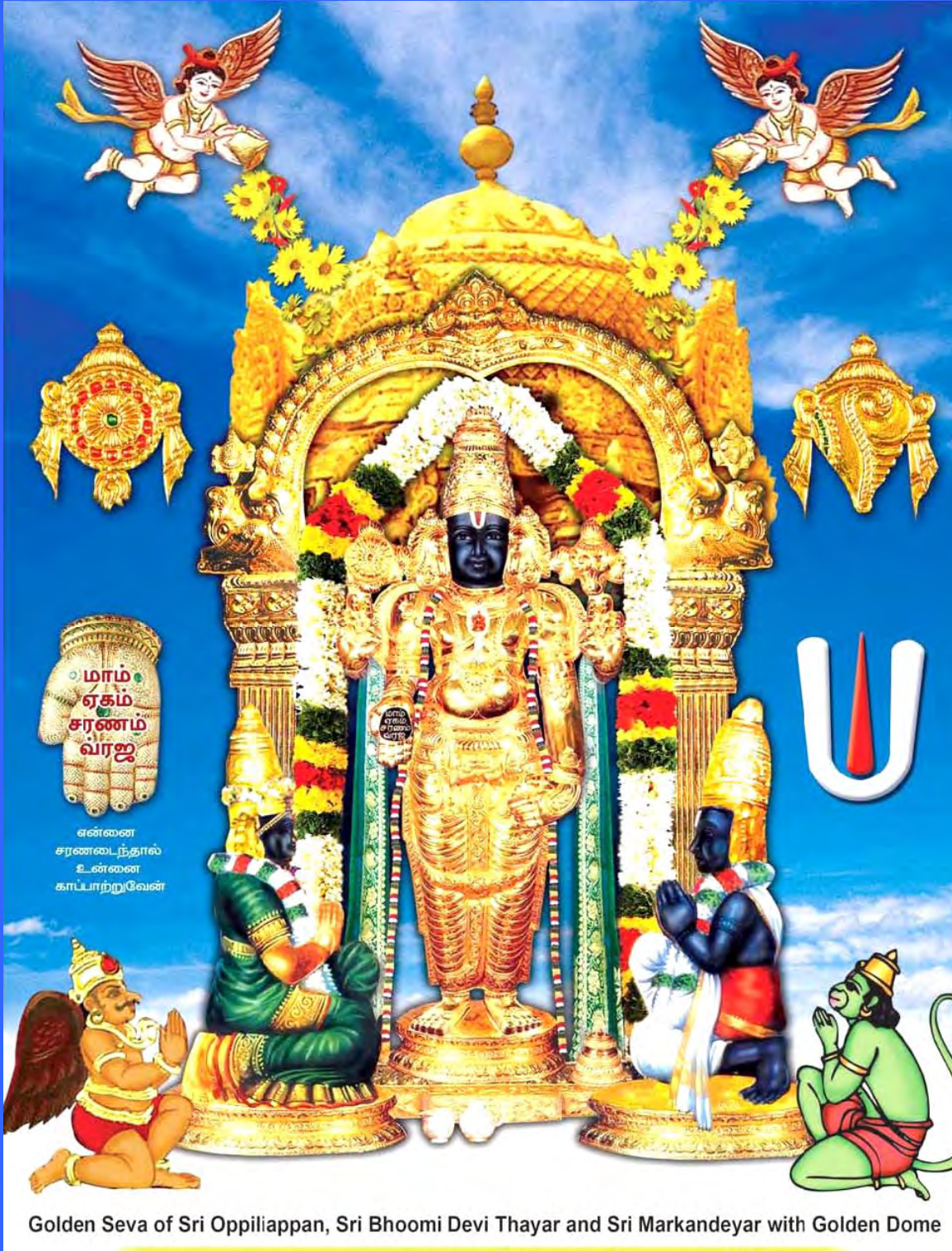


swAmi deSikan's chillaRai rahasyangal rahasyaratnvali hrdayam



Golden Seva of Sri Oppiliappan, Sri Bhoomi Devi Thayar and Sri Markandeyar with Golden Dome

'deSika darSana durantara'
VaikuNThavAsi pudukkOTTai
U.Ve.SrI A.SrInivAsarAghavAcchAr swAmy

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14. RAHASYARATNAVALI HRIDAYAM

THE HEART OF GEM-NECKLACE OF RAHASYAS

तत्त्वो यायपुमर्णेषु अध्यात्माविदां विभावनीयेषु ।
स्वयमेव सूचयामो रहस्यरत्नावलीहृदयम् ॥

We shall ourselves explain the Heart of the Rahasya Ratnavali with reference to the Realities, Means and Goal as determined by the learned in Philosophical Literature.

The first verse (in Tamil of Rahasya-Ratnavali) describes the firm conviction of the Mumukshu (Seeker after Release) that he is free from all the burden (of protecting himself) as he has surrendered it at the feet of The Universal Ruler (Sarvesvara) in accordance with the teachings of the good Acharya.

In the verse, the words 'the only Refuge' indicate that the Consort of Lakshmi, Who alone is, in respect of a particular individual, the Supreme Goal of Attainment (Parama Prapya), is also Siddhopaaya—the Means of Attainment that is already existent; and His favour is to be earned by a mere gesture (as it were) of the means.

The following texts give expression to the same idea:

¹"The multitude of all Jivas is called 'Naaraas. Since Bhagavan is the object to be attained by them and is also the means (upaaya) for attaining Him, He is known as Narayana."

"'Naara' means the multitude of Jivas who are indicated by the word 'Nara'.

¹"I am the goal to be attained by them and I am also the Means for that attainment. Therefore I am called Narayana by the Seers."

²"It is truly affirmed that Vishnu is the only Refuge for those fallen in the Ocean of Samsara which is the source of great misery."

³"All beings, including Brahma (the four-faced God), are inauspicious since they are the product of karma—To him who knows this and has kept himself away from them, Vasudeva is the supreme resort.

1. Padmottara.

3. Bhagavatam, 11.19.18.

2. Padmottara.

4"Those Brahmins, who have mastered the Vedas and those persons who are proficient in the knowledge of the Supreme Self, declare that Krishna, the Paramatma is the ever-existing Means, Sanatana Dharma."

5"Men of learning call Vishnu as the eternal means of attainment and the goal of endeavour. If a person meditates upon Him, Who is also known by the name of 'Yagna', he never sinks into distress."

6"The feet of our Lord, the Benefactor, Who lies on the Serpent-couch—His feet alone are the means for us."

The words 'who have realised' (in the Tamil verse) refer to those specific individuals who are awake (to the Truth) and so enlightened. 'The awakened Souls' are those qualified persons who have realised the Realities so perfectly that they can impart knowledge about them to men of Sattvic temperament in such a manner that nothing more is left to be learnt by the latter. They teach six things—five things stated explicitly in the following text and the sixth, viz. the specific relationship, which is implicit and denoted by the word 'and' ('ca' in the sloka).

7 "(1) The nature of the End to be attained, viz. Brahman; (2) the nature of the individual self, who is the seeker of the attainment; (3) the means of attainment or upaaya; (4) the fruit resulting from it; and (5) so also the hindrances to the attainment of Brahman— all the Vedas with their Itihasas and Puranas speak of these five."

(1) Brahman, that is to be attained, is Narayana, Who is the One cause of all effects and Whose essential nature is defined by attributes like being truth, being knowledge and so on. He is the great ocean of auspicious qualities like intelligence and strength; He is the one Master for whose purposes alone the two kinds of Vibhootis⁸ – or Wealth, viz. Suddha and Asuddha, (Pure and Impure) exist. He is the Supreme Soul that pervades all things, as stated by the following verse: ⁹"Thou art, indeed, the one Atma of all the worlds." He has a celestial and transcendental form of auspicious nature, which is of five kinds¹⁰ – Para, Vyooha and the like. He is with Lakshmi in all conditions and is the

4. Mahabharata, Aranya, 71.123

5. Vishnu Dharma, 72.4.

6. Tiruvaimozhi, 5.10.11

7. Haarita Samhita.

8. z]XnzP

9. Tiruvaimozhi 8.1.5

10. पर, व्यूह, विभव, अन्तर्यामी and अर्चा.

Protector of all worlds. He has spontaneous love for those that seek refuge in Him. He is the object of unexcelled enjoyment in all forms and in all ways. That is the object of attainment, Narayana.

The same is vouchsafed by the following slokas:

¹¹ "The world came into existence from the will of Vishnu and it is altogether existent therein. He is the cause of the preservation and destruction of this world and He Himslef is the world."

¹² "Krishna alone is the cause, indeed, of the creation and destruction of the worlds. All the beings in the world, moving and non-moving, exist for the purpose of Sri Krishna."

(2) The individual soul (Pratyagatma), who is to attain Brahman, is the Jiva who is different from the body, the sense-organs and the like. He is knowledge and bliss in his essential nature. He is self-luminous and shines for himself. He is atomic in size and has intelligence and happiness as qualities. The Jiva exists, by nature, solely for the purpose of another, viz. Paramatma; and his essential nature, continuance and activities are dependent upon that other; he is entitled for the full and perfect enjoyment of Bhagavan.

He seeks service which will be in consonance with his essential nature and which will be according to his desire.

The following slokas may be cited as the authority on the points:

¹³ "The Jiva is neither god nor man, neither beast, nor tree; these differences O King!, are due to Karma."

¹⁴ "The soul is neither god, nor man, nor beast, nor tree. His essential nature is knowledge and bliss. He is entirely dependent on the Paramatma and exists solely for His purpose".

(3) The Means of attainment (¹praaptyupaaya) is that which is laid down by the Sastras as the unfailing means to be adopted by the Jiva out of his own choice for the purpose of crossing the ocean of samsara and reaching the other shore. This is of two kinds (i) Siddha (that which is already existent) and Saadhya (that which is to be performed).

(i) ²The Siddhopaaya or the Means that is already existent is the consort of Lakshmi. His essential nature and qualities are eternally

11. Vishnu Purana, 1.1.31.

12. Mahabharata, Sabha, 38.26

13. Vishnu Purana, 2.13.98

14.

1 प्राप्युपाय

2. सिद्धोपायम्

existent. As He is omniscient, He is able to know what is good for others; since He is omnipotent, he is capable of removing all the undesirable things that confront them. Again He is ever intent on averting the undesirable things of others, because He is, by nature, a well-disposed friend of all beings. He is only looking for an opportunity to act and extend His protecting hand, as the following text states:-

³"Though Bhagavan, Who is the Ruler of the Universe, is both omniscient and compassionate. He expects a prayer for protection from the Jiva, since He has to observe the rule of the world (Samsara)."

His favour can be won by the mere pretext (of a means). He does not stand in need of a co-operator in carrying out what He has willed. He acts for His own benefit and it is in Him that the will for the direct and immediate conferment of Moksha (Salvation) lies.

(ii) ⁴'Saadhyopaaya' is the means that is ordained (by the Sastras)- the means that the Jiva must take to. The means that one should adopt for the attainment of Moksha is of two kinds-(a) Bhakti and (b) Prapatti.

(a) The Saadhyopaaya or the means known as ⁵Bhakti is to be practised by a person with a mind that has been purified by the practice of Karma-yoga and Jnana-yoga. This is also known by the name of ⁶Ashtaanga-yoga-the Yoga with ⁷eight auxiliaries. This can be practised only by those who are qualified by their birth in the (first three) castes. It has for its auxiliaries the strict observance of the rites and duties prescribed (by the Sastras) for the different castes and stages of life (Varnas and Ashramas). Bhaktiyoga is difficult to perform and it is in the form of a continuous stream of knowledge which is of the nature of uninterrupted memory like oil streaming down continuously. It grows in intensity day by day as a result of the daily practice and continues to be performed till the last departure (of the soul from the body). Bhaktiyoga is capable of removing also the virtues and sins that have not begun to yield their fruits. It has as an auxiliary viz. the specific remembrance of God

3. Lakshmi Tantra 17-78

4. साधोपाय

5. भक्ति

6. अष्टाङ्गयोग

7. दम, निषम, आसन, प्राणायाम, प्रत्याहार, धारणा, ध्यान, and समाधि are the eight Angas.

at the last moment—a remembrance, which has to be effected by one's own effort.

- (b) The Saadhyopaaya (means to be adopted) known as Prapatti is accomplished by a person whose mind is purified by intense faith and the like ⁸(Mahaa-visvaasa-adi) in God. This Upaya goes by the name of ⁹Shadanga-yoga—the Yoga with six-fold auxiliaries. All persons are qualified to take to this Upaya, provided they are incompetent to adopt other means. The intention to do what is pleasing to the Lord and the like ¹⁰(Aanukoolya-sankalpa-adi) are the five auxiliaries to this Prapatti. It is easy to perform and is in the form of surrender of the burden of protection which is to be done only once along with the prayer (for protection). It does not require to be intensified in any manner, and therefore till the falling of the last body nothing more remains to be done in the form of a re-adoption of the means and the like. It has the power to remove even those Karmas that have begun to yield their fruit. Prapatti does not stand in need of the final remembrance to be made by one's own effort.

The statement, with reference to the Saadhyopa that it is ¹¹Anupaaya (i.e. it is of the nature of not being a means) and the like, is based on the fact of its being dependent on the will of Paramatma.

(4) The fruit (Phala) here is the service which is not limited by time, space or form—service which emerges from the Bliss of the full and perfect enjoyment of Bhagavan. This is preceded by several auxiliaries as detailed below: Since the Prapanna has adopted, in accordance with his competence, a means to win the favour of Paramatma, he becomes entitled to a privilege. Because of this privilege, the subsequent sins (those committed in the post-Prapatti

8. महाविश्वास आदि

9. षडङ्गयोग

10. (i) आनुकूल्यसङ्कल्प (ii) प्रातिकूल्यवर्जन (iii) महाविश्वास (iv) गोप्तृत्वकरण (v) कार्यण्य (vi) आत्मनिर्ज्ञेय

(1) Intention to do what is pleasing to the Lord, (2) avoidance of whatever is displeasing to Him, (3) intense faith that He will afford protection, (4) begging His protection, (5) feeling of being helpless, and (6) the surrender of the Self.

11 अनूपायत्वव्यपदेश

period) do not affect him and the previous sins also (those that had been committed before the performance of Prapatti) are destroyed. (When the final moment arrives), the Prapanna gets separated from the gross body and begins in his upward flight. He journeys along the shining path beginning with the Archis or Fire escorted by the ¹²Aativahikaas (Escorting Angels) and goes beyond the sphere of the Material Universe composed of the triple qualities. There he sheds the subtle body and enters the World of Eternal Splendour beyond Prakriti. His essential nature becomes manifest and he becomes possessed of the ¹³eight qualities beginning with that of being free from sin (Apahatapaapmatva). Then he attains the Bliss of the full and perfect enjoyment of Bhagavan which finds its fruition in the services he renders to Bhagavan—services which or not limited by space, time or form.

All that follows is the fruit referred to in this context.

(5) *The hindrance to the attainment (of Brahman) is:—* the continuous chain of the Will of the Lord to punish as well as the hosts of its cause and effect which have their origin in the stream of acts of commission (of what is prohibited) and omission (of what is prescribed) (by the person in bondage) – the stream which flows from beginningless time according to the popular maxim of ¹'Seed and Sprout', and which continues till the attainment of Salvation. The fruit of this Will of God to punish cannot be averted by any one unless one makes proper expiation for one's sins. A knowledge of the hindrance can be had only from the Scriptures and one cannot know the time when a particular sin would become mature and yield its fruit. All beings beginning from Brahma, the four-faced Creator (at the top) and ending with the tiny of grass (at the bottom) are under its sway and its flow is capricious, and

12. आतिवाहिका

13. The eight qualities are: being devoid of sin, being free from old age, free from death, free from hunger and free from thirst and having desires that are true, and having a will that is irresistible.

अपहतापाप्मा, निवृत्तः, विमृत्युः, निमोक्तः, निविच्छसः, अविषासः, सत्यकामः, सत्यसङ्कल्पः ॥

1. बीजाङ्कुरन्याय The maxim of 'Seed and Sprout'— It takes its origin from the relation of mutual causation which subsists between seed and sprout, (seed being the cause of sprout, which in its turn is the cause of seed); and is used in those cases where two things stand to each other in the relation of both cause and effect.

not uniform. It is the cause of excessively frightful Naraka and other excruciating miseries coming in succession one after the other. It is going on revolving like a wheel till the attainment of Salvation when it stops once for all.

(6) The relationship here is the contact that Jiva, the seeker of attainment has with Paramatma, the Object of attainment. This relationship is classified in diverse ways by authoritative Texts under the heads of general or specific, as being supported, being controlled, being without having separate existence, being sesha (or existing for the purpose of another being a body, being the object of pervasion, being the object of protection, being a servant, being an object of enjoyment and being an enjoyer.

The term '*The Enlightened*' in the verse denotes those who, through the eye of Sastras, have a clear vision of the six things that are dealt with by the Sastras connected with Salvation— the six things, viz. (1) Brahman, the Object of attainment, (2) Jiva, the seeker of attainment, (3) the Means of attainment, (4) Attainment, (5) the Hindrances to the attainment, and (6) the relationship that exists between the Jivatma and the Paramatma.

The prose order of the words in the verse is: '*As the Enlightened taught us that there is only one Refuge*'; and the meaning is: Men of learning, for whom Bhagavan is the only goal, impart instruction to us who are helpless without the Means that is already existent and self-established (i.e. Siddhopaaya).

Here '*Men of learning*' are those that are capable of instructing us on all the things that need be known – instructing us who approach them in the proper way in all humility and with due reverence. From such teachers the Sastras declare: ²"Learn this (from men of learning) by bowing to them, placing your doubts before them, and rendering service to them. Being pleased, those men, who are learned and who have realised the Truth, will teach you that."

³"They are men who are contented with what they have, who are keen on being true, straightforward and compassionate, who have controlled their sense-organs and who have subdued their anger. Render service to such learned men and learn from them by placing your doubts before them."

⁴ "You should seek the protection of Vishnu, who is fit to be resorted to by all, who is easy of approach, who can never go wrong, who has no one to compare with and who removes the suffering of those that perform Prapatti (at His feet)."

Thus they will teach us, who have no other refuge, about the Siddhopaaya or the Already-Existent-Means, which is ready to be propitiated by the Saadhyopaaya or the Means to be adopted, which, latter by nature, is unfailing. The suggestion is that the performance of the specific means in the form of Self-surrender (Saranagati) to please Bhagavan is effected in the following manner: 'I cannot save myself; nor is there anyone else that can protect me; Thou shouldst Thyself protect me without expecting any further action on my part hereafter.'

This phrase in the verse may be interpreted in a different way also as follows: the whole clause— 'the Enlightened who taught that there is only one Refuge' may be taken as an attribute qualifying 'Acharyas'. Then the word 'taught' will mean — 'when they placed us at the feet of the Lord who belonged to them and for whom there was no other saviour. This is in line with the idea of the following texts:

⁵ "I have been made Thy responsibility by my Acharyas noted for their compassion."

⁶ "All that I cannot maintain, and all that I cannot abandon,—My self as well as everything that belongs to me all that is offered by me at Thy auspicious lotus-feet."

'By compassion' means 'by Thy Supreme Mercy which does not expect any recompense' — as described by the following texts:

⁷ "The crow fell on the ground (at the feet of Rama) and sought protection. Rama, the saviour and the descendent of King Kakutstha, out of Mercy, saved it, though it deserved punishment with death (for its offence)."

⁸ "By Thy Compassion alone, make me Thine own."

Or it may be taken to mean '*by the Mercy of Tiru or Lakshmi*' — by the unceasing Mercy of the Universal Mother, Lakshmi, who makes Her loving consort take interest in those who seek refuge and resort to

5. Sri Rangaraja Stava, 2.102.

7. Ramayana—Sundara, 38.34.

6.

8. Stotra Ratna, 48

Him for protection so that their desires may be realised without any delay or extra strain.

Here is a sloka which says the same thing:

⁹ "If people take refuge in Her (Lakshmi) and meditate on Her, they surely cross this Ocean of (threefold) qualities i.e. Samsara, with ease and in no time—an Ocean, difficult to cross (otherwise)."

The word, – (He) Who accepted (us) the same day as the object of protection' – shows that the Lord accepted the burden (of our protection) as soon as we surrendered it and He did it in such a way that nothing more remained to be done by us to save ourselves.

Here are some slokas which describe the nature of Bhagavan to that effect: Bhagavan says:

¹⁰ "With the help of this Mantra alone a person should surrender his Atma to me. Once he has entrusted the burden of protection to me he becomes one that has discharged his duty."

¹¹ "A person might have led a life of vice before, he might have lived upon anything that he came across indiscriminately, he might have been an ungrateful person and even a dis-believer in God. But if he resorts, with devotion, to Narayana, the Primaeval Lord will make him faultless, because of the superior power of Paramatma (who transforms him straightway).

(Vibhishana prayed for protection and cried aloud: ¹² "Having given up my sons and my wife, I am seeking refuge in Rama," (Hearing those words, Rama turned to Sugriva and said.)– ¹³ "O Lord of monkeys! Protection has been already vouchsafed to him by me. Fetch him at once."

The words – 'Our Lord, the Consort of Lakshmi, Who resides on Mount Hastigiri' – mean the Lord, Who has the qualities of amiability, easy accessibility, love and mastership – qualities, essential for affording protection to those that seek refuge in him. About this Lord, Hastigiri Mahatmya declares:

¹⁴ "On the northern bank of the River Vegavati, in the tower Punyakoti, by name, Hari is seen even today, granting boons, by Himself, to all beings."

9. Sattvata Samhita, 12.84.

10. Saatyaki Tantra.

11. Sattvata Samhita, 16–23.

12. Ramayana-Yuddha, 17.14.

13. Ramayana-Yuddha, 18.33.

14. Hastigiri Mahatmyam. 15.16.

Speaking of these qualities, Nammalvar sings:

¹⁵"O Lord of unparalleled fame (for qualities)! Master of the three worlds! Lord, my Ruler!"

That the Lord is eager to bestow at once Sri Vaikuntha on those who resort to Him, and is waiting only for a prayer for portection; that He has come down to this material world and is ready to confer the fruit. 'If we agree, even today He will take us to His feet' – these words declare that when we fix our minds on the Highest Goal (Parama purushartha) and make a prayer, the same moment the Lord is ready to take us away from this frightful world to the Shining World of Eternal Splendour and bestow on us His feet difficult to attain.

The following texts describe the prayer here mentioned:

¹⁶"Where am I possessed of a highly wicked intellect, and where is the capacity in me to know and seek what is beneficial to me? Therefore, O God of Gods! Decide Thyself what is beneficial to me and bestow it on me, O Consort of Sri!"

¹⁷"In Thee have I sought refuge: Thy own vassal I am; No other protector have I. Therefore accept me at once as Thy servant and place me at Thy lotus–feet."

'No more births we shall have' – The meaning of these words is: as stated in the verse beginning with the words,¹⁸ "giving up the pleasures derived from seeing and hearing," we have learnt to distinguish the superior ends from the inferior, and have given up wealth (aisvarya) and Self-realisation (kaivalya) as they are inferior. Then, because of our love for a life in a holy place sanctified by the presence of Bhagavan in the form of consecrated idol or because of love for service to God here, we may not be eager to get away from this earth and begin to think, ¹⁹"What is the harm if we stay and go about in this world," (provided such a desire is realised)? But the Lord will destroy by some means even the prarabdha-karma (sins that have begun to yield fruit) and will surely save us. He will not let us have another birth hereafter.

The following passages also are to the same effect:

²⁰ "On all those that seek His feet which are the refuge, the Lord, at their death, will confer Vaikuntha."

15. Tiruvaimozhi, 6,10,10.

16. Jitanta, 1.18.

17.

18. Tiruvoimozhi, 4.9.10.

19. Tiruvoimozhi, 8.10.4

20. Tiruvaimozhi, 9.10.5.

21 "O Arjuna! Once they abandon the body, they will have no more births again. Me they do attain."

22 "The Lord does not get depleted if we take (gifts) from Him; nay, all that we desire He will grant."

"Whatever comes, it is only good for us"—these words state that nothing will stand in the way of the realisation of our desires and that till the fall of our body we must consider that whatever may come to us, all that is only for our pleasure and benefit, and feel happy over it. For if things, that are pleasing, come to us before we give up this body, they are the result of the previous punya of ours, and by enjoying them we become free from the shackles of punya (which will keep us tied to Svarga) as the following sloka says— "The virtues or punya get exhausted by the enjoyment of pleasure." If unpleasant things come, as a result of the previous sins that have begun to operate, we will accept them and gladly undergo the suffering; and thereby the sting is taken away from the sins. This must be our feeling as the following sloka states:

23—"Hari bestows sufferings upon his devotees, only because of His beneficent nature even as a father acts for the benefit of his son when he treats a wound in the latter's body with an instrument, acid or even by cauterization."

"Whom I wish to bless, I take away from him his prized possessions"—Bhagavan says.

Again by his life here, his desire for rendering service to God will not get a set-back as the following sloka points out:

24 "Even if a man should reach a mountain of gems, he brings with him only as much of gems as he can carry, (but not the entire mountain;) in the same way a devotee takes from Krishna only those boons which he can digest but not all that Krishna can give (for, Krishna's gifts are inexhaustible)".

25. "In the case of those who meditate upon Bhagavan with absolute and whole-hearted devotion, He, by His mere will, drenches with the nectar of Bliss all the time set apart for meditation till the moment of its fruition."

21. Bhagavad Gita, 4.9

22. Tiruvaimozhi, 4.9.5.

23. Bhagavata

24.

25.

Our Acharyas reiterate the same idea:

26. "O Lord Varada! In whatever manner or measure, Thou dost bestow on me things, pleasant or otherwise, it is meet that I should accept and experience them without demur or protest; for I have completely surrendered my burden to Thee, (though I was a different person before)."

'There is no burden for us': The meaning of this sentence is—Bhagavan, the Universal Master, who is omniscient, omnipotent and all-merciful, has taken upon Himself the burden of our protection. He makes arrangements for the upkeep of our body in accordance with our karma, and works out the redemption of our soul in consonance with sublime compassion which is natural to Him. He will not allow us to lapse into deliberate commission of wrongs, even as the following slokas affirm:

27. "If one bows to Bhagavan Janardana, one will never perish."

²⁸—Nothing inauspicious will ever befall the devotees of Vasudeva."

²⁸ "Persons who have done many Punyas become devotees of Paramatma; and in them there is no anger, no jealousy, no covetousness, nor vile thoughts."

If mistakes should still recur in us, Bhagavan will somehow bring about their removal. Since we know the distinguishing features of the Superior and Inferior Tattvas or Realities, since we are fully aware of the fact that all our actions are being controlled by another (i.e. Paramatma), since we are well acquainted with the characteristic marks of persons who have something to fall back upon (like knowledge or capacity) and of those who are absolutely destitute, (and since we know we belong to the latter class), we have surrendered our burden at the feet of Bhagavan. Therefore nothing more remains to be done by us hereafter for the redemption of our soul.

By the use of the plural number in the words 'for us' and 'we shall no more be born' it is indicated that the redemption of those also that are connected with us is vouchsafed by Bhagavan (over and above our own redemption).

26.

27.

28. Bharata-Anusasana, 254.135

29. Ibid 254. 137

Here is a sloka to the same effect:

¹ "Whether Jiva be a beast, or a man, or a bird—those, who have taken resort to Vishnu-Bhaktas, attain to the Superior world of Vishnu by virtue of this dependence alone."

1 One Jiva or Atma is not the protector of another Jiva.

This means that among the Chetanas Souls, who are all subservient, no one can be the independent protector either of himself or of others. The same idea is expressed in the following texts:

² "A dehi (or Soul) is by himself like a ball of clay and is subservient (to another). When he is incapable of saving even himself, how can he be the protector of another?"

³ "The enlightened do not worship Brahma, Rudra, and other gods spoken of in the Sastras, since the fruit (that can be had from them) is only limited (trifling)."

"Brahma, Rudra and all the other hosts of gods are impure as they are devoid of the knowledge that nothing except the Lord is worth our attention. They stand condemned because of the feeling that they are independent (while they are not so)."

"O Best of men, All others who are objects of thoughts of the mind are impure; because, all of them – gods and the like – have their origin in Karma (have birth and death due to Karma)."

⁴ "All the living beings beginning with Brahma and ending with the tiny grass, that are situate in this world are under the control of Samsara (world) which originates from Karma."

⁵ "For this reason those gods are of no use in meditation for those that wish to meditate. They are themselves immersed in Avidya (Nescience) and are in the grip of Samsara."

"They may become possessed of knowledge later on. Since knowledge is not innate in them and since it comes to them also from others, they are of no use in meditation."

⁶ "All beings have been bound with strings by the Paramatma for His own sport. They are to be released only by Him and others cannot set them free."

1. Sandilya Smriti, 1.15

2. Bharatam-Santi Parva: 294-16.

3. Bharata-Santi : 350-36.

4. Vishnudharma: 104-23-25.

5.

6.

2. Sriman Narayana is the only One Who is the protector of all Jivas.

⁷ "To explain: Lord of Sri! Narayana! Master! I have no other means (of saving myself); I seek refuge at Thy two feet. I am Thine alone, Achyuta!"

⁸ "They, who seek refuge in me, cross this Maya, Prakriti."

⁹ "One should seek refuge in that Primeval Parama Purusha, from whom all the activities (of the world) from ancient times have emanated."

¹⁰ O Arjuna! Seek refuge in Him alone in every way and by all means. By His grace you will get supreme tranquility and the ever-existing place."

¹¹ "To those who are immersed in the sea of samsara and whose minds are overcome by the objects of senses, there is no other source of relief except the boat in the form of Vishnu."

¹² "Wise men seek refuge in Thee alone and thereby cross the frightful sea of samsara which is the receptacle of endless misery."

¹³ "Place me at once before Rama who is the protector of all worlds and who is sublime by nature."

As stated in these texts with reference to all the Jivas, whether they have any equipment or bereft of all help, Narayana alone brings about the removal of disagreeable things and the attainment of desires; Narayana – Who is possessed of a Consort, of a form, of a unique relationship (with us) and of specific qualities. And He does it without seeking help from any other source excepting the auxiliaries that are subject to, and dependent on, His will. No one can do any harm to those who have taken resort to Narayana; and no one else can save those who have sinned against (or offended) the Lord and thereby become objects of dislike to Him, Who by nature, is equal (or impartial) towards all and Who says, ¹⁴ "No one is an object of hatred to me." This can be understood from the stories of ¹⁵ Prahlada, Sumukha, the Crow, Ravana etc. and in the purport of the following two slokas:

7.

8. Gita : 7.14.

9. Gita : 15.4

10. Gita 18.62

11. Vishnudharma : 1.5.9.

13. Ramayana-Yuddha.

14.

15.

¹⁶ "When the beautiful-faced Sita sees an elephant or a lion or a tiger (in the forest), she does not get frightened as she has taken refuge to the two arms of Rama."

¹⁷ "Brahma, who is self-born and fourfaced, or Indra, who has the title of Mahendra and is the chief of all gods, or Rudra who is three-eyed and is the destroyer of the three cities (of gold, silver and iron), – none of them is capable of saving him whom Rama has resolved to slay in a battle."

3. From beginningless time the Jiva did not have the fortune to enjoy Sriman Narayana. With the help of the Rahasyas, the Acharya teaches him the means by which he can attain and enjoy the Paramatma; and thereby the Acharya becomes the protector of the Jiva.

To explain: The chetana, who is now in bondage (in Samsara) has also got the innate fitness and qualification to enjoy the Bhagavan even as the Nityasuris (Eternal Angels) are enjoying as stated in the following sloka:

¹⁸ "All souls are by nature the servants fo the Paramatma." But the soul in bondage has lost it because of his sins. To obtain that goal there is a specific means which is reliable because of its unfailing nature. The Acharya teaches the (Samsari) Jiva that Upaya (means) with the help of the Moola-mantra (Ashtakshara) and others which are the essence of the Spiritual Literature. Thereby the Acharya becomes the mediate or the indirect means of Salvation, as indicated by the following slokas:

14. Gita 9.29

15. Prahlada was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. His father Hiranyakasipu tried to persecute him in several ways. But as Prahlada was in the protection of the Lord, Hiranyakasipu could not succeed in his attempts. Sumukha was a serpent who was saved by the Lord from the attack of His own vehicle and personal attendant Garuda.

The Crow (Kakasura) the son of Indra, and Ravana, the king of Lanka had offended Rama and no one could save them when he wanted to punish them.

16. Ramayana, Ayodhya . 60.20

17. Ramayana, Sundara 51.45

18. Mantrarajapadastotra 12.

¹⁹ "The Acharya is the ferryman to the ignorant, and knowledge is said to be the ferry."

²⁰ "Lord Narayana Himself assumes the body of a mortal because of His Mercy and lifts up the sinking worlds with His hand in the form of the Sastras."

The purport of the following sloka also is to the same effect:

²¹ "Kshattrabandhu, the worst sinner, and Pundarika of meritorious acts, became free from bondage because of their having had recourse to an Acharya. Therefore a person should resort to an Acharya (if he desires redemption)."

4. **Lakshmi**, also known as 'Peria-piraattiyaar', is 'Sarvasvaaminee'—the Goddess entitled to the service of all. She is Sesha or subordinate to the Supreme Master and is also His Associate in the practice of the Dharma (the act of redemption of the world). Because of Her excessive love towards the Jivas, which is like that of a mother (to her children) and owing to Her being the Lord's favourite, whose words of persuasion, He cannot refuse, She intercedes on their behalf with the Lord; and thus Lakshmi becomes the protector of the Jivas.

To explain:—¹"My beloved Consort (Lakshmi) is the Ruler of all the worlds."

² "The two kinds of glory (viz. Nitya-vibhuti and Lilavibhuti—the Transcendental Heaven and Material world) exist for the purpose of this (Lakshmi) as well as of Myself."

³ "In all beings, Gods, men and animals, all that is masculine is Bhagavan Vishnu and all that is feminine is Lakshmi. Maitreya! There is no one other than them."

⁴ "Lakshmi, the mother of the Universe, is eternal and inseparable from Vishnu."

⁵ "Auspicious Sri! Thou art the Science pertaining to the Yagas (Sacrifices), the Supreme knowledge and the esoteric Science; Thou art again, O Goddess!, the knowledge concerning the soul, and the giver of Moksha, the goal of attainment."

19.

2. Vishvaksena Samhita.

20. Jayakhya Samhita 1.63.

3. Vishnu Purana 1-8-35.

21.

4. Vishnu Purana 1-22-53.

1.

5. Vishnu Purana 1-9-220.

⁶ "Here is my daughter, Sita, who will ever be Thy partner in the observance of dharma."

⁷ "Lakshmi is endowed with the quality of the Rulership of all and at all times has for Her dharma whatever is the Lord's dharma."

⁸ "She sheds tears of Mercy and Her face is bent (with sympathy). She has lotus-like eyes and moonlike lustre".

"From Her flows the stream of auspiciousness, She is auspiciousness and She dispels the demerits of the Kaliyuga."

"Lakshmi removes the distress of all beings and (thereby) is flushed with joy. She makes dry the ocean (of sorrow): She fulfils the desires of all and is noble by nature. She is the bestower of fame."

"She is the conferrer of Riches and the grantor of Righteousness, Desire, Wealth and Moksha. She is incomprehensible and is really all act (of the Lord). She is subtle and the bestower of Supreme Bliss."

⁹ "The man, who longs for the attainment of Bhagavan, Who is the purport of all words, should, of necessity, seek the protection also of Lakshmi in the proper way. (It is not enough to perform Prapatti to the Lord alone.)"

¹⁰ "Whatever may be the nature of sin that occurs and thereby when there is an occasion for expiation and atonement, one must seek refuge in Me alone, the Consort of Vishnu, Who is the God of all gods."

¹¹ "Lakshmi is the grantor of all kinds of desires and She is all Beauty. We should meditate on Lakshmi Who can take us safe out of the sea of samsara, Who easily becomes gracious and Who can make us happy."

¹² "Maithili (Sita), the daughter of Janaka, as is well-known becomes pleased and shows Her graciousness to those who bow before Her."

¹³ "This (Sita) is capable of protecting us from the great danger (confronting us), O, Rakshasis!"

6. Ramayana Bala.

7.

8. Lakshmi Sahasranama.

9. Saunaka Samhita.

10. Laghu Tantra 17-10.

11. Kasyapa Smriti.

12. Ramayana-Sundara 27-45

13. Ramayana-Sundara 27.44.

¹⁴ "She (Sita) is capable of saving the host of Rakshasis from (the anger of) Rama."

As stated in the above texts, Lakshmi has the qualities of being the Ruler of all excepting Vishnu, who is the Universal Master, and of conferring all favour which is never associated with punishment. The Lord is the Ruler of the Universe and has laid down the laws; when people break them and thus offend Him, He becomes displeased and angry with them. He cannot bring Himself round to greet them, (who are after all His children). Then Lakshmi cools His anger by making Him forget their faults by appropriate gestures. She also brings the offenders to the Lord and makes them fall at His feet; and She thus brings about a change in the attitude of the Lord as the following text states:

[¹⁵ "When Thy beloved Lord is displeased with a man who has committed serious offences Thou, O Mother, sayest to Him, "What is this? Is there any man in the world who has no faults?"] "Thou persuadest Him by suitable devices to accept the offender by making Him forget his offences. (Therefore Thou art our Mother)". The change in him is so great that He says, as stated in the Text:

¹⁶ "Even if Lakshmi, the Lotus-born, makes a complaint against His devotees, He retorts, 'My devotees will never commit offences. If they have done anything, it will not be an offence.'"

Thus Lakshmi becomes the cause for their protection even as Sita was for the Rakshasis, when she said, ¹⁷"I shall surely protect you all."

5. They have to make Her the mediatrix, because the Lord, Who is the Supreme Ruler, wields the rod of punishment.

The purport is: The Ruler of the Universe has unfettered independence as the following texts show:

¹"Inscrutable is Bhagavan. He cannot be ordered by anyone. He can go wherever He likes. He has all beings under His control."

²"The Lordship of Isvara is absolutely independent and is beyond question by any one."

14. Ramayana-Sundara 58.91

15. Sriguna ratnakosa

16. Perialvar Tirumozhi 4-9-2.

17. Ramayana-Sundara 58-90.

1. Bharata-Sabha 40-78

2. Vaikuntha Stava 55.

3. Gita 16-24

The Lord has propounded from time immemorial Sastras which lay down the rules as to what ought to be done and what ought not to be done by the souls in bondage.

Sri Krishna says in the Gita: ³"To know what ought to be done and what ought not to be done the only authority that you have is the Sastra. (Therefore while you are here, observe the Karma enjoined in the Sastras as it is)."

When such is the case, there are people who violate the laws because of their being associated with Karma which is flowing in a continuous stream without beginning. It is well-known from the Scriptures that the Lord punishes such offenders as the Gita-sloka states:

⁴"I hurl them always into Asuric births." Because of the multitude of their sins these sinners are afraid to approach the Lord (who is the Dispenser of Justice). So they have to make Lakshmi, the Consort of Vishnu their mediatrix; as the Lord, by the very nature of things, never goes against Her word.

6. The transgression of laws by the Jivas from beginningless time is the cause which has brought them this punishment.

⁵"That is to say: The Lord declares in the Gita- "I am the same towards all beings." When Lord is impartial and equally disposed towards all beings, we find that He metes out punishment to particular person. This will leave Him open to the charge of being partial towards some and cruel towards others. But there is a specific reason which prevents His being charged with partiality or mercilessness; and that reason is the commission by the Jivas of acts prohibited by the Sastras, which has been going on like a beginningless stream. The following texts are the authority on the point:

⁶"In the act of creation of the beings that are generated, the Lord is only a general cause; the specific reasons (for the differences in creation) are the powers of the creatures themselves (that they have acquired by their own acts in previous births)."

4. Gita 16-19

6. Vishnu Purana 1-4-51, 52.

5. Gita 9.29

"The creature in this world does not need anything else except a general cause for being created; for every object is made to take its own specific form by its own power (i.e. Karma), O best among sages!"

"The beings are created (differently) because of their own previous karmas, good or bad."

⁸"Dear Sir! Who is slain by another? For a Jiva reaps the fruit of his own (previous) act."

⁹"The great Bhagavan, Who has all beings as His body, rejoices when a Jiva does what is good and is not pleased when the action is evil."

¹⁰"I did myself commit the sins which lead to different kinds of Hell."

7. **Of the various means to win the favour of the Lord, Who is the Protector and Who also wields the rod of punishment, the surrender of the burden of one's protection is the most important, as that alone is within the competence of all that are destitute (of all other means).**

The Sastras have laid down several means by which an aspirant for Moksha (Mumukshu) can propitiate the Lord, Who is the Protector (and thereby realise his desire). The following texts are the authority on the point:

¹"This world is transient and without pleasure. Since you are in it, having reached it, you should resort to Me with devotion."

²"Having given up all rites and activities as means of attaining Moksha, surrender thyself to Me."

³"Having given up father, mother, wife, sons and (other) relatives, friends and preceptors, gems, wealth and corn, fields and houses; and having also given up all upayas (prescribed in the Sastras) as well as all objects of enjoyment along with the joyful experience of my own pure self freed from the body, I seek, as my sole resort, O Supreme Lord, Thy two feet which have measured the whole world."

7. Vishnu Purana 1-5-28.

8. Bharata Santi 199-25.

9.

10. Peria Tirumozhi 1-9-2.

1. Gita 9-33

2. Gita 18-66

3. Jitante.

⁴"Many of your previous births have ended in vain. Consider this life too, may end in vain. To avoid it perform Prapatti."

⁵"I am the abode of all offences; I have no means (upaya) for saving myself, and have nothing else to attain Thee."

⁶"Be pleased to be my upaya (means). It is this idea of prayer that is called Saranagati. Let this be performed to the Lord. All the sins of that person that keep him in bondage will perish the same moment."

⁷"I can be attained only by those who desire to serve Me by intense Bhakti or by Prapatti. There is no other way of attaining Me."

⁸"Those who are incapable of meditation (Upasana or Bhakti Yoga) and seek Thee as their upaya – even they cross over Samsara and enter Thy abode, Sri Vaikuntha."

Amongst the means mentioned above, the surrender to the Lord of the burden of one's protection is one and it is described in the following texts:

⁹"Nyasa or self-surrender which has the word 'nikshepa' (deposit) for a synonym has five angas or auxiliaries and is also called 'Sannyasa' (Renunciation), 'Tyaaga' (Abandonment) and 'Saranaagati' (Seeking refuge)."

¹⁰"The surrender of the burden of one's self and of what is one's earning is called 'Atma-nikshepa'."

For the attainment, without delay, of the desired fruit, this Saranagati alone is important for all,

Since the absolutely destitute also are competent to take to it even though they may not belong to any specific caste;

Since it furthers the attainment of all fruits including the other means (like Bhaktiyoga);

Since it is capable of destroying even the sins that have begun to operate (Praarabdhakarma) in proportion to the intensity of one's distress and eagerness (to attain the Lord);

4. Sandilya Smriti.

5. Ahirbudhnya Samhita 37-30.

6. Ibid

7.

8. Brahma Purana.

9. Lakshmi Tantra 17-74

10. Ibid 17 -79

Since it is easy of performance; and

Since it has to be performed only once and does not stand in need of any accessory (anga) difficult to perform.

All this can be understood from the following texts:

¹¹"This is the means or upaya for those who are ignorant; this is also the upaya for those who know well; this is the upaya for those who want to reach (quickly) the shore beyond samsara; and this is also the upaya for those who want (immediately) to render constant service to the Lord."

¹²"Only as long as Prapatti has not been performed towards Thee Who removest all sins, only so long will there be misery caused by the loss of wealth and the anxiety to regain it; only so long will there be the desire to acquire wealth; only so long will there be no realisation of the self which is different from the body; only so long will there be the suffering of Samsara."

¹³"There is no other requisite for Prapatti anywhere and at any time, since it is capable of yielding all the desired fruits to all (persons) at all times."

¹⁴"Upaaya-bhakti (i.e. Bhakti-yoga) destroys all sins other than those which have begun to operate and yield their fruits (praarabdha-karma); whereas Saadhya-Bhakti (i.e. Prapatti) is superior to Bhakti and destroys even those sins which have begun to operate."

¹⁵"Those, who, with their thoughts fixed only on Moksha, are absorbed in the performance of Karma-yoga, and those, again, who practise Jnana-yoga and Bhakti-yoga, do not deserve to be placed on a par with even one-ten-millionth part of the man who has performed Prapatti."

The surrender of the burden of one's protection in the form of Prapatti here referred to is the specific conviction that one's protection can be effected only by the unique Protector, namely the Lord—a conviction coupled with the absence of egotism that one is effecting one's own protection and also coupled with a prayer (that the Lord should protect one)."

11. Lakshmi Tantra 17.100.

12. Vishnu Purana 1.9.73.

13. Sanatkumara Samhita.

14.

15. Lakshmi Tantra 17.62.

8. This (upaaya or means) along with its accessories (angas) has to be performed but once.

That is to say: It will be in accordance with the Sastraic injunction if this surrender of the burden is performed only once along with its five auxiliaries in the form of a resolve to be agreeable to the Lord and the like,

Since the general principle (with reference to a Sastraic injunction) will come into operation in the case of Saranagati also—the principle which states: ¹"When an action is enjoined in the Sastra, a single performance of it satisfies the requirement of the Sastra;"

Since the specific reason (with reference to the Upasana) does not apply to Prapatti—the specific reason which says: ²"The Upasana requires frequent repetition, because such is the injunction (of the Scriptures);"

Since there are authoritative texts and spiritual tradition in support of its power which say:

³"To him who performs Prapatti only once and to him who has begged of me saying "I am Thine", I grant freedom from fear of all beings. This is my vow."

⁴"This Sastraic principle (viz. Prapatti) takes a man to the other shore of (the Sea of)Samsara, even if it is performed only once."

⁵"O Lord! I have performed Prapatti only once and I also send forth my prayer- "I am Thine."

⁶"Even though requested (by me) only once, He will grant my desires."

Since the use of the present tense in the verb in the Mantras of the Prapatti has reference only to the time of performance of Prapatti; only once.

And since there are, by way of illustration, the several episodes of Draupadi, Vibhishana, Gajendra, Sumukha, the crow (Kakasura), the Dove and so on.

1. Draupadi: Dussasana, the brother of Duryodhana, dragged Draupadi to the Durbar Hall and tried to disrobe her. The Pandavas, the

1. Purva Mimamsa 11.1.22

2. Brahma Sutra 4.1.1.

3. Ramayana Yuddha 18.33.

4. Lakshmi Tantra 17.91

5. Stotra-Ratna 64.

6. Sri Ramanuja's muktaka.

elder statesmen and all others gathered there were looking on helplessly. So Draupadi cried out for help to Krishna who was in distant Dwaraka and at the same moment her prayer was answered.

2. Vibhishana : Being spurned by Ravana, Vibhishana came to Rama and sought protection. Rama offered him refuge.

3. Gajendra : The elephant king, Gajendra, had a tough fight with a crocodile for several years. As the crocodile was in its own element, it proved stronger and dragged the elephant into water. Gajendra sent forth a cry for help—Adimoola. The next moment Bhagavan was there mounted on Garuda and saved it.

4. Sumukha: Sumukha, the serpent, was in mortal fear of Garuda who had vowed to kill him. He sought refuge in Vishnu and the latter saved him from Garuda.

5. Crow : Jayanta, the son of Indra, came in the form of a crow and pecked at Sita with his beak. Rama woke up and saw the offender. He became angry and discharged the Brahmastra. The crow ran on all sides, but nobody would help him. Finally he fell at the feet of Rama seeking protection and was saved.

6. Dove : A dove was chased by an Eagle. It fell at the feet of Sibi, the king and sought protection. The king immediately saved it by offering his own flesh to the eagle.

9. This surrender (of the burden) may be effected either by oneself or by an Acharya and the like on one's behalf.

This means: Just as the fruit of the Prapatti will be attained by a person if he adopts it himself the fruit will no doubt accrue to a person if it is performed on his behalf by the Acharya and the like:

Since the performance of certain religious rites by the father and others on behalf of the son and the like is quite in accordance with the Sastras, even though there is a general rule that the fruit of an act enjoined by the Sastras will accrue only to the doer of the act;

Since there are statements by the sages Parasara and Saunaka to the following effect:

¹"May Lord Hari confer on all souls the prosperity of being free from birth, old age and so on.";

²"When I have now meditated with devotion on Vasudeva, Who is the Ruler of all Rulers and the Creator of the Universe.";

Since there are stories of many other Maharishis (by way of illustration on this matter);

Since it is seen that ³Prahlada, Vibhishana, Dasaratha, Draupadi and others have performed Prapatti on behalf of some of those connected with them;

Since such practice of Prapatti by one on behalf of another is found in the world also;

by virtue of the maxim (Nyaaya) indicated by the saying of Nammalvar as follows:

⁴"You must bow at the Lovely feet of the Lord of all Nityasooris with the help of Sri Vaishnavas who are masters of Vedas and get rid of this (peculiar) illness of this lady." (That is to say—the only remedy for her illness is seeking the Lord's feet through His devotees);"

Since the following words of Nachchiar (Andal) Herself are to the same effect; ¹If Vishnuchittar (Perialvar) of the City of Srivilliputtur makes His Lord appear before us, by some means in his power, we will be content to accept Him;" (that is to say—without depending on the grace of Perialvar, we will not do anything by ourselves);

Since there is the practice of the earlier Acharyas in that manner as well as the spiritual tradition to the same effect. ¹

The following two slokas of Nyasa Tilaka are to be thought of in this connection:

²"Lord Ranganatha! May those great Devotees of Thine be a source of delectation to me—those, the burden of whose protection has

2. Saunaka Samhita.

3. Prahlada performed Prapatti at the feet of Nrisimha for the sake of his father; Vibhishana did it with Sri Rama for the four Ministers who accompanied him; Dasaratha sought the protection of his sons from Parasurama; Draupadi sought refuge under Sri Krishna for the welfare of her husbands.

4. Tiruvaimozhi, 4-6-8.

1. Nachiar Tirumozhi, 10.10

2. "त्वप्याचार्यैर्विनिहितभरास्तावका रङ्गनाथ ।

त्वत्कैङ्कर्यप्रवणमनसस्त्वद्गुणास्वदमताः ।

त्वप्येकस्मिन्नपि विजह्यो मुक्तवत् साधनत्वं

त्वच्छेषत्वस्वरसरसिकाः सुरपो मे स्वदन्ताम् ॥

been entrusted to Thee by their Acharyas; whose minds are by nature inclined towards service to Thee; who become infatuated by the enjoyment of Thy qualities; who, like the Freed Souls, (Muktas), have ceased to think even with reference to Thee, that Thou art the means (for some end); and who derive a pleasure even by the thought of being subservient to Thee."

³"Lord of Srirangam! Just as a blind man moves about carefree when he has entrusted himself to the protection of one who is not blind; just as a lame man, seated in the hollow of a boat, is, without any effort on his own part taken to the other shore by the boatman; and just as the children and others of a king's servant enjoy the things tasted by the king, even though they may not know the king, in a similar way is my merciful Acharya capable of bringing about the attainment of Thee by me."

10. In regard to the attainment of the fruit for which a Prapatti has been performed, nothing more in the form of a re-adoption of Prapatti and the like remains to be done.

The person who adopts Prapatti along with its accessories in order to attain a desired fruit is described as one who has completed the performance of all sacrifices. In regard to the Prapatti so performed, nothing more remains to be done either by way of the repetition of the act of Prapatti in full or by way of an accessory to it. Here is a text on that point:

"For one who has adopted the Prapatti even only once, there is nothing more that remains to be done."

But a person may perform the Prapatti once again for one or other of the following reasons, viz.:

In order to acquire, in a greater degree, devotion to the Lord and knowledge of the realities which will be helpful to him in rendering specific services to the Lord, services- which he does according to his

3. "अन्वोऽनन्वग्रहणवशगो याति रद्गेश ! पद्मत्-
पद्मनीककुहलनिहितो नीयते नाविकेन ।
भुङ्क्ते भोगान् अविदितनृपः सेवकस्यार्थकादिः
त्वत्संप्राप्तौ प्रभवति तथा देशिको मे दयालुः ॥

- Nyasa Tilaka - 21

own competence and as an end in itself, and also for the purpose of pleasing the Lord to a greater extent;

Or in order to bring about greater prosperity either to Bhagavan Himself (e.g. for proper and regular worship in temples) or to His devotees;

Or in order to attain the fruit of Prapatti earlier than already prayed for at the time of its performance, since he is not able to put up with the delay in its attainment;

Or as a result of some special contingency which has unexpectedly arisen, as it is stated:

¹"If a person should have committed a sinful act, he must immediately make atonement for it. The form of atonement is the performance of another Prapatti, i.e. seeking refuge at the feet of the Lord."

The performance of a second Prapatti for any one of the reasons referred to above will in no way be contradictory to the self sufficient nature of the Prapatti that has already been performed and that does not stand in need of the support of anything else.

11. Thus the Prapanna becomes a krita-kritya—one who has performed what one should do (for one's own redemption). For him the observance of the rites and the like prescribed in accordance with his caste (Varna) or stage in life (Ashrama) are specific services which devolve on him by the commands of the Independent Lord.

The Sastras are but the commands of Bhagavan, the Independent Ruler and they prescribe to each person, according to his varna (or caste) and ashrama (stage in life), rites and duties which are but specific services that please the Lord. They are performed not with a view to acquire any fruit, but only to avert the evil; for if one fails to observe the duties enjoined by the Sastras one commits the sin of violating the commands of the Lord. For, it is said, ¹"The Lord out of His mercy declares—'commit not an evil act'."

In regard to the person who has perfect knowledge of the Tattvas (Realities) and Upaya (means) and who is free from the flaw of worshipping others, the performance of the rites is but the inevitable

1. Lakshmi Tantra, 17,87

1. Tiruvaimozhi, 2-9-3.

service to the Lord in the observance of which he must not feign incapacity. About such a person it is said:

²"If a person has sought absolute refuge in Narayana, the Master of the World, his status is such that he is no longer a servant of gods and sages, nor of men and manes, nor is he indebted to them in any way, O King!"

Here are some slokas that speak of a Prapanna who has an inordinate love for the service of God:

³"If a person seeks refuge under Me having given up the Upaayas Karma Yoga, Jnana-yoga and Bhakti-yoga or, and also the Apaayas (Nishiddha-karma or acts that are forbidden) and adopts the middle course—i.e. takes to Prapatti, he ultimately enjoys me."

⁴"In order that there may be no violation of dharma, for the protection of the family, for keeping ignorant men in the right path by setting them an example, for the preservation of the moral law as defined in the Sastras, for my (Lakshmi's) satisfaction and for the satisfaction of the Lord, armed with Samga, who is the God of all Gods, the Prapanna, who is wise should not even think of transgressing the ordinances of the Veda."

The hosts of Pramanans (Authoritative Texts) that speak in this way and the Nityagranthas written by Sri Bhasyakara and others are to be thought of here.

(Nitya-granthas are manuals codified by Sri Ramanuja and other Acharyas. They lay down the rites and rituals of right conduct that are to be followed by a Srivaishnava every day in his life, every moment of which is dedicated to the service of God in some form or other).

12. Every one of all these services, which devolve on a Prapanna for the purpose of either observing the rules that are in the form of commands or, performing acts that are permitted, is an end in itself (and has no ulterior motive).

To explain:

Purity of food, course of right conduct, and atonement for sins of commission are some of the obligatory dharmas referred to already by us which are enjoined by the Sastras on a person according to the

2. Bhagavatam, 11.5.41

4. Lakshmi Tantra 17-93,94

3. Lakshmi Tantra

varna, Aashrama (Caste, stage in life) and the like to which he belongs. **Meditation** on the qualities of the Lord now and again, eulogy, chanting of His names, sweeping and washing the floor (of his Temples), making of garlands, lighting of lamps and the like are services of a superior variety as they can be performed when a person has the desire and need not be performed when he has not. Nammalvar refers to this kind of service when he says:

¹"Having cleaned Thy temple from days of yore by the Grace of Thyself and by the Grace of the Lotus-born (Lakshmi)."

All of them—whether they are obligatory duties or optional services—have for their aim the pleasure of the Lord Who is the kinsman to all the Jivas in every form and Who is the Master of all. There is no other motive for the acts of service of a Prapanna, as Sri Yamuna says:

²"When shall I always be Thy servant, look upon Thee as my Master and in this way give Thee delight?"

These services are like those of a devoted and faithful wife and others to the husband and others and like the activities of the Mukta (Released Soul). They are delectable by nature and the doing of every one of them is an end by itself, as the following texts show:

³"Even if calamities should befall me, (my devotion to Thee should continue for ever)."

⁴"I long only for being the servant of Bhagavan (Vishnu) in all my births. (It is true that my mind clouded by passions does not remain fixed on Thy feet)."

⁵"At all places and at all times (my services should be to Thee alone)."

13. Naraka (Hell) and the like are not for the Prapanna even though there may happen offences in the form of commission (of sins) and omission of duties."

That is to say: In the case of a Paramaikanti (one exclusively devoted to the Lord) who has performed Prapatti to the Lord as the means—Prapatti either as an accessory to other means or as an

1. Tiruvaimozhi 9.2.1

2. Stotra Ratna 46.

3. Jitante Stotra 1-12

4. Jitante Stotra 1-13

5. Jitante Stotra 1-15

independent means by itself—there may happen, as a result of powerful past sins of his that have begun to operate, transgression of the commands (of the Lord) in the form of commission (of prohibited acts) and omission (of prescribed acts)

(i) since he does not come under the category of the great souls about whom it is stated:

¹"Transgression of dharma as well as reckless acts are seen sometimes in Ancient Seers. But because of their extraordinary power no demerit accrues to them;"

(ii) since he, on the other hand, belongs to another class of persons about whom it is said:

²"If an inferior person sees and imitates the acts of the great, he perishes";

(iii) and since it is stated that punishment by way of the destruction of punya and the like will befall even great seers, if they transgress the dharma, the commission of prohibited acts by a Paramaikanti will certainly be the cause of sins; but that will not land him in dire miseries like Hell as the following texts declare:

³"Seeing his attendants with the noose of death in hand, Yama whispers in their ears: 'Do not approach those who have performed Prapatti at the feet of Madhusoodana (the slayer of Madhu); for I have sway only over others and not over the devotees of Vishnu."

⁴"Those that perform Prapatti to Vishnu, the God, who is armed with Samga—they never go to the world of Yama nor is Naraka their dwelling-place."

⁵"Those men who are cruel, wicked-hearted, and always inclined to evil ways, even they will attain the Highest World (i.e. Paramapada) provided they have sought the protection of Narayana."

Therefore the Paramaikanti, who has done Prapatti, will wipe away his sins by repentance, or by undergoing light punishment, or slight discomforts which may be hard or soft in accordance with his nature.

Texts like the following may be thought of in this context:

1. Gautama dharma Stotra 1.1.3

2.

3. Vamana Purana 94-31;

4. Vamana Purana 94-43;

5. Itihasa-samuccaya 31.119.

¹"Neither the servants of Yama, nor his club, nor the noose of death, nor Yama, nor tortures (of Hell) have any power over a person whose mind is always fixed on Kesava."

²"Can Yama, the Lord of Death, any longer think of my past sins for which he was reckoning to give me punishment? "

³"The tormenting Hell has become powerless; there is nothing here for Yama."

14. Even as a prince, though the son of a king should conduct himself in the right way with proper care and observe the laws (of the land), the Prapanna should keep off at a distance all offences so that he may not be visited with punishment, though light it may be.

That is to say:

A Bhagavata (devotee of Bhagavan) stands in a unique position and is the object of protection by Bhagavan who is partial towards him as towards a son and the like. For that is the nature of Bhagavan as described below:

¹"Thou art the Father of the world, moving and stationary; Thou art worthy of worship, and a Teacher, greater than all."

The Sastras declare that a Bhagavata does not go to the land of Yama, and if offences should happen, the consequence will be limited to a few discomforts by which the sins will be wiped out. On the contrary if deliberate transgression takes place, impediments in the form of some punishment will occur unless the Bhagavata repents and performs another Prapatti (by way of atonement). So in order to avoid the occurrence of such offences and the consequent displeasure of the Lord, he must lead a faultless life observing the case of those persons leading a careful life in whom such faults do not occur as stated in the following text:

²"He alone is the ideal man who wisely blocks the four doors (for the entry of offences) in his body—the organ of generation, the belly, the hand and fourthly speech."

1.

2. Tirucchandaviruttam 116.

3. Tiruvaimozhi 5.2.1

1. Bhagavad Gita 11-43

2.

So the Bhagavata continues to lead a faultless life as before so that offences do not creep in. The following verse portray the mind of such a vigilant Bhagavata:

³"I will neither long for the wealth of others, nor associate with the mean."

⁴"We will not adopt what our ancients did not practise; nor will we go about talking scandal against others."

Here is a sloka which seems to go against what has been stated and so raises a doubt:

⁵"Consort of Sri! (Narayana!) Having placed the burden of protection on Thee, I, like a royal prince, practise, according to my ability and in accordance with my understanding, acts prescribed as well as forbidden."

This sloka does not countenance the practice of forbidden acts. For, the purport of the sloka is: In regard to the acts which have necessarily to be performed, I practise what should be performed according to my own competence and knowledge. I scrupulously avoid what should be shunned. While doing so I do not, even for a moment, think that I perform a particular act which is obligatory, because it is the means for attaining such and such a fruit; nor do I think, while avoiding a forbidden act, that if I transgress, it would be an impediment in the attainment of the highest goal, i.e. Moksha. [The motive for my acts is neither lure of enjoyment nor fear of punishment, but the pleasure of the Lord.]

15. Nothing can stand in the way of the attainment of the fruit for which Prapatti has been performed.

This means: With the object of attaining a particular fruit at a specified time if a person performs Prapatti at the feet of the Universal Ruler Who is omnipotent and extremely merciful, he will surely, get that fruit at the specified time. If, after that, there should happen either violation of rules or performance of acts calculated to yield other fruits, such acts will not stand in the way of his getting the fruit (for which Prapatti was adopted before); for the subsequent offences will be set right by the performance of expiations etc. in accordance with his competence.

3. First Tiruvantai 64.

5.

4. Tiruppavai 2.

The following are the reasons that lead us to this conclusion:

(i) since such is the view of the Lord, the Protector, as seen in the following texts (where He says):

¹"I will, in no circumstances, abandon one who has come to Me in the guise of a friend, even though there are faults in him. The great will appreciate this act of mine."

²"Son of Kunti! (Arjuna!) Swear (by Me) that My devotee never perishes."

³"Having given up all dharmas, (virtuous duties), seek refuge under Me alone. I will release you from all sins. Do not grieve."

⁴"Seek refuge in Me alone Who am the kinsman to all in every form; for I am the Inner Self of all beings. By doing so, you will attain Moksha where there is freedom from all fear."

(ii) since Prapatti has so much of greatness as the following text declares:

⁵"Of all the austerities (Tapas—prescribed for the attainment of Moksha), the austerity called Nyaasa (i.e. Prapatti) is the highest,"

(iii) since what is said with reference to another Nivrittidharma (Karmayoga) applies even more to the action of a person who is not attached to the fruit:

⁶"The endeavour that has been commenced in this Karma Yoga never ends in vain; there is no offence if it is not completed; even a small fraction of this dharma redeems a man from great fear (Samsara)."

(iv) since what is said in the following verses about the fall in status of a man by doing certain things:

⁷"By making a request (for ordinary fruits), a man perishes."

⁸"If one becomes attached to acts prescribed as means (Upaayas) for other fruits or to acts forbidden (Apaayas), he becomes devoid of the superior status he had."

1. Ramayana-Yuddha: 18.3.

2. Bhagavad Gita. 9-31

3. Bhagavad Gita 18.66

4.

5. Ahirbudhnya Samhita 37-36.

6. Bhagavad Gita 2-40.

7. Pancharatra Samhita

8.

Since this refers only to the absence of the epithets to the term 'middle course' there, viz. Prapatti: that is to say- to the performance of Prapatti qualified by two epithets, the giving up of the means for other fruits (kaamyā-karma) and the giving up of prohibited acts (nishiddhakarma).

(v) since the absence of faith mentioned in the following śloka refers to the absence of faith (mahaavisvaasa) which is an essential accessory to Prapatti, and which must invariably exist at the time of the performance of Prapatti.

⁹"The Rakshasas had no confidence in the effectiveness of the Brahma-astra (Brahma-missile) with which Hanuman was bound. The result was that that missile, which is infallible became ineffective immediately. In the same way, if men had no faith in the efficacy of Prapatti (while doing it), it will become ineffective. Therefore, to those who have faith in it Prapatti gives Moksha without delay."

(vi) since there is no text which specially speaks of an impediment etc. to Prapatti's yielding of fruit, whereas there are slokas which declare that fruits of other acts will be destroyed (by certain lapses):

¹⁰"A yajna (sacrifice) performed by one loses its effect by untruthfulness; tapaa (austerity) perishes by pride; age becomes diminished by contemptuous talk of Brahmins; and gifts of charity lose their value by their revelation."

(vii) since it is seen nowhere, either in the world or in Vedas, that Prapatti becomes fruitless if the protection is sought from a person possessed both of power and mercy;

(viii) since there was realisation in due course of the desires of the devoted Bharata from his standpoint granting for the moment that the mere request that Bharata made to Rama is interpreted as the performance of Prapatti by him;

The following are the slokas under reference:

¹¹"I shall lie on the ground in front of the hermitage (till Rama relents);" -(these are the words of Bharata).

¹²"He (Bharata) touched the ground with his head and besought me to return; but I did not accede to his request." - (Rama says);

9. Sanatkumara Samhita.

11. Ramayana-Ayodya-III-14

10. Manu Smriti 4.237.

12. Ramayana - Yuddha - 124-20

(ix) since the desired fruit is secured at once by a person who performs Prapatti at the feet of the Lord, as the following sloka says:

¹³"Only so long as one does not perform Prapatti to Thee that canst destroy all sins, will there be the anxiety to recover lost wealth; only so long will there be the desire to acquire new wealth; only so long will there be the absence of the enjoyment of one's self as something different from the body; only so long will there be the sorrow of Samsara."

For all these reasons we say that it is certain that a person doing Prapatti to Bhagavan will get the fruit at the time specified without fail and the attainment of the fruit of Prapatti will never be impeded by anything.

16. Even if a deliberate commission of offences should occur, (they can be atoned for); and the nature of the specific atonement depends upon (the competence and equipment of) the particular offender concerned.

The meaning of this statement is: Even though the offence may be the same, the atonement for it is not uniform, but it is of various kinds according to the differences in the offenders themselves—whether they are Upaasakaas or Non-upaasakaas i.e. whether they have taken to the practice of Bhaktiyoga or whether they have adopted Prapatti. Again the atonement varies according to the differences in caste (varna), stages in life (aasrama), age, or circumstances etc. of the sinners.

This is revealed by the following texts:

¹"The experts of Dharma should prescribe after sufficient forethought the appropriate atonements after taking into consideration the nature of the body, strength, resources, age, time and the particular act of the offender."

²"If a yogi commits a sin by carelessness, he must continue the practice of yoga as an atonement; but he should not attempt to do any other atonement."

³"If he has committed a minor offence, or even if he should have committed a heinous sin, he must, in order to make amends for it, meditate on Brahman for one-fourth part of the night."

⁴"O Dharmaputra! if you are afraid of sins, do not begin any other activity, but devote yourself to Narayana with all your heart."

⁵"Even if the heap of sins should, in size, be as great as Mountain Meru and Mandara, it perishes when it comes into contact with Bhagavan Kesava even as a bad disease dies when treated by a good physician."

⁶"O Hari! The power of Thy name to annihilate the sins is so immense that a man, even though he may be an outcaste-eater of dog's flesh-cannot commit such a sin as cannot be destroyed by it."

⁷"Even though a man utters the name of God unintentionally he is immediately abandoned by the sins, even as a man attacked by the wild animals in the forest is abandoned by them when they hear the unexpected roar of a lion and flee for their life."

⁸"It can be determined that a person has made proper amends for sins committed in tens of millions of his births if he chants, even though involuntarily, the name of Hari, Who is the abode of all auspiciousness."

⁹"Austerities, Penances and the like are the many atonements for sins prescribed by the Sastras. Remembering the name of Krishna is the greatest of them all."

"When a sin is committed and the man feels remorse, the one great atonement or praayachitta is to meditate on Bhagavan Hari."

¹⁰"A man may be very much inclined to the commission of sins; but if he should just think of Bhagavan Achyuta even for a moment he becomes a man of great austerities, and is capable of conferring purity even on those who purify rows of men."

¹¹"A person should salute Purushottama (Bhagavan) and chant always the name of Narayana. He must think of Bhagavan Narayana while he is sleepy and also when he is moving about. A Brahmin-i.e. one devoted to Brahman- should chant the name of the eternal God Narayana at all times-while eating, while standing and while waking

4. Vishnu Dharma 66-72

5. Vishnu Purana. 6.8.19

6.

7. Vishnu Purana 6-8-19.

8.

9. Vishnu Purana 5-6-39.40

10.

11.

up. He must say—'Prostrations to Narayana' when he opens his eyes or when he closes them.

"If a person touches anything that he is going to eat, drink or lick, and consecrates them with the words 'Salutations to Narayana' and then eats it, he reaches the Highest Goal.

"He is freed from all sins and attains the Supreme Goal."

From all these texts it is clear that the atonements vary with different persons. In the same way with reference to the Prapanna, there is a specific text which says:

¹²"If there is an offence, expiation should be done at once. The expiation that is to be done (in the case of a Prapanna) is to perform Prapatti again."

(i) Since this text says that Prapanna also may become a sinner and in that contingency he must make atonement for his sins;

(ii) since the rule that is implied in the following text applies to the Prapanna:

¹³"If out of over-confidence or out of affection, I have transgressed in any way, pray, let the offence of your servant be pardoned. There is indeed no one who does not commit an offence."

(iii) since there is good tradition and precedent with reference to this; for all these reasons it is certain that if a Prapanna commits prohibited acts or omits to do the prescribed duties, he will become a sinner. So if there is a statement to the contrary, it should be taken as merely laudatory (and not literally true).

It has also been established in the Sri Bhashya (by Sri Ramanuja) that the texts that speak of the non-attachment of the sins committed by a person after beginning the practice of the means refer only to those that have been committed unawares. So if sins are committed deliberately by a Prapanna, he must make amends for them. If he has not the capacity to adopt the respective atonements prescribed for specific sins, he must perform the Prapatti once again. The performance of the Prapatti itself will be an atonement in accordance with his competence.

That Prapatti is the only means by which one can get rid of the sins. It can also be seen from the following sloka which gives the definition of Prapatti:

¹⁴"When what a man desires cannot be attained with the help of any one else, a prayer is made, with intense faith, to one who has the required ability (to secure the object desired) that he should be the upaaya or the means. This prayer is Prapatti; it is Saranaagati."

The following texts also point out the greatness of Prapatti:

¹⁵"Whatever object is desired by whatsoever person, and whatever cannot be obtained by other means, and that Moksha from which abode there is no return and which cannot be attained by Karmayoga, Jnanayoga or Bhaktiyoga, all these fruits are obtained, O great sage, by those who respectfully strive for them by the performance of Prapatti. Purushottama, the Supreme Self also is attained only thereby."

¹⁶"Prapatti confers all desired fruits on all persons at all places."

Such is the greatness of Prapatti that it is not only a powerful atonement that destroys all sins that is suited to the equipment of a person and that is a potent means also for the attainment of all fruits.

17. If the Lord directs some to resort to the expiation of their sins, and to some others means of a tough nature, if He gives light punishment in the manner of those that raise a whip by way of threat, – all this is the outcome of the Grace of the Lord, the Protector.

The purport of this statement is: All that Bhagavan does in regard to those that resort to Him is only the result of His favour or grace. This is substantiated by two texts, the first dealing with the common principle about the actions of the gods in general and the second being a specific statement with reference to the action of Vishnu alone. The former says:

¹"(The Gods do not control a man with a stick in hand as the cowherd does). When they want to protect a person, they confer on him good sense or correct knowledge."

14. Bharatamuni.

15. Ahirbudhnya Samhita 37-25.

16. Sanatkumara Samhita.

1.

The latter text about the action of Vishnu declares:

²"Bhagavan Vishnu protects His devotees as He would His own body."

Therefore, Paramatma, like the father and others who are well-wishers, paves the way for the growth of a feeling of remorse in us, teaches us by means of Sastras the specific atonement for our sins, and thereafter induces us to take to that atonement; and if He makes us undergo some suffering by inflicting a light punishment, in the manner of the father and others who create with whips etc., a feeling of fear in the minds of disobedient sons; we should take it that the action proceeds out of the mercy of the Lord, Who is the protector of the Universe and Whose mind is by nature always favourably disposed towards all beings.

18. In the course of a person's sojourn in this world, if there arises an attachment in his mind towards the enjoyment, as such, of worldly objects – though they may be righteous by themselves,– such an attachment is an impediment, like a straw in the drink, to the joy of nectarlike service he wants to render (to Bhagawan) in accordance with his adhikaara or equipment.

A person may be imbued with the Atma-gunas or laudable qualities of the self as described in the following texts:

¹"A mind free from attachment, speech unsullied by falsehood and the like, a body devoid of cruelty (to others)– these three are the commendable means for the propitiation of Hari."

²"A spirit of detachment in general and absence of over-attachment to sons, wife, house etc. (these qualities are conducive to the attainment of the knowledge of the self)."

When a Mumukshu is leading the life of a householder, enjoyment of objects not contradictory to dharma will certainly come by virtue of the dictates of the Sastras. He, being a mumukshu, must not be carried away by the attachment; but he must look upon them as medicines conducive to the development of non-attachment, of knowledge and devotion as the following text states:

2. Bharata Anusasanika 36.24

2. Bhagavad Gita 13.9

1.

³"A man wedded to the spirit of non-attachment must look upon his body as a wound, the food eaten as a poultice for treating the wound, water taken in as the means for moistening the wound, and the cloth worn as that used for bandage."

But owing to the peculiar result of the latent impressions existing in him from beginningless time, it is just possible that his mind also may get tainted by an attachment like the one usually found in those that are addicted to worldly pleasures. If such a contingency should arise, it is true that it will not stand in the way of the attainment of the main fruit (viz. Moksha); but it will be the cause of some decrease in the joy of service that is experienced by him while he is living in this world.

Therefore a mumukshu must evince a dread towards attachment to worldly pleasures, though they may not be opposed to the way of Dharma. Even more, he must develop an attitude of mind towards them as portrayed in the following texts:

⁴"If Bhgavan Vasudeva is not meditated upon for a small period of time, or even for a moment, that is a great loss for a man, that is a large opening for evils to enter, that is the cause of delusion, and that is evil itself."

⁵"O Lord! Is it right on Thy part to confound and hurl me down, who am a sinner, by showing the manifold objects of enjoyment and the petty pleasures which the five senses conspire to give?"

It may be asked if the above statement is not contradictory to the thoughts given expression to in the following slokas:

⁶"A person may fill the entire Earth with valuable gems and offer it to Krishna. But if there is an attachment in his mind to other (worldly) things, it is difficult for him to attain Janardana (Bhagavan Vishnu)."

⁷"Para Brahman or the Supreme Being is far, far away from those whose faces are turned away from Govinda and whose minds are overpowered by the sense-objects."

The answer is: It is difficult for them to attain Paramatma if their minds are inclined towards other pleasures which will impede the love of Moksha in them, even though an enjoyment of such things is not forbidden.

3.

6.

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7. Vishnu Dharma 99-13.

5. Tiruvaimozhi 6-9-9.

The following sloka declares that delay in the attainment of Moksha is inevitable in the case of those in whose mind there is love for Moksha as well as a taste for Svarga and the like.

⁸"If a person is desirous of performing such karma as a means of obtaining other benefits (than God), first he enjoys pleasures unmingled with pain, and at last acquires a distaste for them, after which he reaches the abode of Bhagavan."

The following sloka of Nikshepa-Raksha beginning with the words ⁹"Apraaptitah pariharan svaparaih svarakshaam"—should also be thought of in this context.

19. Similarly a desire for enjoying forbidden things is contrary to the nectar-like joy of service. Therefore it must be kept, *like poison at a distance.

The Mumukshu has his stand on the quality of Sattva, and is therefore normally expected to be averse to do anything which is not to the liking of the Lord. In the everyday life of the world, it is seen that in the case of all persons forbidden acts occur during dreamy states and the like; and the sages also, who are generally wary and careful, fall a victim to the machinations of gods, being deluded by them. Similarly the Mumukshu too may become drawn towards forbidden acts in the course of his life. If such a thing should happen, either expiation or light punishment would certainly come in as the following sloka states:

8. Lakshmi Tantra 17.103.

9. 'अप्राप्तितः परिहरन् स्वपैः स्वर्त्ता तादर्थ्यधीपरिहृतस्वपरार्थभावः ।
अन्योपभोगविरहाद् अनघः प्रपन्नः भुङ्क्ते स्वभोगमखिलं पतिभोगशेषम् ॥

[Apraaptitah pariharan svaparaih svarakshaam

Taadarthyadheeperihritasvaparaarthabhaavah

Anyopabhoga-virahaat anaghah prapannah

Bhunkte svabhogam akhilaam patibhogasesham]

(A Prapanna should abandon all thoughts of his protection either by himself or by others as improper. He must think that all things exist only for the purpose of Paramatma. He must give up the thought that they are for him or for any other person (than Paramatma). As he does not seek to enjoy anything except Paramatma, he is flawless in every way. He does enjoy all objects of enjoyment, but his pleasure is ever subservient to the pleasure of Paramatma, his Master).

*. Like a serpent — R.

¹"The man who has performed Prapatti to me, and who has not abstained from sinful acts committed frequently (and who has not atoned for them), attains me late after destroying all his sins (by suffering)."

Apart from this, the proclivity for sin renders him disqualified to the experience of the nectar-like service which is Bliss as well as a source of redemption for him who was as though non-existent before. He must also think over the following texts like this:

²"There is a great gulf of difference between poison and the objects of senses; for poison kills only the man who takes it, whereas objects of senses kill him even at their mere thought."

He must carefully think and wisely try to avoid temptations impossible to abandon (by running away from places where they are likely to occur.) Just as people will choose to live in places devoid of serpents, the Prapanna must try to lead his life in a place in which there will be no possibility for the recurrence of the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures. It is up to him to perform a Prapatti in time by way of atonement for a (previous) sin that will be the cause of a further sin. The following text gives us an idea of the nature of sins:

³"Sin committed again and again destroys the knowledge of a man. With his knowledge thus destroyed, he begins to commit sin once again."

A man, leading a pure life free from all sins, will be an object of veneration even to gods as the following text says:

⁴"Gods consider that person as a true Brahmin who dreads crowds as one would do a serpent, who is afraid of honour as one would be of death, and who shuns women as one would a corpse."

It may be known from the following texts that such a person is a source of unsurpassed delight even to Paramatma:

⁵"They are dear to me – they who are born-blind to the weaknesses of others, who are eunuchs in regard to the wives of other men, and who are dumb in the matter of talking scandal about others."

1. Lakshmi Tantra: 17.102.

4.

2.

5. Vishnu Dharma 76-22.

3. Mahabharata, Udyogaparva 35.73

⁶"To those, who always think of Govinda and whose minds are firmly fixed on Him – to them Bhagavan may be considered to be always close by."

⁷("Make me an object of the glances of those noble souls who, because of their earnest desire to have just one glance at Thee, treat as trash the unexcelled (earthly) pleasures and the Bliss of Moksha, and) separation from whom is extremely unbearable to Thee."

20. Service (Kainkarya) is the observance of the commands of the Master so as to earn his approbation and satisfaction. Therefore that alone will give Paramatma satisfaction if it is done in accordance with the Sastras (which are his injunctions).

The Nityas and the Muktas are able to know what will please the Lord by direct knowledge which is all-embracing and which does not stand in need of the medium of sense organs. Thus they render service to Him. Unlike that, in the state of bondage, men have to stand in need of the medium of the sense-organs to know a thing. The Sastras declare that in a domain which is beyond the range of sense-perception, i.e. which is super-sensuous, there is nothing excepting the Scriptures which can serve as an eye (to see) and lamp (to throw light upon).

¹"The eternal Vedas are the (only) eye for the Pitrs, gods and men (in matters) that are beyond sense-perception)."

²"The all-merciful Lord bestows (on men) Scriptural Testimony as a lamp (to reveal super-sensuous things)."

The following slokas condemn the violation of the Sastraic injunctions thus:

³"He, who disregards the injunctions of the Sastras and acts according to his own whims and fancies, does not attain either the fruit (of the action), or happiness, or the Highest Goal i.e. Moksha."

Sri Alavandar says:

⁴"Whatever is not in consonance with the Sastras is Asuric by nature; (those actions that are opposed to the Sastras are inconsistent with his nature which is godly)."

6. Vishnu Dharma: 99-15.

7. Stotra Ratna-56.

1. Manu Smriti.

2. Sri Rangaraja Stava 2.1.

3. Gita 16.23

4. Gitārtha Sangraha 21.

What has been said elsewhere in regard to actions in general thus applies with equal force to service rendered here (by the Mumukshu) as an end in itself.

Further the state of a Prapanna is such that he must realise his ignorance and pray to the Lord:

⁵"Thou must be pleased to confer Thy favour on me as I am devoid of all knowledge."

The Prapanna must also confess his ignorance, as Andal says:

⁶"Ignorant children we are."

When it is proper on the part of a Prapanna to act according to the Sastras in the manner stated above, if he should do something as service depending entirely on his own choice, there is no guarantee that his action will be to the liking of the Master.

Further Sri Bhashyakara (that is, Sri Ramanuja) also emphasises the same point in his work, Nitya by name, as follows:

⁷"Only such things should be offered as oblations to Paramatma as are most delectable in the world, as are to the liking of oneself and also as are not inconsistent with the Sastras."

Again service is the name given to that act of a servant which is done under the command of the master who says, 'Do this', when the former waits upon the latter and submits with humility, 'What shall I do?' This is quite in accordance with the following words of Lakshmana (when Rama asked him to construct a hermitage in a place which would be convenient to him):

⁸"Thou shouldst Thyself give me the command to construct the hermitage in any beautiful place (which will be to Thy liking, but shouldst not ask me to do it where I like)."

For all these reasons mentioned above, a Prapanna, who is described as a person ⁹"who has performed a sacrifice", should lead his life until the fall of the body doing acts which are in consonance with his competence and in accordance with the Sastras. That will lead to the attainment of the highest fruit as Sri Alavandar describes:

5. Tiruvaimozhi 6.9.8.

6. Tiruppavai, 28.

7. Sri Ramanuja's Nityagrantha.

8. Ramayana-Aranyakanda: 15.7

9. Tiruvaimozhi ; 5.7.5

¹⁰"When shall I, Thy servant, look upon Thee alone as my master in all my life and give Thee delight by rendering service to Thee?"

21. When it is found difficult to render at the same time service to Bhagavan and His devotees, service to the devotees should be preferred as superior since it is the utmost limit of the supreme goal.

Since the Prapanna has acquired a knowledge of his essential nature from the Pranava, service to the Lord, which is implicit in the dative suffix (to the first letter 'a' meaning Bhagavan) became appropriate to his essential nature. When he became better informed in regard to his essential nature by the (middle) word 'namas', service to Bhagavatas or devotees of Bhagavan also became appropriate to him. Such being the case, when it is feasible to render, at the same time, the two services—service to Bhagavan as well as service to His devotees—both of them should be performed. But when a critical situation arises in which one of the two has to be unavoidably given up, the Prapanna must choose to do service to the devotees and feel blessed and gratified by that realising the fact that service to the devotees of the Lord contains within itself service to the Lord also. This fact is revealed by the following texts:

¹"Therefore to propitiate Bhagavan one should do what one can to please the devotees of Bhagavan. By this Bhagavan becomes favourably disposed to bless one. There is no doubt about this."

²"I have great love for those who are devoted to my devotees. Therefore one should render devout service specially to them."

³"Of all forms of homage, the homage paid to Vishnu is the best; but the homage offered to Vishnu's devotees is superior to this and therefore is declared to be better than all others."

⁴"A householder does not like one who treats his son with disregard. So also Bhagavan does not like those who do not treat His devotees with due respect."

10. Stotra Ratna ; 46

1. Itihasa Samuchchaya : 27.27.

2. Mahabharata,

Asvamedhikaparva: 116-23.

3. Padmottara : 29.81.

4. Sandilya Smriti: 4.86.

⁵"Bhagavan becomes pleased with those who honour His devotees giving up even His own worship, and confers upon them their desired fruits."

Tirumalisai Alvar sings:

⁶"The penance of those that are attached to the devotees of Bhagavan will surpass even that of those who sing the praise of Bhagavan."

The principle propounded in the above hymn applies equally to service to Bhagavan rendered as an end in itself. Therefore we arrive at the conclusion that service to the devotees of the Lord is superior to service to Bhagavan and should be preferred if there is difficulty in doing both together.

22. Service to the Acharya (or Teacher) is more important than these two.

The significance of this statement is: Service to Acharya is the most important thing. This can be understood from the analogy given in a Vedic text 'One should adore an Acharya as one would adore God Himself.' Besides this, there are authoritative texts which reveal to us the importance of service to the Guru (Teacher).

"There is no one greater than the Guru. One should not meditate upon any one else excepting the Guru. One should always think of the words of instruction of Guru and stories about him. One should ever chant his name."

¹"Guru alone is the Supreme Brahman and Guru only is the highest goal. Guru alone is the (source of) great learning and Guru only is the great support. Guru alone is the great object of desire and Guru only is the great wealth."

Further one should not engage oneself in the service of the Lord and the like giving up service to the Acharya for the following reasons: because service to Bhagavan and His devotees should be done only with the express permission and approval of the Acharya; because if we study the question of service to Acharya, we are led to the conclusion that it is both service to the Lord and service to His devotees. It is service to the Lord, because service to Acharya comes as a result of the

command of the Lord to us; it is also service to the devotees of the Lord since the Acharya too has the characteristic of a Bhagavata.

The same idea is expressed by the following slokas:

²"The person, who abandons the Guru visible to the naked eye and thinks of another who is to be known by the Sastras, is like a man who yearns for the water in the cloud casting aside the water in the hand."

³"If a person abandons the Guru who is easily available and tries to worship a Guru who is hard to get, he is like a fool who throws away the wealth that has been obtained and goes in search of wealth concealed under the ground."

The Prapanna must devote himself primarily to service to Acharya in accordance with (the teachings of Madhurakavi Alvar in his hymn beginning with) the words "Kanninun-sirutthaambu". He must also hold in high esteem, service at the proper time to Bhagavan and His devotees knowing that it is to the liking of Acharya following the words of Madhurakavi Alvar who sings thus:

⁴"Even taking myself away from the enjoyment of my Acharya (Nammalvar), I would see the lovely, superb, and dark-complexioned form of the God to Gods, i.e. Paramatma since it is the beneficent result of my being a fitting sesha or servant of Nammalvar, the great saint that adorned Tirukkurugur."

23. The proper place of residence for one devoted to this service is that which is pleasing to the Paramaikantins—those who are exclusively devoted to the Lord.

That is to say :

The Sastras have laid down that holy places are suitable for residence for those wedded to the practice of Dharma. But such holy places have come under the control of Mlecchas due to the evil effects of the age of Kali and the like. Therefore they are to be discarded now as laid down by the following text:

¹"One should not choose to live in a place in which most of the men are not virtuous by nature."

2. Vihagesvara Samhita.

4. Kanni-nun sirutthaambu:3.

3. Satvata Samhita

1.

Though certain definitions are given about holy places, they should be taken only in a general way (and not literally) since such definitions may be too wide or too narrow. The characteristics described as pertaining to a holy place may, by chance be found in places that are not holy and therefore undesirable; and it is equally possible that some holy places may not have those characteristics.

On the authority of the text which says, ²“A thing may be accepted if it is to the satisfaction of one's own self”, if one should try to decide that a particular place is sacred and choose to live there relying entirely on one's own liking, there is the possibility of the judgment being wrong. Moreover such a procedure, namely judging a thing by oneself, is definitely prohibited by the Sastras which declare:

³“(In case of doubt) one should not arrive at a decision by oneself.”

If, on the other hand, one should consult men whose minds are under the sway of the qualities of Rajas (Passion) and Tamas (Ignorance) and should come to a decision with their help, one's correct knowledge is likely to become confounded by their confusion. So says the Bhagavad Gita:

⁴“The intellect of that man is Rajasic, by nature, because of which he understands things as they are not—he mistakes adharma for dharma (non-virtuous for virtuous) and what should be done for what should not be done.”

Of all the places that is the best with reference to which men of superior wisdom have come to the undisputed conclusion that it is a suitable place for rendering service to the Lord in consonance with their essential nature and therefore have begun to reside in it with great zeal. Theirs is a correct conclusion, because they are really men of great learning which is the result of the predominance of the quality of Sattva in them. Consequently they have the realisation that they are the subordinates of the Lord to the exclusion of all others, that they have no other upaya except Prapatti, and that they have no other goal except the attainment of the Lord.

A place selected by such pious men for residence is bound to be more sacred than all other holy places even though it may not be one

2. Manusmṛti 2.6.

4. Bhagavad Gita 18:31

3. Bharata, Udyoga 32.53

f Aryavarta and other places described as sacred in the Sastras and even though it may not have the marks usually associated with holy places.

The following texts can be cited as authority to substantiate the statement that a place which is to the liking of a Paramaikanti is really more sacred than all others:

⁵"Wherever a man in full control of his senses lives, that place is Kurukshetra, Naimisaranya and Pushkara."

⁶"Where there is a forest of Tulasi plants, where there are beds of lotuses and where the Vaishnavas are living, there Bhagavan resides."

⁷"Know that (river or tank) to be very holy where the pure-minded devotees of the Lord take their bath and know also that it destroys all sins."

⁸"Where the devotees of Vishnu halt for a second or even for half a second, that place is auspicious and holy, a place of pilgrimage and a penance-grove."

⁹"In the land where the blessed man, who has true knowledge of Ashtakshara and who stands firmly in its meditation, is honoured, there will be no disease, no famine and no fear of robbers."

24. When it is not possible to get men of similar temperament, the company of those with contrary nature should be avoided by resorting to a life of solitude.

The company of the wicked folk is very much ¹like living in a hut the roof of which is haunted by a serpent. The following are some verses that express the same idea:

²"A wicked man, though adorned by learning, must be shunned. Is not the serpent a source of dread even though it is adorned by a gem (in its hood)?"

³"Give up the company of the wicked; ever associate yourself with the good. Do day and night what is righteous. Always remember that all (earthly) things are, by nature transient."

5. Itihasa Samuchchaya: 27.18.

6.

7.

8.

9. Naradiya Kalpam: 1-20.

1. Peria Tirumozhi-11.8.3.

2.

3. Yajnavalkya Smriti 4.30

⁴"Don't have anything to do with the impious."

⁵"It is far better to dwell in the midst of a cage of flaming fire than to suffer from the agony of being in the company of sceptics who do not countenance any thought of Bhagavan."

⁶"O men of the world! You are what you are and we are what we are. (You are of a particular nature and we of a different nature). You are in quest of wealth and sense pleasures, and we are in quest of Narayana. So there cannot be any companionship between you and us. We are the servants of Lord Vishnu, and you are the slaves of the senses."

A place like the one described above is most suitable for a person who is eager to do the three kinds of Bliss-giving Service. There he can do all kinds of acts that a subordinate (Sesha) should do to his master. Obstacles, if any, to such disinterested service will themselves vanish on account of the purity of that place.

The quality of a Paramai-kanti attributed to the devotees is based on this fact that they have a firm and unshakable knowledge about the Para-tattva (Supreme Reality) Parama-hita (Greatest Means) and Parama Purushartha (Highest goal); that they are exclusively devoted to Paramatma and to no one else. The words 'Bhagavata' and 'Vaishnava' signify only those persons who are endowed with this important quality.

The following texts aver that one should cultivate the association of the pious and the holy who have their stand in the Sattva-quality so that one may successfully avoid the company of the wicked:

⁷"A person should live in the vicinity of good men and should also serve men of great learning. That will make him pious and learned; for a bird that resorts to Mount Meru attains a (golden) colour which is similar to that of the Mountain."

⁸"One should choose to be with the good and court association with the good. Whether in disputes or in friendship, one should always associate with them. One should not have anything to do with the wicked."

If the company of the Sattvic men has to be cultivated by a person as a means for avoiding that of the wicked, and if it is not possible to have it on account of the deterioration in the state of the country, he will have to take to the only alternative of living in a lonely place all by himself being helped in this view of his by the purport of the texts like the following:

⁹"The attainment of Moksha by that man is quite certain who chooses to live in solitude, who is steadfast in his vow (of leading a righteous life), who keeps himself away from the gratification of the five sense-organs, whose mind is firmly fixed in the practice of the Yoga which has Paramatma as the goal, and who is always free from the act of giving harm to others."

He must realise that there is no (suitable) companion for him, and must try to keep aloof as much as he can. He must also realise his absolute dependence on the will of the Lord as Andal says:

¹⁰"This is the state in which our Bridegroom, the Lord, (Ranganatha), has chosen to keep us here—the Lord that all times reclines on the Serpent (Adisesha) with shining hoods."

It would be proper for him to be ever thinking that he is in the company of the Lord Who is his life-companion as Nammalvar says:

¹¹"When am I going to join Thee, Who art possessed of eyes like lotus and hands like lotus, and Who are the only refuge for me that am all alone in this world?"

25. Meditation on the Route (to Vaikuntha) and the like is just a pastime to the Prapanna which is a source of joy to his mind.

There is no specific text which declares that meditations on things like the route to Vaikuntha are inevitable accessories to Prapati. But with reference to Bhaktiyoga, the Sastras clearly lay down that meditation on the following are accessories: meditations on the absence of contact with the subsequent sins and the destruction of former sins, the manner of departure from the body, the scheme of the shedding of Karmas (by them) as well as their appropriation (by others), the path of the Fire and the like, and the specific nature of the State of Release

(Moksha). If, on the analogy of other (Brahma) Vidyas (viz. Bhakti Yoga) one should guess and come to the conclusion that meditations on these things have got to be performed as accessories to Prapatti also, it is not correct, for such a conclusion is unwarranted and wrong. There is a text also which clearly states that Prapatti does not require anything as an accessory:

¹"Prapatti, in this manner, does not stand in need of the help of anything else."

This statement is very wide in its application, and there is nothing to restrict the scope of its operation. The only exception (to this rule) is the five things which are explicitly declared to be accessories to Prapatti as well as the giving up of the thought that one is the independent doer of an act without the help of another, (here Paramatma). That a person cannot do anything without getting help and ability from Paramatma is a fact well-known to all that have right knowledge: This idea finds a prominent place in all the actions of an aspirant for salvation (Mumukshu).

But this may appear to be at variance with the experience of Nammalvar who sings:

²"My mind is ever yearning to have a vision of Sri Vaikuntha, the Great Heaven, at all times irrespective of the fact that it is night or day."

Though that is the yearning of the Alvar, one may venture to think that it is not of great consequence since such meditation does not in any way help the means (of attainment of the Lord). But that statement reveals the intense longing born in the mind of the Alvar in regard to a thing with which it is right and proper to have intimate relationship. The longing for that object is so intense and proper that it cannot be avoided.

From all this we have to come to the conclusion that the meditation on the Route (to Vaikuntha) and the like will serve only as a proper pastime which is a source of joy to the mind even as in the case of a lady in separation who entertains herself with thoughts of her lover. If she does so, it is only as a pastime and not as a piece of unavoidable duty.

1. Sanatkumara Samhita.

2. Tiruvaimozhi 9.3.7.

The following texts also may be cited as authority in this connection:

³"Always chant the Dvaya Mantra with an understanding of its meaning and live at Srirangam at ease till the fall of your body (i.e. death)."

⁴"I shall spend my days worshipping Bhagavan Hari with devotion."

⁵"Men should get rid of their sorrow which is a result of past Karma that envelops the soul by meditating on those passages that describe the Lord's qualities. If they should not do so, by what other thought are they going to spend their time (in Samsara)?"

Passages like the following also may be thought of in this connection:

⁶"It looked as if Sita was going in the chariot of her mind drawn by her desires which were like fleet horses, towards Rama the lion among kings, who was aware of his nature (that was always intent upon protecting those that sought his help)."

⁷"Sita does not look at the Rakshasis; nor does she turn her eyes towards the trees laden with flowers and fruits. Her heart is fixed on Rama alone and she sees only Sri Rama."

16. To this person, whose way of life is like that of the ¹Chataka bird, the remembrance (of God) in his last moments is not to be effected by his own effort.

This declares that thinking of the rule laid down (by Sri Krishna) in Chapter VIII (of Bhagavad Gita) that the attainment of a specific fruit by a person is quite in accordance with the nature of the remembrance in his last moments, he need not be under the impression that the remembrance in last moments of the object of his attainment must be done by his own effort as it has been said in the following two slokas:

3. Saranagati Gadya.

4. Vangivamesuarakariak : 36

5. Peria Tiruvantadi - 86.

6. Ramayana, Sundara : 19.7

7. Ramayana-Sundara: 16.25.

1. Chataka is a bird in legends that is supposed to be always looking to the cloud for drops of water to quench its thirst and that it cannot do it by drinking it by itself even though there may be plenty of water around.

²"When the mind of a man is in its normal condition, when the body is in a healthy state, and when the elementary constituents (dhaatu) of the body are in perfect equipoise, if, at that time, a man thinks of Me who have the world as my body and who am not subject to births due to Karma, I think of (him) my devotee even though he may lie like a log of wood or a piece of stone in his last moments and I lead him to attain the highest state."

³"A man, who utters (this Mantra) at a time when he is in possession of good knowledge, will be free from all sorrow and attain Moksha, though he dies in a holy place or in the house of one who eats dog's flesh, or even if he dies unconscious."

⁴"At the time of casting the body away, owing to My grace alone, you will be in full possession of your intelligence. You will have a vision of Me and the memory of all your previous experiences and desires (that the Lord alone is the one object of enjoyment) will not leave you."

And as stated by Perialvar:

⁵"(O Lord that dost recline on Adi Sesha in Srirangam! A person seeks refuge under those possessed of strength in order that he may obtain their support when he is in distress. Though I am not like Thy devotees, yet I resort to Thee since I know Thou wert gracious even to the elephant). When the languor of the dying moment comes, I may not be able to remember Thee. Therefore, I entreat Thee, even now, that, at that time, Thou shouldst come to my rescue."

As stated in the above passages, the Prapanna will not worry himself about the remembrance (of God) in last moments even as he will not in regard to the ultimate and supreme fruit with this thought that he will accept it if it comes to him by itself due to the Grace of God. It is proper for him to give up the difficult efforts which are said to be taken by Yogins in the following sloka:

⁶"He Whom the Yogis endeavour by their efforts to fix in their minds at the time of separation from the body."

So the Prapanna will be doing the proper thing if he follows the mode of life of the Chataka bird and looks to the rain of Mercy of the Krishna-cloud (i.e. cloud in the form of Lord Krishna).

2. Varaha Charama Sloka

3. Varaha Purana.

4. Saranagati Gadya.

5. Perialvar Tirumozhi 4.10.1.

6. Bharata, Santi Parva. 46-143

The purport of the following sloka* may be thought of here:

"Take resort with great care to the good souls that have their **land** in the quality of Sattva; establish the social code of life. Be in great dread of committing sinful acts against those who have realised Brahman. Treat like trash the threefold goals of life (viz. virtue, wealth and passion). Narayana, the Consort of Sri, Who is eternal, and who is the Master (of all), puts up with all (our mistakes). So entrust the burden (of protection) to Him and follow the mode of life, O wise one! of the Chataka bird that depends exclusively on the cloud (for water to quench its thirst)."

27. To this self-surrender, accomplished in a moment and portrayed as a sacrifice, the end of the body, which is brought about by the will of the Lord, is an Avabhritha snana—the ceremonial bath which is taken at the successful conclusion of a sacrifice.

Self-surrender in the form of a sacrifice has been enjoined in the Nyasa-Vidya (which is propounded in the Taittireeya Upanishad). Authoritative texts lay down that this sacrifice along with its accessories must be performed only once: To show that for the attainment of a fruit for which a Parpatti has been previously made, nothing more is to be done, the Uttara-anuvaaka (or the latter part) eulogistically states: 'All commands become accomplished by themselves in the case of the Prapanna (without any effort of his)'. The same is substantiated by the following text:

¹"If a person seeks refuge thus in Lord Sudarsana (of lovely form), he certainly becomes a (great) man that has performed a hundred sacrifices. There is no doubt about it."

For all these reasons the statement that 'death for him is the ceremonial bath (avabhritha) taken at the conclusion of the sacrifice' should be taken to mean: that for this sacrifice there is no other ceremonial bath (as in the case of other sacrifices). After the fall of the body (i.e. death), he is sure to attain the Divya Loka (i.e. Moksha). Nammalvar also echoes the same sentiment when he says:

²"The Lord is a great helper since He grants Vaikuntha at the time of their death to those who seek refuge at His feet which is the means."

* The last verse of the Tattvasandesa

1. Ahirbudhnya Samhita 37.49

2. Thiruvaimozhi 9.10.5.

That statement should not be taken as a command which enjoins that he must effect his death as a piece of duty— death which is not to be brought about by his own effort, but which comes to him by the will of the Lord when he welcomes it as the following text states:

¹"Those, who have satisfactorily fulfilled their duties, are eagerly awaiting their death as they would a loving, and therefore a welcome guest."

Nor should the statement be taken as an injunction which lays down that he must meditate upon the death that comes to him by itself as the ceremonial bath taken at the conclusion of a sacrifice.

28. All the beginningless time of the past preceding the Prapanna's resorting to an Acharya and his acceptance by the latter is a pitch-dark night.

The meaning of this statement is:

²"Prakriti is achetana (non-sentient). It exists (always) for the purpose of others and it is eternal; but it is subject always to change or modification. It has three qualities, Sattvam, Rajas and Tamas, and is the field of action for the Jivatma."

³"Just as the fire exists in wood, and oil in Tila (sesamum seed), so does the Atma stand in Pradhana or Prakriti. He has knowledge as an attribute. He is subtle and can pervade any object. Knowledge is his essential nature and he recognises himself."

⁴"And that (i.e. the obscuration of the nature of Jivatma) arises either out of (his) association with the body (during the state of creation) or (in another way during the state of dissolution (i.e. out of conjunction with the non-sentient thing which is in an extremely subtle state).

⁵"While going to another (body) than this, the Jivatma (the individual self), goes associated (with the subtle elements); because it is so made out from the question and its answer (given in the context of the Pancha-agni-Vidya).

As stated in the Slokas and Sutas quoted above, the Jivatma from beginningless time is enshrouded by a curtain in the form of

1. Itihasa samncechaya 6.37

2. Paraina Samhita 2.18.

3. Vishnu Purana 2.7.28

4. Brahma Sutra 3.2.5.

5. Brahma Sutra 3.1.1.

Prakriti or Primordial Nature of three-fold qualities (Sattvam, Rajas and Tamas) which is the result of his actions (good or bad done previously) and which continues till the attainment of Moksha. By the maxim of the seed and the sprout, the stream of offences is going on in continuous chain. As a result of these offences the Prapanna finds himself in the midst of the world which is the source of darkness (ignorance)" and is not able to know the directions, eight and two in number, (or the mode of life taught by Ashtakshara and the other two Mantras). He does not know the attributes of his own self. Which is self-luminous by nature. Nor is he in a position to realise the Lord Who pervades everything in full without any exception, Who is present everywhere, Who is always by his side and Who is like a vast and permanent treasure.

All the ages from beginningless time appear to Jiva like a pitch-dark night since there was no light (knowledge) or activity and the Atma was sunk in the sleep of beginningless Maya (or Prakriti). To this Jivatma lying in sleep, the resort to the Acharya appears like the advent of dawn which heralds the coming of the day so that the Jiva can become free from this condition of sleep and see the day.

The Acharya gives the Jiva the glowing lamp of knowledge that can dispel his ignorance and show him the right and good path. The help of the Acharya is described in the following two slokas:

⁶"(Of the two letters in the word guru, the first letter 'gu' signifies darkness (i.e. ignorance) and 'ru' signifies the destruction (of that darkness). Thus 'guru' is called as such since he brings about the destruction of the darkness (of ignorance)."

⁷"A person is called an Acharya, (because he does three acts which are signified by the tri-syllabic word Acharya): he acquires the knowledge of the Sastras, he makes (his disciples) observe the rules of a virtuous life, and he also observes them himself.

In regard to the Acharya who is the greatest benefactor, the Prapanna must feel that he is indebted to him for ever. "It is not possible even for the gods to give anything in return to the Acharya who has bestowed the knowledge of Brahman. Still it is proper for a disciple to offer with respect whatever he can." (Sandilya Smiti 1-117). He must never cease to think of him in the following strain:

⁸"Great Sir! you have changed my mind that was wicked by nature. What can I do for you by way of recompense?"

He is bound to lead his life with this thought in his mind in the words of Alavandar:

⁹"Here as well as hereafter, and for ever, the feet (of the Acharya) are my only refuge."

29. Thereafter till the end of the body, it is a fine day-break.

The resorting to an Acharya (and acceptance by him) is a gain that is difficult to obtain. If this should be attained, the person will realise that by the grace of the Acharya, knowledge of the realities, non-attachment to worldly things and devotion to the Lord blossom in him like a flower. But till the fall of the body which is like a prison-house with its pillar-like bones and the like, he is still in the midst of the darkness of ignorance, though in a small degree, as a result of the sins that have begun to operate. In spite of this ignorance, he experiences by Acharya's grace the joy (or fragrance) of the qualities that have blossomed in him. He wakes up and gets out of the bed which has been keeping him low by putting before him petty temptations in legion. He becomes possessed of a steady intellect and is happy as Lord Ranganatha has commanded Sri Ramanuja to be in Srirangam in Saranagati Gadya:

¹"Having become free from all fears, live in peace."

The following slokas described the mental attitude of such a person:

²"I was without right knowledge and have spent my time in vain with this Prakriti being subject to her sway. How can I remain associated with this Prakriti which takes the excellent forms (or bodies of Gods), the middling forms (or bodies of men) and the mean forms (or bodies) which experience the pains of Hell?

"I will depart from her i.e. prakriti and give up all contact with her and attain the Lord Who is free from all blemish. I will become one with Him and I will not be one with this non-sentient Prakriti. It is in the fitness of things that I should be in communion with Him and not with this Prakriti."

8. Tiruvaimozhi 2.5.8

9. Stotra-ratna - 2

1. Saranagati Gadya.

2. Mahabharata, Santi Parva

312-30, 38,39.

As stated in these slokas the person sees the destruction of all undesirable elements and the fulfilment of his desire for attaining the unsurpassed and Supreme Bliss that are to follow. It is up to him now to give himself up to the Lord and spend his life.

30. Thereafter it is all a great festive day of spontaneous service.

This means: There was a time when this Atma was a Mumukshu (Aspirant for Salvation) and performed Prapatti to attain Moksha. As a result of it he first became a kritakritya (one who has done what should be done). The Lord, the Consort of Sri, accepted him at once as an object of His favour and of protection for all time so that He might in due time give him a place near His heart even as He has given to the kaustubha gem. The Lord was also eager to sever the connection of the Atma with the non-sentient Prakriti both in its gross and subtle states, and bestow on him an all-round splendour—just as a person takes out a precious gem from the mine and makes it lustrous by removing the mud and dirt sticking to it. Service at the feet of the Lord is the ultimate goal of the Atma—service which, like the Lord Himself, is without limitations of space time and the like and is done without hindrance to his desires.

Parama Samhita, a scriptural Text, speaks of this great festive service as follows: The Lord says—

¹"Those who perform Bhakti Yoga with great devotion and those who have performed Prapatti (Tapas) will obtain Saayujya (the relationship of being united in communion with Me). They will always render service to Me and will, for ever, be free from the troubles of Samsara."

Sri Alavandar in his Stotra Ratna says:

²"When shall I be for ever Thy, servant, (look upon Thee as my Master, render service to Thee and give Thee delight?)"

About the nature of this never-ending service to the Lord taught by Religious Literature and Spiritual tradition Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita:³

"(All the worlds, including that of Brahma are places which give rebirth, O Arjuna!) But after attaining me, O Son of Kunti (Arjuna)! there is no rebirth."

1. Parama Samhita. 30.94

3. Bhagavad Gita-8.16.

2. Stotra Ratna - 46.

⁴"Those great souls, who have attained the highest, goal reach me and are never afterwards born in Samsara which is the abode of suffering and which is ever-changing."

The Jiva must realise that for this great festival of service, the manifestation of the essential nature of the Atma, as it is, is like a day which has a dawn at one time, but has no evening. This great festive day is brought about by the boundless Sun (the Lord) Who is endowed with perennial lustre and who has neither rising nor setting, nor eclipses. The Jiva must also realise the sublime nature of this eternal Sun viz. Paramatma and must for ever entertain this thought—that the perpetual rise of this incomparable Sun is the source of ever-lasting prosperity for him.

But sometimes we come across statements like the following in religious literature:

"It is Isvara (or the Lord) that attains the Jiva, and not the Jiva that attains Isvara." "Acquisition and loss—both pertain to Isvara (and not to the Jiva)". Such statements should be taken to mean that the Jivatma who delights in being exclusively subordinate to the Lord, the Universal Master, must think that the excellence that accrues to him in the State of Salvation is a source of joy to the Lord even as the sweet fragrance of flower and sandal-paste will be. (The flower and sandal paste will be blessed if they adorn the Lord; at the same time it is the Lord that enjoys their fragrance and is happy).

31. This is Rahasya Ratnavali or the Gem-necklace of Rahasyas that is agreeable to men of Sattvic nature.

This means: The ideas expressed by the thirty sentences of this work beginning from the first verse are all precious thoughts regarding the Para Tattva (Supreme Reality), Parama Hita (the greatest Means) and Parama Purushartha (the Highest Goal). All of them are found in brief in the Ashtakshara and other Mantras which are the quintessence of Spiritual Literature dealing with Salvation (i.e. Moksha Sastra). Therefore this Rahasya Ratnavali is fit to be worn, like a gem-necklace on their hearts by Sattvic-minded men who can appreciate the sublime qualities in them—the qualities of their being praise-worthy, enjoyable, valuable, auspicious and easy to acquire unlike the dull-witted who despise the emerald mistaking it for a piece of ordinary glass. The Sattvikas know its value.

The following slokas may be thought of in this context:

¹"The Vedas are intended for the sake of those in whom the three gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are preponderant; Arjuna, be free from the sway of all the three qualities, (i.e.) cultivate the Sattvaguna only. Be free from the pairs of opposites (happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, and the like). Be steadily fixed always in (pure) Sattva. Be indifferent alike to fresh acquisitions and the safeguarding of what has been acquired. Be possessed of self-control."

²"In a tank which is full of water and is intended for the use of all, one takes only as much of the water as is required by him. Similarly in the Vedas which are for the benefit of men of diverse tastes, a knowing Brahmin should choose and adopt what is suitable to him."

³"Even as the six-legged bees collect from the flowers only the sweetest part (namely honey), a wise man must choose only what is best in every way from the Sastras which are many (in number) and vast (in size).

"Things to be known are many and endless. The time (at our disposal) is short; the hindrances are many. So one must choose only that which is valuable like the swan that separates the milk from the water with which it is mixed."

⁵"The three Vedas, the six Angas (or auxiliaries), the various metres, the different accents, and literary works of all other kinds— all of them are contained by the Ashtakshara within itself."

⁶"Of what use are the many Mantras to him and of what use again are the many austerities to him? The Mantra 'Namo Narayana' secures all things (that are) desired."

⁷"Narayana or Hari, Who is the great Yogi, is the only Supreme Reality of Tattva for those who seek to acquire the knowledge of Reality with the help of reason of all kinds."

⁸"That act which does not lead to bondage—that alone should be considered the right act; and that (knowledge) which takes one to Salvation as the proper learning (Vidya). All other acts end in mere fatigue and all other learning is a mere show of skill in mechanical arts."

1. Bhagavad Gita 2.45.

2. Bhagavad Gita 2.46.

3. Uttara Gita. 3.10.

4. Mahabharata—Santi Parva 176–66.

5. Naradiya Kalpa: 1–9.

6. Naradiya Kalpam: 1–41

7. Mahabharata, Santi Parva: 357–83.

8. Vishnu Purana.

⁹“That alone should be considered as real knowledge by which that one Reality (Tattva) is known, is seen and is attained—the Reality which is faultless and pure, which is superior and stainless and which is of uniform nature (without any mutation)

¹⁰ “Among all Dharmas, that which consists in the adoration of Vishnu is the highest; (for He protects His devotees as if they are His own body).”

¹¹“Amongst the Karmas enjoined by the Vedas, nothing is more meritorious and sacred than the adoration of Vishnu. (Therefore one must always adore Vishnu Who is without a beginning, middle or end).”

¹²“Excepting under the shade of the Tree of Vasudeva, where is relief for men whose hearts are afflicted by the heat of the sun in the form of worldly miseries?”

¹³“Learned men have averred that the attainment of the Lord is the only remedy in this world for the triad of the multitudinous miseries produced in the state of embryo in the mother’s womb, birth, death and the like—the attainment of the Lord, which is of the nature of joy that is unsurpassed and that confers joy on others. It is an end in itself and lasts for ever.”

¹⁴“No one else will I consider as a God and praise, excepting Sriman Narayana.”

¹⁵“Meditate in time on the feet of Sriman Narayana and redeem yourselves.”

¹⁶“(Am I to wallow still in this world) without joining Thee that art in the company of Lakshmi?”

All the above slokas and the songs of the Alvars are to be thought of here.

The verse in Tamil, that comes after, describes the joy that subsists for the steady-minded person in the code of conduct which should be followed after the performance of Prapatti and which is an end in itself. The words in the verse are so couched as though it is an advice given to the mind which is most intimate to the Atma and which

9. Vishnu Purana: 6.5.87.

10. Mahabharata—Anusasanika Parva: 36–24.

11. Vyasa Smriti 2–42.

12.

13. Vishnu Purana 6–5–58, 59.

14. Mudal Tiruvantaadi–64.

15. Tiruvaimozhi: 4–1–1.

16. Tiruvaimozhi: 6–9–3.

is of the greatest help to it. That it is so can be understood from the following sloka:

¹"(Mind is the cause of bondage as well as Salvation for men). When the minde is attached to wordly objects, it is the cause of bondage, and when it is free (from attachment to worldly objects) it is conducive to the attainment of Salvation."

The Merciful (Acharyas) who are not addicted to trivial ends:

These words refer to those noble and pious souls who take a great interest in the (meaning of the) second part of Dvaya Mantra (which deals with the highest goal). They have no desire for trivial fruits regarding which it is stated in the Bhagavad Gita:

²"After enjoying the extensive world of Svarga they enter again the world of the mortals on their merit disappearing through decrease. In this manner, the followers of the religious teachings of the Vedas who are desirous of attaining objects of desire, gain (only) the going and the coming."

³"But in relation to such (persons) whose intelligence is directed towards the mean (Gods and fruits), the fruit (of their worship) is finite."

⁴"The other three kinds of devotees are indeed considered as being attached to fruits which have an end and they are bound to slip away (from God as soon as their desire is realised since He is no longer of any use of them)."

This is what Nammalwar says on this point:

⁵"The pleasures of the five senses in seeing, hearing, touching etc. (have been given up by me)."

One full decad (IV) of Perumal Tirumozhi of Kulasekhara Alwar portrays the attitude of such perfect souls towards wordly pleasures. It begins thus:

⁶"I do not long for birth accompanied with wealth that (only) makes the flesh grow."

(Though they have no desire for trivial fruits), if such things should by themselves come seeking them as a result of their previous

1. Vishnupurana, 6.7.28

2. Bhagavad Gita: 9-21.

3. Bhagavad Gita: 7-23.

4. Mahabharata Santi Parva:
350-35.

5. Tiruvaimozhi: 4-9-10.

6. Perumal Tirumozhi: 4-1.

karmas that have begun to yield their fruit, they have no attachment for them (like Janaka, the King of Mithila who said):

⁷"How strange is this! Endless is my wealth (viz. god) though I possess nothing. (So much so) if Mithila is consumed by fire, nothing of mine is burnt."

It is about such great men that the Sastras say:

⁸"The wise man who worships Me (the Lord) with sole and exclusive devotion attains Moksha."

⁹"He, who is looked at by Madhusudana just as he is taking birth should be considered as a pure soul (Saattvika) and he will ever think of the Moksha."

The merciful (Acharyas): These words describe the nature of those who are eager to dispel the sorrows of others. (So when the disciples come to them with the thirst for knowledge) they cannot remain without imparting instruction to them. (To find out if they are deserving the Acharyas test them, as is stated:

¹⁰"The disciple should be tested in various ways and should be taught with compassion and without thought of any gain and the like/" If they are able to get disciples who are found deserving after being well-tested, they teach them, but with no desire for getting trivial fruits like fame income, respect and the like.

When the Acharyas entrusted us (to the Paramatma):

These words mean: The Acharyas took pity on us and placed us at the blemishless lotuslike feet of the Lord of the Nityasooris even as a favourable wind carries a floundering boat safely to the shore. (When we approached them) we were in an absolutely destitute condition which is described by Alavandar as follows:

¹¹"I have not practised Karma Yoga; (I have not understood the real nature of the disembodied Self; (i.e. I have not performed jnaana-yoga. Nor have I Bhakti towards Thy holy feet)."

And again in the words of Nammalvar:

¹²"I have not observed the austerities of Karma-yoga; nor have I the subtle knowledge (of the disembodied self)."

7. Mahabharata-Santi Parva:284-4 10. Sandilya Smriti: 1-116.

8. Mahabharata-Santi Parva: 350-33. 11. Stotra Ratna: 22

9. Mahabharata-Santi Parva: 358-73 12. Tiruvaimozhi: 5-7-1

(The Acharyas have joined us to the feet of the Lord so that) we can say with relief:

¹³"I was being tossed about in the ocean of Samsara seized by the crocodile-like sorrows and false knowledge. Now due to the hand of merciful Destiny I have reached safely the (shore-) city of Thy lotus feet."

The Consort of Sri Who accepted us as an object of protection:

This means: We were in a helpless state since there was no one who could save us—neither we, nor others. So our Acharyas placed us before the Lord of Sri as objects to be saved exclusively by Him. The Lord of Sri as objects to be saved exclusively by Him. The Lord of Sri also accepted the responsibility of protecting us being induced to do so by the helpful recommendation (of Lakshmi), the peculiar relationship between Him and overselves and specific qualities of His own Self, all of which cannot be dispersed with by Him.

He Himself having put an end to our rebirth—

This means: It was the Lord that at the outset gave the sense-organs (Indriyas), the body and the like. He is the kinsman to us in every form and therefore put forth this much of effort (to redeem us). He Himself will destroy all the hosts of sins going by the names of Punya and Papa (merit and demerit) that are the cause of our taking further bodies (in future).

He will put us in the Infinite Heaven—

This means: He will give us a place for all time to come in the vast and everlasting City (of Sri Vaikuntha) and treat us on a par with the Nityasuris or Eternal Angels. He will not allow us (to return to the world of Samsara)¹ even if we should furnish security (for our return to Sri Vaikuntha).

About the sublime nature of this infinite and vast City of the Lord, the Sastras reveal:

²"It is a divine place devoid of decay, and beyond the knowledge of ordinary mortals. It can be known (only) by intellect. It is the foremost (of all things) and one can become aware of it (only) with the help of Scriptures (Vedas)."

13.

1. Periazhvar Tirumozhi: 4-5-2.

2. Mahabharata Mausala - 5.27

³"(My) child! Compared with that world of the Supreme Being, these lower worlds (of Brahma and Indra) are like Hell."

O Mind! How is it that you are not delighted?"

This means: There is going to be the complete annihilation of all undesirable elements and there will also be the attainment of desired ends of unsurpassed excellence since the Lord, Who is without an equal or superior and Whose will is irresistible, has made up His mind to bless you and said—

⁴"I shall release you from all sins; do not grieve."

After this when there is every reason for you to be joyful, it is not meet on your part under any circumstances to be sorrowful.

I shall tell you what is proper for you to do as long as you are here—

This means: You have to live now with the body and senses which are irresistible, unavoidable and full of many defects. Here are some slokas which describe the nature of the body:

¹"This body has bones for pillars and is tied by sinews. There is the mire of flesh and blood inside it and it is enshrouded by skin. It is a receptacle for urine and excrement and is ever foul-smelling.

"This body is overpowered by sorrow due to old age, is the abode of diseases and becomes disabled. It is covered with dust and is impermanent (by nature). It is a component of the (five) elements and must be given up."

²"(Even in the case of the wise man who strives to control them), the senses prove rebellious and harassing, and they carry away the mind forcibly."

³"O Mighty-armed Arjuna! undoubtedly the mind is hard to control since it is fickle, by nature."

The songs of the Alvars also speak in the same strain about the body:

3. Mahabharata-Santi Parva: 196-6.

4. Bhagavad Gita : 18.66

1. Manu Smriti.

2. Bhagavad Gita: 2-60

3. Bhagavad Gita: 6.35.

⁴"This body is (like a house) built with walls of flesh, and its bones are the pillars. It is covered all over with hair and has nine openings or door ways."

⁵"It is impossible to sever the connection with the vicious body."

⁶"The five (Indriyas or Sense-organs) load me with a heavy burden, drag me (here and there) in all directions and kick me."

⁷"I have a mind that will not be in the same place in which it was (a moment before)."

Such is the nature of this body; and you have to be with this body in this frightful world which is a fertile soil for the abundant growth of the evil effects of the qualities of Rajas and Tamas. Those evil effects are described in the following sloka:

⁸"Excessive pride, disgusting appearance that is constant, garrulousness, boasting, the mistaken thought that the body (which is not the Atma) is the Atma, dispraise of the Self and the praise (of the body)" – Such are the evil effects.

So long as you have to be in this wicked world as a result of ignorance that dogs you, you may be apprehensive that you may at any time commit any kind of wrong. You may also realise with sorrow that you are standing here having lost the unceasing and important service to the Lord. If you have this dread (of sin) and despondency, I shall tell you something which will be of some solace to you in this state and which will dispel all your sorrow:

You have no doubts about the attainment of the Lord—Who is the specific Siddha—praapya (that is, the Goal that is already existent and Who is again the object of the specific Saadhyapraapya (that is, the recipient of the Service that is to be rendered by you); for you have adopted the Saadhyopaaya (that is, the means that has to be practised by you) and by it you have propitiated and won the grace of Siddhopaaya (that is, the already existent Means; the Lord). (To you who have no doubts about the attainment of the goal, but who have a feeling of dread and despondency, we shall tell you what will be helpful and reassuring).

4. Peria Tirumozhi: 1.6.9

5. Tirvaimozhi 3.2.3

6. Tiruvaimozhi: 7-1-10.

7. Peria Tirumozhi 1.1.4

8.

Having expressed our desire for such knowledge as will prevent the commission of any kind of sin—

This means: Lack of right knowledge is the root-cause of all kinds of wrongs towards the Lord and others. When we know this, we must pray for the acquisition and growth of right knowledge and the like. This we must do as an end in itself, and not with any selfish motive. There is nothing improper in having a desire for such knowledge and love towards the Lord, as the following sloka will show:

¹"A person should never beg of Lord Vishnu anything except devotion and knowledge of His Holy feet. He who begs (for other things) will surely perish."

When we are going to get here itself all that we will be (getting later in Paramapada) and lead a happy life—

This means: If a person goes to Paramapada, he will have the privilege of rendering all kinds of service to the Lord even as Adishesha, Vishvaksena and other (Nityasoories) do. To get such service in this world is as improbable and unlikely as the blossoming of a lotus in the midst of burning ember or as coming across a tank full of cool water in a desert. For this is a world where men always stand with drawn sword against God. They are not prepared to accept God, the Universal Ruler, but are always bragging; as the Gita says of them:

²"I am the Ruler and I am the enjoyer. (I am endowed with extra-ordinary power. I have strength and I have happiness)."

But we are fortunate since we have realised the subservient nature of the Atma and have expressed our pitiable state saying that we are destitute and we have no other end in view than service. Further since we have surrendered the burden of our protection at the hands of the Lord we are free from all worries about our protection. It now remains for us to lead a life of joy rendering service to the Lord without any hindrance.

Do not go about thinking, 'Of what use is this service?' and do not depise it—

This means: We have surrendered the responsibility of our protection at the hands of the Lord Who is omnipotent and Who is extremely merciful. The Sastras clearly declare that the service we

render is not a means for the attainment of Moksha. If such is the conclusion of the Sastras, (the poet addresses the mind and says) you may begin to think: 'If the all-powerful God has undertaken to protect us, and if our service is not going to help us in the attainment of Moksha, why should we take the trouble of doing service?' It is wrong to think like this. You must not neglect the performance of service here itself which is an end in itself and which is quite in consonance with your essential nature as a servant. So do not belittle the value of the noble service.'

You Yourself-

This means: Further you must remember what your ultimate goal was (when you adopted Prapatti). You have chosen service to the Lord in Paramapada as the Highest Goal for you. (You also know that) service rendered there is an end in itself and is not the means for anything, much less for Moksha, (since the latter will have been attained by then.) (If service in Paramapada is an end in itself and not a means) the same can be said with regard to service here also. Have this in mind.

The Arya (Sanskrit Verse in Arya Metre) that comes in after lays down that this (Gem necklace) should be kept safe so that it does not fall in the hands of men of contrary nature. The following sloka describes the qualities of such undesirable men;

¹"The man, who steals learning (by listening to the Acharya without his permission and in hiding), the man who does evil to his Guru, and the man who speaks ill of the Vedas and the Lord that rules over all—these men, the Srutis declare are great sinners and should be punished at once."

Sanskrit Verse in Arya Metre

May the good (souls) preserve with care this charming Gem-Necklace of Rahasyas, which is worthy of being kept secure by those who are exclusively devoted (to the Lord)—Gem-Necklace, which is greater in (thought), though smaller (in size), and which is dear to the heart of Lakshmi's Consort.

May the good (souls) preserve

This means: Let them realise the value of this and keep it safe without spilling it, as laid down in the following sloka:

²"He, who guards this meaning (idea) from those who are unqualified and imparts it to those who are worthy, - merits honour from Me. All auspiciousness to you. I shall take leave."

³"If a fit disciple cannot be found, the man who is fit to teach this Vidya, may (even) die with his Vidya (or learning). It should, on no account, even at the time of great adversity, be sown in a desert (or barren soil)."

By those who are exclusively devoted (to the Lord)-

This means: This is something valuable which is kept safe by those who have no desire for any fruit (other than the Lord's pleasure) and who do not like to waste it by imparting it to undeserving persons, since they are fully aware of the rules laid down by the Sastras (in regard to teaching):

⁴"This (spiritual) knowledge should not be imparted to a person who does not beg for it; nor should it be taught to a person who begs for it in an improper manner."

⁵"Even when one begs for it (in the proper way), secret meanings or the mysteries of religion and the true doctrine should not be revealed lightly."

On the contrary if this knowledge is imparted to the unworthy, there will be no protection for it as in the case of a ⁶costly gem that is cast at a monkey. (It will be like casting pearls before a swine).

Here is a sloka relevant to the point:

Sandilya Smriti 4.258 "You may sow the seed in a barren soil, give your daughter in marriage to a eunuch, and give a garland of flowers to a monkey; but you should never impart (instruction in) the Sastra to one who is unworthy."

Though smaller (in size), greater (in ideas)

This means: A necklace of gems may be small by its size, but will be great by its effulgence and the like. Similarly though this is a small work, it is of immense value since it is a compendium of all the essential doctrines (of our Philosophy and Religion)

2. Sattvata Samhita: 25-375.

3. Manu Smriti: 2-113,

4.

5. Sandilya Smriti: 4-255,

Great Souls: These words refer to great persons who are possessed of superior qualities and who are like those mentioned by Sri Ramanuja (in the concluding verse of the Vedartha Sangraha:)

⁷“There are some great men who can distinguish between what is essential and what is not, who are free from rancour, and who are guided only by the Pramanas. It is for them that this Vedartha Sangraha has been written.”

Dear to the heart of Lakshmi's Consort—

This means: ⁸“To the Lord in Whose chest Lakshmi abides”, this also will be a fitting ornament to His heart, like ⁹the lovely necklace of superior gems and garland of pearls.”

Rahasya Ratnavali—

This means that like a gem-necklace, it is full of immense effulgence and has been strung together in a harmonious way.

Charming – means lovely because of its innate beauty and auspiciousness and also because of its being quite in accordance with Scriptural Authority. So it is fit to be enjoyed at all times by children and scholars alike.

Thus the Rahasyas Ratnavali portrays the first, the middle and the last stages in the life of a Mumukshu (an aspirant for salvation). The opening verse in Tamil which is in the form of a Sutra or concise statement of the subject-matter of this Rahasya describes how a man feels free from the burden of his protection since it has been surrendered (in the hands of the Lord) through the good offices of the Acharya and since it has been accepted by the Universal Lord.

By every pair out of the first twenty-four sentences beginning with “One Atma is not the saviour of another”, the following twelve topics are dealt with:

1. The determining of a particular deity as the only saviour (to the exclusion of all others) (1-2)
2. The function of the specific intermediary who brings together (the Jiva and Isvara). (3-4)
3. The cause for the necessity of such an intermediary. (5-6)

7. Vedartha Sangraha.

9. Amalanaadipiran: 9.

8. Tiruvaimozhi: 7-2.9

4. The specific means to propitiate and win the grace of the Specific Saviour. (7-8)
5. Its being easy to perform. (9-10)
6. The specific code of conduct of the person in the post-Prapatti period who has done what he should do. (11-12)
7. The specific benefit resulting from the atonement of offences. (13-14)
8. The specific potency of Prapatti. (15-16)
9. The specific attitude of mind that should be cultivated by a Prapanna when agreeable and disagreeable experiences befall him. (17-18)
10. Avoiding the very possibility of transgressing the rules of the Sastras. (19-20)
11. The difference in appreciation shown by the Lord in regard to the appropriate services rendered (by the Prapanna) (21-22)
12. And the specific places where he is to live and the services which have to be done. (23-24)

By the next three sentences (25-27), doubts with reference to the accessories of Prapatti are cleared.

By the three sentences coming thereafter (28,29,30) distinction in the nature of the three periods in the life of the Prapanna is drawn in order to increase his joy as he stands in the middle between this world of Samsara and the world of Moksha, and in order to create an interest in those who are not Mumukshus so they they also may take to the path of Salvation.

By the concluding sentence it is stated that the special merit of this small (literary) work lies in the fact that it can be read and enjoyed at one stretch (since it is concise).

The Tamil Verse that follows describes the joy in the subsequent code of conduct which is not different from the service that the Mukta does, the joy that is had by the person who has no doubts about the attainment of Moksha because of the greatness of the Acharya who taught him and because of the qualities of the Lord who protects him.

The last verse in Sanskrit in Arya metre advises one to understand the real merit of the work and impart it to deserving persons after finding out if they are worthy of it or not.

Thus Venkatesa, the Poet, has himself expounded, in accordance with the authority of the Scriptures, the Rahasya Ratnavali, which is an embellishment to the Consort of Lakshmi; (the poet has done this) being requested by pious men who were frightened by the loud noise of obstinate opponents which flows unrestrained and free while they brag about their views with a mind variegated by a liking for the unwholesome path.

Our word that is this literary work of ours, has been composed by us encouraged by the grace of the Acharyas who evinced great pleasure in imparting instruction to us since they could do it with ease (owing to our quick receptivity and lasting retentiveness). Our work, whether it is concise or elaborate, whether it is suitable for the grasp of the simple minded or pleasing to the intellect of the diligent, whether it is composed as an independent and principal work or it comes out as an embellishment (commentary) to the works of others, – our work is an ornament for the head of the youthful damsel, namely Sruti or Veda—which damsel is the object of love and adoration to the Universal Lord. Therefore it is fit to be accepted by the learned with faith and trust.

சாக்கியர் சைனர்கள் சார்வாகர் சாங்கியர் சைவர் மற்றும்
தாக்கியர் நூல்கள் சிதைபத் தனிமறையின் கருத்தை
வாக்கியம் முப்பதினால் வகை செய்து வியாகரித்தோம்
தேக்கி மனத்துள் இதனைத்தினியிருள் நீங்குமினே.

Thus have we, by thirty sentences, analysed and expounded the deep import of the incomparable Vedas. By this the literary works of the Bauddhas and the Jainas, the Charvakas (Nihilists) and the Samkhyas, the Saivas and again the Tarkikas will become annihilated by themselves. You must store in your hearts what we have propounded here and thereby get rid of the dense darkness (ignorance) in you.

(Amritaranjani-20)

தள்ளத்துணியினும் தாய்போல் இரங்கும் தனித்தகவால்
உள்ளத்துறைகின்ற உத்தமன் தன்மையுணர்ந்துரைத்தோம்
முள்ளொத்த வாதியர் முன்னே வரின் எங்கள் முக்கியர்பால்
வெள்ளத்திடையில் நரிபோல் விழிக்கின்ற வீணர்களே.

We have realised and described here the nature of the Supreme Lord, Who, because of His abundant Mercy, takes pity upon us like a loving mother and abides firmly in our hearts even though we may be bent upon throwing Him out. There may be some who may oppose our views and are therefore like thorns. But if they come before our Acharyas possessed of great merit, they will prove to be men of no consequence and they will blink like jackals in the midst of a (river in) flood.

(Amritaranjani-21)

செய்யேல்மறமென்று தேசிகள் தாதையவனுரைத்த
மெய்யேயரும் பொருள் குடியவெண்மதி காதலியாம்
பொய்யே பகைபுலன் ஐயிரண்டொன்று பொருங்கருவி
கையேறு சக்கரக்கைக்காவலன் காவலடைந்தவர்க்கே.

The Lord, whose hand wields the discus (Chakra) is the Saviour as well as the teacher and father of the Universe. Out of His unbounded Mercy He has taught (in the Bhagavad Gita) that unrighteousness should never be practised. There are some people who have sought the protection of this Lord (and who abide by His command). Their intellect which bears this advice on its head as a diadem is (an object of love and affection) for them as a sweetheart. Therefore it is no longer true to say that the eleven Indriyas or sense organs are inimical to them (and therefore untrustworthy) the Indriyas which were once the weapon for fighting (the Samsara).

(Amritaranjani-22)

Thus ends the Rahasya Ratnavali Hridayam