

17. The journey to God: four stages

IT is not easy for the mind of man immersed in worldly concerns to turn to God. Meditation, repetition of the names of the Lord, *bhajans* (group singing of devotional songs), reading of scriptures and other such activities are designed to purify the mind so that it can concentrate on God. As a field has to be properly ploughed and prepared for sowing so as to reap a good harvest, the field of our heart has to be rendered pure and sacred through good and holy actions and *saadhana* (spiritual discipline) if it is to yield the fruit of Divine Wisdom There are four stages in the spiritual journey to God. In the first stage, one-half of the time of the mind may be devoted to the pursuit of the three *Purusharthas* (goals of life)---Dharma, *Artha* and *Kaama*--for earning one's livelihood and carrying on one's worldly duties to family and kith and kin. One quarter should be used for the study of scriptures and the remaining fourth for contemplation on God. Gradually you proceed to the second stage (the intermediate stage) when only one-fourth of the time is devoted to worldly affairs, half the time is used for study of scriptures and the remaining fourth for meditation on God. At the next higher stage, half the mind's time should be devoted to scriptural studies and the other half to meditation.

Bhakthi is the means to transform the mind Godward

In the fourth stage that of the *Mumukshu* (the seeker of Liberation) the entire time of the mind should be devoted to God realisation. This is the stage described in the Geetha as "*Sathatham Yoginah*" (always immersed in union with God). If you pursue your spiritual discipline, while regulating your daily life in the manner, discharging your daily duties, you are bound to become the recipient of God's grace.

In the Bhagavath Geetha, Krishna has declared that He and the Geetha are one, When you reverentially study the Geetha at home, you must regard the Geetha as Krishna Himself installed:: in your shrine. Where Krishna and Geetha reside, it is not a mere home but a temple. It has been declared that for those who have installed the Geetha, the Ganga, the *Gaayathri* and *Govindha* in their hearts, *Moksha* (Liberation) is certain.

If the body is regarded as a home, there are in it a master (the husband) and a wife. The master is a pure, unsullied, unwavering person. The wife is fickle and full of impurities. It is difficult for the two to get on harmoniously. Either of them must give way to the other. It is obviously not desirable for the pure and untainted husband to give in to the ways of the vacillating and impure wife. If the wife comes under the sway of the husband and follows his dictates, the home will be filled with peace and joy. In the body, the master of the house is the *Aathma*, which is ever pure and steady. The mind which is ever wavering and unsteady, is the wife. It is when the mind is transformed and brought under the control of the *Aathma* (soul) that the body experiences *Aanandha* (Divine Bliss). The means by which the mind is transformed is *Bhakthi* (intense love of God). The mind must be progressively turned towards God until it merges in God.

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When a man is good to you, attribute that goodness to the godliness in him; when a man is bad to you, be happy that you have given him some satisfaction, by becoming the target for his attention! If he harms the body, sages are unaffected, because they

know that they are not the body! If they try to harm the soul, sages know that it is impossible, for the soul is ever in Bliss! By means of saadhana, become that type of sage, unaffected by pleasure and pain, loss or gain, victory or defeat.

Sri Sathya Sai