

## The Qualities A Saadhaka Should Cultivate

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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