

## Aspirants On The Bhakthi Path

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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