

Path to Enlightenment



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Swami Yogeswarananda
at Swami Gangatharanantha Samadhi,
Sivayoga Samajam, Trincomalee

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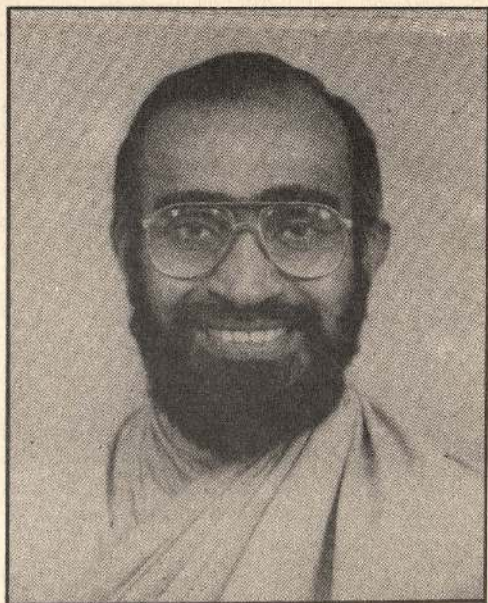
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1. *"The Yoga of Understanding"*
2. *"Divine Virtues"*
3. *"Wholistic View of Life"*
4. *"Mind and the State of No-mind"*
5. *Path to Enlightenment*

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Swami Yogeswarananda is a monk of the Shankaracharya order. Born in Sri Lanka, he spent twenty five years in the Himalayas, India in spiritual seclusion, studying the Hindu scriptures and leading the life of an ascetic. In 1984 and 1986, he made an extensive tour of the United States delivering talks at various universities and religious centres. A discourse delivered by Swami Yogeswarananda at Swami Gangatharanantha Samadhi, Sivayoga Samajam, Trincomalee on 18th & 19th December 1995

When a person does pleasantly what needs to be done, with a calm and serene mind, without likes or dislikes, ever tranquil and content is on the path and will receive the blessings of God.

Swami Yogeswarananda.

Aum

The subject matter of today's talk will be, 'The path of Enlightenment'. Everyone in this world seeks the 'Path' to realise God and the Truth of Life. Every religion strives to show this path. In this world, we find that everyone who aspires to reach God wishes to find this path by which he would be able to realise the God experience. Since all of us are aspiring for enlightenment, first and foremost it is imperative to know what is meant by 'Enlightenment'. Therefore, before we get to know the path, we must understand the term 'Enlightenment'. Of course, various words are used to denote 'Enlightenment'. For instance, God experience and 'moksha' (மௌக்சம்). So, we should understand this clearly. Only then will we be able to appreciate what 'Enlightenment' is and how to proceed towards it. When one gets enlightened, one gets enlightened to the Truth of Life. So, then, what is the Truth of Life?

In all religious traditions they say, God is and God alone is. So, what is it that is understood by God experience or God being? In the Hindu traditions, especially, in the Upanishads, the God state of being or God is expressed very clearly and beautifully by the word 'Brahman'. Not the Lord Brahma or the Lord Vishnu, but 'Brahman'. The very word 'Brahman' itself signifies and reveals to us Its nature of being. Brahman is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Bruhat', which means 'vast', 'infinite' and 'that which has no limits'. That is why it is said that God is everywhere. When it is said that God is everywhere, it means that God in His Godly state is something that exists everywhere.

He is all over and exists uniformly. It is not that God's beingness is more in one place and less elsewhere. He is equally present in everything. One can understand God's existence by the term 'hologram'. A hologram is that which is totally full and totally present at every point. In the same way, God's presence is also is totally and fully felt at every point - in every atom, every molecule, every creature, everything in the whole universe, including the human 'creature'. In the gods, in the angels, in everything God's presence is totally and fully felt. If that is so, we are also a point somewhere in the cosmos and in everyone of us, God's presence is totally and fully felt.

Thus, in this manner you may understand that this one God, who is present everywhere is also present within everyone of us and that the sole purpose of life is, to some day, eventually experience God's beingness which is totally present within each one of us. This is the purpose of life. All of us exist in this world to achieve that God experience - to experience the God within us. Then, where is the God experience? It is only within us. When this happens, something glorious and wonderful happens to you - to each one of us. At such a time, what happens is that you realise and experience - the fulfillment of your being. After all, what does a person or being aspire for, in this world? What does each person want? You are now existing as a human individual. As a human individual, don't you feel that your human existence is incomplete? Don't you feel that you are inadequate? In your present state of existence you feel that there is something incomplete, something missing, something wanting in your being. And, unconsciously or subconsciously, what is it that you are yearning for, in your innermost heart? You want to become self-complete. Is it not? If you analyse it yourself, you will realise that you want to become a whole and become totally complete. You are now incomplete. There is something wanting

and missing within yourself. So, what you are really seeking is, to become self-complete - to become healed of all your psychological discords, to become healed of all your psychological aberrations and thereafter to become a whole and to become perfect and self-complete.

Is it not what you are longing for? Is it not what you want to do? Is it not what you want to be? When you become self-complete what will you do? You will just be. Since you are empty now, you want to do many things in order to fill in that emptiness within you. But, when you become full, what will you do? You will enjoy the fullness of your being; enjoy the 'paripoorna'(பரி பூ ரணம்) of your being. Just experience that. So, the state wherein you experience the fullness and the self-completeness and the wholeness of your own being is called the God experience. You may also call it the Godly state of being.

Remember, that the problem is not with God. The problem of life, the problem of existence is not with God, it is with you. You have all the problems. God is alright, but you are not. So, when you are not alright, you have got to make yourself alright. When you are alright, everything is alright. And, when do you become alright? You become alright when you become self-complete and full. So, the state of existence or being, wherein you become total, self-complete and perfect - that state, in religious language, is called God experience. So, remember this. The purpose of life is to experience this glorious state of being. This is why, in Christian terminology, the attainment of this stage is called the 'Blessed State'. Are you not aware of these words, 'Blessed State'? We, as Hindus, use yet another word for this state. You have been using it every day, but unfortunately, without any understanding. It is called 'Shivapada' (சிவபதம்), which means the 'Auspicious state'. The

God state is called 'Shivapada'. Not Lord Shiva. The purpose of life is not to experience Lord Shiva but to attain 'Shivapada'. So, when you attain 'Shivapada', everything is pleasant and wonderful within you. That is your blessed state or being, indeed. When you attain 'Shivapada', you become full, you become total and self-complete in all your feelings. Remember this. I am presenting this subject in a very unusual and different way, because religions, unfortunately, have not been taught as religions ought to be taught. As a result, there is a great deal of ignorance and confusion in religion. All sorts of beliefs and practices have crept into the world. So, in order to rectify matters, we have to now understand clearly what the problem is. The problem is that, 'you are the problem'. The problem lies with you. The problem is with your own present state of human experience.

So, what are you aspiring for? You want to be at peace. Isn't it? When will you be at peace? You will be at peace when you've got nothing to do. And when will you have nothing to do? You'll have nothing to do, only when you become full. When you are empty, you'll want to do something all the time. When you feel that emptiness, you want to fill that emptiness. When you want to fill that emptiness, you go about doing so many things. But, once you become full, you've got nothing to do. Just enjoy being that fullness indeed. That state which you experience then, is called the God state or God experience. Therefore, whenever the word God is used don't think of a God outside you, but it is the God state- the Godly state of being. It means the state wherein you are self-complete and full. This is the purpose of life. This is the state you are said to attain - 'moksha'. The word 'moksha' means the 'mokshapada' (மக்சாபதம்) - the state of 'moksha'. What happens when you experience

this wonderful state of being? This is the purpose of life. Therefore, the purpose of life is to experience this Godly state. And this is within you. Within you itself. It is ever present within you. So, the path to experience God, as I said is understand that God exists everywhere, and, He exists within each one of us. It has to be experienced within us.

At the present moment you do not know that you are the Blessed Divine. Not knowing that, there is a need for the religious scriptures to intervene and tell you what it is. The religious scriptures bring to you this wonderful truth. What is this wonderful truth? That everyone of you is Divine in your essential nature. In your human nature, you are very much human. But in your true and essential nature, everyone of you is Divine. The understanding of this is the beginning of true religion. If you don't understand this, you have missed the main point in your religion. The true religion and the true religious practice begins when you begin to understand the fact, 'Yes, I'm Divine'. In order to make you understand the truth of life - the profound truths of life - the ancient seers have revealed these truths, through mythological stories. But, the trouble is that you have taken the mythological stories to be very real, forgetting what they were meant to convey. I'll tell you one of these stories which was meant to reveal these truths. I'll tell one of them.

All of you know the story that one day, Lord Shiva was enjoying the company of his consort Parvathy and his two sons Ganesha and Karthikeya. He had a sweet fruit, a mango. But he had only one. So, he told his sons that the first one who goes round the world will get that fruit. Ganesha who was already wise went round his parents and stretched his hands - just stretched his hands - he didn't even ask for the fruit. In the meantime, Karthikeya mounted his peacock 'vahana' and

physically went round the world. So, it took time. When he returned he found that his father had already given the fruit to the first person who went round the world, which was Ganesha. Ganesha had gone round the parents three times and had said, 'I'd gone round the world three times.' Lord Shiva had to give away the fruit to Ganesha. Karthigeya was furious. When people get angry do you know what they do? They get away. They might say that they would go to the jungles. This is what Karthigeya said. From the Himalayas, where else could he go? He had to go somewhere. So, out of anger he ran away to Palani. (பழனி) His mother had to go and console him. Mother Parvathy went to Palani. She told her child Karthigeya, 'Look here, why are you angry over this little physical fruit, when you are the very fruit - Palam Nee (பழம் நீ). In order to make him understand, she imparted to him the 'Brahma Upadesha' (பிரம்ம உபதேசம்), that he was Divine and the glory of divinity is within himself. This 'GnanaUpadesha' was revealed to him in Palani. Allegorically mother Parvathy is also referred to as Uma. (உமா)

So, the 'shastras' reveal the 'upadesha'. The 'shastras' tell you that you are the fruit - the fruit that you are searching for. That you are the Divine, and this is what everyone of you is seeking. The 'Brahma Upadesha' - the teaching of the 'shastras' (the scriptures), is that every one of you is the 'Blessed Divine' - 'Tat tvam asi' (தத் த்வம் அஸி) This means that 'Thou art the Divine'. This is the final teaching of the scriptures. That, 'Thou art that', indeed. Once you have understood this, you can begin your spiritual life. The beginning of the understanding of this is the foundation for spiritual life. So, you require the 'Gnana' (ஞானம்), the understanding that 'I am that'. Once this is conveyed to you by the teacher, it is your duty to feel that 'thou art that' - I am the Divine. This particular feeling must come to

you. This particular feeling must, indeed, glow in your heart. That I'm no more the miserable human being going through the problems of life, and that I'm the blessed Divine. That, 'I am that', the glorious 'Shiva' (சிவம்). This 'Gnana' is symbolically indicated by the eye of Shiva - the third eye 'Gnanakkan', 'Nettrikkan' (ஞானக் கண். நெற்றிக் கண்). That is, you can see God not with the two physical eyes but only with the third eye - that eye of wisdom or 'Gnana' - the 'Gnana' that 'I am Divine'. With that wisdom you'll be able to understand and leap forward trying to experience your God nature. This was the problem that Arjuna too had, as told in the Bhagavat Gita (பகவத் கீதை) in Maha Bharatha we find that Arjuna faced that same problem. Arjuna felt that he was a human individual. But Lord Krishna preached to him thus: "Thou art not this miserable human being. Understand that you are Divine. Function from the Divine centre and not the human centre. Then everything will be alright with you". Therefore, all the problems that we face in life is due to the fact that we function from human centre. But, we must learn to function from our Divine centre - that is our God centre. And this is how you are expected to live your life and function in the world. Once this knowledge comes to you - that everyone of us is Divine - with this awareness that 'I am Divine and not human', you are to live your life in this world. Live your life with God consciousness. Once you attain 'Gnana', you are to live your life with this God consciousness or God awareness.

Since you have to live in this world discharging all your duties and functions, you have to go through all your 'Karma'. It does not matter what types of 'Karmas' you have: what types of duties and functions you have. Every person in this world has his unique 'Karmas', duties and functions to perform. This, by the way is secondary. But what is important is that while going through the 'Karmas', you must maintain your God awareness

and live your life. If you live your life in this manner, then you are living with God awareness. This is how life is meant to be lived. Thus, when you live your life in this fashion, then all the 'karmas' that you have to perform in this world would be performed automatically by you. Thus, you have to do two things. One is to maintain the God awareness. The other is, while maintaining the God awareness, to go about performing your 'karmas' - duties, functions and other activities. When you are able to act in this manner, then all your actions become a Yoga of 'Karma' or 'Karma Yoga'. You've now got to learn to indulge in all these actions as 'Karma Yoga'. Every action that you do in the world is something which will now sanctify you. Haven't you heard that when you perform these sacrificial 'yagnas' (யாகங்கள்) - these are performed in the 'Yagnakunda' (யாக குண்டம்) - you know very well that they sanctify you. You must also learn to understand, that every action or 'karma' that you do in this world, is to be done as a 'yagna' - as a sacrifice. Every action that you indulge in, with the spirit of sacrifice makes that particular action or 'karma', a 'yagna'. This is why it sanctifies you. Every person in this world has his functions ('karmas'). We must learn to perform all these functions and duties with a spirit of sacrifice. When duties are discharged in this manner, they become a ritual. When discharged as a ritual, every action that you perform, sanctifies you. This is why Lord Krishna was trying to persuade Arjuna to perform his varied functions.

The housewife or a mother who takes care of her family is performing a great sacrifice. She sacrifices her time, energy and her resources for the welfare of the family. Now, this is a 'yagna' she performs in the house itself, while carrying on her daily duties at home. So also, a man who goes out and works for eight, ten or twelve hours, in order to maintain and support his

family is also performing a great sacrifice. If he does it with a spirit of sacrifice, then it is going to sanctify him. A farmer working in the field is a similar example. It is in this sense that every action of ours is a ritual. If you understand that every action is a ritual, then every ritual will sanctify you, purify you and make you a better being. But, unfortunately, this idea has got lost - totally lost in our spiritual culture and instead, religious rites have found a place. You have been told that these rituals performed in the temples are the real rituals and the ritual of living a life is something else. You have been also told that living a life is material and that religion is something different. This artificial bifurcation of religion has come into being. The real religion has been taken away from the living of life. But, the very living of real life itself is religion. It is not that you need to invent a separate religion. If you understand the principles of living of life, then the very living of life itself becomes a religion. If you understand this, you don't need to separate religion from life. It is when you don't understand this, that you have to invent a religion and get entangled in various names such as Hinduism, Buddhism etc. Once you understand this, the very life itself becomes a religious life. This is how you ought to live your life. So, you have to understand better. If you are kept in ignorance as to what a real religion is, you can be 'religiously' exploited. All religions have done this. All religions keep you in ignorance, so that they can exploit you - your ignorance and innocence. All religious systems of the world have done this. Now, the time has come for you to understand that you are being exploited and that you should refuse to be exploited any further, by the religious systems, which ever it may be. You have to find your way to liberation. You have to find the way to god realisation or the way to enlightenment. If you are to find the way, you have to understand that every action of yours in this world has to be performed with a spirit of sacrifice and as a religion.

When you perform a ritual, how do you do it in a church or in a temple? Wouldn't you perform that religious ritual in the church or the temple with a great deal of sanctity and reverence. The same amount of reverence should be brought into the actions you perform in life. All your actions will have to be done with the same amount of reverence you give a ritual. To do this, you don't need to go to a church or a temple. Preparing the food is a ritual, eating it is a ritual. Every single work is a ritual. If you understand that all your actions in life are rituals, then these actions will sanctify you; purify you. This is something that everyone of us must learn to understand. The most important spiritual activity for the householder is 'karma'. Householder must learn to perform their work as a 'Karma Yoga'. When actions are done as a 'Karma Yoga' it sanctifies and purifies you. It makes you a better being. What happens when you become a pure soul? You experience God in your heart and in your mind. God is different from 'Devas'. For God experience to transpire, you must keep your heart and mind in condition. When will that happen? It happens when you are pure in heart and pure in mind. All religions tell you to be pure in heart and pure in mind. Because, only then will you experience God. So, religious life, deals primarily with yourself. Dealing with yourself is religion. Go about cleansing your heart and mind, constantly, of all the worldly emotions. Your heart, now, is taunted by all the worldly emotions that you have accumulated.

What are the worldly emotions you have accumulated? They are your accumulated worldly feelings. Love, hatred, dislike, anger, jealousy and envy to name a few. Are they not the worldly passions which have defiled your heart? All religions have taught you to be pure in heart, to have no envy, jealousy or anger. Only the good will have a pure and good mind filled with good and pure thoughts. But, it is rather difficult, because one

has to deal with himself and try to correct himself to become a better, purer person. Because this is difficult, unfortunately, all religions in the world have by passed this process of asking you to perform all your actions as a 'Yoga' of actions. So, you have, in fact, got side-tracked into something else. You have to understand what real religion is. Real religion begins with cleansing yourself. Cleansing your heart and your mind and creating the necessary conditions in your heart and mind so that the God experience can transpire within you. If this is to take place, you have to learn to go about living your life in a calm manner. If your mind is agitated, can you experience God? If your mind is disquiet, it is not possible to experience God. You have to be at peace with yourself, with your own being. With all the calamities and problems in the surroundings you live in, you have to live as calmly and as peacefully as possible. In spite of all the difficulties that are thrust upon you, you must learn to maintain your balance. Only then will you know how to live life. Spiritual life is only the art of living life. For this, you don't need a separate religion. You have only to know how to live your life. While living your life you must know how to be God-centred.

Do you know the secret of how to be God-centred? Do not imagine that there is a separate God centre. There are no two centres in you - one to be God-centred and the other to be centred. When you are centred, you are God-centred. When do you become centred? When you are balanced you are centred. When are you balanced? You are balanced when you are not elated by the joys of life and when you do not get depressed by the sorrows of life. When you are able to balance yourself and hold yourself in check, then you are balanced and you are centred. Being centred is the entire crux of the teaching of the Bhagavat Gita. In the Bhagavat Gita Lord Krishna has given a very classical definition for 'Yoga'. He said, 'Samatvam yoga

ucchate'(சமத்வம் யோக உச்சதே), which means the state of mental equilibrium or the state of mental equipoise. This is said to be 'yoga'. When you are balanced, poised and calm and when you are able to go about discharging your duties and functions in that state, you are in a state of 'yoga'. What is the use of this state of 'yoga'? It will lead you to your God-state. It will enable you to experience your God-state. It is this state of Yoga that Lord Buddha also thought, as a state of middle path.

This state of 'Yoga' is the psychological state of middle path. In this state, you are able to live your life in a very calm and serene manner, without going through the ups and downs of life, without being psychologically affected. If you are able to maintain this serene and composed way of living, then you are in a state of 'yoga' and this state of 'yoga' will enable you to experience your God-state. Therefore, this is how we ought to live our life. Living life is a very simple thing. Religion is a very simple thing too. If you really understand the crux of religion, religion becomes very simple. Then you'll be surprised at its simplicity. Religion has caused such a confusion that you do not know where you are. You do not know what is what. Whether it be Hinduism or Christianity or any other religion, you'll find that all these religions are so confused as to what religion is all about. The very idea is to confuse you, so that you could be kept ignorant and be exploited. But, when you pierce through the riddle of religion, you will find that after all, there nothing in it. It is so simple and so obvious. Its simplicity leads you to be centred and to be centred is to learn to live your life in a very peaceful and calm manner. When you live your life in a way peaceful and calm manner you are being God-centred. When you go about performing all your functions and engage in the activities of your life, little by little, you become God-aware. When you maintain this state, gradually this God awareness

becomes God consciousness and it takes control of your entire life and your entire mind. And then, you are living in God, moving in God, and breathing in God. In this manner, you'll have to cultivate God awareness very gradually.

When you go about living life in God-awareness, you'll come across a very important question. That is the question of prayers. What is the place and position of prayers in our lives? People often ask, "should we pray?" The answer to that question is, "yes, if you feel like praying and you want to pray, then you should pray. If you don't feel like praying and if you don't want to pray, don't pray." This is the real situation. Why? Because, the whole life, the life that you are living, should be a life of prayer. When your whole life is a life of prayer, then you don't need to set aside a particular time for prayers. Nevertheless, when you do want to pray, do so with all your heart. Do you know what happens to you when you pray? Very often people pray because they think they can change the things around them. They think that through prayers they can bring about a change in their environment. People do not know the benefits, prayers bring to them. The outer environment and the circumstances may or may not change. but something very important happens to the person who prays. Do you know what it is? You change! Prayers change you!! When prayers changes you, everything around you also changes. When prayers change you, your perspective towards life changes; your vision towards life changes; everything changes. After all, life is only a matter of looking at things. So, when your inner vision changes, everything outside changes. This is exactly what prayers do to you.

The next question is how you should pray. Pray the way you want. Pray in any language you want. To pray, you don't

need Sanskrit or Latin. God knows all languages! It is not that he knows only Sanskrit or Latin. In the olden days, Christianity made people pray only in Latin. As a result, the priest prayed and the people were not able to pray. They made the people dependent on the priest to pray. In the Hindu system too, they made people to pray only in Sanskrit. When prayers are chanted in Sanskrit, the ordinary man does not understand what the prayers means. Thus, you can pray to God in any language. There is something very important in prayers. If the heart is not involved in the prayers, it will be an empty prayer. So, your heart must go along with the prayers. Your heart should feel the prayers. Prayers should be the out-pouring of your heart. The prayer should be spontaneous. Prayer is a dialogue with God. You speak to God through prayers. The more you love him, the more strongly you can talk to Him. Through prayers, you can give God, a good piece of your mind too. You can tell him what you think of Him. The more strongly you tell him what you think of Him, the quicker He will react to you. So, if you want to pray, don't fear to pray. It is said, "Love thy Lord with all thy heart, with all thy being, with all thy soul." This is a Christian saying. When you love God with all your heart, it is called devotion. And, when you are devoted you can talk to Him in any manner you want. Generally, people pray in three ways: People pray when they want something. This too is a prayer. Secondly, people pray to God when they are in trouble. That is why God puts you into more trouble, so that you can pray to him some more. This is only part of the reason. If you have everything nice and cosy around you, you may forget Him. This is why good people suffer. Haven't you seen people suffer, not because they have done something which brings about suffering, but because some good will result from that suffering. This will take you closer to the God too. Lastly, people also pray to God because they appreciate Him. Most of the 'Thevarams' sung by the saints

of South India, were hymns in praise of God. You too should learn these hymns and sing them with understanding. When you sing adoring God, your heart gets cleansed, because you develop the God-feeling. Whenever you pray, you develop a feeling for God. So, what does your feeling for God, do to you? It neutralises the worldly feelings and attachments. You have developed worldly feelings for your children, your kith and kin. A feeling for God neutralises this. Therefore, the more you pray, the better it is. And finally, after much prayer, there will come a stage when you are good for nothing! You will become God-mad. To be God-mad is the most pleasant thing in the world. People want to pray to God only up to a point and not beyond that. This is because they fear that it will lead to God-madness. That is why Lord Ramakrishna said, "There are various forms of madness and God-madness is one such form." But the beautiful thing about God-madness is that it cures all other madness. Since each person has so many other madness in him, only God-madness is capable of curing all such other madness. As such, God-madness is a healthy madness. It is healthy to be God-intoxicated! You can pray in any way you want. It is not necessary that you should pray only in a Hindu temple. you can pray in a Masjid. You can pray in a Church, in a Vihara, at the sea beach, on the summit of a mountain. Anywhere you want. Anywhere! The good use of a temple would be to go there and pray with all your heart. The next good use of a temple is to meditate therein. When you meditate in a temple you become God-centred. You have to learn to practice these two things. Not only should you learn to practice these in temples, but you should also learn to practice these at home too. The home you are living in, then, becomes your temple. It becomes your 'Ashram'. So the way you live your life in your own home, is now going to sanctify your home. No one in the world can sanctify you. You yourself will have to sanctify yourself by living

your life with good feelings, good emotions, good thoughts and by learning to live your life with good sentiments by engaging in good deeds. This is spiritual life. Therefore, when you learn to live your life in this manner, it will gradually take you towards enlightenment. Always and at all times remember one thing - that you have to go about living your life being aware of your Divine nature that "I am the Divine." The feeling that "I am the Divine" must be maintained by you at all times. If you can go about living your life in this manner everything becomes alright with you. Nobody can bless your life. It is you yourself who will have to bless your life.

The blessing of Gods are there. Very often people say that they want the blessings of God. Do you know how God blesses you? Do you think that you can obtain the blessings of God by giving God something? By bribing can you obtain his blessings? You can obtain the blessings of God by doing what you are supposed to do. Take the example of your own family. You are pleased with your Children, when they do what they are supposed to do! When your children perform their functions and duties at home and behave as good children, you, as parents are naturally pleased with them. If your son comes up to you and tells you, "Oh my glorious father, thou art great indeed!", you will wonder as to what mischief your son is up to! Or, you might wonder what he wants from you. Don't think that by praising God you can please Him, or by giving something to Him you can please Him. Not at all. This is called bribery. You may be pleased by praises because you are fickle and because you have an ego. You may succumb to praises. But God will not succumb to your praises or flattery. Then, how can you please God? God will be pleased, when each one of you go about doing what you are supposed to do. Each one of you know what your functions and duties in life are. You should also know that if you

perform these duties to the best of your ability, then God in turn will be pleased with you. Not that you have to stand up and flatter God.

You have only to go about living your life in a right and noble way. Then everything will be alright with you. Thus, God's blessings will be with you. While you live your life, try to live as calmly and as serenely as possible. Then, you will be successful in living your life. You know how to live your life. It does not matter whether you are in the Arctic or the Himalayas. So long as you are able to live your life in a very calm and serene manner, you are a success in living life. Society may tell you that if you make money, you can be considered successful in life or if you secure a high post or power or position that you are successful. But you know, within your heart whether you are a success or not. In a spiritual sense, true success in life is achieved when you are able to live your life serenely and calmly doing what you are supposed to do. When you do what you are supposed to do, do them with love. How are you to perform your actions and live your life? Haven't you been told that God is love? If, God is love, you have to translate that into your life. How do you translate that into your life? This can be done by showing love and interacting with everyone in the world. You interact with love with your family members. You interact with love with the strangers too. You interact with love with those whom you know and those whom you don't know, because God is love. When you miss love in your life, then religion is lost. Love is the foundation of religion. The crux of religion is love. You have to learn to live and interact with your fellow beings lovingly. Do you know what happens when you learn to live and live lovingly and interact lovingly with each other? At this point, you can never exploit another human being in the world. When there is love in your heart, you are concerned with the welfare of

each and every individual in the world. You cannot take advantage of anybody and you cannot exploit anybody when there is love. You cannot hate anybody, when there is love. This is one aspect. There is yet another aspect to your actions. You must learn to perform your actions with love.

Whatever be the actions, go about doing these actions lovingly. One sure way of knowing whether a man is truly religious is to see how he interacts with his fellow beings. If a person is able to interact with love with his fellow beings around him, that person is religious. You cannot say that you love God and you hate everybody else in the world. It's impossible. If you truly love God, you have to also truly love everything around you - all the human beings, all the animals and birds. This should come to you spontaneously. Whatever actions you have to do, do them lovingly. Cook your food lovingly; eat lovingly, even if it is not tasty; lovingly accept things which are given to you. Lovingly give away things too. When you give things to the poor or a beggar, give them lovingly with compassion. The more you are able to exude love, the more you get closer to God. You cannot separate love from 'moksha'. You cannot separate love from enlightenment. While I was in Switzerland, somebody asked me, "what is life?" Perhaps one of the answers I could give was, "Life is love, to live lovingly is life." This is how God wants you to live - to live lovingly and to lovingly interact with everybody in the world. That is religion. If you can live and practice religion in this manner, there will be no religious discord in the world. There will be a beautiful human fellowship all round. It is because of the absence of love in religions, that hatred and discord have been created. Love is the foundation of life and religion. It is the foundation to attain 'moksha' or 'nirvana'.

Therefore, let us all go about doing everything lovingly. Let us all lovingly share whatever we have. Somebody asked me this question: "Some talk of over population and scarcity of food. Let us suppose that there are five billion people in the world and there is food only for three billion. Then what are we to do? Supposing there is food for three billion people for two meals a day, are we to sacrifice the two billion so that the three billion can have two meals a day?" No. Let us have one meal a day and share the available food for the entire five billion. This is how we should live our life. Let us not wipe out or exterminate the two billion so that the remaining three billion can have two meals a day. No. That is inhuman. We must learn to share the available resources. When you learn to share - even within your own family - how do you share? Share equally with every member in the family. In the same manner, whatever resources we have in the world, we must share equally with those around us. Only then, will there be happiness and well-being. There will be contentment. There will be justice. When we don't share justly, then things go wrong. So, this is all part of the foundation of good living and good religion. In this manner, we should learn to live our life beautifully and graciously. Then you will find that life is a beautiful thing. Overlook the faults of others. Everyone has his quota of faults. Let us not harbour on those. In a family, if a child does something wrong, the family members overlook the fault, because there is love for the child. So also, in our human society when people have their faults, let us learn to overlook them. Then you will find that everything is alright. We have to re-educate ourselves as to how to live our lives in a most healthy manner, in a better way, and that is religion indeed!

The human race has two good ways of living in the world which enables it to get enlightened. One is the path of wisdom - 'Gnanamarga' (ஞான மார்க்கம்). The other is the path of

action - the path of 'Karma'. These are the two principal ways in which the human race ought to live and these are primarily meant for two different types of people. We find that there are certain people in the world who have matured and as a result of that maturity - mental, emotional and psychological - the spiritual maturity dawns in a person as a sum total maturity. At such a time, two interesting things happen. One, is that he becomes dispassionate of the worldly things and at the same time naturally and spontaneously this person attains 'gnana' (ஞானம்), the wisdom. He is an individual who is saintly in nature and thus this person is now ripe, just like a ripe fruit which automatically drops from the tree. We also find certain people who become ripe and mature and as a result step away from the world. They slip away from the society on account of the 'vairagya' (வைராக்கியம்) or dispassion and go into the jungles or monasteries and lead the life of a hermit or a 'sanyasi'. As a 'sanyasi' they live a spiritual life. He is a type who aspires for enlightenment or 'moksha'. We find that in all parts of the world such people are there in all cultures and in all traditions. In the Hindu traditions we have the 'sanyasi'. Similarly, in the Buddhist, the Christian, and the Islamic traditions we have the monks - the mystic monks. We find that these people are matured and their only aspiration is to find the truth of life - to realise God. So, they totally focus on that and lose all worldly desires and interests. Such people can easily step away from society and lead a spiritual life. To these people, it is the natural state of mind that transpires.

How do you know that such a state of mind has transpired to an individual? The person concerned knows it spontaneously. If he has a doubt and asks himself the question, "should I renounce or should I not" then he must definitely be told not to renounce. The very fact that he has a doubt shows

that he is not ready for it and therefore not yet fit for it. The moment he is ready and ripe, he doesn't run away - he walks away - there is a difference! Running away is a fallacy. When ever you find a person running away from home to become a 'sanyasi', go and bring him back as quickly as possible, for, he is not yet ready or fit. That is why he has run away. But, when a man walks away, no one can bring him back. He is lost. He is lost for ever. These people who walk away are the 'sanyasis' - the true 'sanyasis' - and they go away and live a quite life as a hermit not joining any religious institutions. They live all by themselves, alone! Leading a contemplative life, they will not join any institution, any 'ashram', any monastery. A true lion lives alone (not the lion in zoos). These people too live alone, all by themselves in the jungle and lead a contemplative, spiritual life. In such an atmosphere, they lead a very calm life, a very serene life. How do you find out whether a person is fit to be a 'sanyasi' or a 'sadhu'? One of the 'symptoms' is that such a person will be very self-composed, very calm, very peaceful - he will be at peace with himself and also the world and the people around him. He will have no conflicts with anybody. He does not have even inner conflicts. Only such a person is entitled to become a 'sanyasi'. Until such time, such a state, such a frame of mind dawns in a person, what should he do? He should continue to live in the world and perform his duties and functions. You may desire to be a 'sanyasi', but are you competent to be one? One should renounce, only when he is competent. Otherwise he will become a misfit. A person who is competent lives a very quiet, meditative, contemplative life. On the other hand, when a person is not fit and has not reached the - 'paripakuvanilai' (பரிபக்குவ நிலை) that is, not yet ripe and mature, where should such a person live? He should live in the society - in the world. Only while living in the world will this person mature. You know very well, that if you pluck a fruit which is not ripe, it will never ripe

fully and well. You will never get the actual taste. You would not get the same taste and flavour as it would have, had it ripened in the tree itself. In the same manner, people who live in the world, should continue to live in the world and gain maturity. The world that you are living in today becomes your training ground. This is the place where you have to undergo all your training. People very often ask the question, "why are we living here in the world?" One aspect of your life in this world is to gain experience in many things. The other aspect is that the world in which you live is also a training ground, where you education takes place. Very often we think we go to the University for our higher training and higher education. But the real education takes place in the Universe itself - in the world! This world is the university of life, and you have to receive your education and gain maturity in this university of life. Therefore, you have to live your life in the world.

As you keep on living your life in the world, you have to act - this is the path of action. The path of action is meant for those people who have ambitions, who have desires, who think they have responsibilities. All these people must live in the society, in the world. Most of the people in the world have their simple little desires to fulfill; they have ambitions in life; they ought to achieve and become something or somebody. Such people must live in the active society, and not prematurely retire. If they do so, they lose the benefits of having lived the life in society and they would also lose the benefits of the life of a 'sanyasi' because they would not be able to live a contemplative life. Therefore, this world is the best training ground for normal people. Here everyone will have to perform one's 'karmas'. Therefore, we find that there are two types of beings. One lives a spiritual life, which will lead him to enlightenment. This is the 'Gnana marga' (ஞான மార్கம்) or the path of wisdom, meant for

the 'sanyasis' and the other, is the path of actions or the path of 'karma', 'karmanishta' (கர்ம நிஷ்ட) meant for the householders - for people living in active society. There are two ways of living, open for the human race, enjoined by God himself. That is why in the third chapter of the Bhagavath Gita we find Lord Krishna telling Arjuna, "Oh Arjuna, I have revealed two ways of living which are meant for the benefit of the human race. One way of life is for the renunciate monks, the hermits who have risen above the wordly needs and desires and lead a contemplative life. The other, is to lead an active life in the active society and go through one's functions and responsibilities. These are the two ways of living meant for the human race." So we find that the Lord himself has said that a person must go through the actions in this world and convert these actions into spiritual disciplines. That discipline is called the 'karma nishta' or 'karma yoga' or the path of 'karma'. This path of action is meant for all people living in active society.

When you live your life in the world, it is imperative that everyone of you go through your actions. But actions performed ignorantly and actions done unwisely by an individual puts him into human bondage. Therefore, he has to learn to convert his actions - his daily obligatory functions and duties which are his 'karmas' - to a spiritual discipline. When actions are converted into spiritual discipline it is called the 'yoga' of actions or the path of 'karma yoga'. What happens to an individual when he performs his actions as 'yoga' of action? In course of time this individual gets purified in nature, by the science of 'karma yoga' and he becomes more and more purified in nature and thereafter, purity dawns in his mind and along with purity, clarity comes into his mind, which brings about purity of nature. Purity and clarity of mind go hand in hand. When you achieve clarity of mind what happens is that you are able to see

what is what. You are able to comprehend and understand the truth behind the entire universe as to what is real and what is unreal, what is true and what is untrue. This clarity of understanding and perception dawns in your mind. And along with that, since there is already the purity of nature in you, automatically there is also dispassion. Dispassion transpires in your heart and you become dispassionate of the passion of the world. All your passions get cooled off, all your desires subside. When a person achieves purity and clarity, he acquires two things. One is dispassion for the passions of the world and at the same time he acquires the capacity of discrimination - 'viveka' (விவேகம்). Discriminative power of understanding dawns in his mind as to what is truth and what is false in life. Thereafter, this person would naturally and automatically withdraw from life, from active society, get into a contemplative state either in a monastery or jungle, and lead a contemplative life. Since his passions have cooled down, he will be able to live a contemplative life without his inner forces disturbing him from within. The disturbing forces of desires and tension are no more present in this person. This person will be in a tranquil state and being in a tranquil state, he can contemplate and meditate, twenty four hours a day. Therefore, we find that action when rightly done - the 'yoga' of actions - prepare the way for the subsequent discipline of contemplative life. As such, every person living in the world and who has many things to do, things to achieve, has various ambitions, and has to live in the world indeed. Since you have to live in the world, you have your actions to perform. When these things are done by a person in ignorance, they plunge him into human bondage.

How is it that actions put you into human bondage? Because, normally, what happens is that when you do an action, you do it with a certain amount of error or fallacy. Invariably we

find that when people perform an action or 'karma' they do it with a motive. The motive is that they want to reap the fruits of their actions. When you are motivated towards action with a desire to reap the fruits of those actions, then what will happen to you? You will have to come back again in the next life to reap the results of those actions. Because, now you are desire oriented. You are not duty oriented in your actions. When you are duty oriented in your actions, then those actions become a spiritual cleansing force. On the other hand, when you do the same action desire oriented, desires, increase desires and they get filled in your heart. The more desires you have the more turbulent you become, the more disquiet you become. Therefore, these desires ought to subside. But, if you are going to perform your actions motivated by the desires for the fruits of your actions you are going to funnel them like a fire indeed! Therefore, in order to reap the results of these actions or to reap the fruits of your actions you will have to come back again and in the next life you make the same mistake. Thus, your life in this world continues to eternity. This is called the 'Samsara Chakra' (சம்சார சக்கரம்) - the wheel of life. The wheel of life continues on and on. Who has set in or given momentum for this wheel of life to go on and on in this universe? It is you! You are propelling it. You are injecting fuel into the wheel of life by your desire impulses. These desire impulses have given the wheel of life this momentum by the execution of your own actions. Therefore, the first thing you have to learn to do is to see to it that whatever 'karma' or whatever actions or whatever things you are supposed to do, you should first do it duty bound! Why should you do it? Why don't you keep quiet? Instead of doing it you may turn around and say, "supposing I do it, I will run into this fallacy. Why not I keep quiet and not do it? Then I wouldn't run into this fallacy of getting into this action." You cannot do that either. We know very well that it is very difficult for most of the

people in the world to keep quiet. In fact, there is a beautiful story about this. There was a saint who lived quietly in an old temple. All what he did was to sit there quietly. The manager of the temple thought that this monk who was seated very quietly and serenely deserved to be given some food. It was decided that his mid-day meal would be supplied to him by the temple. A paid employee who working in the temple at that time felt that this was unfair. "Here is a man who is being fed for nothing. I have to work for my upkeep from morning until eveing." He decided to challange the monk and said to him, "Now, look here, I think this is an act of injustice. You do nothing and get your food, while I have to toil all day for mine. This is most unreasonable." So, the monk told him, "Don't worry or be perturbed. Sit some where quietly, like me. I'll see to it that you not only get your lunch but your dinner as well. I'm satisfied with lunch, but I'll see that you get both meals." The employee thought that it was simple and accepted the challange. He sat down beside the monk. But then, it was not that easy to sit quietly. After sometime, the body begins to move. The man began to move his body this way and that way. The monk, who had a stick, gave him a knock on his head and said, "I told you to sit quietly. Why are you moving your body?" Soon after, the employee's body became active and he began to think of various things: he thought about his wife and especially about the food he was going to get. He then received two more blows from the monk who asked him, why he was thinking about his wife. Thereafter, the man agreed with all humility that the monk fully deserved his food. Thus, it is not easy to maintain this quietness and silence. The whole secret of life is what we go through all these activities, troubles and turmoils in life, eventually to "keep quiet." All our learning and education in life is only to learn how to keep quiet! Who is the person who can keep quiet? A person who can keep quiet, is one who has no further things to do in

life, nothing to achieve and has no further desires. Such a person can keep quiet and be still not only physically but mentally too. That is why in the Christian tradition it is stated, "Be still and know thyself." This is the final essence. Be still! If you can be still, then indeed you'll know yourself!! Know who you really are. Until a person is able to do that, he must go about discharging his various duties in life.

What are his duties? Every person has got his own personal duties and functions. As a family member, he has his duties towards his family. As a member of a society and a community, he has his social and community duties, and then his national duties, indeed. None of these duties should a person disregard. He should take care of, whatever he has to take care of. How do you know what you are supposed to do? How do you know what your duties are? Your conscience will tell you what you are supposed to do and what your duties are. Nobody in the world will have to come and tell you what your duties and functions in life are. Every person is responsible to himself. In fact, he is responsible to two persons. One is to himself and the other is to God. In case you are not responsible to yourself, you have to answer to God. Every person must know conscientiously, what his duties and functions are, and do them conscientiously and well. No work should be left undone. No work should be half done. Do well, everything you are supposed to do and do it to the best of your ability. The ability of each person varies. It does not matter what your ability is, you must do what you are supposed to do and take care of what you are supposed to take care of. Then your duty is done. Thus, you have your duties towards your family, you also have your social duties, community and national duties. Every person must take up these duties with individual responsibility.

The next factor is, how do you know what you are supposed to do? It's a very pertinent question! How do I know what I'm supposed to do? Your mind prompts to you. You feel and know it. Your mind knows it, and that is what you are supposed to do. In this way, each person knows what he has to do. He should just do it, and it ends there. Don't think about the results there after. While you work, work to the best of your ability. If you do your work to the best of your ability, don't you realise that you don't have to be concerned unduly about the results? All that you have to do is to be concerned about what you do. This is why the Gita says, "your right is only towards the performance of your actions. Your right is never towards the fruits of your actions." Why? Because, that belongs to God and not to you. What you have to get in this life is ordained by God. Have trust and understanding and faith in that. Your right lies in what you are supposed to do and what you are meant to get in this life. If you face a good fortune or a misfortune, that is what you are meant to. When you receive it, receive it gracefully and graciously. Accept whatever actions you have to do, graciously. Accept graciously the duties and functions you have to perform. However difficult, however unpleasant it may be, just do it. Accept it graciously, without a murmur and without any complaints. The person who has assigned these duties to you is God himself. Therefore, to whom could you complain? You can complain to Him only when you meet Him. When you meet Him you won't be able to complain. Till then, do what you are supposed to do. You have two things to do in life. Accept graciously whatever duties and functions you have, however difficult, however unpleasant those may be. Human beings want to perform pleasant duties only. They would like to discharge easy duties and easy functions. They want to run away and get away from hard work. But, mind you, this world is meant for hard labour. Do you know what is meant by hard labour? This

earth plane is the plane of action - the 'karma bhumi'. But the human race wants to convert this into a plane of heaven, that is, paradise. God has created a separate heaven wherein you can enjoy all the pleasures. If you are aware what that heaven would be like, then you will not be interested in going there. The outcome of all your hard labour, is to reach that heaven. That heaven would be like a picnic resort - feasting and merry-making. One gets tired of it. You have all the pleasures and enjoyments there, so much so that after sometime you'll feel like coming back to the earth. A striking fact is that people in the planet earth are envious of the people in the heaven and the people who are in heaven are envious of you! This is the irony of life! Do you know why they are envious of you? They know that they cannot see God there. It is very difficult to get enlightened there, because it is a pleasure resort. The atmosphere is not conducive there. Those who go to heaven, after sometime realise the folly of having gone there and they want to come back here because this is the plane where you can have your God experience and achieve enlightenment. Understand this. Do not perform any of your actions and duties with a desire or motive to go to heaven. Live your life with a little bit of understanding and wisdom. Perform all your actions devoid of any motive. Perform your duties because you are supposed to perform them. Therefore, accept them pleasantly and gracefully. If you are married, take care of your family. This is what is expected of you. By this, what happens is that you do not fall into the fallacy or the error of reaping the fruits of your actions.

In the performance of actions, there are three common errors, due to which, actions become a source of bondage. In 'karma yoga' or the 'yoga' of action you overcome these three errors and thereby convert actions into 'karma yoga' or the 'yoga' of actions.

Thus, we find that action leads to human bondage, when it is performed ignorantly and unwittingly. There are three factors which induce this. One is that when we perform an action with attachment to the fruits of the action, that attachment drives us into human bondage. The second is, where we are attached to the action itself. This action too, draws us into human bondage. We often hear people saying, "I'll do this work, because I like it or I'll not do this work because, I do not like it." So, it seems that the criterion for this man's performance of his actions in life is based on his personal likes and dislikes. What a criterion? It is not based on higher laws of life - that he should do what he is supposed to do whether he likes it or not. In life, pleasant and difficult things come your way and therefore easy and difficult actions have to be performed. But, what does the human individual want? He likes to perform pleasant and easy actions and he likes to get away or refrain from performing difficult and hard tasks. As a result, he gets attached to his actions. Because of attachment to pleasant actions and distaste for difficult actions, a person, on the one hand gets into pleasant actions and recoils from unpleasant or difficult actions. After all, what is life? Is it a life independent of actions? Certainly not. Life is the sum total of all your actions and all your functions. The sum total of all your actions and all your functions constitute life. When you are attached to the actions in the form of likes and dislikes, preferences and distaste, what happens is that you not only become attached to the actions or have a distaste for the actions, but you also become attached to life. At the same time, you develop a distaste for life when you refrain from actions which are difficult to do. You develop not only a distaste for the actions but a distaste for life too. When this transpires, something interesting happens. What is it? If you like to live, you'll have to come back. What happens if you don't like to live? You will still have to come back. Therefore, have neither likes or dislikes,

while going through life. When you live, by overcoming these likes and dislikes you rise above life - you rise above the world. When you rise above the world, you become superior to it and become naturally detached to life and detached to this universe. This is what exactly happens. Therefore, it is desirable that you do not perform actions with attachment to those actions. You should perform your actions pleasantly, without being attached to the actions in the form of likes and dislikes. We must learn to do unpleasant things pleasantly. This is what is called the imposition of a higher understanding upon you or tempering yourself with a higher understanding on your human impulses. By virtue of this, you rise above your human impulses. When you rise above human impulses you rise above life, you rise above the world and thus you become detached from the world. Therefore, act, without being attached to your actions. When you perform an action in a detached, calm and quite manner, it is done very well. There is nothing more to it. Perform your actions as calmly and as peacefully as possible. This is very important. Do not be in a hurry to perform your actions. If you perform your actions and functions in a hurried fashion, it means that you are in a hurry to live your life. You need not be in a hurry to live your life, when you have all the time in the world before you! The very performance of action is the living of life. When you are in a hurry to live your life, you miss life. Learn to live your life as peacefully and as calmly as you can. The man who knows to live his life peacefully and calmly is the one who turns out to be truly successful in life. You may have acquired all the money, all the power and all the high positions in the world. But, what will be the use of all these if you have achieved them with an unsettled mind? Thus, the wise people, the hermits and the saints of the world are in no hurry to live life. Observe the way in which they live their life. In whichever part of the world you are - whether in the Arctic Circle, the Himalayas, the town

or countryside - live as calmly as you can. By leading such a life you will achieve a balance. You become centred and harmonised. What happened to you when you are centred or harmonised? Don't imagine that there is a separate and distinct God-centre. When you are centred, you are God-centred. Not that you have to be separately God-centred, as God-centre is there within each one of us. Therefore, the way to attain God or the way to attain your God-nature or the way to attain your God-state is to be centred. The more centred you are, the more still you become. The more still you become, the more you'll know yourself. So, be still and know thyself. Be centred and live your life. That is why, the holiest and the greatest of the wisemen of the 20th century, the Jaffna saint Yogar Swami said, "If it is natural for you to go through your actions, then go through your actions. If it is natural for you to remain quiet, then remain quiet. But, see to it that you maintain your awareness of your God-nature." Live your life in God consciousness. When you are able to live with God consciousness, you are living in God and you are not living in your human centre. What is your human centre? When you are imbalanced, you are human centred. When you are disquiet and behave as a human being going through the upheavals of life, upheavals of your emotions, the ups and downs of life, the pendulum of your life sways from one end to the other. On the other hand, in spite of all the adversities and difficulties of life, if you are able to live, centred, then at all times you are not only centred but also God-centred. When you are God-centred, you live with God-awareness or God-consciousness. Thus, while we perform all our duties and functions we should always maintain our God-consciousness or God-awareness.

The third error as far as the performance of actions is concerned, is that every person feels that 'I' am the doer. This is

due to the presence of the ego conscience. If you are the doer, then you have to reap the consequences of what you do. If you are not the doer and if you don't feel that you are the doer - that you are only an instrument, an instrument of God, that you are only a means, an instrument through whom many things are done - then whatever actions you perform do not taint you. Those do not create bondage within you, as you are performing those only as an instrument - the medium - through whom certain things are taken care of. When you feel that you are doing a thing, then you become responsible too. But, on the other hand, if you think that you are only a medium, then there is no attachment or human bondage. This bondage or 'pasha' (ਪਾਸ਼) is the root cause of all the evils. If you are devoid of 'pasha' you are a totally free man. Thus, what keeps you away from your freedom are your attachments. Therefore, learn to be free of attachments. How is it possible? You can interact with love, very beautifully without 'pasha' or attachment. So long as you are a member of a family or member of a country, interact with each other with love. Cultivate in you the strength to get rid of this 'I' factor which creates 'pasha'. That is why, Lord Krishna has said in Bhagavath Gita, "Don't think I am doing this. Think that I am only an instrument."

Every action has these three blemishes. The first, is to be attached to the fruits or results of action. The second, is to be attached to the action itself and the third is to feel that I'm the doer. When you are free of all these three blemishes and perform those actions which you are supposed to perform then those actions become the 'yoga' of action or 'karma yoga'. 'Karma yoga' is the most important spiritual discipline for the householders who live in an active society. It is that which purifies and ennobles them to enable them to undertake a successful and totally meditative life. If you were to neglect these most

important disciplines in your life, then you neglect everything indeed! Action is so important. Perform all your actions such as cooking, farming, sweeping or even cleaning the toilet lovingly. Do not do them with distaste, because those are also actions which have to be done. When you live your life, lovingly, in this manner, you become a beautiful soul. You become a beautiful being, because there is love exuding from you. Love is a totality of living. Love makes you great, it expands, it opens your heart, makes you embrace the universe and you become the universal being. And, God is universal. Unless you have this love emitting from your heart, embracing everything around you, you cannot see God. Live lovingly and open your heart and embrace everything in the world with love. This is 'moksha' state.

The subject of my two day talk was the 'Way to Enlightenment.' We could sum it up with its various components. First of all, the most important or the finer factor for enlightenment to transpire in a person is that each one of us should feel within ourselves that we are the 'Blessed Divine.' In our human nature, every one is very much human. But in your true being, your natural being each one of you is the 'Blessed Divine.' The kingdom of heaven is within you. The final essence of the scriptures is 'Tat Tvam Asi' - thou the Divine. The divinity in existence which thou seekest with all thy heart is thy real being indeed. This has been expressed in all traditions in various ways. Once we get this awareness, we have got to maintain it, while living the life. When you live your life with this awareness, then you live your life God-centred or with God-consciousness. This is an absolute must. Since you have to live in the world, you've got actions to perform. You cannot keep quiet without doing anything. The second factor is actions. These when done in ignorance, puts you into human bondage. Therefore, you must learn to do all your duties and actions as

duties and actions of 'karma yoga.' By this, you become absolved of all the actions. You become absolved of all merits and demerits of all your actions and at the same time you also do what you are supposed to do. If you do not do what you are supposed to do, you'll have to come back again to do that. Therefore, with all sense of responsibility you must do all what you are supposed to do. Don't leave anything undone or half-done. Before you leave this world, see that you make amends and be at peace with all around you. If you don't make peace with those around you, you will have to come back again to make peace. Leave no conflicts with anyone in the universe.

The third component fact for your way to spiritual enlightenment is that you have to take charge of your mind. See that you develop control over your mind, because your mind is the cause of human bondage. The unruly and indisciplined mind of yours will bring you back into this world. A controlled and disciplined mind will help you towards liberation. Therefore, you are to become the master of your own mind and the master of your own senses.

Thereafter, if each of you aspire to realise your God-nature, you have to become worthy of it. In order to become worthy of it each one of you must become Godly in nature or saintly in nature. Learn to function like a 'sadhu.' A 'sadhu' means a blessed soul, a noble soul. You are one such beautiful soul, that you cause no anxiety to the world around you and at the same time you interact with everyone around you in such a beautiful way that you are an angel in the world. You learn to function as an angel in the world. It is through this that you can become Godly in nature. You've got to do one more thing. You have to cultivate God-like virtues. What are these God-like virtues that you should cultivate? First of all compassion,

kindness, sympathy, tolerance, understanding, generosity, magnanimity, overlooking the faults of others and generously sharing what you possess. You have to share what God has given you. God gives you to share what you have. The more you share, the more happier you become. Try it. There is more happiness in giving than in receiving. To see other people happy makes you also feel happy. Sympathise with the legitimate aspirations of people. All these virtues will have to be cultivated in you. When you become friendly with everyone you'll find that there are no strangers around you. In the same way, the world will also respond to you if you show hatred and animosity. Then you will see animosity around you. It reflects. When difficulties come your way, endure them. Endure your hardships. People think that they have to perform 'tapas' only in the Himalayas. No, you can do your penance while living in the city itself. When you experience difficulties and hardships and when you are able to patiently endure them, then you are performing 'tapas' or penance, while being at home. Penance makes you stronger. It develops, brings about soul force (ஆத்ம பலம்) in you. 'Soul force' develops and makes you stronger. People wonder, sometimes, why God gives the them hardships and difficulties in life. We also find that the good suffer more than the wicked. Why does this happen? The reason is, that difficulties and sufferings are thrust upon you, so that you become stronger and stronger.

The Fourth component is, that if one feels like praying, one should always pray. That is the golden rule. If your hearts prompts you to pray, do so in any manner, anywhere, but with all your heart. Prayers will cleanse you and make you a better being. But don't think that prayers will change things in your environment. Prayers change you. Remember this. When you change, your perspective in life changes too and in turn

everything around you also changes. Prayer is a wonderful thing. So, pray, if you feel like it.

The Fifth factor is that there are others who want to contemplate and meditate on God. Such people should contemplate and meditate on God.

Finally the most important component is the grace of God. When you make all your efforts in the right direction, then the Grace of God will be showered on you, un-asked. It'll be always there. Grace comes to you when you deserve it. It also comes to you when you don't deserve it. That is the beauty of God's grace. That's God's liberty to shower grace on you. So He showers his grace on you, even when you don't deserve it. When you truly deserve it, how much more will it be on you? That is a very important factor. These six important factors should be registered in your mind. Then, go ahead leading a spiritual life.

