

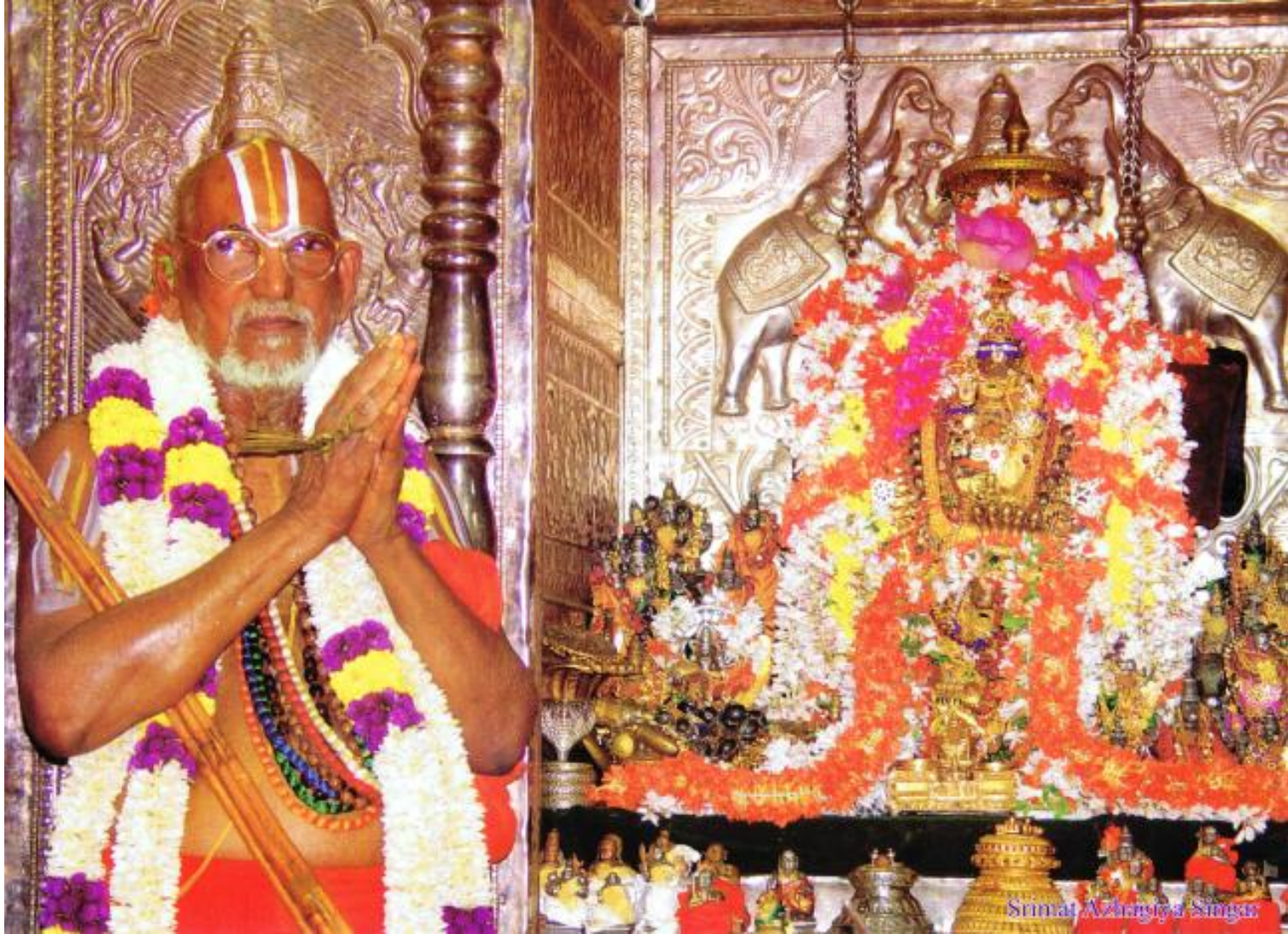
Srimad Rahasyatraya Saara Saaram

Volume 2



Svacchandam Sri.S.Aravamudachariar

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Prakrutham Srimad Azhagiya Singar and Sri MAIOlan

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Srimathe Ramanujaya Namaha

SRIMAD RAHASYATHRAYA SAARA SAARAM

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CONTINUED FROM VOLUME 1

*Classification of Qualified Persons:
Different Classes Among Them*

There are two kinds of such qualified aspirants who are engaged in the pursuit of moksha. Those who perform prapatti for the sake of moksha alone are *Direct Aspirants*. The rest perform Prapatti for the proper fulfilment of bhakti that leads to Moksha.

Prapatti is done in two ways. One is *Ukti Nishta* (by one's utterance) and the other, *Acharya Nishta* (performed by acharya on one's behalf). Just as for the seven kinds of baths, the result is the same according to the aspirant's nature, results of Prapatti are same for the aspirants in keeping with their nature.

Ukti Nishta is as follows. Though one may not know in detail about the limbs of Prapatti, the aspirant must have no other goal except *Narayana* and also have unswerving faith in His guardianship. The words betokening total surrender should be submitted to the Lord, saying that it is His responsibility now to save the aspirant. This is *Ukti Nishta*. When he utters the words repeated by his spiritual teacher without knowing their significance, if he does so with full faith and surrenders, the compassionate Lord accepts him and fulfils his desire. Even an aspirant who lacks in knowledge follows the surrender of *Ukti Nishta*, the Lord's compassion will save him.

Acharya Nishta is what the teacher does on behalf of his disciple. One can perform Prapatti only as *Ukti Nishta* or *Acharya Nishta*. When *Ukti Nishta* itself confers results, no doubt need be raised regarding *Acharya Nishta*. But he who does not perform Prapatti according to either *Ukti Nishta* or *Acharya Nishta* will not gain moksha. Be an animal or a bird, it can definitely gain moksha if a Sri Vaishnava acharya

performs Prapatti for them. Staying close to Vaishnavas and living in holy places may not give one moksha straightaway, but it will induce him to bhakti or prapatti that leads to moksha. For a devotee, residence in a good holy place will bring an accession of bhakti. For one who has done prapatti, such places of residence will increase his desire to serve the Lord. For one who is qualified to follow Bhakti Yoga like Vyasa, and who is not helpless either, and is prepared to bear delay, he will attain Moksha if he performs Prapatti which will avert the hindrances on the way, except his own wish to live which would fulfil his bhakti till the end. Prapatti helps this and grants remembrance of the Lord in the last moments and leads him to Moksha. Thus, for those who follow bhakti yoga Moksha is gained after a considerable lapse of time. This is because if the devotee has to work out his prarabhdha karmas through many lives, in his last life that will end the prarabhdha karma, he will gain remembrance of the Lord while leaving the body and attain moksha. It is not possible though to enumerate the number of births.

But for one who performs Prapatti, Moksha is assured at the conclusion of this life itself. He is not born again. All are qualified for Prapatti. This path removes all difficulties. It fulfils all desires. It is an easy way. It has to be done only once. It can be performed speedily. No hurdles come in its way. But it is a Brahmastra which ceases to be when another missile is used. In the same way, if one goes in for another way to gain

this result, Prapatti will not work. Thus, there is no hurdle for one who has performed Prapatti for gaining Moksha. But one does not seem to be gaining moksha as soon as he performs Prapatti. This is because the aspirants perform Prapatti to gain Moksha at the conclusion of his life on earth. The aspirant wants his body to continue to live as one can do service to the Lord in his archa (image) form. This is controlled by space and time. Since he has seen the greatness of archa form while in the body, and wants to do service, he prays for moksha at the conclusion of his present life. He performs service on earth and later offers unrivalled service in Moksha. Whatever he desires when performing Prapatti to the Lord, his desires are fulfilled in time. Hence Prapatti has been praised in many places.

The service performed in this world by one who has done Prapatti will be varied according to his desires. But the service and Ananda consciousness he gains in Moksha have no degree of difference.

The service he is given to do in Moksha has nothing to do with his earthly life. Any kind of service is given to him according to the grace of the Lord. He becomes qualified to perform all kinds of service.

The Lord gives no place in Srivaikuntha to one who has done neither bhakti yoga nor surrender. The result of devotion and surrender are the same. But one who performs prapatti gains results immediately. But the joy of meditating

upon the Lord is much less for him. For one who chooses bhakti, the pleasure of meditating upon the Lord is immesuarable. But he gets moksha only after a lapse of time. This is the only difference. There is no difference in the gains thereof. Hence no one can achieve Moksha without performing bhakti yoga or Prapatti.

On Several Means

This way of bhakti or Prapatti for gaining Moksha is one kind of the blossoming of knowledge. The attainment of this act also is another kind of blossoming of knowledge.

Of the two, the knowledge of the Way is helped by the senses. It would have been commanded by shastras. It would have five qualities including truth and would be about the Parabrahman that is spoken of having qualities as adumbrated in each of the several vidyas (disciplines). The attained knowledge would be about Brahman that is not dependent upon any sense organ and has auspicious qualities that are everlasting. That is, the knowledge of the Way is about Brahman that has certain attributes. The attained knowledge would be of Brahman who has all-auspicious qualities.

But according to the rule that one attains his object according to his upasana (aspirational discipline), one might think that the aspirant here will get only the qualities of his upasana. It is not so. The qualities that blossom forth during his upasana will be joined by other qualities also at the end. It is not as if other qualities are

from him.

This gain of the atman in moksha is service to the Lord. This is spoken of as one kind of blossoming of knowledge. It would mean that when he enjoys the Lord as containing all-auspicious qualities, Ananda flows forth as a flood. That is kinkarya or service.

The Supreme Lord is the Way and the Goal. That is, He is attained by the Realised souls because He is the content of the knoweldge of the aspirant and also gives the gain, so He is the Way. In the same manner He being the reason for the Ananda Consciousness attained by the aspirant, the Lord is the Goal.

For the aspirant who performs Prapatti straightaway to gain Moksha, the Lord gives Moksha immediately. Those who wish to gain Moksha through bhakti yoga, if they perform Prapatti for the fulfilment of bhakti, they will gain Moksha tardily. For him who performs prapatti for Moksha, the Lord sees to it by His Grace that the Moksha gained through bhakti does not get delayed. Hence the Lord becomes another Way. In the same manner, those who follow the path of bhakti to attain Moksha, if they perform Prapatti for the fulfilment of bhakti yoga, the Lord accepts the Prapatti, removes all hurdles beginning from karma yoga to the completion of bhakti yoga and helps in fulfilling that devotion.

Four are the ways undertaken by one who desires Moksha. They are karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga and Prapatti. Of these, bhakti

yoga or Prapatti is the straight pathway to Moksha. One can follow only one of the two. Both should not be followed together. Of these, Prapatti for Moksha is to be done only once. Karma yoga and jnana yoga lead to Moksha only through bhakti yoga. They do not lead to Moksha straightaway.

Karma yoga is performing action. One should know the truth about the soul and the Supreme through the shastras. Having attained the knowledge, one should perform one's personal work without hankering after results. He must also engage himself in the daily duties and those meant for special occasions and the work ordained by shastra. Karmas are of three kinds: Nithya (daily), naimittika (special) and kamya (performed for personal fulfilment). Nithya includes work like sandyavandana. That which if not done is a sin and must be atoned for is Nithya.

Naimittika belongs to special occasions. This is like bathing and performing rituals during eclipses. If the rituals are not done, sin is the result. Kamya is performing sacrifices to attain ends like heavenly life. If this is done, one gains what is desired. But by not doing these karmas no sin accrues to the aspirant. But the best way is to do them not for personal gain but to please the Lord. It is best to avoid performing such karmas for gain. Such actions form karma yoga. Of these, one portion includes performing worship to the Lord, tapasya, undertaking pilgrimages, charity and yagas. Another part is Vedic

recitation, cogitating on the significance of Vedic hymns, the three types of Pranayama and the rest.

This karma yoga is an instrument to realise one's atman. Even as Prapatti is for some a straight way to Moksha, and for others it is through Bhakti, karma yoga also is a way to realise one's self straightaway or through jnana yoga.

Jnana yoga is a constant meditation on the atman by one who has posited a victory over his mind through karma yoga. He must meditate upon atman as different from Prakriti and as the body of the Lord which is under His control and is held up by Him.

If through the yoga of karma and jnana one is able to watch one's atman, one can gain a rare enjoyment. His desire for external things ceases. But without getting sunk in the joy of beholding the atman, one should continuously apply himself to bhakti yoga that leads to the Moksha of enjoying the Supreme Lord. In this manner, since the vision of his jivatman which is the body of the Lord helps him envision the Lord, this too becomes bhakti yoga.

Bhakti yoga is a constant meditation on the Divine. The meditation on the Lord should be done joyously without thinking of anything else, keeping oneself not as the servant of any one and with the clear understanding that he is Narayana's serviteur. This meditation should be continuous as the flow of oil. The meditation should be like watching the Lord face-to-face. It must be done everyday till one reaches Moksha. Such

continuous meditation should be on when life leaves the body. This is Bhakti yoga. One who follows this bhakti yoga must follow the activities laid down according to one's caste. That way his intelligence becomes keener and helps bhakti yoga by avoiding mistakes.

Bhakti yoga also helps the aspirant gain a taste for Moksha for those who do not have full faith. It helps by giving them an increase in wealth and other things desired by them. The Lord speaks of four types of devotees who worship Him for such bhakti. In the same place the Lord also says that only he who follows bhakti yoga with the sole intent on Moksha is superior among his devotees. Such bhakti yoga whose aim is Moksha is known as Para-bhakti. Bhakti is somewhat lesser than Para-bhakti. Bhakti will help the blossoming of Para-bhakti by emphasising the need for love towards the Lord. The Para-bhakti that rises from such bhakti creates a desire in the aspirant to see the Lord in person. It makes him cry out: "My Lord, show yourself to me!" By such desire the Lord's grace flows out and for that moment gives the aspirant a vision of the Lord. This vision of the Lord is known as Parajnana. A tremendous love and joy rises in the aspirant who has seen the Anandamaya form of the Lord, verily like a thirsty man chancing upon a lake. This love is known as Parama-bhakti. As with Nammalwar, Parama-bhakti brings him to a state of the highest Ananda, raises a deep aspiration in him and makes him call out with force and compels the Lord to grant him Moksha.

Prapatti is surrendering to the Lord. Only Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas are qualified for bhakti yoga. Those outside these three castes must follow Prapatti for attaining Mosha. Even those belonging to these castes who have neither the knowledge nor capacity to do bhakti yoga, are qualified for Prapatti. Even those who have everything in their favour under such groups can gain result through Prapatti, if they do not wish to tarry back tardily. Prapatti gives all that one desires. This is advised as an alternative to Parabhakti.

Those qualified for bhakti and Prapatti should follow one of them only. The results of both the ways are in no way different. Just as the Vedas have spoken of the way of bhakti in several ways, the mantras of Prapatti have also been given in different ways at times. Though bhakti yoga has various methods, only one of them should be followed.

In the same way, though there are variations in mantras used for Prapatti, only one of them must be used. When aiming for a particular goal one must choose either bhakti or prapatti. Both methods should not be followed. Prapatti should be performed only once for a particular goal. If each follows either of them according to his eligibility, he will surely gain the goal.

Fitness for Prapatti

He who does not go in for other ways to reach his goal and prefers Prapatti alone which is 'the path of renunciation (nyasa)', he must

understand his fitness for the same. Here 'fitness' would mean the desire the aspirant has for his goal, and his capacity to undertake the method. The capacity includes an understanding of what has been put down in the shastras, the ability to follow those injunctions, and to have the caste and qualities enumerated therein. The gains of those who have the qualities have been enumerated. The commandment for gaining a particular goal is called upaya. He who is performing Prapatti to gain moksha must understand his relationship with the Supreme Lord just as one who follows bhakti yoga. But the distinguishing mark of one who performs Prapatti is his extreme weakness and of having no other refuge. Weakness here means the aspirant has no capability of doing anything but Prapatti. Not having any other refuge is the state of not caring for any other result than Moksha, and not surrendering to anyone except Narayana. Several shastras and Puranas say that taking refuge in gods other than Narayana will give only lesser results and not Moksha. Only those who surrender to Him gain Moksha. Those who do not wish for Moksha immediately but prefer to remain in the body and worship Narayana, their body will remain so till the time is over and then the aspirant reaches Moksha.

For any path other than Prapatti, one needs the necessary knowledge and strength. Those who have neither and desire for immediate Moksha have to take recourse to Prapatti. This condition is described as the aspirant's weakness and

incapacity. The aspirant must be sure that he will not take refuge in anyone except Narayana and that he will not hanker after any gain other than Moksha. Those who are so qualified can do Prapatti. Unlike bhakti yoga, no caste considerations bind this path. All are qualified for Prapatti.

On Accessories

This Prapatti is also a vidya (discipline) like bhakti. The Vedas speak of thirty-two vidyas. In the same way, Prapatti is a vidya. This is known as Nyasa Vidya. The Vedas have spoken of it.

Nyasa vidya has five accessories (angas). They are the desire to do what is agreeable (to the Lord), rejecting what is displeasing (to the Lord), a sense of helplessness, a tremendous faith and praying (to the Lord) for refuge. This is known as Nyasa Vidya. Nyasa means placing something in the hands of a dependable person. Prapatti is handing over oneself to Narayana.

In the Prapatti praying for moksha, one must hand over the result of Prapatti to Narayana. Hence, when performing Prapatti for gaining Moksha, one must meditatively give the assurance that he has no interest in the fruits of Prapatti as well.

The five accessories of Prapatti must be understood as follows. A definite desire to do what is agreeable (anukula) to Narayana and not do what opposes Him. These two principles are most important because Narayana is our Lord and we should do what He likes and avoid what

He does not so He will be pleased. The shastras are the commandments of the Lord. What they ask us to do must be done. What has been spoken of against must be rejected. One should escape from dangers by doing so and pleasing the Lord. If we do not act according to the shastras, we may have to face the Lord's punishment.

Next comes humility. The aspirant must meditate upon his helplessness. Thereby he should free himself from pride. He must act with humility to elicit the Lord's compassion. By taking such an attitude, the Lord would be kindly disposed towards him. The humility will convince him that there is no other way than surrender to the Lord.

Now there is the act of reposing a tremendous faith in the Lord. Only when he has a firm faith that the Lord will save him can this Prapatti bear fruition. If he has doubts clouding his faith, Prapatti will remain fruitless. This faith completes Prapatti and helps the aspirant remain free of worries.

The fifth accessory is praying to the Lord: "Save me". This is also important. This moksha is one of the four Purusharthas. Purushartha means that for which man prays. As with others, only when man prays for Moksha, it becomes a purushartha. The Lord gives the purushartha of Moksha only after man prays for it. Hence the prayer to the Lord, "you must save me" by the aspirant also becomes a limb of Prapatti.

Without the presence of these five accessories, it is not possible to deliver oneself to the Lord. Such Prapatti or saranagati is witnessed often in great works like the Ramayana.

One of them is the scene in which Trijatha asks the demonesses to surrender to Sita. Trijatha told the demonesses: "Do not speak harshly to Sita. Speak to her with affection." This indicates the rejection of enmity to the Lord and an approach of friendliness (anukula). Humility is indicated by saying: "There is great danger coming to them through Rama". And by this the pride of the demonesses was humbled. Such is the third limb of Prapatti. As she said, "Sita can save us from danger", a tremendous faith is indicated. When it was said, "let us pray to Sita", the need to pray for help is understood. When it was mentioned that Sita saves if one takes refuge in her, the Prapatti of one's surrender is made clear. Sita welcomed the manner in which the demonesses did not express any opposition and said she will save them. In the same manner, she also saved the demonesses when Hanuman asked for her permission to destroy them. Thus we get an idea of Prapatti's five limbs in this incident. As Trijatha surrendered on behalf of the demonesses, they were all saved.

These limbs can be traced in the surrender of Vibhishana also. The rakshasas who came with Vibhishana were also included in the surrender. Vibhishana told his elder brother Ravana: "Return Sita to Rama. We can then live in peace." Thus we know Vibhishana wanted the good (happiness)

of Rama. As Ravana did not accept the advice and also spoke insultingly about Rama, Vibhishana decided that it was not good to live with Ravana anymore, approached Rama and told him: "I have left Lanka and come away." This is the third limb of rejecting forces that happen to be inimical to the Lord. A tremendous faith in Rama was made clear when Vibhishana said: "Go and tell the noble Rama who guards everyone that Vibhishana has come". "I have surrendered to Rama" indicates the prayer for guardianship. Thus Vibhishana's surrender to Rama for refuge is complete with its five-fold accessories.

Thus whoever performs Prapatti that has these five limbs will gain Moksha without delay.

Performing Prapatti with the Accessories

The important limb of Prapatti by an aspirant for Moksha is offering himself to the Lord. This would mean considering himself to be the servant of the Lord who is the sound 'A' of Pranava indicating guardianship and supremacy. He must feel that he is the servant of only Narayana, and that for himself he has no rights of any kind. He must know that he has neither any right nor profit in the power of saving himself and those with him. Action done with this attitude is Prapatti. The following is the method of performing Prapatti, offering oneself to the Lord.

"The Lord who is All-Independent is guarding me for Himself. I do not belong to anyone except the Lord. I am no servant of anyone else. I am the serviteur of Him alone. I

am controlled by Him. I am not controlled even by myself. I have no right to consider anything as my property. I have no capacity to safeguard myself or my belongings to gain fruits for myself. Myself and all that is mine belongs to the Lord. Prapatti is considering the Lord to have the responsibility of guarding me and my things and His are the enjoyment of the fruits thereof."

But then, is he not performing Prapatti to gain Moksha? If so, does the gain not belong to the jivatman? One might wonder how in this case the fruits of action becomes that of the Lord. Just as He rules over the inconscient, He also rules over the jivatmas. Being the possessor, He performs action for Himself and so becomes the possessor of the fruits here as well.

Even as one finds pleasure in decorating lifeless dolls with garments and ornaments, or in feeding a living parrot with milk and making it lisp words, the Lord gives the jivatman the fruits of action. Thereby He enjoys the results.

One should observe this Prapatti with five accessories by repeating 'prapadhye' in the first part of the Dvaya Mantra along with the word 'saranam'.

This Prapatti for Moksha has to be done only once. Such is the revelation of the Vedas. In Prapatti 'parasamarpana' or offering oneself to the Lord is most important.

The act of Prapatti with its accessories has been codified as follows. The aspirant must give

up the feeling that he is the one doing it, that it is his or that he deserves the fruits of action. All the five accessories like considering oneself friendly to the Lord (anukula) are needed. He must worship the lineage of acharyas. Then he must recite the Dvaya Mantra and offer himself and the fruits of such Prapatti to the Lord. It has been decided that this is the right type of Prapatti.

The reason to overcome the feeling that he is the doer is to realise that his action is due to the permission given by the Lord and that he remains forever the Lord's servant.

Also, by considering nothing to be his property, the aspirant overcomes the feeling of 'mine'. Being a serviteur of the Lord and since his gains are those which belong to the Lord, the idea of being a servant helps him consolidate such thoughts. As all that are his belongs to the Lord including the result of Prapatti, this helps the aspirant give up thoughts of 'mine'.

The Lord is the way to reach the goal. Due to his innate love, the Lord has given this body to the jivatman, and then upto his making him repeat the Dvaya, He remains firm in granting grace to the aspirant. Thus He is the one direct cause of giving moksha to him. For those who do not go in search of other paths, He becomes the path.

Nadadur Ammal has dealt briefly with the method of performing Prapatti with accessories. "From times immemorial I have been engaged in this life performing acts not palatable to you. From today I will act according to your wishes. I will

not go against them. I have no means to gain you. I am holding on to you as the Way. You should be my Way. I have no responsibility anymore of rejecting what is not right or gaining what is needed."

It is important to do all these five movements once and for all. Though such activities like being responsible towards the Lord are to be held always by him, that too is the result of Prapatti. They are not the limbs of Prapatti. Hence the jivas who serve the Lord faultlessly as long as they are in the body and perform Prapatti for Moksha, are the best among aspirants when their body falls away.

The Man who has done Prapatti

After having performed Prapatti in this manner, the aspirant has nothing else to do at any time. He should not repeat the performance after having done it. By doing only once, he is assured of result. Since the Lord is independent and is an image of Truth who is the giver of results, he says. "do not sorrow any more." Thereby the aspirant who has performed Prapatti is freed from worries. The Lord has been accepted as the means as He had said, "surrender to me alone." The Lord has also decided: "I shall save you from all sins." The jivatman having placed his faith in One who is dependable and capable is now free of sorrow in the matter of gaining his end. Like a poor man full of joy at the unexpected gain of a treasure, the aspirant is full of joy thinking of the Moksha he is to attain.

Though one who has performed Prapatti must continue to act in accordance with the duties enjoined upon him by his birth in a caste and for a certain term of life, and it may appear he is worshipping other godheads like Brahma and Rudra, he is actually worshipping Narayana who dwells in them. The Brahmasutra says that the names of those gods also directly refer to Narayana. This aspirant is not controlled by any other deity after he has surrendered to Narayana. Nor does he worship them. He worships Narayana alone. Just as the realised souls serve the Lord in Moksha according to His wishes, this aspirant does what has been set down as the commandments and likings of Narayana in the Vedas. Once he has accepted the way and is sure to attain the goal, the aspirant remains without any worry and is at peace. This state of peace gained by the fulfilment of the aspirant's thoughts has been praised by the shastras and the acharyas who have faith in those shastras.

Sri Ramanuja has recorded this idea in his Saranagati Gadya. We had gone against the commandments of the Lord in the Vedas and other scriptures. As a result, we had suffered for long in this life, stung by the anger of the Lord. The Lord's indwelling compassion watched out for an opportune moment to save us. Hence the acharya's glance of compassion fell upon us. We repeated the Dvaya Mantra taught by him and performed Prapatti. After taking to such Prapatti, there is no need for any other action to please the Lord. The Lord forgives the earlier mistakes

of this aspirant. Even if he commits new ones, the Lord corrects them. The Lord takes upon Himself the responsibility of saving this jivatma. "So do not worry", says Ramanuja.

The teacher of surrender in the Gita has also mentioned in the charama sloka: "do not sorrow". The sorrow that was there (and should have been there) before the performance of Prapatti should leave you after surrender: such is the Lord's message at the conclusion of the Gita. Hence, all that an aspirant has to do after Prapatti is for gaining moksha, and nought else.

The Signs of Nishta

One who has surrendered to the Lord must know about his firm commitment. That commitment is necessary in three things: his true nature, the Way he has chosen and the purushartha of Moksha he is to gain. He must have nishta or firm knowledge about his personality (svarupa).

First let us see how one has knowledge about his own true nature. If he is subjected to indignity by others, he must think of it as addressed to his body, and that it does not affect him. So he must remain free from sorrow. The shastras say: "If a person curses, the sins of the cursed enter him." Hence the aspirant must pity the evil one for having acquired sins.

Besides, as it is imperative for him to know about his own shortcomings, he must be grateful towards his tormentor for having helped him ascertain his shortcomings so that he may

This aspirant has no other way to follow for gaining Moksha. Nor need he repeat Prapatti for the purpose. But during his life on earth, the work he does on earth till the body falls away is for gaining happiness. Just as there are some types of service to the Lord indicted for realised souls even after gaining Moksha, there are some services on the earth as well. The aim of such service is the Lord's Ananda. However, the service should be subject to shastras and the season. It should be possible to relate the service on earth to the service done after attaining Moksha.

The Dvaya Mantra should always be repeated so as not to forget Prapatti performed earlier. If we wish to please the Lord, prime among our acts to be rejected is misdemeanour towards God's devotees. Other important activities are the service performed to the Lord and to the devotees as comanded by the scriptures.

There are two types of service to the Lord on earth. One is Anjna which is His commandment. They are actions like performing sandhyavandanam daily as set down in the scriptures. If one fails to do them, there would be punishment. One will have to go through atonement.

The other is Anujna. This includes service like offering flowers to the Lord in the temple. No sin occurs by not doing such service. All the same, they must be performed according to

Third comes the aspirant's understanding of the goal. One must realise that just as birth and death are not under our control, our life is also beyond our control. Realising this one must remain in peace in this life designed for us by the Lord.

Even should the aspirant worry, he must understand that the Lord's will alone will be done. Those things that come to him without any effort, if they are not rejected by the shastras, he may accept and enjoy them as the Lord's gift. He must not have joy or sorrow regarding these things. His sole desire should be to perform the Lord's service. He must hope for Moksha at the earliest. Such a stage betokens a keen faith in the goal (purushartha).

One who has such a full understanding of himself, the way and the goal will not be touched by fear at any time. In the same way he will have no attraction for things considered superior in this world. His only fear would be a possible disrespect for elders that he might commit unknowingly. So also he will gain joy by serving the Lord according to the station in his life. He will not be touched by joy or sorrow at unexpected gains or losses.

Conduct after Prapatti

One who has performed Prapatti goes on with his duties, has a firm understanding of his real nature, of the way and the goal. Now to the manner in which he must regulate his life on earth.

This aspirant has no other way to follow for gaining Moksha. Nor need he repeat Prapatti for the purpose. But during his life on earth, the work he does on earth till the body falls away is for gaining happiness. Just as there are some types of service to the Lord indicted for realised souls even after gaining Moksha, there are some services on the earth as well. The aim of such service is the Lord's Ananda. However, the service should be subject to shastras and the season. It should be possible to relate the service on earth to the service done after attaining Moksha.

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There are two types of service to the Lord on earth. One is Anjna which is His commandment. They are actions like performing sandhyavandanam daily as set down in the scriptures. If one fails to do them, there would be punishment. One will have to go through atonement.

The other is Anujna. This includes service like offering flowers to the Lord in the temple. No sin occurs by not doing such service. All the same, they must be performed according to

shastras. Though it is no sin not to do them, unshastraic performance would lead to sin. Such service pleases the Lord and makes him love the aspirant more. Though he has learnt several things associated with his personality in clear terms, he must not rest upon his oars, but seek clarifications on the aspects that are still unclear to him. In this manner, his experience of the Lord would ever be on the increase. His faith in the Lord would remain steady. Though the aspirant should not ask for anything else from the Lord, he can pray for devotion to the Lord's feet and knowledge. There is nothing wrong in this. He must listen to ascetics propounding high thoughts so that his mind will immerse in love for the Lord. Good knowledge is gained by association with good people. Hence contact with good persons is imperative. He must learn of action that would be appropriate to his caste, state of life, gotra and qualities and then follow the same. But because he is given to good habits he should not think highly of himself and despise others. Such thoughts will fling him into the deep. By God's special grace, he might gain the goal of a direct vision of the Lord as it had happened to Nammalwar, Nathamui and others. But he must not attribute it to personal effort. Instead he must think of himself as a servant of the Lord whose compassion has gained him such grace. So should he live on in humility.

He should not confound his mind with self-pity for not having trod the good path before and for having lost the opportunity to serve the

Lord. Instead, he must console himself through the teachings of his Acharyas on the significance of incarnations and through books like the Gita. Not wasting his time by sorrowing over his past days of worthlessness, he must be happy now for having gained a worthy mind today by Lord's grace. Like one who builds a dam across running waters, he must henceforth engage himself in the services of Anjna and Anujna. The food he eats must be sattvic. In this manner the senses will become suitable for worshipping the Lord. They will not go after evil habits. As commanded by the shastras, one must perform the Anjna and Anujna services at the scheduled times.

Unlike the sick person drinking milk to overcome sickness, one must do such service as a healthy man drinking milk that he has received without hankering after it. He must go to temples where the Lord has been consecrated and worship the image with full faith in the presence of divinity therein. All sins are washed away when one salutes the Lord from His feet to the crown. The aspirant gains holiness by such salutation. Evil thoughts and a lack of faith in shastras are chased away by saluting the Lord in the image. The Lord out of His illimitable compassion allows himself to be controlled by the devotee. And the Lord ravishes the heart of the devotee as well. One must act towards the Lord as a chaste wife towards her husband, as a mother bringing up her child, as a teacher loves his disciple and as a friend.

He must worship the Lord only with things that have been earned in the right manner without going against shastraic injunctions. He must have full faith that it was the Acharya's grace that has given him such a chance to serve the Lord and His devotees. He must be grateful that their teachings have given him such divine servitude. The gathering of such good works gained unexpectedly and the first movement of Prapatti, as also the aforementioned services that follow Prapatti must be recognised as resulting from the Lord's natural grace and he must remain grateful.

These are in brief the activities of the mind, speech and action that should be performed or rejected after one's surrender. Prime among the desires to be forgotten (if one's aspiration for Moksha must not get diluted) is a weakness for sensual pleasures. What helps him in this is the acharya's grace and help for which he must be grateful. The most important of the things to be done for retaining one's humility is avoiding self-praise. The constant repetition of the Dvaya Mantra helps us remember the action of Prapatti all the time. Disrespect to devotees must be totally eschewed to retain the Lord's good will. Other important activities include service to the Lord and His devotees according to the shastras.

Ultimate Object of Life

The earlier chapter said that service should be rendered to the devotees in the same way as one serves the Lord. The reasons are as follows.

Shastras say this jivatma is sesha and the Lord is the seshi. Sri Ramanuja has explained the meaning of this statement in his Vedartha Sangraha. One who considers the good of others as his own primal good is a sesha. He who receives that good is the seshi. Only when an individual performs a service that is good to the Lord can he be a sesha. The quality of this good depends upon the means. Now, the means for the jiva to hold on to the Lord is to become the body of the Lord. But the body is not exclusively that of the jivatman. It is common to matter (achit) as well. Hence, the jivatman's individual offering comes through his intelligence.

If the actions of the jivatman do not conform to the shastras, the Lord gives punishment for the wrongs done. In this way, the jiva becomes the cause of the Lord's play. If the actions conform to the shastras, the Lord is happy. His generosity comes into play and He praises the devotee. In the same way the Immortals (Nitya) and Realised Souls (Muktas) perform service as desired by the Lord and are thus useful to Him. The shastras are the commandments of the Lord. Hence the aspirant should learn of the Lord's desires through them and become useful in divine works. By going against shastras the Lord does gain some play, but the aspirant receives evil. As a realised soul, one can learn about the Lord's desires directly. As a devotee upon earth, he learns of them through shastras, by his acts pleases the Lord and for himself gains Ananda.

It is true that when a jivatma performs an action with devotion, he stands to gain. But this also has to come through the pleasure of the Lord. Several verses in the Puranas assure us that service to the devotees is the best action one can do. Like the joy given to a king by pleasing his prince, the service rendered to devotees pleases the Lord. We learn from the Puranas that the jivatma should give importance to such service. Besides, whatever pleases the devotee, also gives Ananda to the indwelling Lord. This too is the worship of the Lord.

As the aspirant has been advised to serve devotees, and is himself a devotee, would they not stand in sesha-seshi relationship? Would this not be a paradox? There is nothing self-contradictory as it is like the cases of mutual help in everyday life. When one devotee serves another, the former becomes sesha to the latter. If the devotee who had accepted the service happens to serve the other at another time, he becomes a sesha. Therefore there is nothing wrong in devotees serving one another. In fact, such mutual service is very good. Hence the shastras have not said anything against it. It is best for devotees to be sesha and seshi amongst themselves in consonance with the Lord's wishes. Such service to devotees gives joy to the Lord. Just as Lakshmana fell in love with the good qualities of Rama and preferred to be his serviteur and not merely a younger brother, a devotee should love the good qualities of another devotee and serve him. Since such service was not only due to the

Lord's commandment but the devotee's own desire, it would please the Lord no end. The state of a devotee attaining seshi-hood is due to the Lord's free nature. It is for His pleasure that the devotee is a seshā and a seshi at different times. This state is also due to the Lord's grace and for his Ananda. Those who have understood this truth about their goal (purushārtha) will not act discourteously towards the Lord or His devotees. They will not curse them. They will not doubt. They will not seek any god except Narayana. They will do nothing for their independence or consider doing anything for such freedom. They would know that such action (or even thought) is wrong. They would consider the kindness of devotees as the greatest benefaction for themselves. They would like only such benefits for their service.

On Shastraic Injunctions

Holding on to this relationship of being as seshā to the Lord, the aspirant should ever serve the Lord and His devotees. He should know that his service is in consonance with the shastras or not. To the aspirant who has been placed on earth which is inert, shastras alone foster his intelligence. So he should follow the shastras. Where the shastras say something that is in tune with his desire, he may follow the same. Such is the indication given.

When Sri Ramanuja was about to leave the world for Vaikuntha, he realised that his disciples were full of sorrow. He commanded them not to

give up their lives. Their sorrow increased further and they wished to know what their future line of action was to be. Sri Ramanuja said as follows:

After performing Prapatti, the responsibility of that aspirant's future rests with the Lord. The aspirant need not worry about it. If he does anything with a sense of feeling responsible for himself, the Prapatti would become fruitless. It will become a falsity. Since his life on earth is a result of the deeds he has done earlier, it is meaningless to be sad about it. If he goes on feeling sorry, he is sure to become a sceptic.

Hence there is nothing to do for his life here or the state hereafter. But he cannot do what he likes as that would go against his real nature. Even if the work he performs does not have anything to do with his surrender, the work should have a connection with his service to the Divine.

As long as he lives on earth, the aspirant has five types of service to perform. They are:

To study Sri Bhashya, teach it to others and propagate it. If not capable of doing it, listen to the Divya Prabandha hymns of the Alvars and propagate them. If not possessed of that ability, he should cook food in Divya Desas and offer it to the Lord. Also perform other types of service like offering sandal paste and flower garlands and lighting lamps. If not in a position to undertake such service, he should meditate upon the Dvaya Mantra. If not able to do that, remain in contact with a Srivaishnava and give

him his affection.

There are three types of people with whom the aspirant has to have contact: *anukula* (friend), *pratikula* (enemy) and one who is neither. Of these Srivaishnavas are the friends, the enemies of God are enemies, and those who belong to neither party are *samsaris* (worldly people).

When meeting friends one should think of them as sandal paste, flowers, moonlight, cool breeze and the rest and behave in that manner with great joy. One should keep away from enemies as one would from snakes and fire. The rest should just be ignored. In case the enemy or *samsari* appears friendly, one can try to convey the lasting truth to them. But even if they are enemies, one must have compassion towards them. If one does not behave properly in this manner, it would mean he is harbouring a desire for money or lust.

If one shows indifference to Srivaishnavas for the sake of gaining wealth or gratification, the Lord will become angry as a king whose prince has been insulted in his court.

In the same way, suppose he befriends an enemy for gaining wealth or physical gratification, he would become the target of the Lord's disgust, as a king would feel when he finds his queen begging from a lesser person.

If he gains the friendship of *samsaris* for gaining wealth or happiness, the Lord will not accept him rejecting him as an idiot who cannot differentiate between stones and precious gems.

Such was the teaching of Sri Ramanuja. This teaching is in accordance with shastras. The shastras have a general rule that one must shun wealth and happiness that go against dharma. Hence the Lord feels that the aspirant should not go against this shastraic dictum. Some important texts have announced that the Lord is not pleased with one who does not favour a friend and one must eschew support to an enemy.

It is said that one loses the affection of the Lord by joining forces with the enemy. One must also be indifferent towards the rest who are worldly people. Such was Sri Ramanuja's desire that one must watch one's step in one's progression in accordance with the shastras, and not simply follow one's personal whims and fancies. He has said that "acting according to one's whim is not the aspirant's true nature". Alavandar also has said that one must not go against the shastras. The Lord has stated: "The Vedas and shastras are my commands, and whoever disobeys them are my enemies. Even if he has devotion to me, he is no Srivaishnava."

Hence the aspirant should perform service in accordance with the shastras. When a person dear to the king destroys a stream made by him, he is punished severely by the king. In the same way, if an aspirant disobeys shastras, he gets estranged from the Lord. Should the aspirant happen to commit such mistakes, he should perform surrender again as atonement. If he does not do so, the Lord will visit sorrows upon him as a punishment.

Indeed, if the aspirant is sattvik, he would himself feel bad for having worked against the Lord's wishes. So he must pray to the Lord to chase away the sorrows. Till the Lord's anger is exhausted, the aspirant will feel very unhappy. Suppose such unhappiness does not shade his mind, one must needs wonder whether his Prapatti had succeeded. It is also doubtful if he is desirous of Moksha. But if he follows the shastras, the Prapatti will remove the obstacles towards Moksha by pleasing the Lord. The anger of the Lord resulting from the flouting of the shastras is nullified and becomes the means to gain the Lord's pleasure.

Two types of service are mentioned in the shastras. One is Anjna (command). Another is Anujna (accepted). Anjna is for doing service to remain free from the Lord's punishment. Anujna is for getting the result for which he undertakes the service. But Anujna should be performed strictly in accordance with the shastras. Going against shastras is criminal. Activities like sandhya vandanam are Anjna. Performing service in temples, the repetition of the Lord's Name etc., are Anujna. If Anjna is not performed, it is wrong. If Anujna is performed there will be results. If Anujna is not done, it is no sin.

Atonement for Offences

When an aspirant thinks he is sesha to the Lord, performs service in accordance with the shastras and is free from any danger, he will not deliberately indulge in sin. Will it not be against

his chosen kainkarya?

If at sometime or other due to the results of action in a past birth he finds himself in a place without water or caught in a time of drought, or is lost in extreme sorrow, happens to commit a mistake, the Lord bears with him and will not think of imposing any punishment for the lapse.

If the sin is committed knowingly also, when the Lord has decided to forgive him, the sins will not follow, and the aspirant will feel ashamed, perform Prapatti and be rid of sin.

Even if he does not atone but keeps on the wrong course due to the actions in his past birth, the Vedas that are the spring of Puranas have given the assurance that one who has surrendered need fear no hell. The Lord out of compassion will give him some mild punishment like blindness out of compassion. It is like a king who imposes milder punishments upon those near him who have committed a wrong. In any case, it is certain that the prapanna (aspirant) will gain Moksha. There may be delay in gaining Moksha in proportion to the wrong committed by the aspirant. For some, life is stretched long making him suffer more, but he gains Moksha the moment the physical body disintegrates. A prapanna has no rebirth. Moksha is a certainty for him at the close of his mortality.

If a prapanna indulges in wrong-doing after performing Prapatti for Moksha, it is better he performs it again. This way he is rid of sins. He is also safe from losing the Lord's affection. Nor will he be punished for committing sins.

After performing Prapatti as atonement, one must avoid wrong-doing at all costs. If he indulges in his evil ways, he will be punished. The main reason for such indulgence is a lack of discrimination. This lack of discrimination makes one think of the physical body as one's soul (atma). The feeling that he is the owner of the body which actually belongs to the Lord, the pride that he is his own master and hence need not obey any other are the follies of the soul. This ignorance has to be discarded and one must gain discrimination..

When an aspirant surrenders, the prarabhdha sins (due to evil acts performed in previous births) and those that he committed in spite of himself are all gone. The sins that had been willingly performed by him in this birth get removed along with the earlier ones when he performs Prapatti. In case a sin gets committed at the time of surrender, that too can be nullified by surrendering again. Of the sins committed by an aspirant, the most heinous is bhagavata apachara (wrong-doing towards the Lord's devotees). The Lord cannot countenance bhagavata apachara. So the aspirant has to ask for forgiveness from the same devotee whom he has wronged, and make peace with him. Only then can he regain the Lord's pleasure. Among devotees there are no caste differentiations. Whatever be the caste of the bhagavata, unless his forgiveness is gained, there is no way out for the prapanna. He cannot gain the grace of the Lord. There are instances of this in the Puranas and there is the forgiveness

sought by Sugriva from Lakshmana. Hence atonement for sins committed is very important.

Residence Suitable for an Aspirant

The aspirant should know about the suitability of the residence he chooses to use. Aryavarta and other holy places do not follow the varnashrama dharma properly and hence they are unsuitable. The aspirant should choose a place where the four castes follow their dharmas properly. The best place for him is where devotees are found in plenty. Sri Bhagavata has said that in Kaliyuga large numbers of devotees will be found in certain places and these areas would be adjacent to rivers like Tambraparni, Vaigai, Palar and Cauvery in Tamil Nadu. So Tamil Nadu is ideal for residence for devotees. The places mentioned with affection by Alwars and Acharyas are holy places. Though Sri Ramanuja has referred to "living in comfort in Srirangam", it is only cited as an example. In the Tirtha-yatra Parva of the Mahabharata and in the Ramayana the residences of the Lord have been enumerated. Just as the residences of the Lord in His Rama and Krishna incarnations have been praised, in the Pancharatra you find mentions of the eight svayam-vyakta kshetras like Tirumalai and Srirangam and other places where devotees have set up images of the Lord. If one resides in such a place, the mind will remain undisturbed till the end. Whether one performs some service or not, residence in a holy place is most desirable. In every way the area chosen by the Lord and His devotees as residence is the best. But though

Kasi and such places are holy, if there are no bhagavatas around who speak of the glory of the Lord, the places become unfit for residence for a prapanna.

Departing from the Physical

It was stated earlier that Moksha was certain for the prapanna at the disintegration of the body, once he has performed Prapatti. He will not commit wrongs. Even if he does, he will perform Prapatti again to be freed of the sin. Even if he does not, the Lord will give him some punishment and finally give him Moksha.

But if the prapanna continues to pray at the altar of other gods, it would mean his Prapatti has not borne fruit. The most important need for Prapatti is total faith in the Lord. His praying to other gods shows that he has no such total faith and hence his Prapatti has been fruitless. He will not gain Moksha either.

For those who are certain to get Moksha, this body will hold on only till the prarabdha karma broods over him. Then he is certain to gain Moksha after the disintegration of the body. The association of uttarayana and daytime with Moksha is for others, not for the prapanna. Prapannas and devotees are not controlled by such considerations in the matter of attaining Moksha.

The devotee who is found fit for moksha is shown the path of the brahma nadi (the vein of Brahma) by the Lord Himself, made to pass

through it, and conveyed to Moksha via the rays of the sun and the archiradi marga (the Shining path).

There is no rule that the prapanna remembers the Lord at the moment of his life leaving the body. Though there is no remembrance, Moksha is certain. It is for other devotees who are not prapannas that the Gita lays down the need to remember the Lord at the moment of release from the body.

The Prescribed Path

When the jivatma has reached the nadi (vein) at the crown, it is taken out of the body by the Lord and conveyed through the prescribed path. The jivatma is led by the Lord Himself through Archis (fire), day-time, sukla paksha (bright half of the moon), uttarayana, year, Vayu, Aditya, Chandra, lightning, Varuna, Indra and Amanava (Vaidyuta) with the help of Prajapati. On the way the jivatma is made to enjoy various pleasures as well.

Then he is taken to Srivaikuntha, made to throw away the gross body created by karma and the subtle body created by experiential knowledge and given the body that has nothing to do with prakriti (matter). He is then taken to the tank of Airammediyam and made to stand near the aswattha tree called Somayavana. There he is welcomed by five hundred divine damsels carrying garlands, ornaments and garments. The atma is infused with scent, taste and glow. As the crowned, heavenly denizens welcome him, the

prapanna is led to the guards called Prajapatis and is given royal treatment. The Lord then shows Himself with His consorts in the Hall of Ananda. The prapanna joins the lotus feet of the Lord along with other Muktas and Nityasuris. His true nature shines forth and he engages himself in all service with Muktas and Nityasuris with no trace of opposition.

Those devotees who have chosen bhakti yoga to gain this path, have to meditate on all this daily on the earth. But the prapanna has no need to do so. Yet this description is helpful to know what one gains in choosing the path of Prapatti. As it is about the Moksha he is to gain, the very thought will make him happy. Even if he does not have a complete idea, a general cue would be enough to fulfil his desire.

The Bliss of Brahman

The person who follows this path gains eternal bliss.

The jivatma in moksha would be watching the Lord at all times and in all places and in all conditions as various forms, qualities and vibhutis. As all these enjoyments are identical for the Lord and the prapanna, both are said to be the same. This Mukta gains total Ananda when looking upon the Lord. Just as a queen is dear to the king and she enjoys all that he has, all of Lord gives the jivatma sheer Ananda. The Vedas and other scriptures opine that the Lord who has everything gives Ananda to the realised soul.

As the form of the Lord gives him pleasure, the form itself is Paramapada (the Supreme Abode). Since one reaches a place to gain the Lord, it is known as Paramapada. As the Mukta experiences the Ananda, He who is the cause of it is known as Paramapada along with His form of superior qualities. After one becomes a Mukta, all that is on earth are friendly to him. As a bhakta, due to karmic reasons there were friendly and inimical things, but as a Mukta he will find everything friendly to him, as there is no more any karmic connection. In Moksha, under the benign gaze of the Lord, he can perform all services and gain his desires.

One who has gained such Moksha never returns to the earth. Such is the conclusion of the Vedas. Even if he come to the earth out of his own volition, he will not lack in Ananda. This is the significance of saying that he does not return.

Gods, Brahma and human beings are all capable of achieving Moksha. But one cannot predict the nature of the body that precedes Moksha. For those performing bhakti yoga, the body in which the yoga is completed becomes the last before gaining Moksha. For the prapanna, Moksha is gained at the disintegration of the present body.

Though there may be differences between jivas till they reach Moksha or when in swarga, after reaching Moksha there is absolutely none, be it in Ananda or enjoyment. If there is a difference felt, it is against the very nature of

Moksha experience.

Though the Mukta has nought to do in the creation of the Lord's abode, the Ananda of that world belongs to him. That is why it was said that they are identical. In what they are, they do not become equal.



Conclusion of Volume 2. Continued in Volume 3