

SAMVIT SADHANA



BY
Swami Íśwarananda Giri



Samvit Sadhana

Directions for Spiritual Practice



Discourses

By

SWAMI IŚWARANANDA GIRI

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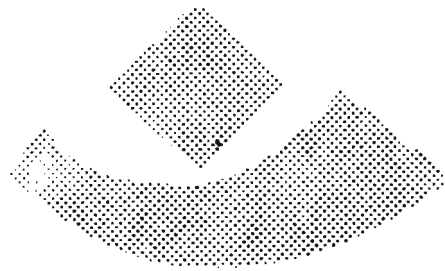
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**Dedicated
to
The Divine Mother
PARĀ SAMVIT**

**Who is ever creating Herself
Ever delighting in Herself
Ever merging into Herself
The one Reality**





त्रिदलं त्रिपदाधारम् त्रिभावं त्रिमलापहम् ।
 त्रय्यन्तस्थं बिल्वतुल्यम् संवित् साधनमुच्यते ॥

**Masters have likened Samvit Sadhana
 to the sacred Bilva-leaf,
 held in a holy Trinity,
 made-up of three petals,
 established in three principles,
 nurtured by three emotive-states,
 liberating the soul from
 three obstructions to Truth.**



Diacritical Marks

The following diacritical marks have been used in transliterating Sanskrit words. The use of diacritical marks for popular Sanskrit words like atma, karma, sadhana, sadhaka, upasana, veda etc. is avoided.

अ a, आ ā, इ i, ई ī, उ u, ऊ ū,
 ऋ r, ए e, ऐ ai, ओ o, औ au,
 ः m̐, : ḥ.

क k, ख kh, ग g, घ gh, ङ ṅ,
 च c, छ ch, ज j, झ jh, ञ ñ,
 ट t, ठ th, ड d, ढ dh, ण ṇ,
 त t, थ th, द d, ध dh, न n,
 प p, फ ph, ब b, भ bh, म m,
 य y, र r, ल l, व v, श ṣ,
 ष ṣ, स s, ह h.

CONTENTS

Preface	viii
Guru, the Path-maker	1
Sadhana, the Path	19
Śraddhā	29
Bhakti	49
Dhyāna	73

Preface

Last October we, the samvit sadhakas from Chitrapur Math Pune, were graced and blessed three times over. Our Parama Guru Swami Īṣwarananda Giriji Maharaj agreed to celebrate Śarat Pūrnima followed by samvit satra at Pune, thanks to the efforts of Śri Prabhakar Bantwal. On a note of great significance was the subject for the discourses chosen by Parama Puja Swamiji. The discourses were entirely devoted to the description of samvit sadhana per se. Only a few months earlier Parama Puja Swamiji, sitting under a bilva-tree, had composed a śloka to describe the whole gamut of samvit sadhana, likening it to a bilva patra—बिल्वतुल्यम् संवित् साधनमुच्यते. It was also uniquely significant that this satra was arranged in the august presence of Parama Puja Sadyojat Shankarāshrama Swamiji, whose grace only brought this sadhaka to the Lotus Feet of the Parama Guru Swami Īṣwarananda Giriji Maharaj.

It was an enthralling experience to listen to the discourses on the *tridulās* of samvit sadhana—śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna. We all sadhakas have our little doubts and confusions from time to time in the course of our sadhana. Only Guru can answer and clear them. Like infants, we need assurance from our samvit mother, the Guru, that we are proceeding on the right path. Doubtless, we need

midcourse corrections. Pujya Swamiji knew all our doubts and difficulties and as if we had given him an advance list, he covered them all in his inimitable and loving way.

It was felt that a large number samvit sadhakas will be benefited by publishing the transcript of the discourses in a book form. The discourses are presented as were delivered with only minimum of changes, additions and editing. It is Parama Pujya Swamiji's grace that this publication has emerged. We cannot even call ourselves निमित्तमात्रम् as Arjuna was referred to by Lord Krishna. As Pujya Swamiji has often explained, to be a *nimittamatram* one has not only to transcend the *katṛtva* and *bhokṛtva bhāva* but also give up *ahaṁkara*. The benefits that we will have through this book may one day lead us to acquire attributes to be a *nimittamatram*.

Pujya Swamiji has exhorted sadhakas to respond to the Lord's eagerness to be recognised. The Lord laments if we fail to recognise him. Pujya Swamiji has often quoted Acāryā Śankarā's words: "अहो कष्टं वर्तते इति अनुक्रोशति च भगवान्." This book will help sadhakas to imbibe and diligently practise Pujya Swamiji's teachings on samvit sadhana. In the event, metaphorically, there will be fewer occasions and reasons for the Lord to lament.

This sadhaka had enthralling and elevating experience in the course of the publication of this book. It is extremely

difficult to articulate its qualitative aspects particularly in the practice of dhyāna; it is like मूकास्वादवत्; like the inability of a physically challenged person, deprived of the faculty of speech, to describe the delightful taste of sweets he is savouring. It is certain that many readers will have similar uplifting and inspiring experiences. Among them doubtless will be the realisation of how practical it is to do सतत भजन निरत and how a mere change in the mental framework and attitude brought about by embracing the theme of यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र makes the practice of karmayoga within the reach of every sadhaka just while he conducts his mundane day-to-day activities.

The *sankalpa* to bring out this publication on the Mahaśivaratri was made at the launch of the book *Soul Supreme* on the New Year's day 2003. That this could be accomplished in a such short time is only due to the 'Guru-śakti'. Special thanks, however, are due to the typesetters and printers who fully co-operated in adhering to a very demanding time schedule.

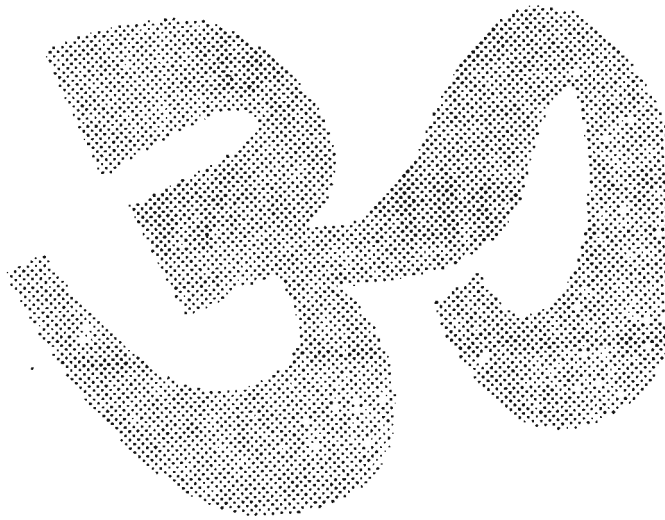
Republic Day, 2003

A sadhaka.

Pune.

Guru

the Path - Maker



काष्ठापरा पराभक्तेः वैराग्य खचिताकृतिः ।

कृपामयी मदीयान्तः गुरुमूर्तिः विराजते ॥

Guru upasana is a vital component in samvit sadhana. In samvit tradition Śri Dakṣināmūrty is the Guru and his upasana is the root of all sadhana. Generally, a math —मठ— as an institution is entirely devoted to the Guru upasana. A sadhaka, each in his own way, shapes his sadhana through Guru upasana. Just as a math is sustained by *Guru-paramparā*, the *Guru-paramparā* itself is sustained by *śiṣya-paramparā*. The *śiṣya-paramparā* in turn is sustained by *sadhana paramparā*. This aspect should not be forgotten. Otherwise maths will be here, gurus will be flourishing and śiṣyās will be thronging; but our real Gurus will not be pleased at all. The spiritual Gurus, though not in person, are very much with us. They are at the root of

this nation's culture; the very breath of our religion.

All our scriptures have been exhausting their potentials in trying to explain what God is. Yet how many recognise him and how many have even a vague idea of him. The Lord himself is almost lamenting: “मम तु वेदन कश्चन—I know everything but nobody knows me.” Bhāṣyakāra Ācārya Śankarā says : “अहो कष्टं वर्तते इति अनुक्रोशति च भगवान्.” The Lord wants you to know him. There is an eagerness, a desire, a love in his wanting you to know him. With all his unimaginable glory he is ungratified so long as you do not recognise him. This has been expressed beautifully in a saying: “Truth does not do anything; it cannot do anything, because it is everywhere, because it is fulfilled. Yet Truth has one desire. It wants to be recognised.” This is a paradox. How can someone who is fulfilled have a desire? Yet it is a fact of life that Truth wants to be recognised. That want is behind this entire creation. “एकोऽहं बहुस्याम्— I am alone, let me be many”, was God's willing that, according to Upaniṣads, prompted creation. Truth wants to be expressed and experienced. This is the nature of Truth. And its first manifestation is ‘Guru-tattva’.

‘Guru-tattva’ has to be recognised and then invoked. Without it life is utterly hollow. Take the classical case of Arjuna. At Kurukṣetra just before the battle is to begin, he is siezed with the meaninglessness of the entire project. But before falling into deep depression, he realises that he needs light. It is not an ordinary light, not an ordinary *yukti*, not material or worldly help, not even a mental consolation. It is enlightenment of the Ultimate Good (श्रेयस्) that Arjuna needs. So he turns to Lord Krishna asking to be accepted as a śiṣya. If you want the ‘light’, you have to invoke the Guru who has the radiance which liberates you from darkness of *ajñāna*. Like Arjuna you should sincerely declare: “शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्.” With all your learning, achievement, power and prowess, you are nothing if you have not touched Truth. This spiritual experience of your own utter hollowness is the invocation to the Guru. If this spiritual need is not there, the real Guru will not be contacted. What the aspirant will meet will be mere preachers or worse, poachers clandestinely active in the religious sanctuaries.

With all the popular upsurge of religious fervour seen in society now-a-days mostly the approach is ‘चमत्कार को नमस्कार.’ What is the *camatkāra* that you are after? What is a miracle? Is it not something which is unusual and unaccountable? What has it to do with your spiritual status and pursuits ? There are so many unusual and unaccountable things happening like a child being born with two heads, the Bermuda triangle or UFO sightings. Are you going to worship them or hang your faith on such phenomena? In sanskrit, *camatkāra* is “shining forth or flashing of light.” The only real *camatkāra* is the *ātmaprakāśa* flashing forth. The light of ātman is always there; but it should flash forth. You may call it recognition, realisation or *sākṣātkāra*. That is *camatkāra*. He who does that *camatkāra* is the Guru. Only Guru can reveal the light that is within you. That is the only purpose and relevance of Guru. When the darkness is dispelled by light, all your anxieties cease. They were all hobgoblins imagined in the state of darkness. Along with darkness they also vanish. Nilakantha Dixit, the nephew of the great scholar-saint Appayya Dixit declares: “Just before his death my uncle was

assured that the darkness of the soul along with all the *piṣācās* lurking there was gone.’’ Can such an assurance come to you? If so that will be a fulfilment and the ultimate achievement.

Guru is a liberating force, like the Ganga released from Śiva’s matted-locks. Jagannath Kavi sang an inimitable poem in praise of Ganga called *Gangā Lahiri*. He was a celebrity in the court of the moghul emperor Shahajahan. He strayed into bad ways influenced by the corrupt atmosphere in the royal court. He fell into the clutches of a courtisan. All the pundits of Kashi abandoned him. His paramour also left him when he contacted leprosy. Disowned and rejected by all and worst of all, losing self-respect, he realised how low he had fallen. It is said he went to the banks of Ganga in Kashi and offered himself to the holy river, composing and singing 50 ślokās in her praise. The banks of Ganga in Kashi are covered by steps leading down to the river bed. As he composed the impassioned song, the water level rose by one step for each śloka. Ganga rose 50 steps to where Jagannath was lying and took him away. In one

śloka he says:

“ दरिद्राणां दैन्यम् दुरितमतदुर्वासन हृदाम्
द्रुतं दूरी कुर्वन् सकृदुपगतो दृष्टि सरणिम् ।
अपिद्रागाविद्या—द्रुमदलन दीक्षा गुरुरिह
प्रवाहस्ते वाराम् श्रीयमयमपारं दिशतुनः ॥ ”

He hails the waters of Ganga (ते वाराम् प्रवाहः) and compares the flow to the Guru. He explains: —सकृदुपगतः दृष्टि सरणिम्— once having sighted the Ganga *pravāha*,—दरिद्राणाम् दैन्यम् दूरी कुर्वन्—the vision removes the penury of the miserable impoverished ones. The wicked impressions are gone from their heart —दुर्वासन हृदां दुरितम्. Further, the turbulent flow uproots the trees on the bank —द्रुमदलन दीक्षा गुरुः. The reference to the *dīkṣita* is significant. Not only does a *śiṣya* need to be a *dīkṣita*, by becoming initiated into *sadhana*; but the Guru too has to be a *dīkṣita* in seeing that the *śiṣya* does the *sadhana*. He says: “Ganga your *pravāha* with its intensity of flow uproots the trees along the banks just as the Guru uproots the tree of *avidyā* from the heart of the *śiṣya* —अविद्या द्रुमदलन दीक्षा गुरुः.” In Bhagavad Gita, the Lord says the trees

of *saṁsāra* has to be cut. In today's context cutting a tree is not environmentally friendly. But the Lord has taken care to describe the tree of *saṁsāra* as an *aśvattha* tree not as a *śāśvata* tree. A tree is respected and is used in upasana because it represents the *śāśvatatā* of life like in the family tree. But the tree of *saṁsāra* is described as *aśvattha* denoting that which does not remain tomorrow. So the transitory nature of the world is what is to be cut and not the 'tattva' of continuity of life. The Lord commands in the 15th chapter of Gita:

“अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूलम असङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्वा।”

The Truth has to be sought after cutting down the encroaching, hiding and shrouding expanse of the *saṁsāravṛkṣa*. This—अविद्या द्रुम—has to be cut down by—असङ्गशस्त्र. That axe which cuts the tree of *saṁsāra* is called *vairāgya* or *asaṅgatā*. The entire sadhana is for acquiring this *asaṅgatā* or *vairāgya*; whether through *karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga* or *jñāna-yoga*. The Lord, therefore, exhorts Arjuna to give up attachments —सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय. But how will you give up attachments? From where will you get the *asaṅgaśāstra*? It is the Guru who

gives you the *asaṅgatā*; rather the Guru becomes the *asaṅgaśāstra* within you.

In the *mangalācaraṇa* to the Guru quoted at the beginning of this text, the Guru is described as वैराग्य खचित आकृतिः. Guru's form we see is like a sculpture carved out of a solid *kṛpamayī* rock of grace by *vairāgya*. So Guru himself is a *vairāgyamūrti*. Then only he can inspire you to use the *asaṅgaśāstra*. He gives the *śāstra* and asks you to use it. He gives you the inspiration and asks you to do the sadhana. That is the *drṣṭi* that *Guru-paramparā* always holds.

When my most worshipful Guru Maharaj, Swami Nrusimha Giriji, was in Haridwar doing tapasya, reading and explaining Vedānta scriptures, a group of people from the Kashi Dakṣiṇāmūrti Math approached his Guru, my Parama Guru, with a request to release the Swami for appointment as mandaleśwara of their math. Mandaleśwara is a pontiff of a traditionally recognised math. In the North mandaleśwarās are like Śāṅkarācāryās of the South. A mandaleśwara has to perform several other functions apart from giving discourses on Vedānta. My Parama Guru expressed reservations about letting the Swami

become a mandaleśwara. He said a *virakta* and *uparatā* Swami like my Guru would not be able to function as mandaleśwara. The math people said they did not need a swami to run the math, that they will do. They wanted a Lamp, a Light, a Radiance to guide the *śiṣya-paramparā*. This is true *Guru-paramparā*. Immediately after becoming the pontiff, my Guru had to go to the Kumbha Mela, in which a mandaleśwara has to play a major role. But my Guru used to remain aloof, not meeting devotees and retiring to his room immediately after giving discourses. For three years he preferred solitude. Gradually he opened up and eventually he became one of the rarest orators and preachers of our tradition. He did not become one by aspiration or planning; '*Guru-śakti*' made him a great exponent of Vedānta. All that one needs is *jñāna-vairāgya*. 'ज्ञानवैराग्य सिध्यर्थं भिक्षां देहि च पार्वति'— is all that our *paramācāryās* asked us to pray from the Mother. *Jñāna* and *vairāgya* is the real श्रीयम् mentioned by Jagannath Kavi in the śloka quoted above—प्रवाहस्ते वाराम् श्रीयम् अयम् अपारं दिशतु नः. 'श्री' is a beautiful word. Usually we connect it with wealth only. But Śri goes much beyond. Śri is the expression of atma. Anything that is full of the expression of

soul is Śrī. Therefore, we say Śrī Māta not just Māta.

Today is Śarat pūrṇima. It is very sacred and dedicated to Śrī. It has connection with samvit sadhana also. On Śarat pūrṇima we are asked to observe '*Kojagari vrata*'. Śarat pūrṇima has assumed the form of autumnal celebrations and has degenerated into a mere entertainment. Kojagari on the other hand connotes a sacred spiritual '*vrata*', initiated on the evening of caturdaśi reaching its climax at midnight when pūrṇima is ushered in. The injunction of śāstrās is:

“ ज्योत्स्नाजालावतरणा सुधाकलशहस्तका ।

कोजागरीति पृच्छन्ति श्रीरायाति शरत्निशि ॥”

Devi Śrī descends on the staircase of the moonbeams at midnight on Śarat pūrṇima; bearing a pitcher of ambrosia. She searches for a proper recipient and asks:—‘कोजागरि— one who is awake.’ It is obvious that here Śrī comes as *Brahmvidya* which alone can give you *amṛta* of *mokṣa*. *Amṛta* is the nature of the soul; which, if you realise, will impart everlasting bliss—*ānanda*. *Ānanda* will be attained

only if you realise your immortal nature. For a mortal being where is *ānanda* when the fear of death always lurks everywhere. This *ankuṣa* of death subdues all enjoyment. *Nirankuṣa sukha* is *ānanda*. Śrī is always ready to give you *amṛta*, but she demands only one thing in return, *jāgrati*. This is the essence of samvit sadhana—to be awake. See how the samvit path is intertwined so closely with all our *vyavahāra* and all our *utsavās*. Festivals have cultural and entertainment value also but they are threaded upon the sutra of *ātmajñāna*.

Let us analyse what is this *jāgrati* that Śrī Māta demands. It is not just remaining awake without sleeping. Most people are awake at midnight in night clubs, cinemas, watching T.V. or in other avenues of entertainment or work places. If you understand what *jāgrati* is, you will realise that most of you are not *jāgrata*. It is not exaggeration to say that most are sleeping most of the time. How do you say so when most people are working, earning, entertaining and enjoying life ? But all this is like somnambulism. You are living and very active, but active as if in sleep. Are you aware of what you are doing? Are you aware of yourself?

First you have to be aware of yourself and then you will realise what you are doing. Our Rishis gave us enough yogic material to build our social and cultural edifice and make our lives full of spiritual power. But you have dismantled all these and complain that you do not have peace and are full of tension. No man will dig his own grave but everyone is doing just that. Everyone is doing his chores as if walking in sleep. Śrī Mātā wants one who is really awake; awake to the sensitive touches of the divine in all aspects of life. The whole world is an expression of God; the overflow of his own bliss. So every touch of life should give you some intimation, though not realisation, of that power, beauty and majesty of God. You will get it only if you are sensitive to it; and this sensitivity is lost by leading a crude life of gross pleasures. That sensitivity has to be awakened by *saṁyama*.

Real *jāgrati* is *ātmasaṁyama*. The 6th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita deals with *ātmasaṁyamayogah*. Actually it is meditation. Through *ātmasaṁyama*, when you are composed within yourself, ātman can reveal itself. The intimations of divinity come from within yourself. Divine inspirations are flowing

from within. But are you receptive to these? The receptivity is *jāgrati*.

In order to derive spiritual sensitivity we are asked to expose ourselves to the influence of Nature. In samvit sadhana *aṣṭamūrty* upasana occupies a prominent place. It is already inlaid in our daily religious routine. You cannot begin the day without the *bhūmisparṣa*. Everybody has to get up from bed and stand on the floor. But a samvit sadhaka does it as an upasana chanting ‘समुद्रवसने देवि’. *Bhūmi* is the first *mūrty*. Even in daily worship, you begin pūja by first touching the ground and praying to *bhūmi* chanting, ‘ॐ भूरसि भूमिरस्यदितिरसि...’ Before constructing a building *bhūmipūja* is performed. Now science has come to recognise that *bhūmi* is not insentient. The earth is a living force.

Similarly without *jalasparṣa* no ritual can begin. *Āchamana*, *prokṣaṇa* and aīi such mandatory observations involve upasana of water. *Agni* is the third of the *aṣṭamūrty*. All religions usually observe lighting of lamps. Hindus have *ārati* and *homa* etc. Then there is *Vayu*. Without *prāṇāyāma* you are not fit to do the pūja—‘नमस्ते वायुः त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि.’

Ākaśa, the fifth element is everywhere and is within you too. In you is the *Cidambara*; cit means awareness and ambar means space. Think of the space in the heart and meditate. God is revealed there. Kaivalya Upaniṣad begins instructions with this:—हत् पुण्डरीकं विरजं विशुद्धं विचिन्त्यमध्ये विशदं विशोकम्.

Sūrya is the sixth *mūrty* who is worshipped in the daily *sandhyā vandana*. Everyone folds hands in adoration at sunrise and sunset. *Soma* is the seventh of the *aṣṭmūrties*. Each day is measured by the digits of the moon. Recognise the power of soma and invoke it particularly during pūrṇima. All pūrṇimas are sacred; but four pūrṇimas coming in succession are very symbolic. The first is the Guru pūrṇima. The next is Rākhi pūrṇima. Then follows Bhādrapada pūrṇima dedicated to *Ananta*. Just a day before that you get the *ananta caturdaśi*, when you perform pūja of *Ananta* and celebrate on the next day which is Bhādrapada pūrṇima. The fourth is the Śarat pūrṇima.

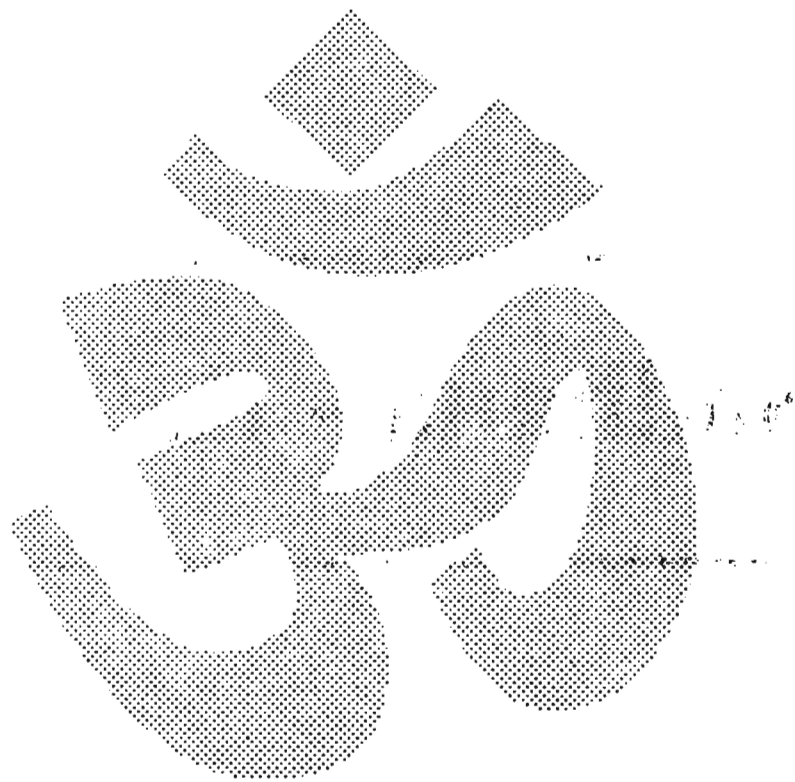
These four are very symbolic because they represent the four aspects of Brahman mentioned

in the Upaniṣads:—‘सत्यम् ज्ञानम् अनन्तम् ब्रह्म आनन्दं ब्रह्म—’*satya, jñāna, ananta* and *ananda*. Guru pūrṇima obviously is *jñāna prasanga*. Rākhi pūrṇima denotes that social relationships are accepted and offered to the Lord. It therefore represents *sat* aspect of Brahman. Bhādrapada pūrṇima relates to *ananta* aspect of Brahman to which we pray—अनन्तरूपे विनियोजे स्वः. The *ānanda* aspect is manifest in Śarat pūrṇima. Lord Krishna chose this occasion to perform *rāsalīlā*, when he raised everybody beyond their body-consciousness. That was ātma-camatkāra. Everyone was drenched in *ānandavarṣa*.

That is how *Guru-śakti* works through *māyā*—शक्तिविलास. If creation is the incredible maya-act of God, his role of Guru in unravelling the secret of creation is much more incredible. By carefully following the sadhana path laid by the *Guru-paramparā*, every human being can be blessed with this *Guru-prasāda*, that is *mokṣa*.



Sadhana - the path



You are all familiar with the mantra which is chanted in Śiva pūja when bilva patra is offered to Lord Śiva :

त्रिदलं त्रिगुणाकारं त्रिनेत्रं च त्रिधायुधम् ।

त्रिजन्मपापसंहारम् एकबिल्वं शिवार्पणम् ॥

Based upon the same pattern, Masters have tried to define samvit sadhana and describe it as a bilva leaf thus:

त्रिदलं त्रिपदाधारम् त्रिभावं त्रिमलापहम् ।

त्रय्यन्तस्थं बिल्वतुल्यम् संवित् साधनमुच्यते ॥

Samvit sadhana is likened to the bilva patra. You have to meditate upon the bilva patra and try to discover the aspects that apply to samvit sadhana. त्रय्यन्तस्थं संवित् साधनम् उच्यते is a very important

and significant point to be noted. Vedas are called त्रयी. त्रयी अन्त is 'Veda-*anta*'. Here *anta* means essence. Vedānta contains the essence of Vedas. Samvit sadhana is entirely based upon Vedānta. Nothing in samvit sadhana should contradict Vedānta. What Vedānta is has been established on unshakeable foundations by paramācāryās. Particulary after the advent of Bhāṣyakāra Ādi Śankarācārya, there was a general acceptance of *prasthāntraya* comprising Upaniṣads, Brahmasutra and Bhagavad Gita. So त्रय्यन्तस्थ in Vedāntic context also means the *sidhāntās* established in the three *prasthānās*. Samvit sadhana should never contradict them, however fanciful the modern representations may be. Samvit sadhana is a pure Vedāntic *paramparā* established by Bhagawān Veda Vyasa and later on reinforced by Bhāṣyakāra Ācāryā Śankarā.

Now, let us see how a bilva leaf is also *trayyantastha*. To understand this we have to turn to a story attributed to the emergence—उद्भव—of bilva *vrkṣa*. The āgamā commentators on Śri Sukta refer to this story of how once Bhagawān Nārāyana decided to perform a severe penance to please Śiva

and receive a son as a boon. It is said in the *śāstrās* that whatever you have to achieve can be accomplished through tapasya. So Lord Nārāyana performed tapasya. But nothing happened. Normally when you do *anuṣṭhāna*, you get intimations that the divine is responding to it. Lord Nārāyana did not have the *ātmatoṣa* or *āśvāsana*. He turned to Devi Lakṣmi for advice. Devi Lakṣmi said she too will join in the tapasya and sat besides Lord Nārāyana. Whereas Lord Nārāyana was engaged in tapasya for a very very long time, Lakṣmi got absorbed the moment she started tapasya. Soon from her right hand arose a bilva tree. Lord Nārāyana was astounded and asked Lord Śiva about it. Lord Śiva replied that he will be propitiated only by offering bilva leaves to him in arcanā. Bilva is therefore called *Śri Vṛkṣa*. It is dear to Śiva and is the fulfilment of Nārāyana. In this way bilva is the basis for the confluence of these Divine Triad, that is fundamental to all upasana. This story reveals how these divinities play their part together. The bilva is प्रेरित (invoked) by Nārāyana, प्रकटित (manifest) by Śri and पूरित (accepted) by Śiva. Nārāyana is the योग. Śri makes the प्रयोग and Śiva gives the विनियोग.

By comparing samvit sadhana to the bilva patra, we are asked to introduce all these ideas in our practice. The samvit sadhana must include all these three *upāsyās*; all other *upāsyā* forms fall under the three aspects of Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu. All the three have to be worshipped because they have different vital roles to play. Together they lead to Brahma upasana, otherwise the upasana will be one-sided.

According to *Śankaramatā*, when we talk of Brahman as the *jagat kāraṇa*, we have to take all the three aspects, material cause, (*upādāna kāraṇa*) efficient cause (*nimitta kāraṇa*) and basic cause (*adhiṣṭhāna kāraṇa*). When all the three are connected together and identified as one, then only we have an understanding of how Brahman being absolute and *advaita*, yet through *mayasakti*, becomes the *jagat kāraṇa*. Only through upasana these three *kāraṇa-swarūpās* are revealed. Therefore, samvit sadhana involves upasana of Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu. This is another implication of the sadhana being *trayyantastha*.

In samvit tradition, Vedānta is entirely in the hands of the Guru and śruti. In the Vedānta *Guruparamparā* also we discover the three stages of Vedānta, प्रेरित, प्रकटित and पूरित. Bhagawān Nārāyana manifested the Vedas. It was left to Bhagawān Veda Vyasa to churn and bring out the essence in the form of Vedānta. Before Veda Vyasa it was all Veda *paramparā*. The Vedānta *paramparā* started with Veda Vyasa. No doubt, Brahmaji had sent Vasiṣṭha for propagating *jñāna*. But he could not bring out the essence of Vedas in a way that Veda Vyasa could do through Brahmasutras. So like Lakṣmi bringing out, in the form of bilva tree, the means for fulfilment of Nārāyana's tapasya, Veda Vyasa brought out the *siddhānta* showing the purpose of Vedas. Thereafter Ācārya Śankarā offered Vedānta to all sadhakas, making it विनियुक्त in everyone's life and not just for intellectuals. That was the purpose of his travel all over the country. After that, till now Vedānta is being used for 'arcanā' by all. Just as bilva leaves are used to perform arcanā to Lord Śiva, Vedānta is used for arcanā to your *ātmawarūpa*. That is the samvit sadhana.

Let us now meditate on samvit sadhana as the bilva leaf. The most striking and revealing aspect is त्रिदलं, the three petals. Samvit sadhana has, apart from the three *dalās*, three *padās*, three *bhāvās* and three *ādhārās*. Also in Vedānta, or in the path of *ātmajñāna* there are three kinds of dirt (mala) or obstructions to be removed. We will refer to all these. Here, at first, we take up the three petals.

To know the three petals of samvit sadhana, we have only to study what the great paramācārya Yājñavalkya Mahirīṣi said in his sermon to his wife Maitreyi. That has become a policy-making statement in the Brahadāraṇyakopaniṣad of the śukla Yajurveda.

“ आत्मावा अरे दृष्टव्यः श्रोत्रव्यो

मन्थव्यो निदिध्यासितव्यः मैत्रेयी।”

You should get a vision of ātman by *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. These are the three petals of samvit sadhana. They all constitute one sadhana and not three different practices. Without *śravaṇa* on what will you do *manana* and without *manana* how can you go into *nididhyāsana* ? They are not even in a sequence but come into play

together. As you do *śravaṇa*, you must go on doing the innovative thinking *manana* within and as clarity emerges through *manana*, you should get absorbed in the effect. It is like in music. It is not that you go into a rapport at the end of the concert only. You are absorbed as you follow the development of the performance, getting hold of all its implications. Similarly, *nididhyāsana* and *manana* will go along with *śravaṇa*. The main sadhana is *śravaṇa*. There is no way that you can get at *ātmajñāna* except through *śravaṇa*. Śruti is the only *pramāṇa*.

There is an alternative interpretation of the three petals of samvit sadhana. We find it in Kaivalyopaniṣad. Āśvalāyana Mahirīṣi, having completed all his duties and become mature and ripened (*paripakva*) through the *grihasthaśrama* goes directly to Brahmaji and says:

“ अधीहि भगवन् ब्रह्मविद्यां वरिष्ठां
 सदा सद्भिः सेव्यमानां निगूढाम् ।
 ययाऽचिरात् सर्वपापं व्यपोह्य
 परात्परं पुरुषं याति विद्वान् ॥

Impart to me that supreme and adorable Brahmanidya by which I can realise my supreme nature, *parātpara puruṣa* and be free from all bondages.”

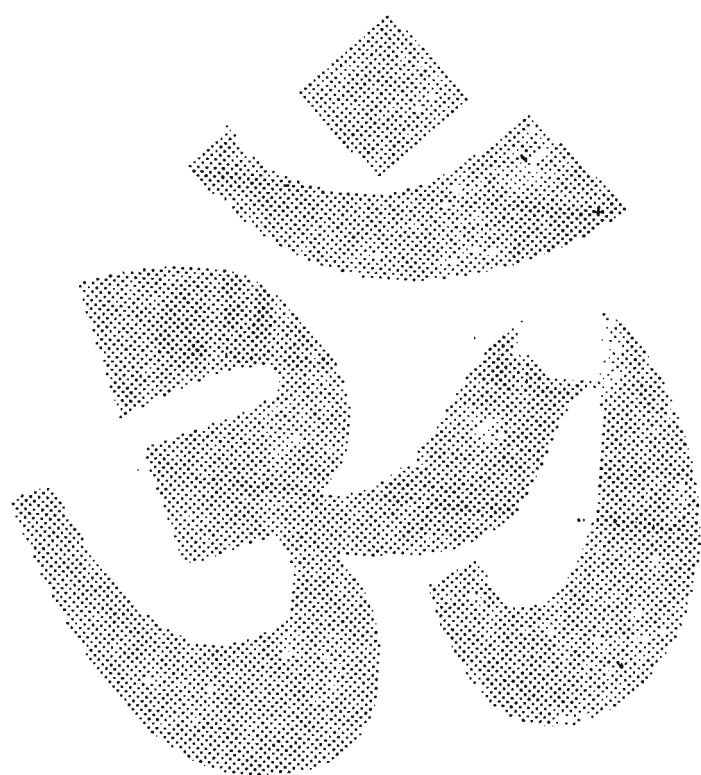
Āṣvalāyana was eminently suited to receive Brahmanidya so Brahmaji immediately gave the answer:

“श्रद्धाभक्तिध्यानयोगादवैहि ।

Know this Brahmanidya by means of the yoga of faith, devotion and meditation.” श्रद्धा भक्ति ध्यानयोग is one yoga; not three yogas. This is the samvit bilva, one leaf holding three *dalās*. Samvit sadhana has श्रद्धा, भक्ति and ध्यान, all held in one yoga. We will see them in detail.



Sraddhā



The *tridalam* of samvit sadhana comprises śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna. The first among the three is śraddhā-yoga and we are considering it as one of the three aspects of the same yoga. Though śraddhā seems to be a very simple and common word, it is not properly understood. It is used lightly in common parlance. In Vedas a stupendous dimension is given to śraddhā. An entire sukta is devoted to extolling śraddhā. In *Śraddhāsūkta* it is invoked as one of the foremost and fundamental powers in creation :

श्रद्धा देवी प्रथमजा ऋतस्य विश्वस्य भर्त्री जगतः प्रतिष्ठा।

तां श्रद्धां हविषा यजामहे सा नो लोकं अमृतं दधातु॥

Śraddhā is a devī. She was manifested in the beginning of creation. Śraddhā is one of the important

principles. In Vedānta the entire creation is a spiritual experience only. Therefore śraddhā is first born *prathamajā* because she is the protector of the world order—*ṛtasya, viśvasya, bhartri*. *Ṛta* is the law according to which the creation blossoms. *Ṛtam* is what God experiences and expresses in creation. That is why it is so beautiful. That beauty will be marred by the ugly acts of a demonic heart bereft of faith in the Divine design. Therefore śraddhā sustains the world order. That is the cosmic dimension given to śraddhā in 'Vedas'.

Śraddhā is *jagatah praṭiṣṭhā*; she becomes the basis for all your progress. *Jagat* is that which moves—गच्छति इति जगत्. All the creatures and feeling beings have to move on. Life is a movement of consciousness and that is sustained by śraddhā. Without faith in oneself one cannot build life. Śraddhā is a means both for the cosmic order and for individual progress. Therefore, *tām śraddhām haviṣa yajāmahe*, we offer oblations to śraddhā so that she may be invoked, propitiated and become resplendent.

When Bhagavad Gita says: “श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम्” it is the very beginning of the sadhana. This is to be followed up by तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः. That is to say, one must apply oneself to the values offered by faith and also discipline oneself to be able to do it. In the present context, it has to be noted that ultimately *tatparatā* gives rise to bhakti and *saṁyama* enables dhyāna and these are the two other ‘petals’ of samvit sadhana whose bilva nature has thus been posited in Gita.

A lot is said about śraddhā. We have seen that you have to have śraddhā in order to get enlightenment. Vedas describe it as a force that is connected with the cosmic process. Śraddhā is spoken of as one that uplifts you. But what really is śraddhā? It is necessary to be clear about this. Bhagawān Bhāṣyakāra provides you with a definition. According to him wherever in Vedānta the word śraddhā is used, it means utmost faith in the truth expressed through the words of the scriptures and the Guru:

“शास्त्र आचार्य वाक्येषु अत्यंत आस्तिक्य बुद्धीः।”

Remember śraddhā is in *buddhi*. It is not in mind

(mana). It is not in your likings or calculations and therefore it is not what an unruly mind believes. Often *śraddhā* and *viśvāsa* are confused for one another. But we should make a clear distinction between the two. *Śraddhā* is faith; *viśvāsa* is belief. Faith comes out of a deep conviction. It is a deep perception of a hidden principle waiting to be realised. Belief comes out of presumption; something you take for granted. You observe something and you build your belief; like an observation of a cricket pitch before the commencement of the match and forming a belief that it is going to be batsman friendly, while in actuality it proves otherwise. *Viśvāsa* can crumble like the cricket pitch but *śraddhā* is the path to truth. *Śraddhā* is *satya-netra*. It is a perception of the *buddhi*. *Viśvāsa* is a belief built up in the mind because of certain unstable and obvious factors. For *laukika vyavahāra*, *viśvāsa* is enough; but for *śāstriya vyavahāra*, *śraddhā* alone is needed. Ācārya Puṣpadanta says:

“श्रुतो श्रद्धां बद्धा दृढपरिकरः कर्म सुजनः।”

Even for an ordinary *śāstriya karma*, *śraddhā* is absolutely necessary. Without *śraddhā* no *yajñā*,

no *dāna*, no *tapas* is effective. Without *śraddhā abhiṣeka* on your *upasya* deity is like pouring milk on a stone; a meaningless exercise of no avail. By the statement: ‘श्रुति आचार्य वाक्येषु,’ the context of *śraddhā* is fixed. You cannot stretch it to what anybody says or does.

On a lighter note, belief is enough to make you place your head in the hands of a particular barber. You may carry the belief for a number of years that he is safe and good. But one fine morning you may find him to be a spy or a terrorist. Belief can fail. But *śraddhā* can never fail because it emerges from *buddhi* and goes to the transcendental truth backed by conviction. *Śāstra ācārya vākya* will never instruct you about your *laukika vyavahāra*. It is always about the transcendental (अदृष्ट). *Śruti pramāṇa* is for two things or you may say that Vedas deal only with two themes. One is *dharma* and the other is *Brahman*. Both cannot be verified by scientific investigation, experimentation and demonstration. *Dharma* cannot be seen—न लिङ्गम् धर्मकारणम्—mere outward look cannot demonstrate *dharma*. *Dharma* can only be felt at heart—‘धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां.’ *Dharma* is *apūrva* and *adr̥ṣṭa*.

Brahman, of course, is *apūrvā* and *adr̥ṣṭa*. So *śraddhā* refers to *dharma ācarāṇa* and *Brahma sakṣātkāra*. That is why this magnificent spiritual force, *śraddhā*, succeeds in delivering you from the *saṁsār bandhana* and in leading you to *mokṣa* and *jñāna*—श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम्.

In the beginning faith is needed for *dharma ācarāṇa*. यज्ञदान तपःकर्म न त्याजम् कार्यमेव तत्—You do *yajña* and *yajña* in turn purifies you. You cannot precisely know how much purification you have achieved by performing *yajña*. You cannot see it but you can feel it. आचारप्रभवो धर्मः। धर्मस्य प्रभुः अच्युतः॥ Dharma has to manifest in action and that will ultimately take you to *Acyuta*, that principle which is never shaken— the ultimate *Parabrahma*. Dharma is means to Brahman. That is why Lord Śiva always rides on a nandi (वृषभः)—‘धर्मो वृषः’ say the Vedas.

If *śraddhā* is there in the performance of *dharma*, then only it becomes *dharma ācarāṇa*. You just cannot initiate and follow a mere routine and believe you are following *dharma*. Yudhiṣṭira when

asked by Yakṣa about the path of dharma replied:

“ धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां ।

महाजनो येन गतः स पन्था ॥”

The path to dharma is that which great souls have walked. He speaks from experience and maturity. Yudhiṣṭira is witness to the fact that śraddhā will be severely tested. You should be prepared for it. Do not take it for granted. Time itself will come to test your śraddhā. The people around will test you, just as Droṇācārya was tested by Drupada. Yudhiṣṭira saw all his brothers in deathly swoon on the lake-side. He wanted to revive them with water but he could not touch the water unless Yakṣa, who presided over the lake, allowed him. Yakṣa would not allow unless Yudhiṣṭira answered all his questions. Yudhiṣṭira agreed and answered the questions brilliantly. Pleased with the replies the Yakṣa said that the four pāṇḍavās were dead because of their folly in disobeying him and because they did not use their *buddhi*. But pleased with Yudhiṣṭira, he will allow him to revive one of them and asked him to choose. Yudhiṣṭira had no difficulty or hesitation in delivering his matured and considered

decision because he was living dharma. It appears to others as if such great persons take decisions on mere intuition; but actually their *buddhi*; being steeped in dharma, is trained for instant consideration and decision. It is the result of sadhana and the developed śraddhā. In such persons, Śraddhā sees and śraddhā speaks. The śraddhā in Yudhiṣṭira gave the decision:—“नकुलो यक्ष जीवतु—Yakṣa, let Nakula be revived.” Yakṣa was surprised and asked for reasons.

When śraddhā is tested it has to be vindicated through *tarka*. You should have a reasoning behind it. You cannot say you do not know. It only means you have not understood and the decision is unconsidered one. You cannot be intellectually blind. Blind are the people who say that faith is blind. Faith is the real eye we have. Śraddhā is strengthened by *tarka*. Trying to see *yukti* behind Yudhiṣṭira's statement, the Yakṣa told him that Bhima or Arjuna will be useful to him and even Sahadeva will be helpful. Nakula, though with a handsome face, will hardly be useful when war is imminent. Yudhiṣṭira's reply was classic. He said he was aware that there was going to be a war.

But his decision was not based on what was going to come. Time would take care of it. He had faith that he would be able to face whatever was to come. This is śraddhā. Yudhiṣṭira reasoned that he was Kunti's son, but Mādri was also his mother. She too should have atleast one son. Her blessings should go to mankind. So he said he wanted to revive Nakula. Thus there has to be a justification for any decision based on śraddhā.

When Nachiketa went to yamaloka according to Upaniṣads, śraddhā entered into him—श्रद्धा आविवेश. Without that Nachiketa would not have faced the tortuous journey and the severe tests that Yama put to him. Śraddhā was paramount in him. He thought he could face Yama, “किंस्विद् यमस्य कर्तव्यं यन्मयाऽद्य करिष्यति—what work can Yama have for me? My father has asked me to go there and so there must be some work and I shall do it creditably.” This is śraddhā at the action level.

As noted earlier there has to be justification for decisions. And such attempts are important for śraddhā-yoga. It has been told: “हविषा वर्धयामहे—we will with our offerings enrich our śraddhā.” Do

not think that you have śraddhā and that is enough. It is tested; it is shaken; it may even fall. Therefore, you have to keep on working at it to develop and strengthen your śraddhā. There is sadhana involved in it and that is śraddhā-yoga. You must know how to strengthen your śraddhā.

Droṇācārya was a very luminous personality. He was well versed in *śāstra* (scriptures) as well as *śastra* (weapons). But even he committed a costly mistake. He and King Drupada were studying together and were childhood chums. In later life Droṇa, seeking prosperity, visited Drupada, perhaps, expecting that the latter will embrace him and display emotions in welcoming him. Drupada, now a king, received him formally according to protocol. Droṇa was furious and took it as an insult. He vowed to take revenge. Here Droṇa's śraddhā faltered. Droṇa took revenge. Drupada was captured and lost half of his kingdom. He in turn vowed revenge and did tapasya to get Driṣṭadyumna and Draupadi out of sacrificial fire. Driṣṭadyumna turned out to be the cause of Droṇa's death. All this insult and

revenge were not necessary. This is not śraddhā's path. Whatever is your desire it can be fulfilled through śraddhā as the sukta says: “श्रद्धां कामस्य मातरम्.” The violent methods of insults, counter-insults, revenge, counter-revenge that hurt everybody are endless; they are not creative; they are destructive. Śraddhā is a creative force. This is a very important aspect of śraddhā. You should meditate upon it—श्रद्धं हृदि धारयते इति श्रद्धा. If śraddhā is in your heart, you will have a creative mind. Faithless persons cannot create. By force, persons with *āsuri* tendencies create only chaos and confusion; but that is not creativity.

In sadhana you are concerned only with creating your own *mokṣa* and making your life beautiful. Bhagavad Gita makes it clear:

“श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः।”

A man is made in the measure of his faith. If you want to make your life at any level, material, psychological, social or spiritual, you should have faith in that method. As much faith you have that

much you will succeed. Lord Krishna in Gita makes a very profound statement which has to be meditated upon:

“सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।”

Everybody is born with *śraddhā* according to deep impressions in the mental setup. But the Lord does further say: “अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति—one who is ignorant, faithless and has a doubting mind perishes”. Is there a contradiction in this ? No, the Lord cannot do that. Here *aśraddadhāna* actually means one who has a weak *śraddhā*. His *śraddhā* is at a level of intensity which will not lift him at all. To raise the level of *śraddhā* you must increase and activate the *sattva*. Do not mistake this to be *sattvaguṇa*. In the above Gita reference Bhāṣyakāra explains what *sattvānurūpa* is:

“विशिष्ट संस्कार —उपेत— अन्तःकरणानुरूपा ।”

According to special impressions created in the depths of your mind *śraddhā* manifests. The 15th chapter of Gita mentions that at the time of rebirth, the soul brings with it all the capacities of senses and mind exercised in the previous incarnation.

Naturally, the mind brings along the deepest and the most prominent impressions of the previous experiences and out of them, the developed faith in life values. But you just cannot be contented with that inheritance. Now you have a new life, a new karma, a new aspiration to progress further. If you have come into this world with past impressions, you can gather further and better impressions. That is the way to achieving new levels of śraddhā by creating new विशिष्ट संस्कार. A *sankṛta mana* (developed mind) will exercise śraddhā at that level. If you have *adhyātma saṁskṛti*, you will have śraddhā raised to the level of spiritual creativity. That is why satsaṅga is insisted upon in the course of your sadhana. Satsaṅga is the beginning and the end of all sadhana. From satsaṅga only you get samvit *saṁskāra*. By hearing, by doing and by meditating upon satsaṅga experience your śraddhā level rises higher and higher right upto the end—*Brahmasākṣātkār*, when all the means of knowing and feeling are surrendered—सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य. One can surrender all the dharma only with the force of śraddhā that this is to be done.

Dharma *ācaraṇa* will come only when the *saṁskārās* are imparted. The first one to give *saṁskāra* to a human being is the mother. Śraddhā comes from there. Of course, a new born arrives with ‘*viśiṣṭa saṁskāra upeta antahkaraṇa*;

’ but the mother imparts a new level of śraddhā. In the eyes of the mother there is nothing ugly in the child. This is how spiritual culture is sustained. If there is no motherhood in the real sense, if there is only a physical mother but bereft of *mātru-drṣṭi*, the development of *adhyātma* or spiritual life is not easy. It is said there is no need to tell children what to do. It is necessary to tell the elders what not to do. If only the elders do not corrupt the children they will grow into good human beings. But elders corrupt children with their own frustrations, unfulfilled ambitions and expectations. So the responsibility for creating śraddhā among new generation rests with parents, teachers and society in general. A human being cannot progress without this sustenance from elders. Whatever inadequacies exist in this respect can be filled by *satsaṅga* and *satpuruṣa*.

King Prathardana's wife Madālasā was a Brahma-viduṣī. When her child was born, she used to sing a lullaby for her son:

“शुद्धोसि बुद्धोसि निरंजनोसि संसारमाया परिर्जितोसि ।
My child, you are the pure, ever-awakened, impeccable soul free from delusions of the world!” How much *atma-śraddhā* the child would have imbibed. Similarly, we wonder whether Prahlada would have faced the terrible oppression from his father and risen spiritually if his *śraddhā* was not reinforced by the *saṁskārās* imparted by his mother and Sage Narada at the time of his birth. If the spiritual atmosphere pervades the society, inspite of adverse situations, *saṁskārās* will emerge from somewhere and touch your heart. Many people worry what will happen to the country the way things are going. The country will be fine as long as *satsaṅgās* are taking place. If *satsaṅga* with *mahapurūṣās* are not available, one may take to studying *śāstrās*. We have such a rich heritage of *śāstra sampat* bequeathed by our masters. From their works you should make efforts to know some fundamentals like what is meant by karma theory, why do we believe in rebirth, what is Bhagawān, what is ātma, what is

the symbolic meaning of various festivals. Get to know and understand these and many other aspects through satsaṅgās or *śāstrās*. This is a part of your *tatparatā* which goes with *śraddhā*. In satsaṅga you will learn to develop your own logical mind and exercise right *yukti* and reasoning to understand implications of the various religious and spiritual practices.

Usually when young persons enquire to know the rationale, they are just brushed aside and merely asked to follow the practices. It is assumed that they ask questions because they lack *śraddhā*. On the contrary they ask questions because they have *śraddhā* and want to reinforce it further by knowing the reasoning. This is a very important point. You should reason it out and the more you reason the more faith will grow.

My Guruji used to frequently tell the story of a Guru and his intelligent *śiṣya*. Many *śiṣyās* used to go to the teacher's house daily to learn. After the study they used to return home, while this *śiṣya* used to stay back and ask persistent questions. He was brilliant enough to complete the

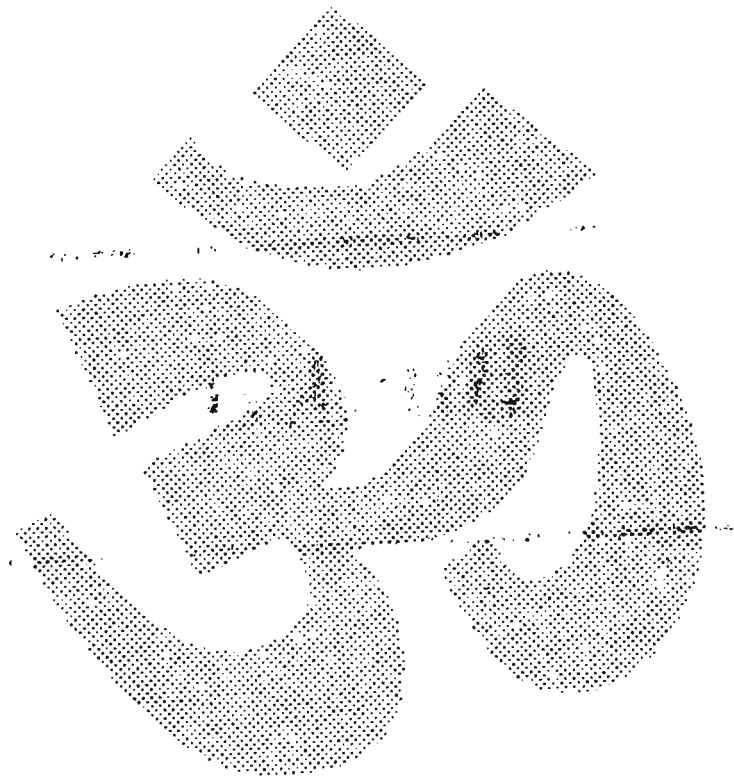
assigned work quickly so that he would have time to make extra inquiries. The Gurupatni used to consider him a troublesome nosy pest. The Guru one day decided to prove to her that the śiṣya was really the best one and so he feigned ill-health. All the śiṣyās were told that there will be no class. Many rejoiced and left. A few that remained enquired of the Gurupatni. When informed that the Guru was afflicted with a terrible disease, they also left feeling sad. Only the persistently questioning śiṣya lingered behind. He asked what disease the Guru was suffering from. The Gurupatni admonished him for his inquisitiveness. He retorted that as a śiṣya he had every right to know so that he could serve his Guru. He was at his persistent best. He was then told, as instructed by the Guru, that a chameleon had entered Guru's leg. The śiṣya could not believe and reasoned out how a chameleon could enter the leg. He knew there was some mistake and he wanted to see the Guru. He expressed his resolve that if he was not allowed to go inside he would sit there and fast. The Guru came out and assured him that it was not necessary. He was hale and hearty and that he was only testing his devotion and intelligence.

The Guru predicted that the *śiṣya* will be a man of knowledge. This is what is meant by श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानम्.

In the modern context it is fashionable to talk of freedom of and right to information. Before exercising this right, it is necessary to ask whether the exercise of the right is backed by *śraddhā*. Is media's right to information based on firm *śraddhā*? If not it just lapses into mischief mongering. Educate your children and your young friends, give them correct *yukti*. Then only *śraddhā* will be strengthened. Otherwise, *śraddhā* will become weak and falter. Bhagawān Bhāṣyakāra exhorts श्रुतिमतस्तर्कोऽनु संधीयताम्. It is your duty to find out the positive logic behind every practice. You will get the positive logic only from श्रुतिमत. So you must be conversant with the scriptural thought; reason it out and then *śraddhā* will become strong. When *śraddhā* grows *tatparatā* is bound to come. When *tatparatā* is acquired, *bhakti* will manifest. We will enter into that subject now.



Bhakti



We have started studying samvit sadhana by comparing it to a bilva leaf. We have already noted the two ways of viewing samvit sadhana as three-petalled *tridala*. The traditional definition of samvit sadhana is *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. But some Upaniṣads have described it as comprising *śraddhā*, *bhakti* and *dhyana*.

Śrutis say, *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* is the only way of attaining *ātmajñāna*. However, this is possible only for a highly developed and subtle intellect. Infact Bhāṣyakāra Ācārya Śankara reserves this sadhana only for sannyasis—सन्न्यस्य श्रवणं कुर्यात्। If *śravaṇa* is to be used as a sadhana for attaining *ātmajñāna* with a definite and fierce intent in this life itself and be a *jīvanamūkta*, then you have to be an all-renouncing sannyasi. That

sannyāsa is not what you see at the physical level. The sannyāsa required for attaining *ātmajñāna* through *śravaṇa* has to be the outcome of a very highly elevated intellectual perception of the nature of the world. That state may be available only to a very few persons like Sanatakumara, for whom Bhagawān Dakṣināmūrti found it not necessary even to utter a single word. That *śravaṇa* was of the utmost elevated and subtlest form where the Lord's dynamic silence was received as a sermon leading to immediate enlightenment; *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* happened instantly. That is not possible even for advanced sadhakas. A *siddhapuruṣa* like say Śukadeva also struggled for a long time.

Śukadeva was the son of Veda Vyasa and was a born yogi. Purānās say that he was born with a deer skin wrapped around him. He immediately asked his father Veda Vyasa to teach him yoga. Veda Vyasa performed his thread ceremony then and there and imparted to him the knowledge of Vedas and yoga. Instantly Śukadeva went into the forest for meditation. Veda Vyasa was concerned, because Śukadeva had not developed his vision

sufficiently. He had grasped the essence of Vedānta and proceeded straight into *samādhi*.

Veda Vyasa sent some of his disciples near about the place where Śukadeva was sitting in *samādhi* to fetch him. As instructed by Veda Vyasa, his disciples sang the praises of Lord Krishna using some ślokas from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Śukadeva was so enchanted by the beauty of the poetry, music and *bhāva* that he was eager to know about their Guru who taught them. He requested the disciples to take him to their Guru, which they did. Śukadeva was surprised to see Veda Vyasa and asked him why these beautiful ślokas full of *bhāva* were not taught to him. Such an evolved soul like Śukadeva also needed bhakti. Only through bhakti can the heart be filled with rasā and become fit to comprehend the Brahman of Upaniṣads. In Gita Lord Krishna assures : “भक्त्या मां अभिजानाति—through devotion one knows me truly and fully.”

Upaniṣads are too mystical. Bhagawad Gita lays down the path in detail and with delectable clarity. From कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते in the 2nd chapter to सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य in the 18th chapter, step by step

the theme is unfurled. The “*tridalam*” idea is presented here as karma-bhakti-jñāna yoga. Intellectually you may know something about him or imagine him to be something. But that may not be the Upaniṣadic Brahman, who is *rasamaya*—रसो वै सः. Therefore, in defining samvit sadhana we opted for the description given in the Kaivalyopaniṣad which identifies the *tridalam* of the samvit sadhana as comprising śraddhā, bhakti and dhyānayoga.

Generally śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna are within our potential ability to acquire, develop and attain. We have the facility to invoke śraddhā. It manifests through a very cultured and carefully monitored social life, with environment at home being established on dharmic traditions. So the dharma *saṁskārās* and love for dharmic values are instilled into the heart. Such a śraddhā will automatically inspire bhakti.

The main objective that intelligent parents and enlightened society should place before a young person is to be enlightened. Be enlightened and then do whatever comes naturally. Once a person is enlightened whatever he does will be elevating

to him and useful to the society. Have faith that you will realise the Truth; because human birth is meant for that purpose. There is a divine intent behind human birth. Utilise the opportunity of a human birth and realise the Truth.

But you do not get *jñāna* instantly. It is a long drawn out process. During this time you should develop *tatparatā*. *Tatparatā* is important as it leads to bhakti. Śraddhā induces *niṣṭhā*. *Niṣṭhā* is that which sustains you continuously—नितरां स्थिति इति निष्ठा. You may have śraddhā but it may not be consistent at the same level. One day you may find an excuse to skip your *anuṣṭhāna* because temporarily your śraddhā level has taken a dip. But *niṣṭhā* will ensure that even in difficult circumstances you will not fail to do what your faith establishes. *Niṣṭhā* is that which sustains your śraddhā. Just as śraddhā induces *niṣṭhā* and *niṣṭhā* induces *tatparatā*, *tatparatā* will give rise to bhakti. Bhakti will lead you to *tanmayatā* and *tanmayatā* will enable you to go into dhyāna. So behind śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna, you will find another triad of *tanniṣṭhā*, *tatparatā* and *tanmayatā*. This is the three-based

त्रिपदाधार of samvit sadhana. Just as the motto “तन्मयो भवेत्—” taken from Mundaka Upaniṣad, *tanniṣṭhā* and *tatparatā* are also well-founded in the scriptures like the Gita.

According to Upaniṣads this human life is to be shaped and used as a missile. A dynamic analogy given for this is an arrow. An arrow is designed and shaped to hit the distant target.

“ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते अप्रमत्तेन वेद्ध्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ।”
Brahman is the target to be hit. You yourself are the arrow. If you properly propel yourself through the bow of sadhana, you will become तन्मय, one with the target. This proper and vigilant (अप्रमत्त) propelling is described in the 5th chapter of Bhagavad Gita:

“ तद्बुद्ध्यस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।

गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥”

To attain to *ātmajñāna* there should be intense and continuous sadhana. तद्बुद्ध्यः, your *buddhi* should be applied to that Reality, which is the supreme self. That is the main sadhana. Repeatedly

the Lord says: “मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय— give your mind and intellect only to me, not to the superimposed form.” How to put *buddhi* in it? Meditate on the *ātmaswarūpa— tadātmānah*. This is same as the theme of *tanmayah*. You become one with it; become totally identified with it. To become *tanmayah*, you have to be *tanniṣṭhāh* and become *tatparāyaṇāh*. These are the three elements which are referred as त्रिपदाधारम् in the sadhana śloka which defines samvit sadhana. This is the basis and support for developing śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna and hence called पद.

You will note that these three basic elements, *tanniṣṭhā*, *tatparatā* and *tanmayatā* are relevant in every sadhana of *tridala*. This is to say, these three apply at every stage to all the three —श्रद्धा, भक्ति, ध्यानयोग, even in the act of performing karma-yoga. In every yoga these three elements form the foundation or launching pad, the only difference being in their relative emphasis. In the śraddhā-yoga, *niṣṭhā* becomes very pronounced. In bhakti-yoga, *tatparatā* becomes prominent. In the dhyāna-yoga *tanmayatā* manifests fully. They are inter-connected and intertwined, with variation in their respective stress.

Once a devotee wished me to visit his new house; which was not fully complete. When I went I was surprised to see a blooming garden with marigolds lining the approach to the living room. I went straight to the flower bed and exclaimed how soon the garden had started blooming. The devotee's little daughter started laughing and informed me that they were planted that morning just for my visit. This was not garden. They were just decorations. They had no roots. The plants started drooping by the time I left. These days decorated pots with plants are sold. They hardly last a few days because they are just placed there and do not go deep. There is no connection with the sustaining force. This is exactly what will happen to your sadhana if there is no *niṣṭhā*. Your sadhana should have roots. The roots are traced to *niṣṭhā*. Over enthusiastic sadhakas just do like-wise. They pluck certain religious experiences and stick them in their psycho-physical frame and think that they are spiritually progressing. For spiritual progress you have to be rooted in your sadhana with *niṣṭhā*. So śraddhā sadhana has to be very deep before you aspire to love God. You may have faith in God but love

for God may not have manifested. Having been rooted in your sadhana, there is special effort needed to adore God; bhakti sadhana.

Bhāṣyakāra describes bhakti as a *latā*, a creeper which you plant in your inner being's garden. It will grow beautifully depending on how you sow it, water it, give support to it, increase the support as it grows and how you tend it. Bhakti sadhana is similar. Do not expect bhakti to emerge in you without effort. A lot of sadhana has to be done. It is a long drawn out severe sadhana. Great saints too had to do severe tapas. How much they suffered. As Meerabai says: “असुवन जल सिंच सिंच प्रेमबेल बोड़—this bhakti-lata I planted and watered by my tears; tears of joy, tears of *viraha*.” It is a valley of deep emotions cut by torrent of tears. It is a *bhāva* sadhana. Because it is *bhāva*, nothing much can be told about it. We can define śraddhā but to define bhakti is difficult. Narada Bhakti Sutra says bhakti is “अनिर्वचनीय प्रेमस्वरूपा.” It is indefinable love.

The sense of sweetness in different sweet preparations can be felt as different in each but

the difference cannot be described. Similarly, the sense of love for God is felt as different from love for the beloved or a friend but it cannot be precisely defined. But because it can be felt, others can guide you.

Saints talk about love of God. They have no other theme but love of God. They have no other message but love of God. It is put in different ways but the message is the same; love God with all your heart as continuously as you can—अनन्यचिंतन. Because he is the soul of the soul it is possible. Even in and through all worldly transactions you can remember God, because he is there in all forms and because he is seated in your heart. You cannot think of a particular thing continuously; if you do it becomes disease. No thing can be continuously dwelt upon. But God can be, because God is not a thing. He is your own soul. This is all that saints say. But we are such ignoramus that we ask how to love God and how to think of God continuously.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa in speaking about love of God gave a *laukika dṛiṣṭānta*. He said: “Think of three infatuated persons; a miser who

is addicted to gold, a doting father attached to his only son and a lover passionately in love with his beloved. If you combine the constancy and intensity of the attachment of all the three, then it is equal to the love of God.’’

These are things that are understood and in connecting them with divine love, Masters wish to state that bhakti is a natural capacity of the mind to enter into a state of utter absorption, which even intense *saṁyama* or great yoga practice cannot achieve. Human mind has that capacity to love God. But we give more importance to intellectual understanding than to divine love. Even if you love your pet dog it will uplift you. Give outlet to your inherent capacity to love. Only you have to recognise who is the real lover, who is प्रेमास्पद. Vedānta comes to the conclusion that ātma is the only *premāspada*. It is impossible for love to go to anything except *caitanyaśvarūpa*— pure awareness. If you love a dog it is only because unconsciously you perceive your own self in it. Will you still love the dog if it becomes rabid? Love is addressed only to ‘self-ness’ which is pure *caitanya*. You see yourself in something then you fall in love with it. If it is

a mere imagination, naturally it will evaporate. If you really love the Self then that is the proper thing to do—आत्मा परम प्रेमास्पद.

In Bhagawad Gita Lord Krishna carefully leads Arjuna from karma to bhakti from 7th chapter onwards. Arjuna is lost in bhakti. By the 9th chapter he becomes a perfect bhakta and he hankers after the Lord to show him his different forms. In the 10th chapter Arjuna says:

“केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ।

Through what objects, O, Lord, are you to be meditated upon by me?” This is the stage when the creeper of bhakti grows fast and spreads far. The Lord replies that his *vibhūti*s are infinite; there is no end to his manifestations but the most important to remember is:

“अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।

He is residing in the hearts of all beings.” In all beings he is the soul. See him as that. You love him as a soul in every being. That is the foremost *vibhūti*. Seeing and feeling him thus will give you bhakti. If you cannot see God in living beings your

bhakti will never develop. Therefore in the 12th chapter the Lord defines bhakta as:

“अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

He who cannot hate anybody, is the friend of all and is compassionate, because ātman is in all.” If you develop *ātmadr̥ṣṭi* you will recognise him in all living beings and adore him wherever *caitanya* manifests itself.

This *ātmabuddhi* unfolds through three forms of bhakti mentioned as ‘त्रिभाव’ in the śloka of samvit sadhana. Let us meditate on these *bhāvās*. The question may well crop up why only the three forms of bhakti? Ramayana mentions *navadha bhakti*. Śrīmad Bhāgavatam names eleven forms of bhakti. I prefer to categorise bhakti by the three *bhāvās* derived from Āñjaneya’s statement steeped in samvit perception. It is not that if you do *kīrtana* it is one form of bhakti and if you do *śravaṇa* it is another form. These are many ways of expressing bhakti. What is of importance here is to go to the essence of bhakti. In samvit sadhana we see it in *buddhi*. Developing three kinds of *buddhi*, you will get three *bhāvās*. Śrī Hanuman brings this

out in his statement when Lord Rama asked him to describe his relationship with him:

“ देहबुद्ध्या तु दासोहं जीवबुद्ध्या त्वहं सखा ।

आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहं इति मे निश्चितामति ॥”

It is the considered opinion (निश्चित मतिः) of an enlightened soul. Śrī Hanuman says three kinds of *buddhis* come to him usually in a day's existence—देहबुद्धि, जीवबुद्धि and आत्मबुद्धि—consciousness at three levels. At the physical level he is an embodied being. All *saṃskarās* and dharmic acts are for and by body only. So why reject the body? There is a misconception among people that Vedānta means a rejection of the body and the entire world; that Vedānta is a joy-killer. That is not the case. Vedānta is for the search for Truth and Truth is everywhere. Truth comes embodied. The body is meant for the expression of Truth. The Upaniṣads call the human body Brahmapuri—यदिदं अस्मिन् ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म. Āgamās say this is a *navaratna deepa*. Kundalini yoga will say it is a *mahapadmavana*. So in sadhana, particularly in bhakti, the body is an altar of God. So *dehabuddhi* is not rejected at

all. Śrī Hanuman uses *dehabuddhi* for serving the Lord with *dāsa-bhāva*—देहबुद्ध्या तु दासोहं.

From a scientific viewpoint ponder over where the body comes from. Parents are only a medium for the birth. Birth is a reflection of God's intent and the need of the soul. Special powers are manifested in the body because God wants human beings to realise Truth. Therefore, man's prime effort must be to serve that power and दासोहं is the humble beginning.

This body is the finest evolution of creation. Every part of the body is a miracle. This body consciousness should lead you to adore that mysterious majestic force that created the body, which is the Swami. This body belongs to that creative force. So you are the *dāsa*.

In India the national atmosphere, the cultural tradition and social values come into play for development of bhakti in the same way as they do for śraddhā. The mind within the body has to accept that the real master is the force which created the body. When like Meerabai you sing

—‘मेरे तो गिरिधर गोपाल दुसरा न कोई’—then only bhakti is possible. When you have an inherent tendency to serve as a servant, then serve the real master, the gracious one. We truly belong to God. All the world inheres in God. It took an intense sadhana for Arjuna to come to a stage where he could demand to see that God who possesses everything. When the *Virata Swarūpa* was shown, he was so totally disoriented as to ask “who are you?” The *Virāta* introduced himself and finally thundered in a booming voice ‘*nimittamātram bhava*’, you be just my medium. This is the beginning of superior devotion—*parā bhakti*.

‘Be just my nimitta’ heralds the losing of all wordly calculations and being a conscious conduit of the Divine. The body is propelled by karma and sustained by karma. So karma is natural. But when you offer that karma to the real swami and through it, feel the glory of the entire universe as the glory of the Lord, then it becomes spiritual. Karma becomes *arcanā*. In this *yajña*, *dehabuddhi* plays the part of *yajamāna*.

“ब्रह्मणः विजये महीयध्वं—glow in the glory of the Brahman’s victory.” That is the Kenopaniṣad statement. You may not know God; you may not see him but you can serve him. If you serve him, the love of God will slowly sprout in you because of his response to your offerings. In olden days, people were committed to serve the king, though they may never have seen him. God is omniscient king; he sees, knows and feels what you are doing. Offer what you are doing to him; serve him. This is karma-yoga. In so doing his magnificence slowly enters into you so much that you will fall in love with God. When love of God enters, karma becomes secondary. The act is not as important as the feeling. When feeling predominates the act also recedes in the background. Therefore, as the *Viṣṇwarūpa*, the Lord says to Arjuna: “Do not become the actor, I am the actor. I have killed Droṇa, Bhiṣma, you are just a *nimitta*.” And Arjuna actually sees in the *Virāta Swarūpa* all that he was supposed to do was already done by the Lord. You are just trying to act, as in a drama, your part of carrying out the Lord’s work. The Lord loves it. He wants to express that love. Just as you acknowledge his

presence, might and power, he wants to acknowledge your presence as a jīva. Here comes the *jīvabuddhi*—जीवबुद्ध्या तु अहं सखा—and it leads to sakhā-bhāva.

Now the relationship has changed. *Dāsa* is meant for serving. But in the jīva level, Paramātmā can only share with you on the same level of consciousness. The *lakṣana* of *sakhā* is ‘sharing.’ That is the second level of bhakti.

What is jīva? As a word it means living—जीवति इति जीवः. In the human context, the Lord gives a definition in the 15th chapter of Bhagavad Gita:

“ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः।

मम एव अंशः—the jīva is only my *aṅśa*.” *Aṅśa* actually means a part. Bhāṣyakāra and others take pains to explain that jīva should not be mistaken to be a separate part like a petal is a part of a flower. Petals can be removed one by one and the entire flower will be eliminated. If jīvās are parts of the Lord then the Lord also will one day cease to be. That is not true. Therefore, the ‘partness’ is merely an appearance as in a reflection. Bhāṣyakāra explains this with two analogies —यथा जलसूर्यः

घटाकाशो— just as in the water the sun is seen reflected or in an empty pot space is enclosed, similarly jīva and Īṣwara appear to be different because of *deha-upadhi*. When water is removed, the reflection of the sun just goes back to the sun. When the pot is broken the space ceases to appear enclosed. Similarly, Bhāṣyakāra says, jīva appears as a limited part of Paramātmā because of *avidyā* adjunct —अविद्याकृतोपाधि—परिच्छिन्नः एकदेशः अंश इव कल्पितः. It is a mere *kalpanā*. This sense of ‘I’ness in the mind is just a *kalpanā* created by the Lord. Just as the reflection of the sun is bright and can throw light, the jīva too is a bright reflection of the Paramātmā. It is conscious, but the consciousness is derived from the Paramātmā. Like a spark from the fire, like a wave in the ocean, jīva and Paramātmā are connected. They are one essence only. Recognise this connection. Live with the conviction : “I am an *aṁśa* of that *ananta*.” This is the sharing. This is the *sakhā-bhāva*. Then you start loving him like the gopās loved Krishna.

When the Lord lifted the Goverdhan mountain to shelter all gopās from the fury of deluge, after

five days of being sheltered by the Lord, the gopās asked whether they could lend a helping hand by supporting the mountain with their sticks. The Lord let them do it. This is bhakti. It is not what you do but what you feel. In being a *nimittamātram* the feeling assumes importance. Only when you get intimate with the Lord you can understand the meaningfulness of the tribulations of life. *Duhkha* and *Vipatta* become sweet because the Lord is giving them. You can understand this difficult thought through an illustration of what happened recently in cricket. When India won the final in England, the Indian captain came out to the ground running and jumped upon the Indian batsman Kaif responsible for the victory. Kaif could not bear the weight and both fell down. The player concerned was undoubtedly injured but was laughing and joyously celebrating with the captain. The hurt from falling down was brushed aside and the joy was paramount. God may fall on you like a thunder bolt. If you are a *sakhā* and celebrate his victory, you will smile. That is the test of your bhakti. Can you accept God like that?

All bhaktas have their share of *duhkha*. Why should Ramakrishna Paramahansa get cancer of the throat? The question is irrelevant to the saint and inapplicable for God. In *sakhā bhakti* everything is a play and in play all is sportingly accepted. Enlightened bhakti should avoid any feeling of hurt from such experiences, then you will know how to participate with God. God wants participation. Scientists say the entire universe is a participatory universe. When you enlarge your vision and go to the depths of creation, you find that existence is one and untouched. Everything else is changing. And you who are participating in this are also the unchanging essence. For such an intense participation you need to practice equanimity as the Lord says in Gita:

“ सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि॥”

It is very difficult to bear both *sukha* and *duhkha* with the same *bhāva*. But if you love God it is possible. It comes naturally. *Duhkha* from the hands of God is *sukha*. They become equal. It is difficult to understand and accept how *sukha* and

duhkha can be the same. Only through the love of God you can understand it. When such a state comes you are ready for the *ātmabuddhi*, the third *bhāva* mentioned in Hanumanji's statement referred to earlier.



Dhyāna



Samvit sadhana is a way to fulfil human life, hence it is open to all. It becomes applicable to all human beings at all levels and at all times. The physical, psychical and spiritual potentials of human life are to be exercised, expressed, developed and used properly. Only then human life will be fulfilled. That has been the vision of all our masters from the earliest ṛṣis who came to establish human culture. In the Bhagavad Gita the Lord says:

“ महर्षयः सप्त पूर्वे चत्वारो मनवस्तथा ।

मद्भावा मानसा जाता येषां लोक इमाः प्रजाः ॥

The fourteen manus, the four kumaras and the seven ṛṣis all manifested from my mind as my expressions to guide human society.” This was the *sankalpa* of the Lord. We all belong to him. The ṛṣis asked us to discover the potentials which nature has

instilled in us. Human beings have been scientifically exploring, understanding and adapting whatever is observed through the senses and is understood through the mind, so that the life standards may become more and more fulfilling. The modern scientific approach is only at a material level. But the ṛṣis laid main stress on the fact that the potentials are not just physical and fulfilment is not just sensual; what you see, experience and enjoy through senses are not enough. Beyond this is *ātmadr̥ṣṭi*. This knowledge of ṛṣis had spread all over the places wherever man had started building up civilisation. Whichever ancient culture you see, whether Chinese, Egyptian, Greek or Roman, they all accepted that unless you know yourself you will not be fulfilled. Know thyself is the edict you find on the Apollo Temple in the ruins of Rome even now. This makes your attempted fulfilment very safe and sure unlike the frustration and fears involved in achieving anything from outside which is not in yourself. You have to achieve yourself only. You need not depend upon anything else. To achieve this also the instruments are all within you. Your mind is enough. “Mind alone is the

cause of bondage and of freedom—मनएव मनुश्यानां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः.’’ You can use that mind either to make yourself blissful or make yourself miserable. Either way you are free to do.

Samvit sadhana is the only way in which man can live freely, move towards freedom and achieve ultimate freedom. There is no other way possible. Therefore, we want this to be understood by every one. Samvit sadhana is the hygiene of the soul, that teaches you how to clean yourself. This is what is covered by the word त्रिमलापहम् from the samvit sadhana śloka we are dealing with. In the Gita śloka quoted earlier for *tanniṣṭhā* and *tatparatā* (chV-17), you would have noticed the word, ‘*jñāna nirdhūta kalmaṣāh*’ which indicates that enlightenment is a cleansing process. To estimate your sadhana, you must have clear idea of what this *kalmaṣa* or *mala* is.

. Samvit sadhana removes three kinds of dirt, त्रिमल अपहः. It is a scriptural concept that in the natural course of anybody’s life, however careful and scientific he may be in his approach and actions, through the passage of time and development

of various phases of life, he accumulates dirt. Even Brahmaji accumulated *rajoguṇa* in the process of creation. Purānās have stories of Brahma-prajāpati committing misdeeds. The finest of machines, as it runs, accumulates dirt; hence the need for cleaning, maintenance and overhauling. Just as metal is hungry for oxygen and in the process corroding takes place, your mind is hungry for sensual pleasures and corruptions set in.

Samvit sadhana gives you the technique of developing safety measures to save you from natural hazards of life. In your life, you have to exercise your senses, you have to freely use your mind, you have to develop intellect and you have also to use *ahamkāra* in an enlightened way. Therefore, safety measures are needed. Samvit sadhana provides you with techniques for these. If you go on doing samvit sadhana comprising śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna, it will not only produce power and manifest your inherent potential but also give you safety, purity and freedom from the shackles.

Our ācāryās have explained what these three types of malās are. They are according to Vedānta,

avidyā, *kāma* and *kārma*. It is in a natural sequence. *Avidyā* is ignorance of *ātmā* *swarūpa*, incapacity to understand oneself. Because of this one is led into inordinate emotions—**काम**. Lord Krishna explains this in the 3rd chapter of Gita:

“ काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ ”

The all-consuming, defiling enemy is *kāma* or *krodha*, arising out of blinding of soul nature. *Avidyā* is a dirt of the *ātman*; while abnormal emotions are the dirt of the mind. Such a mind cannot be normal. When *kāma* is in force, you cannot do justice. With *rāga* and *dveṣa* your mind becomes agitated and all actions flowing from it are defective. This is the *karma malā*. Your activities are in disharmony with your *prakṛti*. This disharmony is the dirt of your karma.

If you follow *samvit sadhana* your activities will not bind or restrict you. Your emotions will be perfectly in harmony with the cosmic tune. Normal emotions are needed for a human being to enjoy life. If you have all sorts of misconceptions,

even normal enjoyment is not possible. There is a saying in sanskrit that a very rich person may not be able to enjoy even a couple of rotis because he has some ailment or other; whereas a poor and hungry man can fill his belly with worse food and also enjoy it. While the poor man has the capacity to enjoy, the rich person has lost that capacity because of greed, worry and tension. So even normal enjoyment is affected if there is *kāma malā*. These malās have to be removed.

In the 3rd chapter of Bhagavad Gita the Lord says:

“ यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।

तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥”

The Lord tells you how to perform karma and with what *bhāva*. No esoteric karma are suggested. The same day-to-day karma that you perform like sweeping, cooking, reading books, studying for examination, working in the office and engaging in business etc. are to be performed. The main qualitative difference is that you do the same karma as a *yajñā*. *Yajñā*

bhāva signifies offering to the Lord. Do not ask what you will get out of it. You will get fruits of your karma but do not think of or ask for it. At the level of your mind, look at every action as an offering to the Lord. Fruits of *yajñā* are hidden but they will materialise. Śraddhā is the key word. Through this *yajñā bhāva* all the *karma malā* is removed. By and by, while doing all actions in the spirit of *yajñā*, you will come to the conclusion that your actions are not *yajñā* but the Lord himself is *yajñā*—‘यज्ञो वै विष्णुः.’ You will realise that it is not that you are offering something to the world system and it will come back as rain, grain, name etc. You will realise that you have crossed that stage and evolved into a higher plane when you look at *yajñā* as the Lord himself. You look at the world system also as the Lord himself. It is blissful. You will feel fortunate in touching it and being part of it. That feeling will remove *kāma malā*. It is the *jīva-dr̥ṣṭi* as seen earlier. You become *sakhā* of the Lord. You become participator in the universal process. This state is described

by the Lord in the 9th chapter of Bhagavad Gita:

“महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।

भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥”

This is the level of bhakti when अनन्य भजन takes place. You are totally oriented towards God. He is there in all your activities. Now it is not activity, it is love, expression of love. It is दैवी प्रकृति. The point to be noted is, this bhajana of the Lord is in the real sense of bhakti. Bhakti is *bhajana-bhāva*. It cannot happen that you have bhakti but you are not doing *bhajana*. Only when you do *bhajana* bhakti will arise.

But what is अनन्य मनसः—undivided devotion? This will be explained through a popular story told in Uttar Pradesh. There was a very simple-minded person. Influenced by local traditions, he became a fervent devotee of Lord Hanuman. He had to fend for himself to find a suitable bride as he had lost his parents. In the absence of elders to help him, he was at a loss to ensure that a good natured bride was located. So he started praying

to Lord Hanuman to fulfil his search for a suitable bride. Lord Hanuman appeared in his dream and expressed his inability to help him as he himself was a *brahmacāri*. He should instead pray to Lord Rama. The person then started praying to Lord Rama and soon got married to a good bride. Soon thereafter it was time for Prayag Kumbha Mela, a mega congregation of millions of devotees on the banks of Ganga. At the insistence of the newly wedded wife, he took her to the Mela. Caught in a sudden upsurge of the crowd, the person lost sight of his wife and could not trace her. Desperately he went into a nearby temple of Śri Rama and prayed to Lord Rama for help. While he was so doing, Hanuman sitting at Rama's feet spoke to him: "Why are you praying to Rama who could not get back his own wife? I only got Sita for him. You should pray to me." He did so and the person's wife was soon located. This state of confusion exists among the gullible. With so many deities, one wonders whom to approach. This is due to lack of proper understanding of what *Īśwara bhajana* is.

If you have carefully read scriptures and received guidance from your Guru, you will not have this confusion. You will understand who is God, who is to be worshipped. There are 33 main aspects of God identified in Vedas. Purānās speak about thirty three crores of Gods. But what is lost sight of is the fact stated by Sayanācārya in his commentary on Vedas:

“एक ईश्वर एव सर्वत्र हूयते ।

in all occasions according to Vedas, whether you worship Varuṇa, Surya, Aṣṭwinikumara or any other God by any other name, only Īṣwara is being worshipped.” He is so infinite, he is so rich that he needs thousands of names. As the Lord says in Gita: “There is no end to my extent, my *vibhutis* are *anant*, only a little is being told. Worship anyone but you will worship me only.” This is what you should understand—ज्ञात्वा भूतादिम् अव्ययम्. The God you are worshipping is the God of the universe, whatever be his form. One creator. That alone is our *upasya*. If this concept is in your heart, then it is अनन्य भजन. Many misguided sadhakas

think that *ananya bhajana* means if your *upasya* is Krishna, then it is only Krishna that you worship and do not even look at other deities. Religious fanaticism and sectarianism have arisen because there is no proper understanding of the non-dual universal nature of God.

Now we go on to the last and most difficult of the three ‘dirts’ –*avidyā mala*. It is a natural obstruction to perception. Let us understand it through an analogy. To see the orb of the sun you must get up at dawn and watch the sunrise. Afterwards the sun becomes too brilliant and you cannot bear to see it. The very lustre of the sun hides the sun. The sun creates a dusty earth and raises clouds from seas. The clouds and dust-storms also cover the sun. Like the dust and the clouds, in the case of *jīva*’s perception, ‘*āvaraṇa*’ and the ‘*vikṣepa*’ hide the Truth which is God, the soul of the soul. Both these are due to *avidyā*. In creating, the Lord is covered by the creation, his own glory. By a deep perception, this *āvaraṇa* has to be removed. How to remove this *avidyā-mala* is indicated in

the following śloka:

“ अर्धं सज्जन संपर्कात् अविद्यायाः विनश्यति ।

चतुर्भागस्तु शास्त्रार्थैः चतुर्भाग स्वयत्नतः ॥ ”

Half of the *avidyā* is removed by association with holy people, *sajjana*. One fourth of *avidyā* will go through a deep study of spiritual scriptures and understanding of ātman, *maya*, mind, *jāgrat*, *swapna*, *susupti*, *vairāgya* etc. through *swadhyāya*. The remaining one-fourth can be eliminated by your own intuition and *sadhana*. *Samvit* *sadhana* thus is nothing but purification of the intellect. The *buddhi* should be pure, unshakeable and subtle. For this you alone have to do *sadhana*, no body else can do it for you.

Buddhi's purity is acquired by walking on the path of virtue and dharma, like Yudhiṣṭira. *Buddhi* will become unflickering *niscāla* only through *bhakti*. *Śuddha* karma guarantees the purity of intellect. If your mind is wavering and is not able to concentrate and focus, then even a *nirmala buddhi* will be unable to take proper decisions. That *cancalatā* of the mind will go only through cohesive force of

love. Bhakti will make *buddhi niscala* and capable of absorption. *Buddhi* also has to be very subtle (*sukṣma*) and sharp to enter into profound concepts and the abstract nature of Truth. How do you make your intellect *sukṣma*? Just as you sharpen your pencil and make it one-pointed, your intellect too can be made one-pointed through practice of dhyāna or *samādhi*. Though this needs a prodigious effort in itself, we are assured that advanced bhakti will make dhyāna-yoga easy and enjoyable.

The Lord graciously assures us in the 10th chapter of Gita:

“ तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।

ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

To those sadhakas who employ the mind constantly in yoga, and do *bhajana* with great love and affection to me, I impart *buddhi-yoga* by which they attain to me.” This is the *buddhi-yoga* referred by Hanumanji as आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहं. “त्वमेवाहं—I am you” is the realised state which is also called ‘attaining to God’ or ‘God entering into you.’ Let us remember that it is only due to his grace that

the Lord himself manifests through *jñānā*, but to allow this, the sadhaka's mind should be in a state of utter poise. That is *dhyāna*. The Lord is ready to give you *amṛta*, but as was told in the first discourse, you should be '*jagrata*' to receive it. The vedic prayer is: "अमृतस्य देव धारणे भूयासं—Lord let us have the capacity to retain that *amṛta*.'" The mythical belief is that the milk of a lioness cannot be kept in an ordinary vessel; you need a golden pot to ensure its freshness and prevent it from turning sour. Do not ask who dares to milk a lioness. But samvit sadhakas do dare to get this *anugraha* from the Lord's maya. But to retain that *anugraha* you need a golden vessel called *samādhi*; a supreme state of mind. "तदा द्रष्ट स्वरूपे अवस्थानं—*samādhi* is the state in which you are established in your Truth," says Pātanjali in his *yoga-sutras*.

You should be very clear in your mind about what meditation is. So much is talked, taught and written about it that there appears to be more material for confusion than for light. At the outset it is better to state what meditation is not. Some teachers of meditation advise sadhakas to keep a picture or a form in front and keep on gazing at

it. Since one can get tired of gazing at the same picture or form, they are changed one after another. This picture-gazing will not lead you to anywhere near the Truth. One very sincere and senior sadhaka told me often that he was getting a lot of joy in meditation. I asked him what precisely was he doing. He said he first starts with visualising me in Mt. Abu. He then visualises going to the banks of Sant Sarovar and mentally visits all the twelve jyotirlingas situated there. Then he picturises himself going to Pushupatinath temple in Nepal and praying there and proceeds to other shrines he has visited. That way he does *mānas-tirthayātrā*. This is fine as a part of the sadhana, better than watching T.V. This smaraṇa is good and will help to purify your mind. But it is not dhyāna. Sadhakas should evolve their own methods for dhyāna, but they should understand the purpose and the principle of dhyāna. Many shadhakas seriously and sincerely try to control their mind thinking that dhyāna means keeping the mind quiet. A quiet mind often goes to sleep and the sadhaka feels good about it. They mistake the state of sleep to be the state of dhyāna. When I was with my Guru, we all śiṣyās used to

sit near him during his discourses. He was such a captivating preacher. His profound discourses were widely popular. Many senior sadhakas used to arrive at the venue much ahead of the scheduled time to occupy front seats. But the moment Maharaj ji started his discourse, they used to lapse into sleep drooping their heads. Sitting besides them, it was an uninspiring sight for us. When we complained to Guruji and suggested that atleast they should not occupy front seats, Shri Maharaj ji said, “They are very senior and sincere sadhakas and they sleep because they are trying to control their mind. Their mind does not know anything else but sleep in the name of quietness.” A quiet mind has to be given direction to enter into the Truth and be absorbed in that and not in darkness. In spite of the so-called modern meditation techniques it is really unfortunate that thousands of seekers remain misguided. To avoid this you should always keep in mind what Mahirishi Pātanjali has to say on meditation. Meditation is a state in which the *ātma-swarūpa* is clearly perceived. There you become just the witness. You are not even the meditator. A proper process of meditation is where you are

slowly led beyond that also, so that there is no effort. This state of seeing without seeing or meditating without meditating can be achieved if you follow the steps. It will be a total transformation. The enduring light, peace and the bliss of the self will be experienced. That is the state you have to try to achieve.

The scriptures talk about the भ्रमरकीटन्यायः as description of dhyāna. It is said a wasp catches a worm, brings it to its muddhole and keeps it there. It does not want to eat it immediately. It goes on dancing around it like tribals. The poor worm is so terrified that it fixes its gaze on the wasp as it circles around it. This constant one-pointed and intense focus on the *bhramara* transforms it in the wasp's image. It develops wings and flies away. The idea is whatever you meditate upon that you become. Sometimes I notice posters of film stars depicting violent scenes pasted on the walls of children's rooms in some houses. The children must be unconsciously meditating upon the posters and the illeffect is obviously felt. We see growing tendencies of glamour, pleasure and violence in children. The transforming power

of meditation should be employed to get positive healthy results.

Bhāṣyakāra Ācārya Śankarā in his grantha *Aparokṣanubhūti* writes what samvit sadhakas should practice:

“ दृष्टिं ज्ञानमयीं कृत्वा पश्येद्ब्रह्ममयं जगत् ।

सा दृष्टिः परमोदारा न नासाग्रावलोकिनी ॥”

God is everywhere, but you can not see him because your *drṣṭi* is not proper. You should acquire enlightened look, ज्ञानमयी दृष्टि to perceive the world as expression of Brahman. Now it is जडमयी दृष्टि. Saying that the *jñāna-drṣṭi* is the noblest one Bhāṣyakāra has a dig at the so-called yogis by adding ‘सा दृष्टिः परमोदारा न नासाग्रावलोकिनी’ meditating on the tip of the nose is not going to help. If you look at the tip of the nose, nose will be seen not God. Gazing at the tip of the nose and all such yoga techniques of meditation are useful initially but one should not be stuck up there. It is necessary to be clear about the purpose. What is it that you are trying to attain through meditation? What are you really meditating upon?

Some place a portrait of the Lord and meditate. But the question is actually do they meditate on the portrait or the Lord? Mostly it is only the portrait because they are uninitiated into the nature of the Lord.

An example of a sadhaka who was initiated into sadhana is very relevant here. He had received a Ganeṣa mantra. He had difficulty in meditating. Whenever he tried to do dhyāna on Lord Ganeṣa, his mind wandered all over the potbelly of Ganeṣa and down to the little mouse he rides on. His mind was troubled by the question how that poor little mouse could bear the weight of the heavy elephant-headed Ganeṣa. “Would not the little mouse get crushed under his weight”, he asked me? To avoid such pitfalls you should read scriptures and through satsaṅgas understand the symbolism behind the forms of deities and the *mudras* in their hands, their *vāhanās* etc.

Now coming to what meditation really is, Ācāryā Śankarā says, it is of four kinds. The basic distinction is between two types—सविकल्प with attributes and—निर्विकल्प without attributes. Each is further

distinguished by two kinds. The *savikalpa* meditation is based either on sound or form—नाम or रूप. These are the two available representations in all creation—नामरूपात्मकं जगत्. Either you use a name or a form. Both name and form can serve to express something deep and profound. You choose either form symbol or sound symbol that appeals to you, on which you can meditate and go deeper behind the symbolism. Usually your Guru will select the name or form. These two respectively are called दृश्यानुविद्ध or शब्दानुविद्ध.

Though the form symbol is kept in front, what that form symbol signifies is meditated upon. If you choose Śiva's form you see the *candrakalā*, *Ganga pravāha*, *nāgabhūṣana*, *neelakanṭha*, embodiment of compassion *karuṇamūrti*, *cinmayamūrti* etc. After all the descriptions of various aspects of the Lord are meditated upon according to the dhyāna śloka, one idea will always be paramount—*satcidānanda-mūrti*. Actually it is a form of consciousness. The aspects of *caitanya* are depicted by the various *mudrās* of the form. So the *rūpa-mudrā* is the form of the Lord, while *śabda-mudrā* is the mantra of the Lord.

Usually when you are initiated into meditation by your Guru, a mantra is given along with a *vigraha* or a *yantra*. It has deep implications. If with utmost faith and love you meditate upon it, the *vigraha* will reveal its *swarūpa* to you. You are not meditating upon a stone in the form of a *linga* or an idol but you are contacting *satcidānandarūpa*. Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devi, Gaṇeśa etc. are all the divine forms of the one and only Lord *satcidānanda mūrty*. This understanding in your outlook should be there. Thereafter gradually meditation will yield results.

Ramakrishna Paramahansa was meditating upon a terrible form of Kali Māta, holding in her hands a sword and a severed head. But to the saint she was pure *satcidānanda swarūpiṇi*. He ultimately realised her. But he had to endure much and try for a long time. You should not be under misconception that in a short time meditation will yield results. Even after years of intense and extraordinary efforts yielded no results, Śri Ramakrishna was ready to cut off his head. The mother manifested herself and fulfilled him. Later on devotees wanted to know what was revealed to him and what the

experience was. He merely said, “I was lost in an ocean of light.”

Savikalpa meditation will lead you to the *swarūpa* of the Lord. Your *upāśya devatā* and your *upasana* process should be based on authority of *śāstra*. You cannot create your own *upāśya* as some groups or cults do. Some people place a black dot in front and meditate thereupon. Others advise placing a red light for meditation. Actually all these outer things are to be transcended. *Jñānamayī-dr̥ṣṭi* will reveal the Truth. It depends upon the intensity of your emotions, feelings, *bhakti* and understanding.

Gradually and slowly you will overcome the need to have a sound; a sound of mantra or *nāda* of ॐ. It will gradually fade into vibrant silence; the voice of your soul. Then it goes into *nirvikalpa*. Some *sadhakas* who are equipped for it can directly take to the *nirvikalpa* stage. *Ācāryā Śankarā* describes it like this:

‘ स्वानुभूति रसावेशात् दृश्यशब्दानपेक्षितुः ।

निर्विकल्प समाधिस्यात् निवातस्थित दीपवत् ॥”

When you meditate upon a particular sound symbol

or a form symbol and have that experience then the joyous rapport (rasā) of that experience, will take you beyond the need of that sound symbol (mantra) or the form symbol (rūpa). The mind will transcend the sound and the form. Then it will be absolute stillness. There is no seeing. There is no hearing; only the selfness. This is *nirvikalpa*.

Nirvikalpa dhyāna again is of two types; one outward (बाह्य) and the other inward (अंतरः). *Nirvikalpa* dhyāna internal is reflected in the heart. That *nirvikalpa swarūpa* of the Lord is seen in the heart as the ātman. *Nirvikalpa* dhyāna external can be seen outside in any object or Nature's element. Usually *aṣṭamūrty* upasana is taken up for this. When you see a tree, you do not relate to it as a tree. You perceive the entire cosmic power in it. If you have the sensitivity and aesthetic sense you will perceive cosmic reality in a tree or flower. Otherwise it will simply be gazing at something colourful or at the best an aesthetic appreciation of Nature's beauty. Therefore, we stress upon स्व अनुभूति रस आवेश. This means your meditation should produce some delight. That delight will lead to light. The *rasānūbhūti*, artistic approach, sensitivity

and asethetic sense should be there. Simply closing the eyes is not enough. Facial impressions of some sadhakas in meditation give a picture of their being in pain. You should be totally relaxed like a baby asleep in the lap of the mother.

Rasa āveśa will be pronounced, when you do *upekṣa* of or overlook the *dṛṣya* and *śabda* and get immersed in experiencing *aham*. *Nirvikalpa śthiti* will emerge. What happens in it cannot be told or explained. But the scriptures assure you, go on trying you will get to that absolute state of the flame kept in windless place. You will have experience of the unbroken effulgence of consciousness. *Avidyā* will be gone. Your heart will be enlightened. Even afterwards, when you open your eyes and see the forms, they will be forms of light, like waves in ocean. The waves seem to have form but are just water, water and water. The same way when you see the world-forms, they all will be *caitanya*, *caitanya* and *caitanya*; *sat*, *sat* and *sat*.

Bhāṣyakāra proceeds to says:

“सन्मात्रान् नामरूप पृथक्कृतिः कस्मिंश्चित्त्वस्तुनिः ।”

Externally also you can take an object and go into

a *nirvikalpa* state if you practice the transcendence of the idea of *nāma-rūpa*. सन्मात्रान् नामरूप पृथक्कृतिः— separate *nāma-rūpa* and just feel the pure सत्—existence there.

That is what āgamās call शांभवि मुद्रा. You look at a thing but you are not looking at it; you are looking at your Self. It will appear as if it is a vacant look; but it is indeed a very vibrant look. Of course, the eye-lids should not flicker or fall. Some sadhakas practice त्राटक. It is not to be mistaken as a physical exercise. It is a practice at the mental level. Let the mind catch hold of the pure substance, the pure essence that is appearing as the form in view. This is what is called the external *nirvikalpa dhyāna*.

If you try intelligently and consistently to practice any of the four types of dhyāna, it will slowly bring into you the capacity to cognise and feel the glory of the *ātmaswarūpa* and the glory of the Lord everywhere. All ācāryās assure us:

“सतुदीर्घकाल नैरन्तर्य सत्कार आसेवितो भवति दृढभूमिः।”

Long time practice of meditation, which is continuous

and done with great reverence and giving utmost value to it, will give you rich dividends, make your life dynamic and remove all the cobwebs from your mind. You will live in Bliss.







Spiritual disciplines recommended by Vedānta for realisation of the ever-lasting divine nature of one's own Soul (atman) have been practised by illustrious persons over countless centuries in the past history of India. Their experience and wisdom have been carefully handed over to us through authentic literature.

This is the basis of Samvit Sadhana,
the Path of Light presented in this book.

The author, belonging to the ancient unbroken monistic tradition of vedānta explains here the simple steps for self-fulfilment and unravels the deep implications of "Be Absorbed in That –*Tanmayo Bhavet* ", the Upaniṣadic motto of Samvit Sadhanayana founded by him.

