

Bhakthi Is of Two Kinds

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

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

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

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

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

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

46

