

ANANDA BODHAMRITA

(Part II)



SHRI CHITRAPUR MATH, SHIRALI

North Kanara 581 354



Recitation of the following Shlokas will be mandatory before and after any Chitrapur Math function/meeting as per instructions from H.H. Shrimat Sadyojat Shankarashram Swamiji. There is however no bar on reciting any additional shlokas.

a) Before the meeting :

दक्षिणास्य समारंभा शंकराचार्य मध्यमा ।
अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्ता स्मर्या गुरुपरंपरा ॥
शंकरं शंकराचार्यम् केशवं बादरायणम् ।
सूत्रभाष्यकृतौ वंदे भगवन्तौ पुनः पुनः ॥

परिज्ञानाश्रम श्रीगुरुशंकर परिज्ञानाश्रम शंकर सद्गुरु ।
केशव वामन कृष्ण पांडुरंग आनंद परिज्ञानगुरु ।
सद्योजात शंकर सद्गुरु ॥

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुस्साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥
ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥
॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

b) After the meeting :

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते । पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय
पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

ANANDA BODHAMRITA
(Part II)

ABOUT THIS BOOK

To commemorate the sacred memory of P. P. Shrimat Anandashram Swamiji during this Centenary Year of His Birth, we brought out a book entitled 'Tamaso Maa Jyotirgamaya' on 4-1-2002. It was a reprint of an earlier publication entitled *Sandesha Sanchika* by Kanara Saraswat Association a compilation of Deepavali Messages given by Poojya Swamiji to *Kanara Saraswat*. We only changed the title of the book from *Sandesha Sanchika* to *Tamaso Maa Jyotirgamaya*.

The above book was very well received by the laity as soon as it was released by P. P. Shrimat Sadyojat Shankarashram Swamiji on 4-1-2002 at Talmakiwadi, Mumbai. This warm response has enthused us to come out with another offering entitled ANANDA BODHAMRITA (Part II).

Late Shri H. Shankar Rau brought out The Shrimat Anandashram Ordination Jubilee Souvenir on 11-12-1941 under the Chitrapur Saraswat Series. In addition to many valuable old documents, Shaasans, etc., this Souvenir was also a compilation of discourses by late Swamiji during the period: December 1932 to December 1940. These discourses were translated into English by Shri H. Shankar Rau and published in *Kanara Saraswat*. Mahasabha addresses, addresses on 'hot topics' of those days like Temple Entry to Harijans, etc have been excluded while bringing out this book.

Discourses on Dharma and Adhyatma having a timeless relevance have been retained.

Our earlier publication entitled ANANDA BODHAMRITA in 1999 was a compilation of Swamiji's contributions to Chitrapur Ravikiran. Hence, this book, now in your hands, is titled as ANANDA BODHAMRITA (Part II). We hope and pray that it will adorn every Bhanap home and receive his/her patient study.

27 April 2002

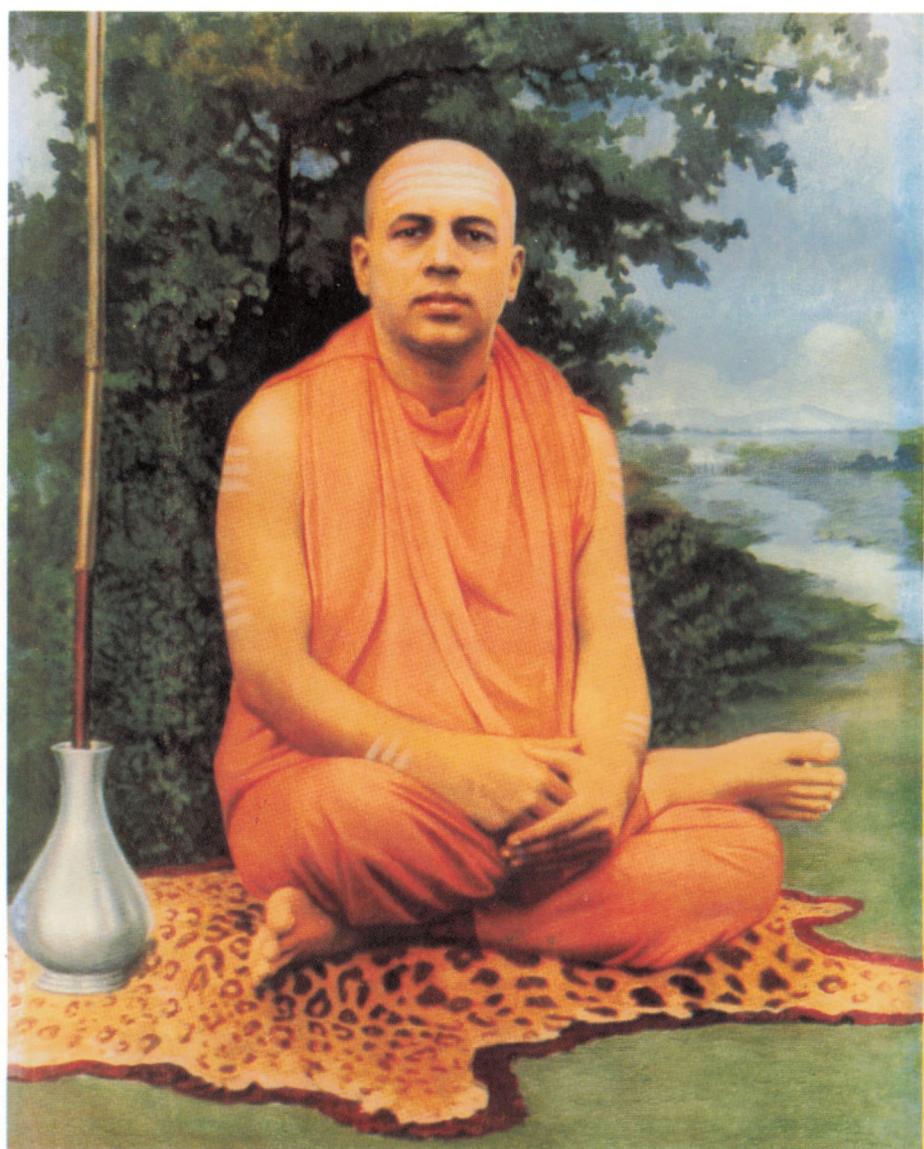
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SWAMI Sadyojat Shankarashram



॥ श्री भवानीशंकरो विजयते ॥



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॥ श्रीगुरुभ्यो नमः ॥

Recognised as a *ब्रह्मनिष्ठ* of the highest order by saints of Ramana Maharshi's caliber, accepted as a true Paramahansa Sanyasi by His contemporary Mathachari-
patis, revered as an embodiment of all the qualities of a *सिद्धिप्रज्ञ* by scholars of Gokarna and Kashi H.H. Swami Anandashrama was the beloved Guru of the community that he guided in His own calm, unruffled manner.

This book Ananda Bodhamrita (Part II) presents the essential teachings of our Parama Guru on various aspects of Dharma and Adhyatma and they have been carefully classified topic wise by Shri V. Rajgopal Bhat. This book's being in English is a definite advantage to the reader. We are very happy indeed to dedicate this book to the sacred memory of H.H. Swami Anandashrama during His Birth Centenary Year and recommend its study by one and all. May these eternal teachings guide us all.

With love and blessings,

Maha Siva Ratri
2002.

CAMP - Hubli

सद्योजातशङ्कराश्रमः

I

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF SHRI SHANKARACHARYA

(Delivered at Karkala in May 1937,
and published in June 1937.)

As this Jayanti is being celebrated by the Samiti for several years, the history of the life of Shri Shankaracharya is probably known to those here assembled. Hence the details of his life will not be dwelt upon at length, but a few things which can be learnt from it will be recalled and briefly explained to you on this blessed day.

Shri Shankaracharya was born towards the close of the eighth century A. D. at Kalati in Kerala (Malabar) in a family of Nambudri Brahmans. His father Shivaguru having expired when he was yet a child, his mother Sati had to look after him and she had his thread ceremony performed in his fifth year. Thereafter, Shankara studied all the Shastras under a preceptor, and with his unrivalled intelligence, became famous as a great man of learning. The fame reached the ears of Rajashekara, the King of the place, who was anxious to include Shankara among the learned men of his Court, and he accordingly sent his minister with many presents to the house of Shankara who had secured his release from the Gurukul. But Shankara returned the presents, boldly saying, as Nachiketa of

old had said to Yama, that his simple living did not require all that glittering glory, and that, having renounced the desire for honours obtainable by shining at the King's Court, he himself had no need to go to the King. Not even the King's own entreaties could move him. It may be learnt from this that it is not the proper thing for man to be captivated by regal pomp and to seek one's own worldly happiness.

It is said that the Acharya was an incarnation of Shiva. Howsoever that may be, the time of his advent was a time of agony for Bharatavarsha as well as for Sanatana Dharma. Buddhism and Jainism had spread in the land, Many kings had adopted these faiths, and, what was worse, even among Hindus, the followers of the Shaiva, Vaishnava, Kapalika and other different faiths were fighting with one another, and there was absolutely no unity in matters religious or political. Sanatana Dharma was in a parlous state. From the west, the Mussalman invasion of Aryavarta was beginning, and prospects of checking it were hardly in sight. Shankara realised that, if he got himself involved in family troubles and ties, it would be difficult to escape these dangers and resuscitate Sanatana Dharma. Accordingly, he firmly resolved to accept sanyas in spite of the injunction that it should not be adopted in the Kali Yuga; and he established Maths and Vidyapiths in order that there might be a succession of such sanyasis for the subsequent protection of Sanatana Dharma. From this it may be inferred that although universal spiritual truths (*samanya dharmatatva*) may remain the same forever, it is permissible to alter the methods of Dharma (*dharma vidhi*) in accordance with place, time and circumstances. Lovers of Dharma may take this example at a time like the present when it is considered necessary that the numerical strength of the Hindus should increase rather than decrease. Again, Shankara

converted and took into his fold Kapalikas who had gone in for a tamasic faith. From this it is clear that it is a good thing for the more enlightened people to spread the light amongst the ignorant and see that they do not leave their religious fold. Besides these, there are several other incidents in the life of the Acharya which may be taken by lovers of Dharma as examples in connection with issues now engaging attention in other fields, but as the issues are controversial, they will not be touched upon at present.

When the mother would not agree to his acceptance of sanyas, Shankara was on the look-out for means to satisfy her and tried hard to obtain her consent. This indicates that it is necessary for each one, whosoever he be, to honour the father and mother who brought him into being. That Shankara performed the obsequies of his mother although he was in the sanyasashram, is another fact which lends support to this.

Sanyas was not in vogue in the south in view of the injunction against its adoption in the Kali Yuga. Hence Shankara journeyed to the north in search of a Guru, sought refuge under Gouda Govinda Bhagavatpada, obtained initiation from him, ignored prevailing distinctions as between Goudas and Dravidas, and taught them to mix together and achieve unity. The same attitude is apparent from his choice of Mandanamishra, a Saraswat, as his disciple to succeed him.

In firmly establishing advaita, he instilled into the followers of the Ganapatya, Shaiva and other faiths the feeling that the Paramatman whom they had all to worship was one: he gave the quietus to their internal squabbles and created unity. Right up to the Himalayas, he went on teaching the lesson that adopting varying faiths and fighting with false pride

would do no good but would result in untold harm to the country; and to propagate his teaching, he founded Maths and a succession of Sanyasis. For these reasons he is entitled to our eternal gratitude.

The works of Shri Shankaracharya, while giving the first place to knowledge, also teach the *pravritti* dharma; they include *Prapanchasara* which follows the *Upasanakanda*. He has thus indicated the means of salvation for all—action, devotion or knowledge according to their respective capacities.

Although the Acharya had written independent commentaries on the *prasthanatraya*, he did not ignore the *Mandookyakarika* penned by his Parama Guru Goudapadacharya, but wrote his commentary on that as well, and by means of the *mangalacharana* at the end of it, eulogised the position of Guru therein more particularly than in his other works. He has thus shown that the aims of human existence can be attained through devotion to the Guru.

His Parama Guru's work just mentioned adopts the line of advaita, and as Shankara accepted it as supporting his own school of thought, it follows that this advaita school was in existence long before his time. As he revived it and silenced the other schools, he came to be known as *Advaitasthapanacharya*. After Shankara many an Acharya has criticised his school and founded his own. But the great majority have been following the advaita school, and even the West has recognised that Shankara's philosophy embodies the greatest element of truth.

May the blessed Paramatman awaken in all the spirit of devotion to the Guru of the type evinced by Shri Shankaracharya and make them fit to attain all objects of human existence attainable thereby !

* * *

II

THE VEDAS NOT THE WORK OF MAN

(Delivered at Karkala in May 1937,
and published in July 1937.)

The authority of the Vedas is not viewed alike by ancient Rishis and by modern critics. With faith firmly implanted in their hearts by intense meditation and personal experience, Rishis have thought about the origin of the Vedas according to their own method. A detailed exposition of the shastric manner of discussion will only bore those who do not understand it. Hence the subject will be briefly dealt with.

The word Veda comes from the root "Vid" meaning knowledge. As the Vedas impart uncommon knowledge which is not capable of sense-perception or proof, the name is significant.

The Vedas are also known as Shrutis. Shruti means what is heard: knowledge acquired by hearing from the mouth of the Guru and so passed on from generation to generation—only heard and not composed or created. Mimamsakas argue from this that the Vedas have been in existence without a beginning.

The discoveries which modern scientists say they have made, may be found embedded in the Vedas at least in embryo. Inasmuch as such an extraordinary storehouse of knowledge could not possibly have

been created by mere man, Shri Shankaracharya declares in his *Bhashya* that the omniscient Ishvara alone must have created it (*Brahmasutra*. 1-1-3), On the other hand, with their extreme zeal for the authority of the Vedas, Mimamsakas hold that Ishvara could not have been free to create the Vedas and that they are eternal (*Jaiminisutra*, 1-1-23)—an opinion held by the Sankhya school as well. The Vedas describe themselves as the breath of Ishvara; seeing that breathing is an effortless process, they must have emanated from Ishvara without any effort on his part; the knowledge of the Vedas which existed in the previous Kalpa, came to Ishvara after the Deluge; hence the Vedas are eternal and not a new creation : so argue the Seshvara Mimamsakas. Even the Naiyayikas acknowledge that the Vedas are the creation of Purushottama or the Supreme Spirit and not of ordinary mortals. .

The fact that branches of the Vedas are described as Kathaka and so forth does not disprove this. It is not that Katha and other Rishis wrote or created them but that they greatly spread the knowledge of the respective branches (*Jaimini*, 1-1-30).

Several critics argue that as the Vedas seem to contain the names of certain persons, they could not have been in existence before those persons came into being. It would appear, however, that the names in question have different meanings altogether (*Jaimini*, 1-1-31). In the same way, Maharshi Yaska declares that, if particular hymns are known by the names of particular Rishis, it is because the Rishis obtained them and realised them through meditation and not created them.

On the whole, scholars have arrived at the conclusion that the knowledge of the Vedas, which was without a beginning, emanated from Ishvara, and

that it was later made known in the form of sentences by Rishis who had obtained realisation.

Students of modern research have tried to determine the age of the Vedas in a variety of ways. There are persons who have put it down at anything from 25,000 to 20,000 years. Swami Vivekananda and a few others maintain that the Vedas have existed for at least 9,000 years.

Even when viewed from this standpoint, the greatness of the Vedas does not depend upon whether they are or are not the creation of man. It is acknowledged by all that, so far as is known at present, they represent the most ancient body of extant literature on earth. That this great literature, so full of the essence of truth, should have become widely known in the old old days when modern facilities for the spread of education and knowledge were nil and the art of writing was unknown; that regulations should have been made to preserve it untainted through a succession of Rishis etc.; that, by fixing the exact intonation and otherwise, it should have been carefully secured from change and has actually survived to this day—these things alone may well lead one to believe that in the Vedas there is a power divine.

May you all take a pride and have faith in this divine literature, and may you thereby be blessed!

* * *

III

RELIGION A MATTER FOR PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE

(Delivered at Karkala in May 1937,
and published in August 1937.)

That reason should be given the first place in teaching religious topics, is an idea which has of late been gaining strength. But if, among such topics, rebirth and the like must be taught from experience alone, is there any way, to do so by dying first to gain it? Hence, in matters beyond the powers of reason, it is necessary to accept trustworthy statements as authority. Don't we refrain from taking poison on the authority of such statements without testing them to obtain the experience?

It is not to be understood from this that reason should be ignored altogether. It must be given due weight if only to scotch the evils arising in society from blind mistaken faith. Accordingly, the authority of reason and the Scriptures alike will be relied upon in dealing with today's subject.

Is religion a mere matter of speculation? The question may be interpreted in two ways:

- (1) When strenuous efforts have proved fruitless, to believe, in order to soothe one's grief, that God will bestow the reward at least in a future birth, is pure speculation; in other words, a

mental attitude, assumed for the sake of mental peace, in the absence of any actual experience of God or of rebirth.

- (2) Intellectual perception of truths relating to God and religion, is enough: practice is unnecessary. Whatsoever the practice, good will result from the mere fact that the mind is directed towards religion.

That neither of these contentions is sound will be clear from the following explanations :

- (1) Says Manu (VI-67): "If dirty water has to be purified, it is absolutely no use calling the clearing out a hundred times without number. The water is rendered pure only when the dirt is actually obtained and put into it. Similarly, the fruits of religion can be obtained only by practising it." This disposes of the first contention.
- (2) Says Sureshvaracharya (*Naishkarmyasiddhi*, IV-62): "If the wise may be wicked, what is the difference between dogs and such wise men?" Again, as the Upanishads put it, "He who does not leave wickedness aside cannot attain salvation from the knowledge of Brahman." Hence the second contention also falls to the ground.

It follows from the above that religion is not a matter of speculation alone, but a matter for practice. Whether it is also a matter for experience will now be considered.

The religious doctrine of rebirth has been established in the *Gita* and the Upanishads. Goutama maintains that it is a result of the habit of previous births that the new-born calf seeks its mother's teats straightway to have its fill of milk and does not search for it

elsewhere; as also the fact that the cow is frightened at the very sight of the tiger, realising that it is her mortal foe. According to the *Patanjala Yogasutras* (III-18), a particular type of *yogasadhana* enables one to recall past births. It may therefore be inferred that rebirth is a matter capable of being tested by experience.

Similarly, the *Patanjala Yogasutras* themselves (II-44) hold that a study of the Scriptures enables one to realise the *Ishtadevata*. It may be understood from this that the gods too are not outside the scope of human experience.

Again, the Upanishads declare that the ultimate goal of religion, namely, the attainment of the Self, is possible through intense meditation. Even the Parabrahman, then is an object capable of being realised. Yajnyavalkya too (1-8) accepts this.

On the whole, it is clear that religion is not a matter of mere speculation but definitely one for practice and experience.

The utility of such a religion will now be briefly explained, although the question is not strictly relevant to the subject in hand.

That the well-being of society must rest on a foundation of ethics, is a proposition which few will deny. But ethical truths will not easily sprout in selfish hearts unless there is a religious feeling. Universal religious truths are not dissociated from ethics. Manu says (X-63) that harmlessness, truth, uprightness, purity and self-control should be practised by all alike. Is it necessary to add that religious tenets embodying such ethical teaching are a source of the society's well-being? "It is the function of religion to support the subjects and save them from a fall," says Vyasa. The injunctions against the satisfaction of the sexual

instinct otherwise than through a wedded life, as also against the eating of flesh and the drinking of liquor otherwise than as prescribed in connection with laborious sacrifices, were doubtless meant to regulate man's natural propensities in an orderly fashion. According to the *Bhagavata* (VI-5-41), "The element of evil in the objects of sense cannot be appreciated without experience. Hence the man who adopts the life of the householder, experiences sorrow in due course from such objects, acquires dispassion, and adopts the path of *nivritti*." the path that leads to ultimate good. Of the four *ashramas*, *brahmacharya*, *vanaprastha* and *sanyas* obviously follow this path, while even that of *grihastha* may be said to follow it to a large extent, being strictly regulated in various ways—see, for example, the prohibition of sexual intercourse except at prescribed periods.

"The Paramatman who is in all is One and to worship Him is the eternal religion." A feeling of this kind is a great help in the observance of tenets regarding harmlessness etc. Again, "Just as different rivers join the one ocean, the different faiths lead to the One Paramatman," indicating that a tolerant attitude towards other religions can result in nothing but good.

* * *

IV

WHY SHOULD WE SEEK THE SHELTER OF GOD?

(Delivered at Karkala in May 1937,
and published in September 1937.)

In dealing with today's subject, it is necessary to establish that God exists. Hence let us consider this first.

As in speaking on religion yesterday, so in speaking of God to-day,—a subject beyond the grasp of reason,—due weight will be given to reason and Shastras alike.

If this wonderful material universe should work in obedience to nature's laws, there must be an intelligent Creator. That He is Ishwara is the opinion of the Naiyayikas.

According to Yogashastra, Ishvara is the transcendent Knower embodying the knowledge of all even as ether embodies all dimensions.

Some hold the view that just as there is the master who rewards his servants of their services, there is Ishvara Who bestows, even at the end of time, the fruit of actions which spend themselves the moment they are performed.

Atheists assign all these attributes to nature alone. As it is not possible for ordinary people to convince such persons, the Paramatman incarnates Himself as

stated in the *Gita*, and establishes Dharma. And that is how theism is alive to this day.

The researches of modern scientists in this connection are still incomplete, but do not disprove what they have not discovered. And there is the possibility of their proving the existence of God in course of time.

Thus though the forces of theism and atheism are seemingly equal, theism is reinforced by the evidence of great souls who have realised God. The conversion of the arch-atheist Vivekananda to theism by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, is not an incident from the Puranas. Similarly, it may be inferred from many a recent event that God does exist.

Let us now proceed to consider why we should seek the shelter of God.

The injunction that one must seek His shelter cannot be found in the schools of Vedanta, Sankhya and Jaimini, the first of which enjoins the worship of the Brahman without attributes. But the Brahman sought by the Vedantists is not different from Ishvara. It is in this sense that Shri Krishna says in the *Gita* that He is worshipped by the suffering, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of possessions, and the wise (VII—16). Indeed, this statement makes it clear that the shelter of Ishvara has to be sought by the suffering for the relief of suffering, by the seeker of knowledge for the attainment of knowledge, and by the seeker of possessions for the acquisition of possessions, and thus provides the answer to the question why we should seek such shelter.

Shri Krishna has also declared in the *Gita* that He bears the burden of responsibility for the happiness and protection of those who worship Him with undivided heart (IX—22). Numerous examples of this

have come to notice from time to time. At the present moment, there is the case of the Ashram of Ramana Maharshi where, although it is not usual to store up material in advance, the day to day feeding of the great number of devotees that assemble, and other matters proceed automatically without a hitch.

It may be that, on occasions, the force of *prarabdha* outweighs the power of worship, thus leading to disappointment in material expectations. But the prospect of spiritual peace is always present in theism and this satisfaction may lead to the saving of human life. There are not a few instances of atheists taking refuge in suicide when faced with troubles which are too hard for them to bear.

Hence may all seek the shelter of God to gain the primary object of spiritual peace as well as the secondary one of material prosperity, and may they thereby be blessed!

* * *

V

JEEVA AND SHIVA

(Delivered at Hubli in June 1937,
and published in October 1937.)

O Goddess! The Spirit which is but one
Thou dividest in sport into two with
the names Jeeva and Shiva. Having first
given the state of Jeeva in this manner
to one who is no other than Shiva, Thou
finally transformest the same Jeeva into
Shiva—*Devi Bhujanga Stotra*.

Thus has Shri Shankaracharya praised the Mother of the world. From this it can be gathered that the Jeeva is of the nature of Spirit, that he acquires the state of Jeeva through the Paramatman's power of Maya or illusion, and that he can attain to Godhead again through the grace of the Paramatman. It is not possible for any one to say with certainty when and how the state of Jeeva came upon one who was Shiva, nor does it serve any useful purpose to argue about the matter. Man's main duty (स्वधर्म) is to get rid of the Jeeva condition which, according to universal experience, is so full of grief, and to try to regain the Shiva condition which is bliss itself.

The Jeeva centres his love in the material body and other things which are not Atman, and thereby becomes subject to sorrows without number. The chief cause of this is ignorance of his true nature. Hence

unless this ignorance is removed, it is not possible to free oneself from the succession of sorrows and attain to Godhead. Just as light alone can dispel darkness, true knowledge of the self—knowledge born of the experience of realisation—can alone destroy this ignorance. This is proclaimed in various declarations of the Shrutis : for example, "Immortality can be secured only by realising the Paramatman. There is no other way to it."—*Shvetashvataropanishad* (III—8).

The means to realisation consists in understanding the nature of the Atman through instruction from the Guru etc. and meditating upon it. "Even as the *keeta* contemplates the *bhramara* and becomes the *bhramara*," says Shankaracharya, "the man who is intent on the Brahman, becomes, through his single-mindedness, one with the Brahman." Again, "When the aspirant longs only for the Paramatman, He can be attained. The Paramatman will manifest Himself to such a single-minded aspirant," teaches the *Kathopanishad* (11-23). This type of worship of the God without attributes, is however, possible only to the higher class of aspirants. For ordinary people, worship of the God with attributes is an easy means. It is this which is known as *bhakti*. This *bhakti* is of two kinds, *para* and *apara*. *Parabhakti* consists in intense devotion to the Lord. When devotion has thus sprung up, it is only natural that the mind should ever be engaged in the thought of Him. *Aparabhakti* consists in engaging the other senses in physical worship, salutation, singing His glories, listening thereto, etc., in order to help the mind to remain fixed on Him. When the Paramatman is satisfied with this two-fold devotion, through His grace comes the knowledge that leads to realisation. This is the process described by Shri Krishna in verses 9 and 10 of the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

In the address just presented by you, you have given

us credit for abandoning the time-honoured practice of restricting our travels to the two Kanaras and for touring outside their limits for the benefit of our disciples. Although occasions for such travel may arise in future, tours of the kind undertaken in the past were made for specific reasons and not solely for the propagation of Dharma. Similarly, you have mentioned the summoning of the Mahasabha and the solution of certain difficulties. Even this was a work accomplished by gentlemen who came forward, impelled by their love of the institution and of the Community. That you give us credit which is not our due indicates your affection and reverence for us. The homage thus lovingly tendered by you is offered at the feet of the Paramatman.

May the Paramatman, the Lover of devotees, even more firmly establish your religious sense and devotion, and grant that you may all share in His blessings!

* * *

VI

DHARMA AND ITS PRACTICE

(Delivered at Hubli in June 1937,
and published in November 1937.)

Dharma is the means to prosperity and to liberation alike. Prosperity includes the happiness of this world with health, wealth etc., leading thereto, as well as the happiness of heaven and other worlds. This two-fold happiness is impermanent. By liberation is meant salvation which is identical with bliss.

In our Sanatana Dharma there are two divisions known as Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Shri Krishna has told Arjuna that he had prescribed in ancient times in this world these two ways of devotion to duty for the followers of the path of action and the path of knowledge respectively. Of the two, Karma Yoga is the means to prosperity and Jnana Yoga to liberation. As Karmayogis go on enjoying the fruits of action, they acquire dispassion in regard to such fruits by reason of their evanescence, and they thereby qualify themselves for Jnana Yoga.

Karma Yoga is suited to those in the *brahmachari*, *grihastha* and *vanaprastha* stages of life, while Jnana Yoga is suited to Sanyasis. Although the ordinary rule is to adopt sanyas only after properly passing through the three earlier stages, those who, either because of faithful performance of their ashrama dharma or through the strength of their past good deeds, acquire

purity of heart and dispassion in either of the first two stages, can, according to the Shastras, enter the stage of sanyas straight from it.

"Brahmans long to know this Atman through the study of the Scriptures, sacrifices, gifts and penance in the shape of desirelessness", says the *Brihadaranyakopanishad* (IV-4-22). This implies that performance of Karma Yoga in the spirit of desirelessness prepares one for Jnana Yoga. Shri Shankaracharya has made this clear in his *Gita Bhashya* where he says : "Though the pravritti dharma, prescribed for varnas and ashramas as a means to prosperity, leads to the attainment of heaven etc., it paves the way to purity of heart if performed without desire for fruit and in the spirit of dedication to the Lord. As the pure in heart become fit to tread the path of knowledge, pravritti dharma leads both to knowledge and to liberation."

It is well known that ours is the Bhagavata tradition. It is stated that the basis of this tradition is the Dharma preached by Shri Krishna to Uddhava in the *Bhagavata* and to Arjuna in the *Gita*. As the path of action yields birth for the enjoyment of the fruits thereof, it is, by its very nature, the source of shackles in the form of birth and death. But it is not possible to abandon it on this account, because all but the wise are subject to the qualities of nature and have perforce to engage in action. Not even for a moment can they remain actionless. Hence the need for performing the actions prescribed in the Shastras in such a way that they may not create fresh fetters. Just as poison which killeth life is transformed into medicine in the hands of the physician, even so, Karma Yoga, when performed without desire for fruit, with the mind balanced alike in success and failure, and in the spirit of dedication to the Lord, helps to remove the fetters

by purifying the heart. And more : as it is stated that man can attain perfection by performing his own karma and so worshipping the Paramatman who is the omnipresent Creator of the universe, there is, in this Bhagavata school, a sort of harmony between the paths of action and of devotion.

Of the actions to be performed daily by householders, the chief ones are the *Sandhyavandana* and the *Panchamahayajnyas*. As the *Sandhyavandana* includes meditation on the Paramatman through the *Gayatri mantra*, and as such meditation can be of benefit to every one, this kind of worship has the greatest importance. Manu has declared that the *Gayatri mantra*, which embodies the Pranava and the three great mystic words, is the means to the attainment of the Brahman. As the Paramatman has to be worshipped with the feeling that He is immanent in the entire universe both moving and unmoving, the five great sacrifices which constitute the worship of Gods, Rishis pitris, bhutas and men, are helpful in that they firmly establish that feeling. Shri Krishna has commended these sacrifices by saying that those who partake of food remaining over after their performance, are absolved of all sin.

May the Paramatman grant that all of you may perform your Dharma to the best of your ability and share the merit!

* * *

VII

BHAGAVATA DHARMA

(Delivered at Mallapur in October 1937,
and published in December 1937.)

It is common knowledge that our society is connected with the Bhagavata Dharma. Hence let us consider this Dharma a little.

The Mimamsakas, who valued the Vedas as higher than life itself, called them Brahma and cared not for the Brahma that is Ishvara. In fact, it is the opinion of Jaimini (*Brahmasutras*, III-4-18) that the path of pravritti enjoined in the Vedas is itself Dharma and that the stage of renunciation which pertains to nivritti, is not predicated in the Vedas. As a result, the attention of those who were inclined to be scrupulous in following the path of action, was centred in the works section of the Shrutis and the Smritis : and knowledge of the Lord and the path nivritti came to be ignored altogether.

In the same way, the Vedantists called the Vedas Shabda Brahma. This Shabda Brahma emanated from the Brahma or Ishvara, the Cause of the universe. They maintained that the highest aim of human existence was the realisation of this Brahma, that actions created fetters, and that renunciation which pertained to nivritti was predicated in the Vedas. But herein lies the possibility of harm arising from indifference to action before attaining purity of heart—indifference

based on the supposition that, in the state where the mind is stable, no sanctions or prohibitions need apply.

In order that there may be no room for obstacles which are apt to crop up in both the schools above mentioned, the Bhagavata Dharma proclaims harmony between the paths of pravritti and nivritti. It includes devotion. Of late, however, has grown the erroneous impression that devotion automatically means absence of all regulations relating to the performance of actions prescribed in the Shrutis and the Smritis : and, simultaneously, has spread a tendency to caprice which is neither pravritti nor nivritti. But this is a defect due to ignorance of the nature of true devotion.

Devotion means the highest love of the Supreme Self. The wife who loves her husband, gladly acts according to his behests, strives to please him and experiences a kind of joy in so doing. In the same way, should not those who have devotion for the Lord carry out His directions faithfully? "The Shrutis and Smritis are My own directions. He who disobeys them is a hater of Mine, and even though he may style himself My devotee, is no Vaishnava," said the Lord according to Shri Shankaracharya's commentary on the *Vishnusahasranama*. The mother who loves her children does not hesitate to punish them occasionally when they disregard her good advice and behave naughtily. Even so, the Lord never likes wicked conduct in His devotees. From all this it follows that liberation comes to hand through the grace of the Supreme Lord if one takes care not to infringe the ethical rules of harmlessness etc. and performs, to the best of one's ability and only to please the Lord, actions prescribed in the Shrutis and Smritis. Further, the *Shankara Bhashya* declares that, although it may be difficult or impossible to observe the Varnashrama Dharma according to rule, perfection may be obtained

by abstaining from prohibited actions and resorting only to the silent repetition of the Gayatri etc. (*Brahmasutras*, III-4-38). Even women and Shudras can secure salvation by adopting the path of devotion; and more easily the Brahmans in whom devotion is reinforced by Varnashrama Dharma. This is what is implied by Shri Krishna when he indicates the greatness of that Dharma by qualifying the noun "Brahmans" with the adjective "holy" in the *Bhagavad Gita* (IX-33). Clearly, then, the path of devotion is in harmony with the path of action and never opposed to it.

In keeping with the spirit of this Bhagavata Dharma is the prevalent practice of beginning each action prescribed in the Vedas with *sankalpa* that one is going to do it to please the Supreme Lord (*Shri Parameshvara prityartham*) and of ending it by making an offering of it to Shri Krishna (*Krishnarpanam*.)

Although the main fruit of Bhagavata Dharma is liberation, secondary and material benefits also accrue from it, even as the mango tree, planted for the sake of its fruit, supplies fruit and shade as well.

May all engage in this Dharma which leads to enjoyment and liberation alike !

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VIII

TEMPLES AND THEIR FUNCTION

(Delivered at Vittal in December 1937,
and published in January 1938.)

"Merge thy mind in Me, be My devotee, sacrifice to Me, prostrate thyself before Me, thou shalt come even to Me. I pledge thee My troth; thou art dear to Me." So said Bhagavan Shri Krishna to Arjuna on the field of battle. He said of course that he gave that promise to Arjuna because Arjuna was dear to him. But the object of an *Avatar* is not merely to preach to those near and dear, but to preach to the whole world so that the whole world might be benefited. Shri Krishna *vows* in all sincerity that those who are His sincere devotees shall attain godhead themselves.

That is the one great secret of genuine happiness. We know instances of persons who are unhappy even though endowed with all the world's goods in abundant measure. All material happiness has to depend on externals for its very existence and continuance, and is therefore uncertain and unreal. Such happiness is not unmixed but is generally found to be tainted with sorrow in varying proportions.

"Merge thy mind in Me," says the Lord. Rely on the Lord, and all will be well. We should not hanker after worldly happiness but fix our eye on ~~the~~ Miss eternal.

The Lord has pointed out the way: "Be My devotee." Lest, however, difficulty should be experienced at any

rate in the early stages, in disciplining the mind and treading the path of devotion, the Lord adds "Sacrifice to Me" and "Prostrate thyself before Me." Hence the necessity of image worship. It is not easy for every one to worship an impersonal God in the abstract. An idea becomes easier of mental comprehension if there is a concrete symbol embodying it. That is why, even in the field of nationalism and patriotism, ideas are sought to be given concrete representation—*moorta swarup*—by suitable symbols like the national flag.

Similarly, in spiritual matters also, placing an image of God before ourselves, we find it easier to engage in devotion by worshipping that image and prostrating ourselves before it. It was therefore that our forefathers introduced the system of temples wherein to worship God. They help to strengthen devotion. The Paramatman is omnipresent, so that, strictly speaking, He is present not only in temples but everywhere else. To discipline the mass mind, however, institutions like temples are necessary. Where an image is installed according to the prescribed ritual and worshipped in all solemnity as laid down in the ancient Scriptures, the presence of Divinity naturally makes itself felt to a greater extent than elsewhere. Therein lies the secret of the value of temples to mankind.

This Shrimat Ananteshwar temple at Vittal is one of the biggest and oldest of the temples belonging to our Community—perhaps the oldest of all our temples. A draft scheme has recently been notified for the temple by the Board for Hindu Religious Endowments in this Province, and such a scheme will probably be framed before long. New trustees may be appointed for the temple after the scheme comes into force. But whoever be the trustees, co-operation of the public, and especially of the local public, is absolutely necessary for the successful management of the temple.

The future of the Board seems itself to be somewhat uncertain, as the Congress Party, which is in office now, appears to be thinking of other ways and means for ensuring efficiency in temple management. But whichever Government or party may be in power, whether the Board itself continues or ceases to exist, temples will remain and will have to be managed and managed well.

The work of temples is almost literally, as well as really, the work of God. It must therefore go on unhampered, and no party spirit should rear its head in that kind of work. In saying so, we do not mean to convey that party spirit has manifested itself to any undesirable extent here and that any defects have been noticed in the work of this temple as a result thereof. Our intention is only to sound a suitable note of precaution as regards the future.

No one can please all. Whatever a man may do, he cannot expect to please everybody. Every one should therefore try to see that the right thing is done and not merely that the thing done is pleasing to himself. By doing so, the necessary atmosphere of sympathy and co-operation will be created, and when people co-operate, real benefit will accrue as a result of the service extended by them to the temple.

We pray to God to endow all with the right sense of duty and service necessary for the purpose and to bless them with peace and happiness.

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IX

THE NEED FOR TEMPLES

(Delivered at Coondapoor in November 1937,
and published in February 1938.)

Although man may try ever so hard, it occasionally happens that all his attempts prove to be in vain. From this it can be inferred that the fruit of actions depends upon the Lord (*Nyayasutras*, IV-1-19). Hence it is clear that worship of the Lord becomes the means of fulfilling one's desires and of remedying evils. Even neglecting these factors, one can not gainsay the fact that peace of mind results from such worship.

Duality is the rule of the universe, and permanent happiness cannot be found in this world. Accordingly, Bhartrihari says, "Although objects of sense may last a long time, they cannot but cease to exist one day or another. Hence what is the harm in relinquishing them right from the start? When man relinquishes object of his own accord, a kind of peace remains with him for ever. But when, after having been enjoyed for a while, the objects drop off by themselves, it is difficult to describe the pain of separation which seizes the mind." As declared by the Vedas, therefore, the lasting peace which springs from the worship of the Lord, is superior to the fleeting happiness derived from objects of sense.

The *Bhagavad Gita* (XVIII-46) proclaims Varnashrama Dharma as one way of worshipping the Lord, but

Rishis have also pointed to mere devotion as an independent means. Although yoga by meditation is the best in this sphere, few are the qualified ones whose minds can be attuned to meditation of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss devoid of attributes. It is easier for ordinary people to contemplate, as God with attributes, the Paramatman who is imbued with the illusory Power through which He undertakes the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe. In this way, say the Upanishads, "By rubbing the under log of one's body. i.e., the mind, with the upper log of silent repetition of the Pranava etc., one can see the fire of God emerge." Even this worship of the God with attributes which has been prescribed for those who are on the middle rungs of the ladder, is worship of the Formless and therefore difficult for those on the lower rungs to comprehend. Hence to suit the mind which cannot attune itself to the Formless, is prescribed the worship of the God with form. Even Shri Shankaracharya, the great exponent of the Nirguna school, has stated in his commentary on the *Brahmasutras* that the Lord assumes an illusory body at His pleasure for the benefit of the devotee. Worship of the Paramatman in the form one likes best, cannot therefore be improper. Where, owing to weakness of the mind, contemplation of God with form may also be impossible, success may be attained through the worship of images. Although, mainly, living images like mother, father and Guru may have been mentioned, worship of inanimate images too does confer benefits according to the strength of feeling in the devotee, witness the case of Ekalavya in the *Mahabharata*. Drona declined to teach Ekalavya on the ground that he was a person of low birth, but the latter worshipped an image of Drona, looked upon himself as his Guru, so prosecuted his studies, and turned out to be more skillful than Arjuna, Drona's chief

disciple. It is thus clear that even the worship of images can lead to success.

In praising an image having *abhayamudra* etc. as the protector of the humble and so forth, there is the possibility of virtues of the type taking root amongst the devotees themselves.

Although the rules relating to image worship may require it to be conducted by each individual separately, this may be impossible in present conditions when the battle of life is hard indeed. Nevertheless, the fact that our forefathers had been observing congregational image worship in temples, has made it possible for us to remember God in these difficult days. "*Sankata bandaga Venkataramana*" : the minds of those who are in trouble naturally run in the direction of temples. Devotion is inspired and strengthened by mass action. And more : when, in course of time, atheism grows and a future generation for any reason finds itself in a state of despair, temples, if properly maintained, can be the means of warding off possibilities of suicide by reminding people of God and bringing new hope into their lives. Hence may all who have striven for the restoration of such temples be blessed!

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X

RIGHT ACTION : RITUALS AND RESTRAINTS

(Delivered in the course of the northern tour of
1937-38, and published in March 1938.)

In the *Ishavasya Upanishad* as well as in the *Bhagavad Gita* (III-3), knowledge and action have been prescribed as the two paths to the attainment of the Paramatman. It is an established truth that, of these two, knowledge alone leads to liberation. Nevertheless, as Nature drives every one towards action, helpless man cannot remain actionless even for an instant (*Ibid*, III-5). Hence, in accordance with present conditions in which many are fit only for the path of action, let us consider that path a little.

The ordinary duties like harmlessness (*Manu*, X-63) to be practised alike by all who are on this path, have been dealt with on a previous occasion (page 10 *ante*). The special duties appropriate to the respective varnas and ashramas have also been briefly described (pages 13 to 15 *ante*). The ordinary duties like harmlessness mentioned by *Manu* have themselves been prescribed by *Patanjali*, with slight variations, as the five *yamas* or restraints, namely, harmlessness, truth, uprightness, continence and absence of greed (*Yogasutras*, II-30). It is also stated that, when harmlessness is faithfully practised, mutual foes abandon their enmity in the

presence of the aspirant and live in peace. Says Manu (IV-204): "These restraints should ever be practised without fail. He falls who sticks merely to religious observances without practising these restraints. Hence it does not matter even if observances which nullify restraints are occasionally neglected." Is it not better that the tiger which observes the Ekadashi by fasting and celebrates the Dvadashi by cow-killing, should refrain from the fasting as well as from the cow-killing?

The merit of the conjee served to his guest by Saktuprastha who lived on grains left over from the harvest and picked up in the fields thereafter, has been described in the *Mahabharata* (*Ashvamedha Parva*, XC-7-116) as superior to that of the horse sacrifice celebrated by the Pandavas with large gifts but after considerable fighting. Similarly, it is better to be content with *tirtha prasad* and to trouble no one than to secure *prasad* for all through an extensive bhiksha and to trouble the poor for contributions for the purpose. Flowers etc. are *prasad* as well.

Again, in the absence of endowments sufficient to enable the Math to carry on permanently, its current expenses have to be met to a large extent from the annual vantiga collected from disciples. "Actions which involve dependence upon others should be abandoned as far as possible, and only those actions performed which are within one's power," teaches Manu (IV-159). Hence when the financing of ordinary daily expenditure is a matter of some difficulty, there can be no question of incurring the wrath of the Deity as a result of the stoppage of the car festival which makes large demands on men and money, involves a great deal of effort, and may consequently be reckoned amongst rajasic activities (*Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII-24). It is not possible to say that this rite is one laid down in the Vedas; it is a rite prescribed in the Agamas. The

ceremony of the car festival came to be established amongst us through the surrounding influence of those who attach great importance to the Agamas. It is on record that, on the occasion of the consecration of a certain temple, a former Jagadguru of Sringeri put a stop to the Agamic rite and adopted the Vedic one. At the Vittal temple and elsewhere, there is sufficient income from endowments and the celebration of the car festival may be a means of attracting the minds of the ignorant towards God. But it is difficult to continue it at Chitrapur on the strength of the annual vantiga. It does not appear that all pay vantiga regularly. Accordingly, as we deem it proper to declare our own views in the matter in present conditions, we would make it clear that greater attention might be paid to the problem of ensuring the permanent existence of the Math and the performance of the most essential religious functions, and the car festival stopped.

In dealing with right action in general, the importance of self-restraint in such matters as birth control might incidentally be mentioned. But our views on the subject have already been reported in *The Kanara Saraswat* (January 1938, page 21) and need not be repeated.

Ashvapati, the Kaikeya, says in the Upanishads that, in his kingdom, there were no thieves, drunkards, adulterers, and so forth. We pray to the Paramatman, in conclusion, that our Community may shine likewise.

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XI

HAVE FAITH IN THE VEDAS AND USE YOUR REASON

(Delivered in the course of the northern tour of
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That matters which appeal to reason should alone be accepted as authoritative, is an opinion which has been gaining ground in recent times. If this contention had not made itself felt amongst the ancients, it does not mean that the ancient Shastrakars were devoid of reason. When one examines the arguments used by Kumarila Bhatta (who maintains the authority of the Vedas) to refute the Buddhists who rely on the sole authority of reason, one feels that his intellectual powers were, indeed, unrivalled.

There are thousands of rules in Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*; and the first fourteen rules in it have been so constructed as to correlate all of them. If but one letter in these fourteen rules is disturbed, it is impossible to reconstruct the subsequent *Ashtadhyayi* in anything like the same ordered form. Even western scholars are astonished at the cleverness of this manner of composition. Says Patanjali, who is the author of a commentary on these rules : "In the rules prepared by Panini as a result of meditation, great labour and thought, not a single letter can be held to be useless." It is a well-known statement that one who teaches

this commentary should be clever enough to rule an empire. And when even Patanjali, whose intellectual splendour is also great, maintains that "All that is declared in the Vedas is authoritative," how can one say that he is a blind believer? That his intellect had permeated the Ayurveda which is in use to this day, is a matter of common knowledge amongst traditionalists.

It is true the skill used by Shri Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya and others to refute other schools of thought and establish their own, shows their intellectual heights, but all the Acharyas are agreed that those heights cannot compete with the wisdom of the Vedas which proclaim the Paramatman who is beyond the grasp of reason.

If, in the name of rationalism, religious truths are interpreted according to one's own sweet will, hardly any room will be left for God or religion. It is better far to remain as atheists than to adopt such a line.

An interpretation once settled after a deal of effort, by mere argument, can be upset, and its very opposite established later by cleverer people. "Argument hath no stability" says the *Mahabharata*. Accordingly, Shastrakars, though themselves possessed of outstanding intelligence, permit only such argument as is in consonance with the well-ordered Vedas (*Manu*, XII-106). At the same time, where there are varying percepts in the Vedas, Smritis or ethics, it has been laid down that what appeals to one's reason should be adopted (*Ibid*, 11-6 and 12); in other words, the use of reason has not been belittled.

Even people who loudly proclaim the authority of only those matters which appeal to reason, are not found, in practice, to act entirely in accordance with their protestations. It is therefore out of the question to stand by reason at all costs.

Again, there is the school which relies on the authority of the opinion of the majority. But one can see instances of the opinion of a single individual appearing as the opinion of the majority when ordinary people do not use their intellect and only say ditto to whatever he may happen to say. And even such opinion may turn out to be different on each occasion and lead to confusion.

Hence, religion, whatever its name, is usually based on the authority of a special Scripture. And, in the same way, our religion has followed the Vedas from time immemorial.

Although the Vedas proclaim the truth of the Paramatman with great skill and intelligence, they end with the injunction : "Have faith." It is also stated in one place that the truth manifests itself to the refined intellect (*Kathaka*, III-12). Hence success can be attained if one has faith in the Vedas *and* uses one's reason.

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XII

IS THERE NO PATH BESIDES KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION?

(Delivered in the course of the northern tour of
1937-38, and published in May 1938.)

The Vedas proclaim that there is such a Being as the Paramatman who is invisible to the public gaze and of the nature of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. The principle of consciousness which is present in the animal creation is but part of this Paramatman. But, oblivious of this fact as a result of Maya's veil, man imagines that he is the material body, becomes subject to a succession of joys and sorrows, and thereby suffers. To dispel this ignorance and "to know the nature of the Atman is the main aim of religion" (*Yajnyavalkya*, 1-8.)

According to the *Bhagavad Gita* (111-3), there are two paths in religion, namely, action and knowledge. But the same *Gita* maintains (XVIII-55) that the Paramatman can be known through devotion as well. These two declarations may seem inconsistent. But it appears to us that worshipping the Paramatman by the observance of Varnashrama Dharma also constitutes devotion. It would thus be clear that the paths of action and devotion are one. Shri Shankaracharya has expressed this idea in one place; and further, in his commentary on the *Gita*, he has

interpreted devotion as *Jnananishtha* and embodied it in the path of knowledge as well.

On the whole, it is clear from this that devotion does need the help of right conduct (*achar*) and right thought (*vichar*). Devotion bereft of these and going by the name of love, is apt to drag men down the slippery slope. It is hardly necessary to state that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was one who knew the secret of devotion. A boy who had acquired a name as a prince of devotees was once brought to him. It was generally known that the very utterance of the name of God had the effect of bringing out the eight *bhavas* in him and sending him into deep meditation. But the moment Ramakrishna saw him, he remarked that the boy was raw (*kacha*). Although this surprised the people then assembled, the boy's absorption in worldly affairs soon thereafter made them realise that what the Paramahansa had said was true. Instances have come to notice in which a few members of our Community have neglected their wives and children and have lost their all by falling into the net spread by seeming saints who possess no right conduct or thought but have, nevertheless, become famous as great devotees. The company and service of saints have doubtless been prescribed (*Gita*, IV-34), but when Bhartrihari asks "How many such saints are there in this world?" it is obvious that genuine ones are rare indeed. According to the *Gita*, too. "Among thousands of men scarce one striveth for perfection; of the successful strivers scarce one knoweth Me in essence" (VII-3), Imitation ware has the better shine; even so, seeming saints possess the greater attraction. Hence it is most necessary to be on one's guard in the search for the true seer.

Nevertheless, as the *Gita* says that even if the most sinful worship God with single-minded devotion, he

too must be accounted righteous (IX-30), it may be contended that the repetition of the name of God will alone wash away all sins and lead to liberation. It should be remembered, however, that the emphasis here is on single-minded devotion which is rarely met with. Again, even as little children were being told in the old days that a drink of the decoction of gulantha (*amritaballi*) makes the hair on the head grow nicely, the hope of a fine growth of hair being the inducement held out to them to drink the decoction, the pronouncement in the *Gita* seeks to describe the glory of devotion and not to countenance sinful conduct. Seeing that it states further on (IX-31) that the devotee speedily becomes a *dharmatma* and goeth to eternal peace, it is clear that the devotee can secure liberation only by the steady observance of Dharma and has no chance of obtaining it if he persists in sinful ways. The *Naradabhaktisutras* which proclaim devotion as the principal means, also prescribe adherence to right conduct in the shape of harmlessness etc.

Devotion is of two kinds—*para* and *apara*. The former, as declared by Shri Shankaracharya, is included in the path of knowledge. As love of God is likely to take firm root only in those who acquire dispassion towards the objects of sense, this *parabhakti*, which is intense love for the Lord, is not possible for ordinary people. *Aparabhakti* is prescribed for them; and as it involves action, it may be included in the path of action. Hence it is not incorrect to say that there are only two paths.

Just as restraints are more important than rules in the path of action, pure unalloyed devotion characterised by harmlessness is pleasing to the Paramatman, as is evidenced by the examples Vidura, Shrutadeva etc. The worship of images and the method

of silent repetition (*japa*) are also common to the paths of devotion and action.

May the Paramatman inspire all in ways of devotion which are not dissociated from right conduct and right thought !

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XIII

THE YOGA OF ACTION

(Delivered in the course of the northern tour of
1937-38, and published in June 1938.)

It has already been explained that devotion can be treated as forming part of action and knowledge. And, as between these, although right thought is more important than right conduct, it should be remembered that the latter purifies the heart and qualifies one to tread the path of knowledge. As the *Shankarabhashya* says in explanation of an aphorism in the Smritis, "If the dust on the mirror is washed away, the reflection clearly appears; even so, if the sinful propensities of the heart die out through the performance of right action, the likeness of the Atman shines forth".

In present conditions, when *grihasthas* find it hard to eke out a living themselves, they may find it harder still to bear the burden of protecting the other three *ashramas* which tend towards *nivritti*. As some adopt the garb of the Sanyasi merely as a means of livelihood, the few rich people that exist have often had to treat the order with indifference. In consequence, the true Sanyasi finds it difficult even to live. It is therefore better to remain a householder and strive for liberation than to resort to the path of knowledge and adopt sanyas.

It may be doubted whether it is possible to perform all the actions prescribed for the householder and

strive for liberation at the same time. But Yajnyavalkya has, as it were, selected the particular types of action which householders can make it possible to practise in these days, and also said in so many words that they can secure liberation even through such actions (III-205). Accordingly, let us consider the types mentioned by that sage.

First of all, he warns us that, whatever good deeds may be undertaken, wealth lawfully earned should alone be utilised therefor. The suggestion apparently is that attention should be paid primarily to ethical principles or restraints. This point has been dealt with at length (pages 30-32). In any case, the contention of the Shastras that adherence to evil ways results in greater harm than abstention from right conduct, is not to be forgotten. Of the thousand cows given away by Nrigaraja, one cow was not his own. It is stated in the *Mahabharata* (*Anushasanika Parva*, Chapter 70) that, for the fault of having made the gift of a single cow which belonged to others, he had not only to forego the merit of his other gifts but also to assume a low birth in his subsequent life.

Secondly, Yajnyavalkya mentions constancy in the wisdom of the Self. This constancy and the method of *Gayatri japa* prescribed in the *Sandhyavandana* may be said to be one and the same. As stated in the Patanjala *Yogasutras*, japa has to be performed with a realisation of its meaning. The *Gayatri mantra*, which has been explained in the book on *Sandhyavandana*, embodies the wisdom of the Self. Hence says Manu, "The Gayatri should be understood to be the threshold of the Brahman" (II-81).

The third duty mentioned by Yajnyavalkya is hospitality. "The guest should be looked upon as God," enjoins the *Taittiriyaopanishad*. Manu exalts food left over after satisfying the guest to the status of nectar (III-

285). According to the Vedas as well as the *Bhagavad Gita* (III-13), to eat food cooked for one's own sake is to eat sin. Manu goes so far as to say that in case the food is likely to prove insufficient for the guest, even the *Vaishvadeva* may be withheld, and the food so saved should be served to him (III-108). But as the selfsame Manu maintains that pretenders like bogus Sanyasis should not be entertained even with mere words (IV-30), it is clear that it is necessary to see that the guest is a deserving person.

In the opinion of Yajnyavalkya, the fourth duty is *shraddha* or anniversary of death. Being a thing done in a spirit of devotion to one's parents, this is named *shraddha*. Even in connection with marriage and other auspicious ceremonies the *vriddhi nandi shraddha* is prescribed as a means of maintaining the spirit of devotion to ancestors. Hence it is not right to associate anything inauspicious with the very word *shraddha*. The *Taittiriyaopaniṣad* requires that parents should be looked upon as God. Manu not only regards service of parents as one's main duty, but declares that, so long as they live, one should not abandon them and seek the shelter of others (II-235). Who does not know the fact of Panduranga having stayed at Pandharpur in appreciation of Pundarika's absorption in filial devotion? The *Mahabharata* narrates how a Yogi who had reduced a poor bird to ashes with his yogic power, was compelled to seek instruction from a professional hunter who had himself obtained wisdom only through the service of his aged parents. To perform the anniversary of the death of the mother who looked after the development of one's body, as well as of the father who looked after the development of one's intellect in the earlier years, is a matter of duty which at any rate serves to remind one of their goodness. Recent researches of foreign scholars confirm the Hindu religious belief that, although the soul which

is deathless may abandon the physical body, it retains the subtle body and remains subject to pleasure and pain. Hence anniversaries prescribed for the peace of departed souls cannot be fruitless. As Manu has laid down that there should be nothing very elaborate about these ceremonies (III-126), it is obvious that one need not spend beyond one's means on this account.

The fifth duty is truth which is one of the restraints mentioned in a previous discourse.

May all perform the yoga of action in this way and qualify themselves for liberation!

* * *

XIV

CEREMONIES AND EXPENSE

(Delivered in the course of the northern tour of
1937-38, and published in July 1938.)

Shri Shankaracharya, who proclaims the oneness of life by saying that "The Jivatmas in all living beings are forms of the same Paramatman", has declared in his *Vivekachudamani*: "Amongst animals, human birth is the most difficult to attain; more difficult than this is to be born as a man; and even more than this is Brahmanhood". The fact that these different stages have been mentioned indicates that, although oneness of the Self may be realised in the state of perfection, the distinction of Brahmanhood exists when one is still in the stage of an aspirant. "He who has been like a Shudra from birth becomes a Dvija through ceremonies", declare the Shastras. Hence ceremonies are the means of attaining Brahmanhood which is known as the second birth.

"Ceremonies wash away the sins which arise at birth," says Manu. Shankaracharya maintains in the *Prapanchasara* that there is uncommon power in *mantras*. According to Kumarilabhatta, "Every Vedic rite has its unseen utility (even where it has utility which can be perceived)." Hence how can one say that ceremonies performed with uncommonly powerful Vedic incantations are of no use?

Of such ceremonies, only two, namely, the thread

ceremony and marriage are generally performed in our Community at present; and even as regards these, there was recently a demand, in view of the large expenditure involved, that the Math should fix the charges payable to priests in order that economies might be effected. We accepted this view to some extent, classified the different portions of ceremonials as obligatory under the Shastras and discretionary under custom, and indicated the opinion that those who wished to reduce expense need confine themselves only to the obligatory portions. At the Math itself, it has been arranged that a thread ceremony may be performed even for ten rupees exclusive of *bhuridakshina* and *santarpana*, the rate of the former being discretionary and the latter costing 4 1/2 annas per head. But if priests elsewhere are directed to charge accordingly, the poor ones who have to depend upon their profession for their living, may have to abandon the calling altogether, and it will be impossible to fulfil the desire of the Community to have properly educated priests.

Again, a question has been raised whether the fact that priests belonging to other Communities perform the Satyanarayana *vrata* more cheaply than our priests, is due to any difference between our Ashvalayana method and the method adopted by the former. In the first place, Ashvalayana has not prescribed this *vrata* at all. In the second place, will not those who are generous enough to perform it although it is not prescribed by Ashvalayana, benefit their own brethren by paying them a little more than the charge in other Communities? The rates fixed for the performance of the *vrata* at the Math have been published in the *Directory*.

When one considers the expenditure incurred in connection with marriages and thread ceremonies on

luxuries like music and dancing, it does not seem proper to insist on economy in the matter of essential vedic rites alone. A registered marriage by itself does not necessarily mean an achievement of economy. Whether one spends more or less depends largely upon oneself.

On the whole, if rates for priests to be fixed at all, it is desirable that Local Sabhas, who know local conditions best, should fix them in such a way that the priests concerned may have no difficulty in securing their means of subsistence.

That all may act according to Dharma and not abandon such purificatory ceremonies, is our prayer.

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XV

SHASTRAS AND CUSTOM

(Delivered in the course of the tour of 1938, and published in August 1938.)

We have already indicated the view that, amongst ceremonials, those laid down in the *Ashvalayanasutras* are important, while those established by custom are subsidiary. But in view of the saying that custom overrides the Shastras, it may be contended that customs which have prevailed from time immemorial should not now be given up.

In his *Mimamsadarshana*, which is the principal authority on Dharma, however, Jaimini says : "A custom which is contrary to the Vedas is not worthy of adoption" (1-3-3). Similarly, according to the *Shabarabhashya*, "The practice of winding cloth round the fig flagstaff and the like arose from greed for cloth and so forth. Customs of this kind which are contrary to the Vedas should not be adopted." (1-3-4).

Again, the *Bhagavad Gita* declares : "He who, having cast aside the ordinances of the Shastras, followeth the promptings of desire, attaineth not to perfection, nor happiness, nor the highest goal. Therefore, let the Shastras be thy authority in determining what ought to be done or what ought not to be done" (XVI-23 & 24). The *Gita* does not maintain that custom is supreme.

It is not possible to trace the origin of the saying

that custom overrides the Shastras, although there is a somewhat analogous rule in the science of grammar. Some years ago, the late Panje Mangesh Rao observed at a meeting that present day society was like a cow which is neither fit to be milked nor good for the plough. And true enough, the condition of our Community has become somewhat peculiar. There are people who maintain that none of our long-standing usages should be abandoned, although there are few, indeed, whose practice conforms to their precept in this respect. Others advocate reform in certain directions but support agitation against any change in matters like the car festival.

Manu is very emphatic when he says : "The Dharma of the Krita yuga is of one variety; the Dharma of the Treta yuga is of a different variety; the Dharma of the Dvapara yuga is of another type; while the Dharma of the Kali yuga is of yet another. In this way, there are changes in Dharma in accordance with the times." (I-85). Hence while Dharma is known as *sanatana* or eternal because ordinary duties like harmlessness remain the same for all time, special duties do change according to place, time and circumstances.

Again, some think that the truths of Dharma should be verified with the aid of science. It is no doubt possible to throw dust in the eyes of the ordinary people in this way. But scientists themselves admit that there are ever so many mysteries which science has not been able to unfold. And, further, scientific discoveries of today may be disproved by scientific discoveries of the future. A method so unstable as this scarcely commends itself to us.

And, finally there are people who desire that other Communities should honour us as Brahmans. Does our Brahmanhood need a certificate from others as Vishvamitra needed one from Vasishta? Instances are

not wanting where, though other Communities are not prepared to own us as Brahmans, they prefer to treat us as such while considering our claims for Government appointments.

May the Paramatman guide all in the true path of Vedic Dharma !

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XVI

LAY NOT THE FOLLOWERS' FAULTS AT DHARMA'S DOOR

(Delivered in the course of the tour of 1938, and
published in September 1938.)

One comes across people who, pained at the sight of certain practices which prevail in the name of the Bhagavata tradition, maintain that the Bhagavata Dharma itself should be tabooed from the Community. But while the name Bhagavata Dharma is often mentioned, there do not seem to be many who understand its true implications. Even if the *vama marga* of the Shakta tradition were to be called the Bhagavata tradition, such a proceeding would hardly be questioned. The practices which arose from contact with the Madhvas also assumed the form of Bhagavata Dharma. If a particular observance could not be assigned to any particular Dharma, it is being assigned to the Bhagavata Dharma, even as the Kashyapa gotra is claimed by one who does not know his own gotra. In view of this state of affairs, investigations were made in regard to this Dharma, certain ideas on the subject were promulgated (*vide* Supplement for December 1937), and others were going to be. In the mean time, the Ramakrishna Mission brought out a publication entitled *The Cultural Heritage of India* which contains a full exposition of all matters relating to the Bhagavata Dharma, and it is scarcely necessary to

repeat it. Suffice it to say that it is clear from the publication that there is no room whatever in the Bhagavata Dharma for conduct which does not conform to ethical standards.

In his commentary on the *Brahmasutras* (II-2-42), Shri Shankaracharya may have expressed a different opinion on the *chaturvyuhas* of the Bhagavata Dharma. Similarly, while the followers of this Dharma exalt it by claiming that the Paramatman, who does not manifest Himself even to the Vedas, shows Himself to devotion, Shankaracharya, who held the Vedas in high esteem and could not bear to see such scant courtesy paid to them, has argued that the Bhagavata Dharma is a heretical faith because it does not respect the Vedas (*Ibid*, II-2-45). But although there is a difference of opinion on these two points, he clearly agrees that the worship of God with attributes, prescribed in the Bhagavata Dharma, leads to realisation of the Paramatman and so forth (*Ibid*, II-2-42). And he has not controverted the Bhagavata Dharma altogether, not did he make any attempt to root it out.

As the Bhagavata Dharma attaches great importance to the repetition of the name of God, it may appear as if right conduct finds no place in it. Shri Shankaracharya has declared on the authority of the *Rig Veda* (II-2-26) that repetition of the name is a method prescribed in the Vedas. He has also expressed the opinion that it is the means to the attainment of all objects of human existence; that it secures much fruit with but little toil; that it involves no harm and requires no wealth etc.; that it does not need another's help or impose restrictions as to place and time; and that it is accordingly superior to all other means. It is essential to remember, however, that it is implicit in this description that those who repeat the name should observe the ethical principles of harmlessness etc. If,

in prevailing circumstances, it is not possible to observe all the prescribed lines of right conduct, no room should be given for evil conduct at any rate.

In his commentary on the *Vishnusahasranama*, Shri Shankaracharya has established the fact that liberation results from repetition of the name through purity of heart. This is in harmony with his own path of liberation through knowledge. Why should the Bhagavata Dharma not be followed, seeing that it does not, in the main, conflict with Shankara's path?

May the Paramatman grant that all may understand the true principles of the Bhagavata Dharma and conduct themselves with caution so that it may not lose any of its pristine lustre through the faults of its followers !

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XVII

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

(Delivered at Shirali in April 1938,
and published in October 1938.)

The mirror reflects the form of the person in front of it. Even so, the *Bhagavad Gita* conveys different meanings to different people according to their line of thought. The wise think that it teaches the path of knowledge; those who are intent on works look upon it as indicating the path of action; devotees consider that it prescribes devotion; while physicians see in it a code of health with rules relating to food, amusement and so forth.

Of the treatises on the *Gita* available at present, Shri Shankaracharya's commentary is the earliest, and this maintains that knowledge itself is the chief means to liberation. When one sees the way in which he proves his case with the aid of weighty authorities, one's zeal for his doctrine becomes all the more firmly established.

Many commentaries and treatises have been written in accordance with the authors' own schools of thought, but, of recent ones, Tilak's *Gitarahasya* has attained wide fame. Indeed, it is difficult to deny that he has skilfully established therein that the *Gita* teaches the yoga of action in the main.

In these circumstances, to determine the true

meaning is a great problem. Maharshi Vyasa has said "There are 8800 verses in the *Mahabharata*. I know their meaning; Shuka knows it; Sanjaya may or may not understand it; but others never." (*Adi Parva*, 1-81 & 82). If that is so, the correct implication of any puzzling verses in the *Gita* (which is part of the *Bharata*), will have to be ascertained from Vyasa himself.

Let us try to ascertain the position from Vyasa's own words. From the closing sentence of the first chapter, it is apparent that the chapter deals with Arjuna's grief at the sight of the army. Similarly, as at the close of the second chapter, Sankhya Yoga has been mentioned as its subject, it is clear that the yoga of knowledge has been taught to Arjuna therein. The very first verse in the third chapter contains Arjuna's question : "If it be thought by Thee that knowledge is superior to action, why dost Thou enjoin on me this terrible action?" From this it follows that, according to the second chapter, the path of knowledge is superior to that of action. Shri Krishna apparently accepts this position, and merely advises Arjuna to act without attachment.

It is generally agreed that Krishna prescribed for Arjuna yoga of action without attachment as stated by Tilak, that is, the Bhagavata Dharma, in view of the fact that the Lord knew that Arjuna, the Kshatriya warrior, did not possess that purity of heart which was needed to qualify him for the Eternal state described in the second chapter. This fact is obvious from Arjuna's own admission that the mind was verily restless and as hard to curb as the wind (*Gita*, VI-33 & 34), and Krishna's advice that it may be curbed by constant practice and by dispassion. (*Ibid*, VI—35). If, like a Brahman and unlike a Kshatriya, Arjuna preferred the beggar's crust at the outset and refused to fight (*Ibid*, II—5 & 9), it was not because of true

dispassion, but because of delusion caused by attachment to the kith and kin whom he was facing.

Brahmans may acquire dispassion while they are still in the stage of *brahmacharya*. But it is seldom that Kshatriyas have acquired dispassion and adopted the path of *nivritti* straight from that stage and without passing through the three stages in the usual order. Buffalo's milk is milk no doubt, but it does not possess the pure satvic qualities of cow's milk, The latter can be drunk as it comes straight from the cow, while to drink the former before boiling would be to court indigestion, The nature of the Brahman and that of the Kshatriya differ likewise. Krishna's advice to Arjuna to fight and not to beg took into account his Kshatriya nature. Thus, if action was prescribed for Arjuna who was not qualified for the Eternal state, it does not follow that the same prescription binds those who may be so qualified.

It is true that Krishna lays emphasis on action when he says "Whatsoever a great man doeth, that other men also do ...I am engaged in action." (*Ibid*, III—21 22). Like king, like subject. Krishna Himself was a Kshatriya and had to act warily, if only to set an example to His subjects. But, few, indeed, are those who have followed Sanaka and others, the sons of Brahma, and adopted the path of *nivritti*. Samarth Ramdas, who was a Brahman, adopted that path, and yet, Shivaji, who was reckoned a Kshatriya, followed his preceptor's advice and continued in the path of *pravritti*. In Krishna's reference to the hierarchy of Karma Yogis (*Ibid*, IV—1), appear Kshatriya names alone, and the specific instance of Janaka (*Ibid*, III—20) who attained to perfection by action, is again an instance of a Kshatriya.

Thus, if Shri Krishna's teaching is interpreted to mean that yoga of action is the most important for

Kshatriyas and others who are not in a position to qualify themselves speedily for the Eternal state, it is possible to reconcile the views of Shri Shankaracharya and Tilak. There is no great difference of opinion between the two as regards devotion taught in the *Gita* or the Bhagavata Dharma in both of which there is need for right conduct and right thought.

May the Paramatman grant that all may reach perfection through action, devotion or knowledge, whichever may be best suited to their qualifications as stated in the *Gita* !

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XVIII

NAVARATRA

(Delivered at Manki in November 1939,
and published in the same month.)

It is related in the *Kenopanishad* that, in a fight between gods and demons, the former once scored a victory through the Power of the Parabrahman. Pride of victory led Agni to boast that the success was due to his power. Vayu ascribed it to his own and in the same way, the different gods began to praise their respective strength. Then the Parabrahman assumed the form of a Yaksha, stood before the gods, and examined their powers one by one. Agni, who boasted that he could burn down the universe with his power, found that he could not, with all his might, burn down even a blade of grass. Similarly, not all the attempts of Vayu could so much as move the blade. The gods, who had thus to pocket their pride, then sent Indra before the said Yaksha, who took the form of Uma, daughter of Himavat, and told Indra that the victory was due to the Power of the Parabrahman alone.

People attain perfection by worshipping, in the form of Gayatri etc., the Power thus described. The worship of this Power, which is not distinct from the Parabrahman, is the main thing in the procedure prescribed for the Navaratra. And this worship gives no room for any distinction as between Shaivas and

Vaishnavas, and is thus a convenient means of creating harmony.

Shri Shankaracharya installed Sharada at Shringeri, and has thereby spread the cult of Shakti worship. But it does not appear that there is any trace of animal sacrifice or of the use of liquor or flesh in the course of the worship at that place. The *Prapanchasara* of Shri Shankaracharya mentions a variety of modes of worship, but does not prescribe the use of liquor anywhere. The *Vaikritikarahasya* of the *Saptashati* clearly says : "Nowhere is prescribed the method of worship with this sacrifice, liquor, flesh etc." The Smritis reckon the drinking of liquor as one of the five great sins. Hence it is desirable that Brahmans should, in accordance with Dharmashastra, give up the use of liquor in the course of *archana pooja*.

Some people maintain that, if this method is given up, it results in the displeasure of the Deity. But will the feeling of such displeasure remain when the prohibition programme initiated by the present Government is universally adopted? Those who call themselves the Sanatanists of the Community do not seem of defy the Sarda Act. Again, to give up the use of liquor in accordance with Dharmashastra is far better than to abandon it through fear of the law. And, as Bhartrihari says, to give up, of one's own accord, an object which must go some day, would bring peace of mind as well.

At the same time, it is a matter of consideration from the spiritual point of view, that, while patriots would place a ban on the *asavas* and *arishtas* of the Ayurveda as being on the same footing as liquor, they are apt to hold up the drinking of *neera* as an orthodox and unobjectionable practice. But rather than enter into the politics of the matter, we would express the hope that all will strive to establish the reputation

that there is no one in the Community who drinks liquor in any shape or form.

It has been made clear before that there is no room whatever in the Bhagavata Dharma for such evil practices. Accordingly, no one need be under the impression that this practice is in keeping with the Bhagavata tradition.

May the Paramatman grant that all may secure happiness and liberation by worshipping Shakti with leaves, flowers, fruits and the like alone in accordance with the views expressed by Shri Shankaracharya !

* * *

XIX

THE POWER DIVINE

(Delivered in the course of the southern tour of
1938-39, and published in December 1938.)

"Ha ! ha ! What a wonder this is ! The disciples are old; the Guru is young. By the Guru's silent teaching, the disciples are freed from doubt and enjoy the bliss of samadhi." This description of Dakshinamurti indicates the divine power of the Guru as well as the strength of the purity of the disciples' hearts. From our early days up till now, we have been strongly of the opinion that the wishes of our disciples should be fulfilled through such divine power alone; and we had made attempts to go to Benares or to some secluded place in order to attain such power. We had contemplated the transfer to the laity of the work of administering the Math's affairs, a thing referred to by Shri Shankaracharya in the words "No Math administration in any birth whatever." But several leaders represented that administrative arrangements could be made to some extent and that our *sadhana* might continue here itself. Accordingly, certain arrangements have been made, and we have been finding some little time for the practice of our austerities. Although the original intention of the Standing Committee was that our regular tours should commence later, these had actually to begin last year owing to pressure from the laity, thus curtailing the

time available to us. Our original idea of starting religious discourses after completing our *sadhana*, had therefore to be modified.

But the strength of the purity of the disciples hearts is as much a means to the realisation of the teaching as the greatness of the Guru's austerities. While he was yet in the womb, Vamadeva attained wisdom by merely listening to the teaching and without going in for reflection and meditation. Even so, the hope that the purity of your hearts and your devotion to the Guru might result in the propagation of Dharma, gave us courage to undertake the work of delivering religious discourses. It is stated in the *Mahabharata* that Ekalavya, a Harijan, and others reached perfection through their devotion to the Guru, while Upamanyu, though working as a mere cowherd, attained his goal likewise. But today there is no question of imposing a ban on anybody like the one placed on Ekalavy nor need one tend cows in the service of the Guru; nor, indeed, need any one, like Upamanyu, offer all his earnings to the Guru, quench both hunger and thirst with nothing more than the juice of the *ravi* plant, get blind, fall into a well and so suffer. If all paid *vantiga* at the rate of one per cent of income, the daily as well as the occasional services of the Math could be performed without any anxiety, and the *sadhana* contemplated by us could be accomplished with peace of mind. As such payment did not seem likely in present circumstances, it was proposed to stop the car festival, but this has given rise to agitation and to a demand for a Mahasabha which might cost almost as much as a car festival itself. We have no personal predilections in the matter, but does it not strike you, O devotees of the Guru, that care should be taken to see that there is no difficulty about carrying on the Math's main functions which contribute to the spiritual welfare of the Community?

The path of action which leads to purity of heart has already been described in previous discourses, and it is unnecessary to deal with the matter on the present occasion.

May the Paramatman bless you all with devotion to the Guru as well as with purity of heart, and guide you in such a manner as will help in realising our hope of attaining the power divine !

* * *

XX

RELIGIOUS RITES

(Delivered in the course of the tour of 1938-39,
and published in February 1939.)

Eternal bliss, which is dearer than all else, stands rooted in oneself. A semblance of this bliss of the Atman is itself reflected through the union of the senses and their objects. Actions in the universe take place under the delusion that the happiness springs from the objects of sense. According to Yajnyavalkya, the main object of religious rites is the attainment of the bliss of the Atman. Nevertheless, such rites may be abandoned in the condition in which stability of mind has been reached, just as the outer husk is discarded when the inner grain of rice is used as food. But if rice is to be produced, it can be done only with paddy which includes the husk which is eventually discarded. If the outer husk is thrown away at the outset, the rice cannot sprout. Even so, if purity of heart, which is essential for a realisation of the Atman, is to be achieved, external religious rites become helpful.

Vasishtha has said that it is generally difficult to understand how each rite can become the means of attaining the goal of man. At the same time, Vyasa has declared that the root of Dharma is to realise that the Paramatman is in all beings. According to the *Bhagavata*, to know this Paramatman as forming the

five classes, namely, Gods, Rishis, pitris, bhutas and men and to worship Him through oblations, study of the Scriptures, offering of water to the manes, food-offering and hospitality respectively, constitute the *Panchamahayajnyas*. It may not be possible, in present conditions, to observe all these rites properly, but there is Manu's statement to the effect that outer display is not the means to Dharma and that Dharma should be observed to the best of one's power.

There is every probability of one's fighting shy of Dharma, nowadays, firstly, because several rites not prescribed in the Shastras happen to be in vogue, and, secondly, because it seems so difficult to observe them. Hence it is necessary for those who know to reform them. So far as we are concerned, we have been suggesting simplifications in certain directions. There is doubtless need for economy, but consider, for example, the amounts spent on the receptions accorded to us and the floral tributes offered to us at nearly every step from morn till night. May not some thought be bestowed on such extravagance? Our nature is simple, and we are satisfied with devotion pure and simple. And yet, in certain places, although there is difficulty about collecting the annual *vantiga*, money is forthcoming for grand receptions, and the people console themselves with the reflection that something is better than nothing. It is for our disciples themselves to consider this matter further.

May the Paramatman grant that all may choose and faithfully observe such rites as do not involve much expense and as are really prescribed in the Shastras !

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XXI

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

(Delivered at Puttur in December 1939,
and published in March 1939.)

The search for happiness is universal. Every one desires happiness. Every one pursues happiness. But not one succeeds to the extent he desires. The fact is that what we believe to be happiness is not real happiness. Hence even if we get the particular thing we desire, we do not secure lasting happiness thereby.

In the universe there is a twofold division—*Atma* (Parabrahma) and *anatma* (*prapancha*). The former is also termed *chetana*, while the latter is referred to as *jada* (inert). Happiness is related really to Parabrahma. The nature of Parabrahma is threefold—*sat* (existence), *chit* (knowledge) and *ananda* (bliss). This last is the real happiness.

Prapancha consist of *nama* (name) and *rupa* (form). It has no real existence; it is like the proverbial reflection of the money-bag in the mirror. So the happiness which we believe to be derived from *prapancha* is not in any way connected with it. There is the instance of the dog and the bone, which brings home the truth to us. The bone smells of blood but does not contain any blood. The dog is carried away by the smell and chews the dry bone. Its hardness hurts the dog's teeth which begin to bleed. The dog then sees and tastes real blood which, however, it

believes to be the blood yielded by the bone. Its appetite is thereby whetted, and it continues to chew the bone more and more vigorously. Just so is the happiness we believe we derive from the physical world.

This world is not the real seat or source of happiness. If it is, it should be so with respect to the past, the present and the future alike. Also, it should be sweet to all. But what was sweet yesterday may be bitter tomorrow, and what is sweet to one is bitter to another, and *vice versa*.

We know what great happiness is given by *sushupti* or dreamless sleep. Whence does it come? Such sleep postulates the total exclusion of the outer world and the objects of so-called enjoyment. If it is these objects that yield the happiness, how can sound sleep produce such happiness? The truth is that, during sound sleep, the mind is merged into the inmost self, the *Atma*. That is where the happiness comes from. We have to grasp this secret.

The happiness which appears to be derived from the pursuit of worldly pleasures is not real. Only that is real happiness which does not have to depend on the existence of any worldly objects. As it does not depend on any such objects, it is permanent; even without the objects there is happiness.

The happiness supposed to be connected with enjoyment of objects of sense of not positive happiness, but may, if at all, be regarded as negative in character, like getting rid of a burden, a trouble or an inconvenience. According to Bhartrihari, all so-called happiness is negative, like that derived by the supply of water to a thirsty man or of food to a hungry one. It is thus only temporary. The thirst or hunger will return again and demand satisfaction once more.

Bhartrihari says also that even though we may guard a thing very carefully, we are apt to lose it sooner or later. Why not give it up then of our own accord? If we give it up ourselves, we shall not feel sorry at our want of it. That is therefore the better way. The joy derived from renunciation is permanent. The joy of acquisition is temporary.

Here is Shri Krishna's classification of the different types of happiness: "That in which one by practice rejoiceth, and which putteth an end to pain; which at first is as venom but in the end is as nectar; that pleasure is said to be satvic, born of the blissful knowledge of the Self. That which, from the union of the senses with their objects, at first is as nectar, but in the end is like venom, is accounted rajasic. That pleasure which both at first and afterwards is delusive of the self, arising from sleep, indolence and heedlessness, that is declared tamasic." (Bhagavad Gita, XVIII-36 to 39).

Satvic happiness is real. It cannot be acquired all at once but only gradually. There are obstacles in the way. But what should we do? We should cultivate contentment and peace of mind. The mind should be trained to remain unperturbed under all conditions. Then we shall not be sorry even if what we desire does not come to pass. We have instances of saints who have acquired that mentality. It is not therefore impossible to train the mind in that way.

A Sanskrit poet has observed that, in order to make the objects of sense subservient to us, we must train our mind; it is like the case of the eye and the object seen through the eye. If the object cannot be seen properly, the eye should be trained or corrected, and not the object. Hence train the mind. Learn to be supremely indifferent to the result. Then there will be no disappointment. As Shri Krishna has declared in

the *Gita* (II-64 & 65), "The disciplined self, moving among sense-objects with senses which are free from passion and hate, and perfectly under his mastery, goeth to peace. In that peace, the extinction of all pains ariseth for him, for of him whose heart is peaceful the reason soon attaineth equilibrium." The transformation of the mind is the important thing to be achieved, not the transformation of external objects.

A feeling of universality (*sarvatma-bhavana*) should be developed. There will then be no cause for pain. The Paramatman is in everything and everybody. Such a mentality naturally leads to public work. Mahatmas have such a comprehensive attitude. They do not grieve on any account. Mahatma Gandhi is an instance. He engages himself actively in a number of activities, but his activities are quite disinterested. His work is vast, but he is tranquil. Public work conducted in this spirit comes under Dharma. The principle of Dharma are immutable, but the sphere of their application extends with the passage of time. Karma Yoga thus comprises, at the present day, service to one's motherland as well as service to the whole world.

Devotion is also very helpful. The highest type of devotion is *Atmanivedana* or complete surrender of oneself to God, reposing unquestioning faith and unwavering confidence in Him. Such an attitude sustains us in adversity. Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, is said to have prayed to Shri Krishna for repeated calamities in order that she might thereby be blessed with a vision of the Lord.

May the Paramatman give all of you that tranquil attitude which treats difficulties with contempt and steadily pursues the one true path leading to perpetual happiness in realisation !



XXII

KARMA AND FREE WILL

(Delivered at Puttur in December 1938,
and published in April 1939.)

"O son of Kunti, bound by thine own duty born of thine own nature, that which from delusion thou desirest not to do, even that helplessly thou shalt perform." So said Shri Krishna to Arjuna (*Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII-60). Some are by nature critical. Others unquestioningly accept whatever they are told. In the passage just quoted, the former see a conflict between man's nature and free will. Even if a man out of his free will resolves not to do a thing, if his nature will make him do it, is there any scope for ethical preaching or right conduct? And how can he be held responsible for his deeds?

According to our Dharma, there are three factors governing all action, namely, free will, karma and the divine will. There is a school of thought based solely on free will. It discards the theory of previous births. But we discern a relationship of cause and effect in everything in this world. We have to presume the existence of a primary cause for all phenomena including the differences between the different things or beings we meet with. The hypothesis of previous births and the theory of karma help to explain such differences satisfactorily. Every individual soul acquires certain experiences and becomes endowed

with certain tendencies as a result of what it passes through in each of its births, and it is only the next natural and logical step to believe that the nature of each such soul will be influenced by the stock of experiences and tendencies thus acquired.

We are also forced to the conclusion of the existence of a Being governing the universe. We see various laws operating in the universe. There must therefore be a Being responsible for those laws. This Being is called Ishvara in our Dharma. Such a Being cannot but have a will of Its own. This was what we meant when we referred to the divine will.

There is also a school of thought which accepts the theory of the divine will as the sole factor in the universe. But such a theory is also open to objection. We see that some are happy, while others are not. Is it not injustice? Does it not indicate partiality? And what may be the reasons for such difference of treatment? Another objection is that acceptance of the theory will engender a thoroughly helpless and slavish mentality.

The acceptance of the karma theory alone as the sole factor is similarly open to objection. If what we now see is solely the result of past deeds, how can we account for the variations in the past deeds of different individuals, which are now manifesting different results?

We cannot therefore accept any one of the three factors as the sole one. We have to assume the existence and operation of all three of them. Some conflict may perhaps be apparent amongst them. We have to resolve it. Let us see what our Scriptures say.

According to the *Koushitaki Upanishad*, "Whomsoever the Lord decides to lift upwards, by him He causes good deeds to be performed. Whomsoever He resolves

to push down, by him He causes bad deeds to be performed." (III-9). On the other hand, the *Brihadaranyakopanishad* says : "Man is full of desire. His inclinations will be shaped by his desires. His deeds will be shaped by his inclinations. And he will reap the fruit suited to his deeds." (IV-4 & 5). While the former passage gives prominence to the divine will, the latter makes the individual's desires the cause of whatever good or evil befalls him.

In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna, persuading Arjuna to fight and kill his foes, goes to the length of saying : "By me they are already overcome. Be thou the outward cause, dexterous one." (XI-33). Here also, the divine will seems to be made almost the one factor which counts. This is emphasised again in another verse : "The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings. O Arjuna, by his Maya causing all beings to revolve as though mounted on a machine." (XVIII-61). This immediately follows the verse quoted at the beginning. Thus in two successive verses, prominence has been given to nature and to divine will respectively. We should not therefore regard the two views as contradictory, but as supplementary and meant to lead to a single conclusion, namely, the need for doing one's duty.

The *Gita* has passages pointing to free will also : "Let the self be raised by itself; let not the self be allowed to be depressed. The self alone is the friend of itself, and the self alone its enemy. To him that hath conquered himself, the self is his friend. But to him that hath not so conquered, the self is his enemy." (VI-5 & 6). This is further proof of the fact that, in order to drive home the same lesson to Arjuna, Shri Krishna has advanced different arguments at different times.

A man's nature, as we have stated already, is built upon the stock of experiences and tendencies acquired by him as a result of his previous births. This is called

prarabdha. It is the stock of his previous karma with which he starts a new birth. But it does not stand in the way of his doing any good deeds in the course of that new birth. As a result of the nature developed in human beings, some have leanings towards good and some towards evil. This nature is of three broad types, satvic, rajasic and tamasic, and a detailed description of these will be found in Chapters XVII and XVIII of the *Gita*. Chapter XVI sets out the attributes of the divine nature and its opposite.

As a result of deeds performed in previous births, man is born in a particular grade or class of society. Such grades have been broadly classified into four main types, namely, Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, and the main characteristics pertaining to each of these types have been mentioned in the *Gita* (XVIII-42 to 44). They constitute, so to say, the type of mentality of the individuals born in the respective classes. Within the limits marked out by a person's nature, there will be enough freedom left to him to do good deeds or bad deeds according to his discretion. When this is understood, it will be seen that a man's nature or karma need not stand in the way of his doing or not doing any particular thing. Even nature can be gradually changed by constant, earnest, sedulous endeavour.

This view may not appear correct at first. Shri Krishna Himself has raised the question in the *Gita* : "Even the man of knowledge behaves in conformity with his own nature; beings follow nature; what shall restraint avail?" (III-33). If restraint be no avail, will preaching be of any avail? But in the very next verse, the Lord says : "Affection and aversion for the objects of sense abide in the senses; let none come under the dominion of these two : they are obstructors of the path." So we have His authoritative pronouncement

that to submit or not to submit rests with ourselves.

It is stated in the *Yajnyavalkya Smriti* that success is achieved by both *daiva* (*purva karma*) and *pourusha* acting in cooperation. God helps those who help themselves. What is required is sustained exertion in the proper direction. If it is maintained that God does everything and that man has no freedom in any matter, it would be ascribing to God both cruelty and partiality. Hence the *Brahmasutras* declare that God distributes rewards strictly according to deserts and merit (II-1-34). From this it is clear that there is scope for doing good deeds out of one's own free will.

In doing good deeds, we may have to select such deeds as are in conformity with our nature, suited to our status, condition and circumstances in life. Place, time and occasion must also be taken into account. We have to follow the line of least resistance. Going against the current is more difficult than going with it. But even when going with the current, we need not be mere passive agents : we do have some freedom to do what good we can. Sometime, perhaps, we may, with extraordinary effort, succeed in going, at least for some distance, against the current. Even so, evil can be resisted or fought with effort. In certain conditions, we may well take advantage of our very nature for doing good. In certain others, we may get the better of our nature and do good.

Thus nature, the divine will and the human will can all be made to co-operate with one another. None of them operates to the complete exclusion of the other two.

May Providence grant you the ability and the understanding to grasp this problem aright, to resolve the apparent conflict satisfactorily, and to do good in spite of the obstacles in your way !

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XXIII

AT DHARMASTALA

(Delivered at Dharmastala in December 1938,
and published in May 1939.)

We have noted the praise bestowed on us by Shriman Manjayya Heggade. It seems to us, however, that distance in this case has lent enchantment to the view. There is a verse of Bhartrihari which means that the good men who think much of the minor virtues of others are very rare. We count Shriman Heggade as one of such good men.

Though the good words spoken about us by him may not be deserved, we take them as an indication of the high ideal which he has placed before himself in judging others, and particularly as a reminder of the ideas and ideals which heads of religious institutions should cherish and follow. And it will be our endeavour to cherish those ideas and follow those ideals in our career through life.

We value very highly, indeed, this excellent opportunity which Shriman Heggade has afforded us of paying another visit to this holy place. The place has a special fascination for us on account of the harmonious coordination which the famous temple of Shri Manjunath here presents between two separate and independent religious, namely, Jainism and Hinduism, as typified in the person and administration of Shriman Heggade, who, though a true Jain himself,

manages a Hindu temple in accordance with the principles of genuine Hinduism. This cannot but lead to mutual love amongst the followers of different religions. It has no doubt been the case here from the very beginning. But during the regime of Shriman Manjayya Heggade, we have observed the development of a special feature calculated to foster the growth of harmonious relations amongst the devotees of different faiths. We refer of course to the Dharma Sammelan sessions which have now been held annually here on the occasion of the famous Lakshadeepotsava during the last six years, one of which sessions we had been given the honour of inaugurating three years ago. A remarkable feature of these has been the discussion of practical and interesting subjects connected with the practice of different religions. This has helped not only to impart necessary and useful information about the precepts and practices of the various Dharmas to all concerned, but also to strengthen the devotees in their respective faiths. Another important feature of the sessions has been the kindly and tolerant spirit in which different points of view have been presented by speakers belonging to different faiths. This should encourage a sympathetic study of other religions and help to convince all of the common goal to which all religions lead.

We have been asked to deliver an address. No subject has been specified, but there need be no difficulty about the choice of one. All are engaged here in the worship of the Paramatman, and not much of preaching on this topic is necessary either.

In this world, the goal of all is happiness. The exertions of all are directed to this end. But the efforts of every one are not crowned with success to the extent desired. And such happiness as may be acquired is

short-lived. As the Lord says in the *Gita*. "The delights that are contact-born, they are verily wombs of pain, for they have beginning and ending, O Kaunteya; not in them does the wise man rejoice." (V—22). We must get rid of the thoughts arising from the *dvandvas* (pairs of opposites). We cannot escape their influence unless we shed our *asakti* (attachment). It is only by cultivating a spirit of detachment that we shall be able to achieve our ultimate goal. How to cultivate that spirit? The wise have pointed out how this can be done. We must secure peace of mind. We should accordingly train ourselves to avoid both *raga* and *dvesha* (affection and aversion) in respect of our activities in the world. We should also practise Dharma and worship the Paramatman. All religions are at one in preaching this. No religion preaches practices leading to mundane progress alone.

Dharma has been defined as that which possesses the nature and power of regulating the world. Right conduct (*sadachara*) has been prescribed for so regulating the world. Such conduct leads also to peace of mind. The essence of Dharma has been stated by Vyasa to be to desist from doing to others what is harmful to oneself. Manu has specified the fundamental elements of Dharma as harmlessness, truth, uncovetousness, purity (both mental and physical), and self-control.

The worship of the Paramatman consists in the practice of devotion with *shraddha* (unfailing faith) in relation to the Supreme Lord of the Universe. According to Vyasa, the one and only objective to be achieved by man is sincere and whole-hearted devotion and the realisation of the omnipresence of God. The steady practice of this aim serves to eradicate all selfishness and other defects. All religions agree on this point.

May God inspire all present here to practise such devotion; and may He reward them with the fruits thereof in ample measure ! May God also endow Shriman Heggade with both health and longevity and through him render this sacred place a greater power for the good of pilgrims than ever before !

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XXIV

WOMAN'S DHARMA

(Delivered in the course of the tour of 1938-39,
and published in July 1939.)

"They who take refuge with Me, O Partha, though of the womb of sin, women, Vaishyas and even Shudras, they also attain to the supreme goal." (*Bhagavad Gita*, IX-32). According to this verse, women *can* secure liberation.

While the Smritis declare that the husband himself is Guru to the wife, the *Bhagavata* lays down that the Paramatman should be thought of as the husband of all. On the whole, as Patanjali maintains, it is possible to reach perfection through *yathabhimatadhyana* or meditation on the deity of one's choice. But one should not forget the story in the *Mahabharata* wherein the faithful wife who worshipped the husband as her God, is shown to have been gifted with divine wisdom in a larger measure than the Yogi who had burnt down a bird with a mere glance.

We have been requested on behalf of women to deliver an address on woman's Dharma. But faith in dharmic matters seems to be second nature with women in general. On occasions, even blind faith manifests itself. "He who offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept from the pure in heart, offered as it is with devotion," says the Lord in the *Gita* (IX-26.) In view of this, the offer of

leaves, flowers and the like to the Paramatman can be considered as faith. But to offer fowl, behind the back of the husband, for sacrifice at Mari's shrine to escape Mari's displeasure, is an instance of blind faith. "Satvic men worship the Gods; the rajasic Yakshas and Rakshasas; the others, the tamasic folk, worship pretas and hosts of bhutas." (*Ibid*, XVII-4). Here the worship of bhutas has been condemned as a feature of tamasic faith. On the other hand, harmlessness is described as one of the attributes of those who are born with the *daivi sampad* or divine properties (*Ibid*, XVI-2 & 3), while action involving injury to others is classed as tamasic (XVIII-25). Again, "The divine nature is deemed to be for liberation, the demoniacal for bondage." (*Ibid*, XVI-5). It is clear, therefore, that tamasic faith should be abandoned and satvic faith resorted to.

Blind faith on the part of women probably accounts for many of the customs in vogue in connection with marriages and thread ceremonies. Just as it is necessary to strive for the efficiency of priests, it is necessary to work for less of blind faith and more of true dharmic faith in women. This process will be facilitated if educated women who understand woman's nature best, undertake the requisite propaganda. For example, the agitation led by ladies on the question of *kumkumtilak* afforded us recently an opportunity for giving a ruling in the matter.

It may appear that the declaration in the Dharmashastra that the husband himself is Guru to his wife, detracts from woman's independence. But the Smritis not only lay down that domestic finance should be entrusted to the wife, but also contain a number of sentences which require that women should be respected. Again, the householder, according to them, has no independence, apart from his wife, in

relation to *dharma*, *artha* and *kama* : the husband becomes responsible for an exact moiety of the merit or demerit of his wife's actions. Shankaracharya scored a victory over Mandanamishra, but as Bharati Devi was the *ardhangi* of the latter, the victory was not deemed complete until Shankaracharya held a discussion with her as well and won the contest. And this he did. Needless to say, in the path of devotion, women have held their own, a fact which, so the story goes, made Narad wish that he should be reborn a woman !

"And he who serveth Me exclusively by the yoga of devotion, he, crossing beyond the gunas, is fit to become the Brahman." (*Ibid*, XIV-26). May all, including women, secure liberation accordingly !

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XXV

PERFORM ACTION THAT PURIFIES THE HEART

(Delivered in the course of the tour of 1938-39,
and published in September 1939.)

"The very birth of a Brahmana is an eternal incarnation of the sacred law; for he is born to fulfil the sacred law, and becomes one with the Brahman." (*Manu*, 1-98). As stated here, the object of a Brahmana's birth is the preservation of Dharma, and by practising Dharma, he becomes the Brahman. The main object of Dharma is the realisation of the Self. (*Yajnyavalkya*, I-8). The mind which becomes impure on account of its many desires etc., acquires serenity through the practice of one's own Dharma, and bliss of the Self thereby results. "Which, having obtained, he thinketh there is no greater gain beyond it." (*Bhagavad Gita*, VI-22) : in this state no desires remain. "When all the desires that dwell in his heart are gone, then he who was mortal becomes immortal and attains the Brahman in this very body." (*Brihadaranyakopanishad*).

"Not a single act here appears ever to be done by man free from desire; for whatever man does, it is the result of the force of desire. He who perseveres in the discharge of these (prescribed duties) in the right manner, reaches the deathless state, and, even in this life, obtains the fulfilment of all the desires that he may have conceived," (*Manu*, II-4 & 5). These sentences

contain the answer to the question, sometimes asked, whether it is necessary to continue always in the path of action. Further satisfaction may be obtained from the following verse in the *Gita* : "For a sage who is seeking yoga, action is called the means; for the same sage, when he is enthroned in yoga, serenity is called the means." (VI-3).

Among actions, too, there are three varieties, namely, *nitya* or obligatory, *nāimittika* or incidental, and *kamya* or done with a motive. Of these, it is mainly the obligatory ones that lead to purity of heart, and this can be easily understood by contrast with the actions which are done with a motive, but which tend to make the mind only more restless. It is with the idea of conquering such restlessness and restoring equanimity that the *Gita* enjoins on the aspirant action designed to keep his mind at peace : "Verily yoga is not for him who eateth too much, nor who abstaineth to excess, nor who is too much addicted to sleep, nor even to wakefulness, O Arjuna. Yoga killeth out all pain for him who is regulated in eating and amusement, regulated in performing action, regulated in sleeping and waking." (VI-16 & 17).

On the whole, where serenity has not been attained, the above rules have to be observed with care. "Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished, but should be performed; sacrifice, gift and austerity are the purifiers of the intelligent." (*Ibid*, XVIII-5). We pray to the Paramatman that the ordinary people may accordingly perform actions leading to purity of heart, and that the Brahmana may become the Brahman as declared in Manu's precept quoted at the outset.

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XXVI

THE UNIVERSALISM OF THE GITA

(Delivered in the course of the tour of 1938-39,
and published in November 1939.)

Although the *Bhagavad Gita* is small in size, the subjects embodied in it make it look like an ocean itself. When one seeks to select something from it, many a gem of truth comes to light, and the mind is dazzled and at a loss to know what to take and what to leave. On the present occasion, we shall refer to just a few features of the work which strike one at a glance.

If, according to prevailing practice, the utility or greatness of a work may be judged by the number of the commentaries and annotations on it and the expositions and translations of it, the *Gita* may be said to be the greatest work relating to the Hindu religion. Further, man is, by nature, prone to seek the maximum amount of benefit from a minimum amount of labour. The *Gita* is great from this point of view as well. There are many other works dealing with the very subjects taught in the *Gita*. But it is difficult to commit them to memory. If this little *Gita* is memorised instead with a little effort, a veritable store of wisdom will always be ready at hand. When one remembers that Acharyas like Shankara, Rāmānuja and Madhwa ranked the *Gita* with the *Brahmasutras* and the *Upanishads* in substantiating their respective faiths, is there any need to explain its greatness further?

Those who have true faith do not need to be told all this before they can take an interest in the *Gita*. From whose lips did it come? This single consideration is enough for them. Hence the well-known saying : "The *Gita* which fell from the lotus mouth of Padmanabha Himself should be read well. What is there to be obtained from other scriptural expositions?"

The *Gita* doubtless teaches the very subjects dealt with in the *Upanishads* etc. But the points scattered here and there in the latter have been brought together by Shri Krishna to suit the occasion and arranged systematically in the *Gita*. And more. As all ways and means are helpful according to the qualifications of the different aspirants, He has looked on all with a sympathetic eye without showing any partiality for any one of them. On the other hand, He is found to reconcile even those paths which happened to be mutually opposed through limited vision. The more ancient works reflect such universalism rather faintly, but as it is so prominent in the *Gita*, it may be reckoned as one of its special features. It is on this account that the *Gita* appears to everyone to propound his particular faith. Where pride in one's faith results in intolerance of another's and thereby leads to difference and discord, universalism of this type must be a potent factor tending to create harmony.

We shall now illustrate this point with one or two examples from the *Gita*. When advocates of the path of action maintained that was the one true path and that renunciation was prescribed for those who were not competent to follow it on account of the lack of a hand or other limb; when advocates of the path of knowledge maintained that renunciation of action was itself the means to liberation through knowledge, and that sacrifices and other observances were like ships without a rudder; these two schools seemed to be at

loggerheads indeed. But Shri Krishna has reconciled the two by declaring that the path of knowledge was the direct path to liberation and that the path of action also led to liberation through purification of heart and the resultant attainment of knowledge. "Children, not sages, speak of the Sankhya and the Yoga as different; he who is duly established in one obtaineth the fruits of both. That place which is gained by the Sankhyas is reached by the Yogis also. He seeth, who seeth that the Sankhya and the Yoga are one." (*Gita*, V-4 & 5).

It is common knowledge that the fact of the deities worshipped being different leads to differences amongst the worshippers. But Shri Krishna has tried to compose these differences by declaring that, whichever deity may be worshipped, He is the one who decrees the fruit. And further, where deities other than the Paramatman are worshipped, He has expressed His sympathy by saying that He confirms them in their faith. "Any devotee who seeketh to worship with faith any such aspect, I verily bestow the unswerving faith of that man. He, endowed with that faith, seeketh the worship of such a one, and from him he obtaineth his desires, I verily decreeing the same." (*Ibid*, VII—21 & 22).

Finally, there is His assurance : "Howsoever men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine, O Partha." (*Ibid*, IV—II). It is clear from this that all who steadfastly follow their different paths reach the Paramatman in the end. Can there ever be an attitude more liberal or a vision more comprehensive than this?

May the Paramatman inspire all to acquire wisdom through a study of this *Gita* !

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XXVII

SAINTS AND MIRACLES

(Delivered at Shirali in December 1940,
and published in February 1941.)

That lives of saints teem with miracles is a fact known to you all. In the history of Gora, the potter, the hero of the Harikirtan just finished, you must have noticed one or two miracles of the kind. In the opinion of a few moderns, propagation of such tales leads to blind faith amongst people, kills out their critical faculty, and clouds their understanding, and the tales should therefore not be propagated. They used to be narrated hitherto only by Puraniks, Haridases and followers of the path of devotion. Now, however, cinema companies have been broadcasting them extensively through *Sant Tukaram*, *Jnaneshvar* and other talkies, and opponents too have started an intensive campaign of speeches and writings against them. Hence it is the purpose of today's discourse to declare our views as to whether such incidents are probable or are products of mere poetic fancy; whether they are useful even if they are probable; and whether it is necessary, as contended by moderns, to expunge them from lives of saints and to make such lives simple and understandable like those of ordinary men, or whether it is possible to retain them and at the same time overcome the objections raised.

Let us first consider what our Shastras say about it.

In explaining the nature of the mind, the *Yoga Vasishtha* says : "It is the nature of mind to comprise power and the capacity to achieve all. As this mind thinketh, so all will happen." It propounds the view that the mind which abandons distortions and modifications and is pure and one-pointed, acquires the power to achieve whatever is wanted by steady thought alone. In his *Yoga Shashtra*, Patanjali has described many siddhies of the kind, for example, the power to see minute, hidden and distant objects; to see and converse with deities; to read the thoughts of others; to make one's body invisible to others; to see siddhas who are themselves invisible; to enter a different physical body. Similarly, Shri Krishna says in the *Bhagavata* : "The Yogi who has subdued his senses, steadied his understanding, controlled his breath, and placed his heart firmly in Me, obtains the siddhies," Although the main theme of these works is knowledge, yoga and devotion respectively, all three of them are unanimous in regard to the siddhies. What is more, the siddhies described therein are more or less of the same character. The powers detailed above are obtainable mostly through mind control or yoga. There are other kinds of power as well. Patanjali declares that siddhies arise from birth, from herbs, from incantations, from austerity and from deep meditation. Of these, the power of birds to fly in the air is due to birth; prolongation of life by means of elixirs etc. is due to herbs; the power of yoga is itself due to deep meditation. Thus our Shastras are agreed that such siddhies—otherwise known as miracles—are probable.

The subject has so far been dealt with on the authority of the written word. It is possible to establish it by reference to direct perception as well. Many seemingly wonderful deeds come to the notice of people from time to time. In the matter of enslaving evil spirits with spells and performing wonderful things through

them, we are reminded of the experience related by a resident of Mangalore who had been the victim of the mischief of such a spirit. His foes are believed to have directed against him, by means of charms, a spirit named Kallurti. Sudden disappearance of money etc. from the house, showers of useless stuff within it, tearing of clothes to shreds where they were kept, and several other surprising things are said to have taken place in consequence. These, however, relate to an evil spirit. Then there is the example of Ekanath to show how God, pleased with His devotees, disports Himself to enhance their greatness. It is related that Shri Krishna worked as his servant under the name Shrikhandya. Although this matter is merely on of traditon at present, it is possible to see signs of it even now. When we visited Paithan some time back, we were shown a reservoir which Shri Krishna is believed to have been filling with water in Ekanath's compound. We heard that the reservoir, which requires some 100 to 150 pitchers to fill it at other times, overflows once a year with but one or two pitchers from Alandi, and that there are people from other towns who have verified the statement.

Further, as regards yogic powers, we may cite the Yogi named Sadashivendra Saraswati who lived in Southern India some 150 years ago. A perusal of his works indicates that he was a Yogi of experience. The late Jagadguru of Shringeri, himself an adept of a high order, has sung the marvellous history of this Yogi in hymns of praise. The present Jagadguru also, according to the statements of his followers, looks upon this Sadashivendra as his model, and frequently expresses the one desire that he may share the intoxication of the joy of the Self which the Yogi possessed. In view of all this, it is not possible to reject the famous miracles in the Yogi's life as being without foundation. We shall mention just one of them. It is related that, while he

was once wandering about in the height of intoxication of the joy of the Self, he happened to enter the harem of a Nawab, unconscious of the external world; that the Nawab, who became blind with fury when he saw him entering in the garb of an ascetic, chopped off one of his shoulders with a dagger. And yet, he did not return to body consciousness, and was moving on to another place. The Nawab, who understood his greatness from this, thought that it would not be good for himself if he did not seek his forgiveness, and so followed him. A little while after, the Yogi, who had regained consciousness of the external world but was observing silence, asked the Nawab by signs why he was following him. The Nawab narrated what had happened and begged his pardon. Then Sadashivendra indicated by signs that he had forgiven him, and he had hardly touched the lacerated part with the other hand when a new shoulder appeared in the proper place. Similarly, all know that the life of Bhatkal Appayya Samartha included many a miracle. Finally, we recall to memory a well-known incident in regard to Guru Shankarashrama II of our own line. He was a great Yogi. It was his habit to take conjee after his daily worship. Once, on the occasion of the *samaradhana* of his Guru, his disciple Keshavashrama is understood to have instructed the cook that it was not necessary to prepare conjee on that day. The Guru finished his worship, went to the kitchen as usual, knew the fact, and returned to rest himself. At the other end, the *vades* which were being prepared for the *samaradhana* refused to get fried and rise to the top, all attempts notwithstanding. Finally, it was realised that this was due to the disregard shown to the Guru, conjee was prepared and offered to him, and the *vades* got fried and rose to the surface all right.

If the faithful explain such incidents in one way,

moderns may explain them in another. Nevertheless, this does not affect the view that seemingly wonderful things do occur in this world. The power of the Paramatman is unbounded. It can bring about strange occurrences. Hence, if a miracle takes place, it is in consonance with the nature of that power, and is therefore natural. Similarly, there are ever so many laws of nature not yet known to us, and it is possible that incidents which appear miraculous to us are in harmony with such laws. Accordingly, when a seeming miracle occurs, we can only infer that it must be in accordance with a law of nature not yet known to us, and it will not be right to deny it merely because it does not fall within the compass of our limited experience.

It is also useful to retain such incidents in the lives of saints. Saints do not themselves attach any value to powers of the kind. It is no doubt also true that the educated among the public measure the worth of saints in the light of their knowledge, dispassion etc., and not in the light of their miracles. All the same, if the teachings of these saints are to make headway amongst the uneducated, it is necessary, in the first instance, to attract their minds towards the saints. In so doing, the miracles themselves may be more helpful than their knowledge, dispassion etc. Thus, where the propagation of the teachings of saints is to become general, even the miracles in their lives have their use.

If the accounts of siddhies in the lives of the saints of old are retained and propagated, some pseudo-sadhus of the present day may make a show of them, draw uneducated people into their nets and deceive them. This fear in the minds of moderns is not groundless. But, even so, it is not necessary, for this reason, to expunge from the lives of olden saints,

miracles which have really taken place and which are useful as explained above. If, in our dealings with present-day sadhus, we do not seek such siddhies, but make it a rule to see how far the knowledge and dispassion taught by them have taken root in their own conduct, the chances of getting cheated by them will be very few. Even if they have real siddhies, we shall not lose by disregarding the siddhies. The cleverness of hypocrites who make a show of siddhies, is, of course, not likely to deceive us in that case. The rule will facilitate our intercourse with genuine saints adorned with knowledge, dispassion etc., and help us to benefit thereby. It will also lessen blind faith.

We conclude this discourse by declaring our opinion that it is possible, in this way, not only to retain the miracles in the lives of olden saints and to believe them, but also to escape the harm which may arise from hypocrites desiring to make capital out of such belief.

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