *nididhyasa* or ruminating on things thus recalled to memory...until bhakthi is fully developed, these have to be gone through without interruption. Instead, bhakthas often deal with God in a bargaining spirit or in the spirit of a tradesman! This attitude should be given up. Whoever he is, he should not ask from His God, or *Isthadevatha*, anything other than bhakthi or prema. If he does he is no true bhaktha. Uninterrupted flow of prema towards the Feet of the Lord, that is real surrender. Such surrender alone guarantees santhi, and ensures santhi, the genuine santhi.

Teaching is of two kinds: indirect and direct. The teaching through the Vedas and the Vedangas, deduction and induction, reasoning and inference, is indirect. When this understanding is experienced and realised, it becomes Direct. The Parabrahma (The universal absolute) which is Sathyam, Jnanam and Anandam is self-evident and so, its understanding can at best be only indirect. Looked at from one point of view, the Brahman knows neither indirect nor direct. It is unique, being beyond both. To obtain this direct knowledge of the Absolute the first requisite is sadhana. And the first step in this sadhana is the service done to the *Sadguru* (the true teacher), with full faith and full submission. The Sadguru too should be instructing the sadhaka always and in simple ways, the nature of Brahman. When the disciple grasps this instruction, it becomes *Paroksha-jnanam* or Indirect Knowledge. This Paroksha-jnanam itself can be transformed into *Aparoksha* or Direct Knowledge by

constant *manana*, or recapitulation. Turning over in the manas or mind. The Indirect Knowledge is as shifting as letters drawn on water, while the Knowledge gained in the Aparoksha way is indelible like letters carved on rock.

When the sound “horse” is heard, the form of the “horse” presents itself before the mind. So too, at the word, “Brahman,” the nature of Brahman will come into the consciousness. This is what is called dhyaana, by those versed in the *Sadhana Chathushtaya*, or the First Principles of Sadhana. To be stabilised in dhyaana, the aspirant should cultivate the control of the senses and the passions, that is to say, *sama*, and *dama* and also, the attitude of acting without any desire for the fruits of action. Whoever is an adept in the Six Qualifications, sama, dama, etc., can easily see with the mind’s eye the swarupa of Brahman as soon as he hears the exposition of Its nature. *Phalabhogaviraga* or renunciation of the desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of one’s action is also essential. When this vairagya is rooted deep, the *Chitta* (consciousness) becomes pure and *Uparathi* or Withdrawal of the senses from the objective World is made possible.

Yoga too is of two varieties: Raja yoga and Jnana Yoga. In Raja Yoga, there are Eight Stages which have to be well-cultivated, and realised. Of these, some are external, some internal. This is the Aryan path. In the Jnana Yoga, there is no “external” at all. Both these yogas have as their goal, the stilling of the agitations of all levels of consciousness. For those who have calmed all these

agitations, everything is Brahman. Primary for this purpose is Jnana Yoga more than Raja Yoga. At least that is the opinion of the Knowers of Brahman: they say, “that is the thing to be known, to be reached.”

But according to the Wisdom of the Upanishads the direct knowledge of the Brahman can be got by the Eightfold Yoga of *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Aasana*, *Pranayama*, *Prathyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyaana*, and *Samaadhi*.

Yama: *Yama* includes *ahimsa* (Non-violence), *sathya* (Truth), *astheya* (Non-stealing), *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy), and *aparigraha* (Non-acceptance).

This is the usual meaning given to *Yama*, but I would say instead, that it means the giving up of attachment to the body and to the senses. The Brahma entity (which is devoid of Name and Form, and Qualities, which is without end, without joy or sorrow, and without modifications, which is eternal and of the Nature of *Sath-chith-ananda* [Being-awareness-bliss]) appears, as a result of delusion, as all this Creation (endowed with all qualities and modifications, viz. Name, Form, transformation of rise and decline, joy and sorrow). This appearance has an End. It has various other limitations. It appears to be ever-moving and so it is called *Samsaara* (flow of time). Thus, this Brahma entity appears in both the individual form of *Vyashti* and the collective form of *Samashti* and deludes even great scholars and pandits.

One single Chaithanya (consciousness) becomes manifest in different ways as all this multiplicity. Therefore, we speak of the particular and of the collective, i.e. a collection of particulars. Of course, the particular (the *Vyashti*) is a superimposition on the Brahman, a superimposition, like seeing the snake on the rope, the lake in the mirage. Each of the three bodies, the *Sthoola* (gross), the *Sookshma* (subtle) and the *Kaarana* (Causal), is itself, for the knower of Brahman, a superimposition. To say that it is real or unreal is not correct. It is neither real nor unreal, it is *mithya*. The ignorant man caught in the meshes of this delusion believes that *Samsaara* is everlasting and a source of happiness.

Falsely identifying themselves with the body, men suffer in the coils of attachment towards their mother, father, wife, children, relatives and friends. They do not realise (through the constant contemplation of the Brahman having the characteristics of *Sath-chith-ananda* (Being-awareness-bliss), through the never-ceasing discrimination between the changeless and the changing, through association with the good, the service of the wise, and the acquisition of purity of intelligence) that they have neither body nor senses, that they are Brahman (the sustenance and support, the *Adhishtaana* (foundation) of the threefold Body and everything else). The establishment of one's intellect in this Consciousness is the real renunciation or *vairagya* of the body and the senses, implied in the word, *Yama*, as defined by me earlier. This is what is called *Yama*, in the Jnana Yoga.

Joy in times of good fortune and sorrow in times of bad, mistaking the pain of the body and the senses as one's own, such dual attitude and feeling must be overcome. Step by step, the identification with the body and the senses has to be given up. This is the sign of one's acquiring the *Angam* (body) of Yama. This Angam is the very foundation of Jnana Yoga.

Niyama: Niyama means purity, being always full of joy, engaged in thapas or japam. That is what is mentioned in Raja Yoga; *soucha* (purity), *santhosha* (joy), thapas, *swadhyaya* (study). *Eswarapranidhaana* (Surrender to the Lord), these are the components of Niyama.

But I would explain it in the following manner. Niyama is the condition of steady prema in the Paramatma or Godhead, at all times and under all conditions. *Saa parama prema roopaa*, it is said in the *Narada Bhakthi Sutra*. "It is the highest form of prema." It is only when such steadfast Love towards the Absolute is gained, that the *soucha* or purity, the *santhosha* or joy, the thapas, the Swadhyaya or study, the *Eswarapranidhaana* or Surrender to the Lord, mentioned in the Raja Yoga will also be got. When Yama is won, ananda and santhi will become the possession of man through the source of all ananda and santhi, the Sath-chith-ananda Parabrahma Entity.

For these two are not derived from the dry worldly material objects. *Rasovai sah*, He is Sweetness, *Ananda vai Brahma*,. Brahma is Ananda, says the Upanishads. It is

in and through Brahma that the material world is endowed with even the tiniest modicum of joy. Without the basic Brahma, which is the most complete and the fullest sweetness and joy, this fleeting evanescent appearance thereon cannot be so sweet and joy-giving to the worldly minded! It would have been, without that basic rasa (sweetness), terribly bitter. For this little sweetness that material objects give, that Ocean of Nectar is the cause. The association with the knowers of Brahma, the discussion with them of the nature of the Absolute in a spirit of humility and earnestness, a thirst to realise the Reality, unwavering prema towards the Lord, these are the characteristics of those established in Niyama. Such stalwarts will not be affected by derision or praise, by wind or sun or rain, by honour or dishonour. They will tread the path of liberation free from all attachment to anything except the one single aim of realising the ananda of unison with the basic Brahma.

He who has realised the stage of Niyama will be ready to sacrifice everything for the acquisition of jnana. He will run to any distance to listen to discussion of Brahman. He will obey every instruction of the wise. He will attach himself to those who teach him the science of Ultra-consciousness or *Chinmaya-thathwa*, as if they alone are his most intimate friends. He will put up with any trouble in fulfilling their wishes. These are the signs of the *Niyamastha*, or person who has achieved Niyama.

Asana: One should have a steady pose in sitting, that is to say, one should not either shake or sway. But even if

one sits like a rock, motionless and with all joints locked, it can never be called Asana. That is not the sign of real Asana. Asana means both steadiness of the physical frame and inner joy that blooms in the heart. So whatever the pose adopted by the sadhaka of yoga, it must be both steady and comfortable. That is why Patanjali²⁴ has advised, *Sthirasukham-aasanam* (Steady comfortable posture). I am telling you the same thing, in another way: which is the best and most success-yielding Asana? It is that pose in which one is most unaffected by the external world. It is that pose which comes of the practice of the moral life, meritorious in the world and in accordance with the Vedic path. It is absolute lack of interest in matters unconnected with Paramatma. When someone whose ways you do not appreciate comes near you, there is no need to find fault with him. There is no need either to laugh at him or show him your contempt. It is enough if you continue to do your work, unaffected by his arrival.

Let those whose behaviour you do not appreciate follow their path, leave them alone. That is the Udaaseenabhava, the attitude of unaffectedness. After the dawn of love to the Absolute, the aspirant gets this *bhaava* (mental attitude, feeling) towards all worldly things. To be more exact, one should constantly be turning over in the

24 Pathanjali - The author of the Yoga Sutras, a classic description of the way to Self-realization through meditation. Patanjali lived around the second century B.C., and his method is sometimes referred to as raja yoga.

mind, the Reality of Brahma and the Unreality of the jagath, Brahma Sathyam: Jaganmithya. One must avoid comradeship with the bad and too much of friendship with the good, even! Attachment of this nature will drag one down from the Centripetal path, the *Nivriithi Marga* (Path of detachment) to the *Pravriithi Marga* (Path of attachment). Give up attachment with the momentary, the things clothed with the trappings of Name and Form. Once you have achieved this Udaaseenatha, or attitude of unaffectedness, you will have unshakeable santhi, self-control, and purity of mind. You will have the steadiness and stability of Asana.

Pranayama means usually the control and regulation of the inhaling and exhaling of the breath. In the *Yoga Sastras*, this is explained as *rechaka* (exhalation of breath), *pooraka*, (inhalation of breath) *kumbhaka* (retention of breath), etc. comprising the various stages of pranayama (breath control). But I explain it this way: The control of the pranas or *prana-samyama* is possible only for those who consider this whole universe as “unreal.” We are seeing golden ornaments of various types and styles, all are made of the same metal, gold. But still, one likes one ornament more, another ornament less, not all the things equally. We have ourselves given various names and forms to these articles according to the needs and fashions, likes and desires. Yet, we are bound by a meaningless delusion which blinds us to the actuality. When the ornaments were thought of, when they were being manufactured, when they are in use, and when they are finally melted into a lump, they are and remain “gold,” is it not?

Likewise, so many names and forms appear and reappear in this world, rise, grow and get destroyed, but that which is the basic substratum, the eternal, persists in and through all this change and remains eternal. Just as the multiple forms create the illusion and arouse feelings of hatred and love, so too these forms and names delude and create attachment. They make us believe that they are themselves the source of joy. But do not the Sruthis say, the Universe is nothing but Brahman, the Beginning-less, the Endless, the Unblemished, the Ever-pure? They declare that the ornaments are passing phases, that Gold alone is eternal and real and true. Therefore, you must take everything to be Brahman and Brahman alone. Convince yourselves that all appearance is the product of Maya (illusion), practice always that type of discrimination, evince great interest in knowing the reality and be ever alert to recognise the truth that everything is Brahman.

Of course, in the deluded stage, the world appears as real and Brahman as a meaningless concoction. In the stage of intelligent clarity, the jagath is grasped in its true sense as unreal. The Fairy of Delusion overpowers you by her charms and by her arrows of falsehood and guilt. It is only the person possessed of the vision of universal Brahman that can soon escape her wiles. Such a person fully knows that names and forms arose a little time ago and disappear a little time after. In the Gita too it is said, “these Oh Bharatha, appear in the middle only.” (II-28) The world is subject to evolution and involution. To understand this, one need not wait till the

end of the world. It is enough if the angle of vision is corrected. That is the gateway to real knowledge. That is real control of pranas, the consciousness that the world is unreal, or mithya.

The genuine master of Pranayama will picture the world like letters written in pencil many years ago, indistinct, hazy, misty. Knowing that Brahman alone is all this, he will never be drawn towards his environment however fascinating it may be. Earnings, wealth, property, everything is unreal, valueless, not worthwhile. This conviction is the best sign of Pranayama.

The tongue tastes, the eye sees, the ear hears, the skin feels and the nose smells, each sense acts thus throughout life, is it not? The senses have to be withdrawn from the external objective world and turned towards the internal Mental Consciousness or Intelligence known as chitta. This process is called by Patanjali in his *Yoga Sutras* as *Prathyaharam*. However, I shall define it in another manner also.

The inward activity of the chitta, that is to say, the perpetual insight of the chitta, the fundamental directive force of all the senses, that is the real meaning of prathyaharam. It is only when the chitta, or the Mind stuff realises that this is all Maya-born and Maya-maintained that it will draw back its feelers from the sensory world and give up its worldly selfish attitude. The general nature of the chitta is to waver and hesitate and flutter in its search for happiness and peace.

When it knows that the things it ran after are transitory and meaningless, it grows suddenly ashamed and disillusioned. Then, it begins to illumine the consciousness and to clarify it.

The sadhaka who has attained this stage will be watching the outer world as a huge pantomime. His inward look will give him such joy and contentment that he will repent for all the time wasted in external activities and pursuit of sensory joy. So, the straight, sharp, single-pointed vision of the chitta towards the Atma within, **that** is the real Prathyaharam.

Patanjali has explained that when the chitta is fixed in one place, it is named Dharana. I would say that it means more the undeviating attitude of the chitta, its unwavering character. When the chitta gives up the attachment to external objects, when it is saturated with repentance for past foolishness, when it is filled with remorse, renunciation and understanding, when it directly fosters the development of the progressive qualities of head and heart, then truly it becomes fit to join the Ideal. It contemplates only the Ideal. Such fixed attention is what is meant by Dharana.

To whichever place the chitta may wander, instruct it to find only Brahman there. Whatever ideas and pictures it may form, instruct it to find only Brahman in those creations of the mind stuff.

Treat your chitta as a little boy. Bring up that boy, training it to become wiser and wiser, caress it into good

ways, make it aware that all objects that are “seen” are just products of one’s own illusion, remove all its fears and foibles, and focus its attention steadily on the goal only. Never deal forcibly with the chitta. It will yield easily to tenderness and patient training. Correct its waywardness by means of the attitude of renunciation. Destroy its ajnana (ignorance) by means of the instruction in the knowledge of the Atma. Strengthen the interest it is already endowed with, towards the realisation of Brahman, let it give up the attraction towards the evanescent and the false, the mirages created by fancy and fantasy, turn its face inwards away from the external world. By these three methods, Dharana can be established firmly.

During both the waking and the dream stages, as well as during all the process of mental spinning and weaving of colourful pictures by the imagination, the chitta has to be watched and trained. It must be made to flow, single-pointed and steady, like water from a sluice, towards Brahman and Brahman only. That is real Dharana.

Jnana that flows in a single direction is dhyana. I have already described its various characteristics in previous articles. Dhyanam, in short, is the uninterrupted dwelling of the consciousness in jnana, the consciousness itself becoming thereby Jnanaswarupa. All this is Brahman. The ocean of amritha is everywhere amritha. Whether in the well, or in the tank, or in the river or the ocean, water is water. So too, when all is Brahman, all is the same substance appearing under a multiplicity of names and forms. Akasa (sky, ether)

is there, inside the pot as well as outside it, and it is the same akasa though it appears as two, interior akasa and the exterior akasa! The Brahman, too, appearing as various bodies with their own individual characteristics, is One and One only. Like akasa inside the pot as well as outside the pot, it is One. Experiencing that One and only Brahman, avoiding all feelings of difference and distinction, that is the sign of dhyana, the essence of the dhyana experience, however much individuals may vary.

When form is ignored and meaning alone is felt, that is samadhi. This is the opinion of Patanjali. This can be explained in another manner also. When the person engaged in dhyana, forgets both himself and the fact that he is engaged in dhyana, then it becomes samadhi. That is to say, when he is merged in the thing he meditates on, he enters into the stage called samadhi. Dhyana fulfils itself, becomes complete, in samadhi. Dhyana strives, proceeds through effort, but samadhi comes effortlessly. It is the culmination of the eightfold discipline, the Ashtanga.

When one knows that there is absolutely no iota of distinction between the Jiva and the Atma, that they are one and the same, then it is the highest samadhi. It is the fruit of ripest dhyana, the dearest moment of Yogis, the destroyer of ajnana, the signal of the Grace of God. Incessant thirst to know the Atman as all, is worthy to be encouraged and welcomed, for, it is the path through which all doubts can be eliminated.

Samadhi is of two types, *Savikalpa*, Nirvikalpa. In Savikalpa, the Thriputi, or the Threefold nature of Knower, Knowing and Knowee will still persist. When it is realised that the Knower is Brahman, Knowing too is Brahman and the thing to be known is also Brahman, then there is no more *Vikalpa* or Agitation or Activity; that is the Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Samadhi is as the ocean to which all sadhana flows. The seven streams of Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dharana and Dhyana all find their consummation in it. Every trace of name and form disappear in that Ocean. He who serves and He who receives the service, he who meditates and He who is meditated upon, all such duality is dispelled and destroyed. One will not experience even the experience, that is to say, one will not be aware that he is experiencing! Oneself alone, naught else—that will be the samadhi. If there is aught else, it cannot be samadhi. It is something like a dream, a fantasy, a passing vision at best. Samadhi can admit of nothing other than Brahman.