

# MORALS *for* Mind Purification



*(A compilation of enlightening parables from the sacred discourses of  
His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji)*

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*(A compilation of enlightening parables  
from the sacred discourses of His Holiness  
Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji)*

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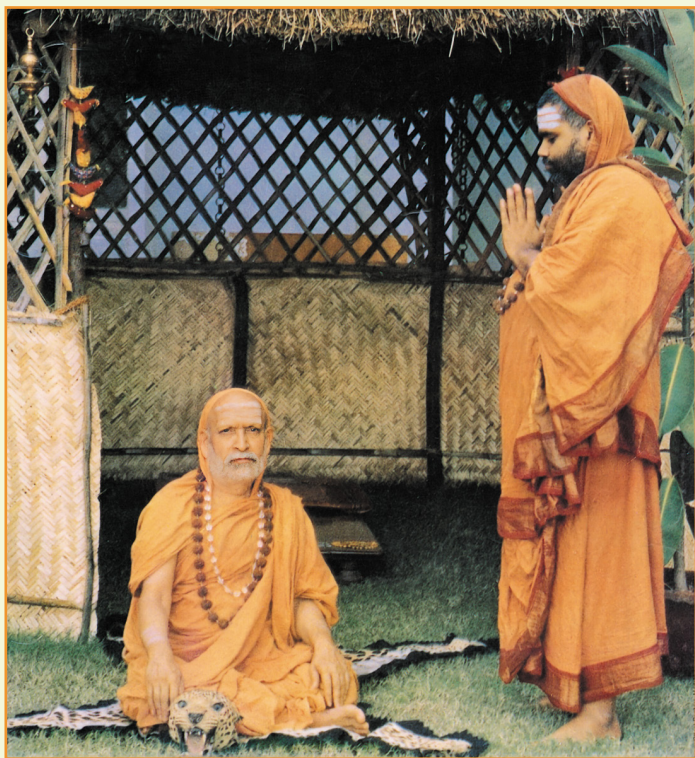
## **Dedication**



**This book is dedicated with utmost  
reverence and humility at the most sacred lotus feet of  
His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji**

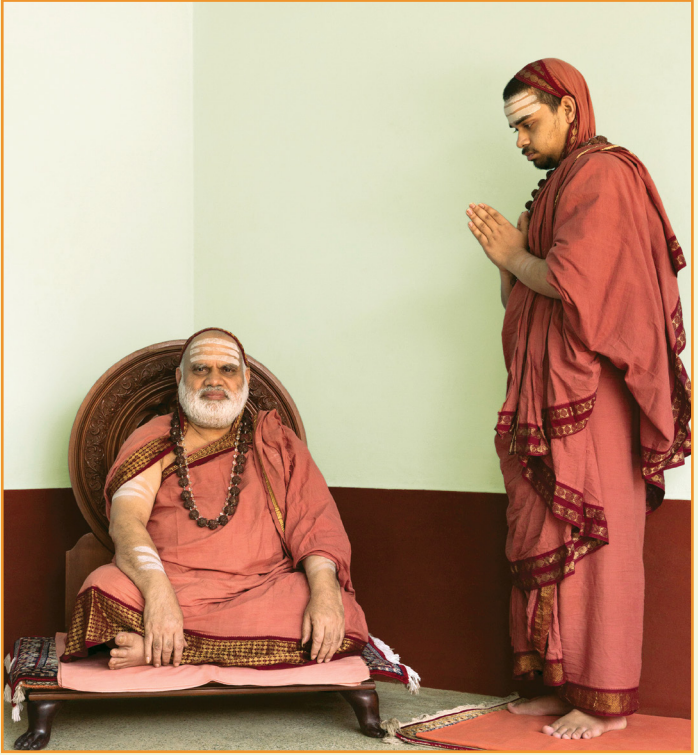






**Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji paying obeisance  
to His Guru, Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamiji**





**Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahawamiji paying obeisance  
to His Guru, Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji**





**Goddess Sri Sharadamba,  
the presiding Deity of Sringeri Sharada Peetham**



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## Preface

His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji, the 36<sup>th</sup> and reigning Pontiff of the Dakshinamnaya Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, established by Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya, stands as a beacon of spiritual wisdom. His towering spiritual accomplishments, His profound mastery of the Shastras and His firm grounding in traditional values, make him an ideal preceptor, revered by countless devotees seeking spiritual upliftment.

A distinguished polyglot fluent in Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Hindi, His Holiness is renowned for his eloquence and ability to impart profound scriptural knowledge with remarkable clarity. His discourses seamlessly blend lucidity and depth, drawing from the Vedas, Shastras, Puranas, Itihasas, and the teachings of great Acharyas such as Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada. With effortless grace, the Jagadguru simplifies complex philosophical concepts through vivid and relatable illustrations, making ancient wisdom accessible to all.

To commemorate 50 years of His Holiness's Sannyasa Ashrama, this book – featuring 50 insightful and illustrative accounts compiled

from his benedictory addresses –is being released as part of the Vajra Mahotsava celebrations.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Sri K. Anand (Advaita Research Centre, Sringeri) for his invaluable time and thoughtful suggestions in refining the content. Special thanks to Sri K. Parthasarathy for meticulously handling the book layout and cover design, Sri E. R. Ravikumar for his diligent proofreading, and Sri N. Subramanian (Sudharsan Graphics Pvt. Ltd.) for facilitating the printing within a remarkably short time.

It is our great fortune to offer this garland of wisdom at the sacred lotus feet of His Holiness, as an expression of our deep reverence on this auspicious occasion of His Vajra Mahotsava –the 75<sup>th</sup> Vardhanti of His divine advent.

Vidyashankar Krishnan  
H.N. Shankar  
Meenakshi Lakshmanan  
K. Suresh Chandar  
**Trustees,**

**Centre For Brahmavidya**



## 1. Power of Desire

A thought provoking verse teaches us how desire surpasses all else.

“What is the biggest thing in the world?”

“The mountain.”

“Is there anything bigger than a mountain?”

“Yes, the ocean—it is vast and can even engulf mountains.”

“Fair enough! But, is there anything greater than the ocean?”

“Space, for it stretches infinitely, encompassing both mountains and oceans.”

“Very well. But, what is greater than space?”

“The Supreme, for the Vedas say the Supreme is the cause of space itself.”

“Is there anything greater than the Supreme?”

“Yes! Desire. It surpasses even the Supreme!”

This verse sarcastically teaches the profound truth that desires are insatiable. The more we try to fulfil them, the more they multiply. The moment one desire is satisfied, another arises, continuing an endless cycle. Yielding to desires only fuels them further.

To break free from this cycle, we must shift our focus away from fleeting worldly desires and instead seek the true purpose of life: Union with God.





## **2. Desires are Endless**

Once, a man prayed to the Lord with a humble heart, saying, “O Lord, I have no children. Please bless me with a child.” The Lord, in His infinite mercy, granted his wish, believing that the man would soon be content and begin to focus on the true purpose of human life. A child was born to him, but as time passed, the child did not speak at the expected age. Worried, the man once again prayed to the Lord, asking for help. The Lord, ever gracious, answered his prayer, hoping that the man would now shift his focus inward and nurture his own spiritual growth.



The child began to speak, but, to the man's surprise, his gift of speech became a curse. The child talked incessantly, creating a whirlwind of noise and distraction. Desperate, the man prayed again, asking the Lord for help. God, ever patient, granted his request, hoping this would finally bring the man peace and help him turn his attention to his own spiritual path.

But then came another challenge. As the boy started school, his academic performance faltered, and he struggled to keep up with his peers. The anxious father, once more, sought divine intervention. God responded once again, granting his prayer so that the boy began to excel in his studies. Yet, despite his newfound abilities, the boy failed to pass his exams while his friends succeeded. Distraught, the father prayed once more, this time for his son's success in the exams. And so, his prayer was granted, and the boy passed.

As the years went by, the boy earned a degree, but his father's desires did not cease. Now, the father wished for his son to find a job. He prayed to the Lord, and the boy was employed. Yet, it was only a temporary position. Still unsatisfied, the father prayed once more, this time for his son's job to be secured. The man's supplications never ended.



The story serves as a reminder: If a person's desires continue to grow without an end, how can he ever hope to achieve true desirelessness, the path to spiritual growth, and inner peace?



### 3. Way to Conquer Desires

The key to conquering desire lies in cultivating indifference toward worldly objects. This detachment arises through the sincere practice of *Vastu Viveka*—the analysis of the true nature of the object of desire.

While the world is filled with countless objects, we do not desire them all. We covet only those we perceive as pleasurable. As long as an object appears enjoyable, a longing for it arises. However, when one carefully examines its nature, along with the flaws and limitations inherent in it, its true worthlessness becomes evident.

By repeatedly recognizing these defects, detachment naturally develops. The object loses its appeal, and thoughts of it no longer disturb the mind.





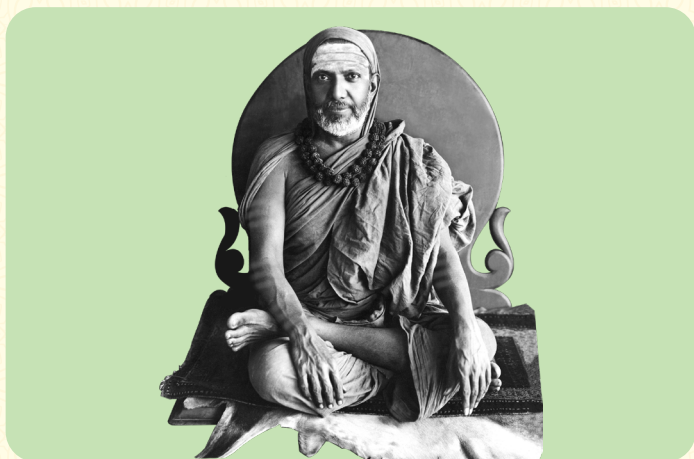
#### 4. Evils of Anger

In Bhagavadgita (Chapter 3) Arjuna asks Bhagavan: “O Krishna, impelled by what does a man commit sinful deeds as if driven by an inevitable force, however much he wishes against it?” The Lord replies that it is due to desire and anger that a man is compelled to commit sins, and warns Arjuna to treat these two as his deadly enemies. Again (in Chapter 16), the Lord compares anger as a gateway to hell and goes on to advise Arjuna to keep off this gate so that he could attain the highest goal (Moksha).

In the Sundara Kanda of Srimad Valmiki Ramayana, we find Sri Anjaneya describing the evils of anger: Anger is indeed very harmful. What sins will an angry man not commit? A man blinded by wrath will harm even his own Guru whom he otherwise holds in high esteem. One who is in the tight grips of rage loses the abilities of discrimination and speaks what should not be spoken and insults even those who deserve his respect. Fortunate are those who are able to keep anger at check through patience.

Therefore a man of wisdom should shield himself from the evil called anger with discrimination and tolerance.





## 5. Conquering Anger - 1

It is only tolerance which can help us to conquer anger. Let us consider an incident. It occurred during the time of Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamiji, the 33rd Acharya of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham. He was camping in a place, when an officer of the forest department came for darshan. Acharyal was not in the habit of dismissing people after just enquiring about their welfare. To ascertain whether the officer had any inclination to know the highest Truth, He asked, "Do you ever become angry?" The officer replied that he occasionally lost his temper.

Acharyal : What do you do when you are angry?

Officer : I take it out on my subordinate.

A: If that be the case, what does he do?

O: He vents his ire on his assistant.

A: Do you see how one man's anger gives trouble to many?

The officer admitted his fault and sought a remedy. Acharyal said, "There are three types of people. Some foresee that they are going to get angry. Some, who are unable to foresee anger, are able to realise after the onset of wrath that they are angry. Some others recognise their anger only in retrospect, after the damage has been done. Amongst these categories of people, to which one do you belong?" The officer replied that though he did not belong to the first, he was a member of the second set of people. Acharyal advised him to join the first group, by thinking even before the onset of anger, "Is it fair on my part to give room to wrath?" Such an analysis would forestall anger. The concerned officer paid his obeisance to the Guru and left for his place where he was camping.

It was midday by the time he reached and he felt very hungry. Unfortunately for him, his cook had prepared only two rotis. He was about to lose his temper. However, he immediately recalled

Acharyal's advice. He called his servant and asked the reason for his making only two *rotis*. The servant replied that the person who had left to fetch provisions had not returned yet. The servant had wanted to appease the hunger of his officer by perparing two *rotis* with the available flour. For his part, the servant did not eat anything and was prepared to remain hungry till the provisions arrived. The officer praised his servant as generous. He felt that he had been saved by the advice he had received, from the sin of getting angry at his innocent servant.







## 6. Conquering Anger - 2

A devotee once approached His Holiness Jagad-guru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji and lamented that he suffered from a short temper that completely overpowered him whenever it erupted. He prayed to His Holiness for guidance to overcome his problem.

H.H. : As anger destroys the one who harbours it, we should eschew it with diligence. Hereafter whenever you tend to become angry, laugh heartily.

Devotee: I shall act as directed.

The words of great saints are never in vain. Laughter, whether spontaneous or volitional, is a proven refiner of mood and an obstructor of anger. Though hearty laughter was advised specifically to the devotee in question, it can, presumably, be used to advantage by others too to deal with the onrush of anger.

Incidentally, when His Holiness was addressing a gathering at Tiruppur in 2012, He shared an information about this advice: “A disciple once approached me, seeking guidance on how to control his anger. I advised him simply, *‘From now on, whenever you feel anger rising within you, laugh heartily.’* Sometime later, another disciple recorded this episode in his book. Sometime after its publication, I received a letter from a man who shared an incredible experience. While waiting for his international flight at Mumbai airport, he happened to notice an unattended book on a nearby seat. Curious, he picked it up and began flipping through its pages. In the process, he came across the very passage recounting my advice on laughter as a remedy for anger. He read it, set the book aside, and thought nothing more of it. After reaching his destination, he hosted a friend at his home. What started as a casual conversation soon escalated into a heated argument. Tempers flared,

and before he knew it, rage overtook him. In his letter, he confessed that at that moment, he was so consumed by fury that he might have even harmed his friend. But just then, my words flashed in his mind—‘Laugh heartily.’ So, in the midst of his rage, he let out a loud, hearty laugh. His friend, caught off guard, found the sudden outburst amusing and, unable to resist, started laughing as well. In an instant, the tension dissolved. What could have ended in disaster transformed into shared laughter. Expressing his deep gratitude, he wrote, ‘Your advice saved a life that day.’”





## **7. Power of Attachment**

Once, there was a king who ruled his kingdom with great wisdom and fairness. However, as fate would have it, he was betrayed by his own family. Stripped of his royal power, he was exiled to the forest. In his wandering, he sought refuge in the ashram of a wise Rishi. Not long after, another unfortunate soul arrived at the ashram—a wealthy trader whose business had once flourished. Yet, he too had been abandoned by his family and left with nothing.

The Rishi, ever compassionate, welcomed them both and offered them shelter for as long as they needed. Over time, the two men formed a strong bond of friendship.

Despite their shared misfortune, both the king and the trader struggled with their inner turmoil. The king could not reconcile what had been done to him by his own kin. His mind was constantly consumed with thoughts of his lost kingdom, his loyal subjects, and his unfinished duties. Similarly, the trader was haunted by the loss of his business and the uncertainty of his future. Both men were overwhelmed with grief, but interestingly, neither harboured hatred toward their families—only a deep disbelief at the sudden and unexpected turn of events.

As their sorrow grew unbearable, the two men turned to the Rishi for counsel, hoping to find a way out of their misery and find peace. The compassionate sage listened to their woes with great patience, allowing them to pour out their hearts. The king spoke first: “We have been betrayed by those we loved. We have lost everything, yet our hearts still cling to what is gone. We turned our backs on those who have wronged us, but how can we free ourselves from this constant sorrow? Why is it so hard to sever the bonds that bind us?”



The trader echoed his sentiments, sharing the same sense of helplessness and confusion.

The sage, moved by their plight, spoke kindly: “What you feel is indeed true, but it is not your fault. All beings—humans, animals, even birds—are swept up in the whirlpool of attachment, caught in the illusion known as *Maya*. *Maya* clouds the mind, making us believe in the permanence of things that are ever-changing. The only way to break free from its grip is to turn your hearts and minds towards the worship of the Supreme Goddess, Parameshwari.”

The sage initiated both men into the worship of the Goddess. Over time, through devotion and spiritual practice, they both transcended their delusions and found true peace.

Every person is endowed with intellect, but it is clouded by the illusions of *Maya*. As a result, we become entangled in all sorts of worldly attachments, becoming our own foes. However, when we use spiritual practices to clear the fog of *Maya*, we are freed, and the Supreme Knowledge reveals itself. This way, we become our own true kin.







## 8. Arrogance Humbled

In the Mahabharata, there is a powerful episode that shows how Bhima, the mighty son of Vayu, learned a profound lesson and shed his baseless arrogance.

Bhima had become excessively proud of his immense physical strength, believing that no one could match him in might. But fate had other plans, and it was Lord Hanuman, his elder brother (being the son of Vayu, just like Bhima), who would humble him.

One day, as Bhima was wandering through the forest, he came across an old *Vanara* (monkey-faced being) lying across the narrow path he was travelling. The *Vanara*'s tail lay stretched across the path, completely blocking it. Bhima, in his arrogance, speaking rudely and dismissively, demanded that the monkey move his tail out of the way. The *Vanara*, with calmness and humility, replied, "I am too weak to even lift my tail. If you wish to pass, you must move it yourself."

Offended by what he perceived as an insult, Bhima tried to push the tail aside with his left hand. But to his astonishment, the tail did not budge an inch. Undeterred, he used his right hand, but again, he was met with resistance. In frustration, Bhima then employed all his strength, using both hands to move the tail. Still, it did not move.

At this point, the realization slowly dawned on Bhima: This was no ordinary *Vanara*. With awe and humility, he put aside his pride, joined his palms in reverence, and spoke with sincerity: "O great one, I do not know who you truly are, but please forgive my arrogance. You must be a being of immense power and wisdom. Please reveal your true form to me." With a gentle smile, the *Vanara* revealed his true identity: he was none other than Lord Hanuman, the great divine being. Hanuman

explained that he had staged this encounter to break Bhima's pride and to teach him a valuable lesson.

Through this simple yet profound act, Bhima was humbled and enlightened, realizing that true strength lies not just in physical prowess, but in humility and respect for all beings.





## 9. An Obsession to Avoid

“The world should not censure me, but rather, it should praise me.” This desire for praise and the fear of criticism is known as *Loka Vasana*. It destroys one’s mental peace. Why? It is because it is impossible to gain universal acclaim for all our actions, no matter how virtuous we are.

Ramayana provides a fitting example for this. Rama was a person who embodied virtue, valour, wisdom in *Dharma*, unwavering resolve, compassion for all, courage, and a complete absence of anger and jealousy. Rama was in fact the incarnation of Lord Narayana Himself. Rama’s wife, Sita, was none other than Goddess Mahalakshmi. She was known for Her unwavering chastity. Yet, despite their exemplary virtues, the faultless Rama and the virtuous Sita faced criticism. What, then, can be said of ordinary people?

This illustrates an important truth: People will find fault with others no matter what. For example, if someone is not handsome, people criticize his appearance. If one is handsome, then his intellect



is questioned. If they are learned, their behaviour is scrutinized. If they possess great qualities, they are labelled unorthodox. Furthermore, people from different regions or ideologies find fault with each other. Northerners criticize the customs of the South, and Southerners criticize those of the North. Philosophers from one school criticize those from another. It is thus clear that no one can escape criticism.

This is why a person filled with *Loka Vasana*—the desire for praise and fear of condemnation—will not find mental peace and the inclination to pursue spiritual discipline. One must not be swayed by the praises or denunciations of others. One should live one's life according to the teachings of one's Guru.

If one concerns oneself with what others say—whether praise or blame—one's spiritual efforts will be in vain. Therefore, one must rid oneself of *Loka Vasana*.







## 10. Two Great Enemies

Two great enemies reside within the human mind: *Ahamkara* (ego) and *Mamakara* (attachment). *Ahamkara* manifests as the constant assertion of

“I, I, I.” *Mamakara* creates the possessiveness “This is mine.”

Whenever one accomplishes something, the feeling of “I did this” arises from *Ahamkara*. Likewise, the attachment to objects and relationships stems from *Mamakara*.

An instructive incident took place when Jagad-guru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamiji, the 35th Acharya of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, as part of His tour, visited a sacred site which, despite its spiritual significance, had long remained unnoticed due to a lack of facilities for pilgrims. Recognizing this, a dedicated officer took it upon himself to develop the area, introducing various improvements. His efforts soon bore fruit, and pilgrims began visiting the site in large numbers.

When the Acharya arrived, the officer eagerly pointed out his accomplishments, repeatedly stating, “This was done by me,” and “That was arranged by me.” Acharyal wholeheartedly praised the man’s accomplishments but subtly imparted a moral lesson that would serve him well in the long run. As they approached the grand entrance of the temple, He stopped and turned towards the towering *Gopuram* (temple tower).

- Acharyal: Do you behold this *Gopuram*?  
Officer: Yes, I do.  
A: How high is it?  
O: Very high.  
A: Where are we when compared to it?  
O: On a very low level.

Acharyal continued:

“Do you know why such *Gopurams* were built? It is to remind us of our insignificance before the Divine. The grandeur of the temple tower is meant to diminish our *Ahamkara*. When we reflect on Ishwara, the Creator of the vast universe, and compare His work to our own, we realize how minuscule our achievements truly are. Thus, one would do well to renounce the thought, “I did this,” and instead humbly acknowledge all accomplishments as the result of divine grace.





## 11. A Noble Cause

The Vedas shine forth as the *Parama Pramana* (the ultimate authority) in all matters of *Dharma*. However, before the advent of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada, the supremacy of the Vedas was being increasingly ignored, leading to a proliferation of misleading schools of thought that clouded society's understanding of *Dharma*.

The Shankara Digvijaya, the authoritative biography of Sri Shankara, vividly describes the perilous state of affairs prevailing in the country

at that time. Anti-Vedic movements had deeply influenced the people, causing them to lose faith in the sacred scriptures. In this dire situation, it was Kumarila Bhatta, an unparalleled scholar of the Mimamsa school, who took upon himself the monumental task of restoring faith in the Vedas.

Kumarila Bhatta, having mastered the study of the Vedas, began challenging the anti-Vedic factions to debates, systematically defeating them with his profound knowledge and irrefutable logic. On one such occasion, a debate was held in a royal court before the king, who devised a dramatic test to determine the victor.

The king declared, "Only the one who jumps off the mountain in my kingdom and remains unharmed will be accepted as the undisputed winner."

The opponents of Kumarila Bhatta were terrified. How could anyone survive such a fall? It was nothing short of suicide. Unable to accept the challenge, they remained silent.

Kumarila Bhatta, however, displayed unwavering courage. Without hesitation or doubt, he accepted the challenge, his heart filled with unshakable faith in the Vedas. Climbing to the cliff's edge, he uttered a prayer and leapt from the towering



heights. To the astonishment of all, he landed safely, without a single bruise on his body.

Describing this miraculous moment, Sri Vidyaranya, the author of *Shankara Digvijaya*, beautifully compares it to a mother protecting her child: Just as a biological mother safeguards her offspring, *Veda-Mata* (Mother Veda) shielded Bhatta, her devoted son, because of his steadfast faith in her.

Had it not been for great souls like Kumarila Bhatta, who tirelessly fought to uphold the sanctity of the Vedas, the wisdom of the Vedas may have been lost to time. Without such unwavering dedication, the tradition of Vedic learning and the presence of scholars to teach them might have vanished.

It is our duty to honour and remember these selfless guardians of *Dharma*. Their sacrifices remind us of the eternal truth that the Vedas stand as the highest authority, guiding us in discerning what is and is not *Dharma*.







## 12. An Indicator of *Dharma*

Where there is *Dharma*, prosperity follows. Without *Dharma*, misery prevails. This eternal truth is beautifully illustrated in an episode from the Mahabharata.

The Pandavas, the five noble sons of King Pandu, were paragons of virtue. Their eldest, *Dharma*-putra (Yudhishtira), was the very embodiment of

*Dharma*. Yet, despite their righteousness, they were deceived by the Kauravas and exiled from their kingdom. As per the conditions of their banishment, they were to spend twelve years in the forest and then one year in exile incognito. If their true identities were discovered during the thirteenth year, they would be forced into another cycle of thirteen years in exile.

Bound by their unwavering commitment to *Dharma*, the Pandavas accepted their fate and fulfilled the twelve-year forest exile. As the thirteenth year began, they settled in a certain kingdom, carefully concealing their identities.

Meanwhile, Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, was desperate to expose them. He devised countless schemes to uncover their whereabouts, but all his efforts ended in failure. Frustrated, he turned to the wise and venerable Bheeshma, seeking guidance. "Where are the Pandavas hiding?" Duryodhana demanded.

Bheeshma, though unaware of their exact location, replied with wisdom: "I do not know where they are, as they have concealed their identities. However, I can tell you this: "Wherever Dharma-putra resides, prosperity follows. Look for a land that has suddenly begun to flourish, where

abundance and well-being have taken root. That is where you will find the Pandavas, for Yudhishtira is the very embodiment of *Dharma*, and *Dharma* brings prosperity. I have nothing more to say.”

The power of *Dharma* is such that when one sincerely upholds righteousness, prosperity naturally follows.





### **13. A Lesson on *Svadharma***

Once a Brahmin named Kousika was doing penance sitting under a tree when a crane perched on the top of its branches defiled the Brahmin's head with its droppings. Enraged, he cast a fiery glare at the bird. Lo and behold! The crane was instantly reduced to ashes. Astonished by the sudden manifestation of his spiritual power, he felt a surge of pride. He marvelled at his newfound abilities, convinced of his elevated status.

Shortly after, he arrived at a nearby village, stood before a house, and called out for alms. The lady of the house, occupied with her household duties, took some time to respond. In the meantime, her husband returned home, weary and hungry. Dutifully, she attended to him first, ensuring his comfort before stepping outside to offer food to the waiting Brahmana.

By then, the Brahmana had lost his patience. His anger flared, and he glared at her with burning rage. But the woman, calm and unshaken, simply smiled and said, "I am not a crane to be burnt by your wrath. Please do not be angry. I was merely fulfilling my duty as a devoted wife."

The Brahmana was stunned. How did she know about the crane incident? Bewildered, he asked, "Mother, how have you gained such divine insight?"

The woman replied with humility, "My spiritual strength comes not from austerities or mystical practices, but from unwavering devotion to my duty of serving my husband with sincerity." Humbled, he folded his hands and sought her guidance on the path of *Svadharma* (one's duty as ordained by the scriptures). She then advised him, "Go to Mithila and seek the wisdom of a man named Dharmavyadha. He will teach you the true essence of *Svadharma*."



Eager to learn, he travelled to Mithila, expecting to find Dharmavyadha in a grand ashram, surrounded by disciples receiving sacred teachings. However, to his utter shock, Dharmavyadha was a butcher, a seller of meat!

As the Brahmana stood in disbelief, Dharmavyadha approached him and said, “Did that noble Brahmin lady send you to me?” The Brahmana was further astounded by the butcher’s knowledge of his journey. Dharmavyadha continued, “O revered one, I know why you have come. Come to my home, and I shall share with you the wisdom you seek.”

At Dharmavyadha’s house, the Brahmana witnessed a truly humbling sight—the butcher, despite his seemingly lowly profession, served his aged parents with utmost devotion and care.

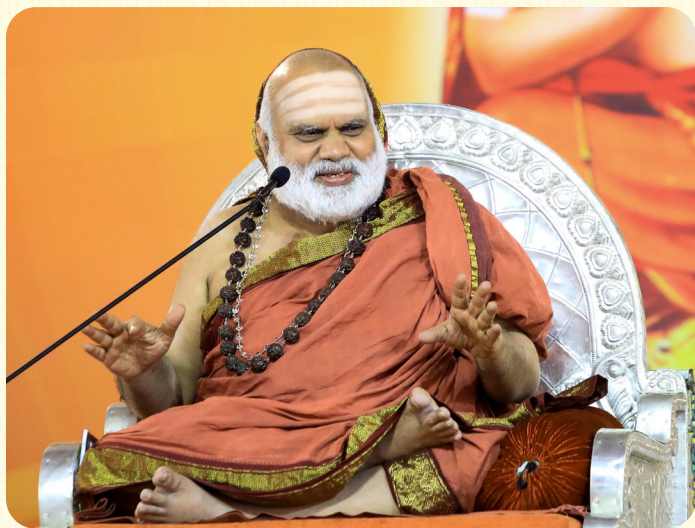
There, in that humble home, Dharmavyadha imparted profound wisdom on *Svadharmā*, emphasizing that true spiritual progress is not determined by one’s profession or external practices but by the sincerity with which one performs one’s duties.

Realizing the error of his ways, the Brahmana felt blessed by this revelation. With newfound



wisdom, he returned home, a completely transformed man. He dedicated himself to serving his parents with devotion and sincerity and attained higher good.





## 14. A Fitting Parallel

There was once a Guru with ten disciples, all of whom were rather dull-witted. One day, he assigned them a task that required them to travel to a nearby village. To get there, they had to cross a river. Since no bridge or boat was available, they decided to wade across on foot. Upon reaching the other side safely, one of them suddenly grew anxious. “Did we all make it across?” he wondered. To be sure, he asked everyone to stand in a line and began counting. But in his foolishness, he

forgot to count himself and declared, “Oh no! There are only nine of us. One of us must have drowned!”

Alarmed, another disciple decided to do the counting himself. But, like the first, he too left himself out and arrived at the same conclusion—only nine! Each disciple, in turn, counted in the same erroneous manner, and each time, they arrived at the distressing number—nine instead of ten. Convinced that one among them had perished in the river, they were overwhelmed with grief.

At that moment, a passerby noticed their sorrowful faces and stopped to ask what was wrong. When they explained their predicament, he asked one of them to re-do the head count in his presence. As expected, that man excluded himself, counted only the others and said nine. The passerby quickly realized the root cause of their issue. Smiling, he turned to the one who had done the counting and said, “You are the tenth man!” Hearing this, that disciple beamed with joy and exclaimed, “Oh! I am the tenth man! Thank God, I didn’t drown!”

After narrating this amusing tale, His Holiness pointed out how similar this situation is to people’s attitude toward *Dharma* today. Many are quick to blame others for failing to follow *Dharma*, yet they

conveniently overlook their own shortcomings. They are like the foolish disciples, oblivious to their own presence in the count. Instead of merely critiquing others, one must first focus on the sincere performance of one's own duties, as prescribed by the scriptures for one's stage of life



## 15. Unwavering Faith

In the 19th century, the kingdom of Mysore (modern-day Karnataka) was home to a renowned scholar named Kunigal Rama Shastry. As the chief scholar in the king's court, his wisdom and deep rooted faith in the scriptures were widely revered. One particular incident stands as a testament to his unshakable faith in the words of the scripture.

At the time, his wife, Lakshmamma, was pregnant. Rama Shastry fervently wished for a son and performed the *Pumsavana* rite, a sacred ritual prescribed by the scripture to ensure the birth of a male child.

One of his most devoted students, Subrahmanya Shastry, hailed from the Chola region (modern-day central Tamil Nadu). During his wife's pregnancy, Rama Shastry embarked on a pilgrimage to the temple of Lord Srikantheshwara in Nanjangud, accompanied by Subrahmanya Shastry.

As they travelled, a thought crossed Rama Shastry's mind about the name he would give his yet-to-be-born child. Turning to his student,

he asked, “What name should I choose for my child? I would prefer one of the many names of Paramashiva, my *Ishta Devata* (personal deity).” But, Subrahmanya Shastry remained silent.

Noticing his hesitation, Rama Shastry repeated his question. With great humility, the disciple finally replied, “O Swamin, the child is yet to be born. Only the divine knows whether it will be a boy or a girl. Would it be appropriate to decide on a name before the child arrives?”

Rama Shastry’s response was swift and unwavering: “Why do you even doubt it? I have performed the *Pumsavana* rite with complete faith and in the precise manner prescribed by the scriptures. The Shastras categorically state that if the ritual is performed with devotion, it guarantees the birth of a male child.”

Subrahmanya Shastry was struck by his guru’s unshakable conviction. With deep reverence, he responded, “O Swamin, it is entirely possible that Lord Paramashiva Himself may be born as your son. In that case, it would be most fitting to name him ‘Shivaswami.’” Rama Shastry was pleased with the suggestion and resolved to name his child Shivaswami.



Months later, a beautiful baby boy was born to Lakshmamma, and true to his vow, Rama Shastry named him Shivaswami. In time, this child grew into a towering spiritual figure and went on to become the 33rd Acharya of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham, assuming the revered title Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamiji.



## 16. Need for Sincerity and Faith

Daksha, the mind-born son of Lord Brahma, played a vital role in the divine act of creation. Endowed with great power, he was revered by the celestials. His daughter, Sati, was married to none other than Lord Shiva, one of the Supreme Trinity.

One day, when Daksha entered an assembly of celestial beings, all rose in respect, but Lord Shiva did not. Misinterpreting this as an affront, Daksha, consumed by his ego, resolved to teach Shiva a lesson.

Determined to assert his authority, Daksha organized a grand *Yaga* (sacrificial ritual). However, he deliberately excluded Shiva and Sati from the invitations. Sati, deeply hurt by her father's blatant insult, insisted on attending the *Yaga* to confront him. Despite Shiva's counsel against it, she defied His advice and proceeded to the venue.

Upon her arrival, Daksha greeted her not with affection but with harsh words, ridiculing her for coming uninvited. Sati, undeterred, reminded him that no sacrifice could bear fruit without offering

due reverence to Lord Shiva. But Daksha, blinded by arrogance, dismissed her words and humiliated her further. Overcome with grief, both for disobeying her husband and for the disgrace inflicted upon her and Shiva, Sati ended her life in anguish.

When news of Sati's demise reached Shiva, His fury knew no bounds. In His wrath, He created Virabhadra, a fearsome warrior, and sent him to destroy the *Yaga*. Accompanied by Shiva's mighty army, Virabhadra descended upon the sacrificial grounds, laying waste to everything in sight. Amidst the devastation, Daksha met his grim fate—his head was severed. Thus, the grand *Yaga*, conceived with arrogance, came to a tragic end.

In time, Shiva's rage subsided. Moved by the prayers of the celestials, He resurrected Daksha, albeit with the head of a goat. Realizing his grave mistake, Daksha humbly sought forgiveness, which Shiva, in His infinite grace, granted. With newfound wisdom, Daksha reperformed the *Yaga*, this time inviting Shiva with due reverence and offering Him His rightful share.

Daksha was no ordinary being. He was the son of Brahma Himself, held in high esteem even among the celestials. Yet, despite his exalted status, his *Yaga* ended in disaster. Why? It was because he

wilfully disregarded the scriptural mandate of honouring Lord Shiva. If even a being of Daksha's stature could not escape the consequences of neglecting sincerity in performing sacred duties, what then of us mere mortals? It is imperative that we approach all scripturally ordained activities with utmost sincerity and faith.





## 17. A Testament to Virtue

In the Ramayana, there is a poignant episode where Rama and Lakshmana arrive at Sugreeva's dwelling, seeking his help in finding Sita. In an attempt to assist, Sugreeva presents a bundle of jewels, explaining, "These were thrown down by a woman who was weeping as she was carried away in a flying chariot."

Hearing this, Rama is overcome with sorrow and turns to Lakshmana, asking him to identify whether the ornaments belonged to Sita. With deep humility and reverence, Lakshmana responds,



“O noble brother, I can recognize only her anklets and toe rings. I have never looked at Mother Sita’s face or any other adornment, for my gaze has always remained fixed upon her sacred feet as I offer my daily prostrations.”

What an extraordinary display of virtue! Lakshmana’s unwavering respect and devotion serve as a timeless example of how one should uphold dignity and righteousness in one’s conduct.





## 18. The Wisdom of Fate

The great Kurukshetra war had ended, leaving the battlefield strewn with the fallen Kauravas. Though victorious, Yudhishtira was weighed down by grief and guilt, believing himself to be the cause of such immense destruction. Seeking solace, he turned to Bheeshma, the wise elder lying on his bed of arrows, and poured out his anguish. Moved by

Yudhishtira's distress, Bheeshma narrated the following story to him:

Once, there lived a noble and wise woman named Gautami. One day, a great tragedy struck her. Her only son was bitten by a serpent and died instantly. A hunter, who had witnessed the event, was furious. Seizing the serpent, he brought it to Gautami and said, "This wretched creature took your son's life! Just say the word, and I shall kill it at once."

But Gautami, being a woman of great virtue, stopped him. "Will my son return if you kill this snake?" she asked gently. "No. Taking its life will not undo my loss, but it will burden you with unnecessary sin. Please let it go."

The hunter, however, remained stubborn. "Such a creature deserves the highest punishment for the irreparable sorrow it has caused you" he argued.

Just then, the serpent itself spoke. "I am not to blame," it hissed. "I was merely acting under the command of Mrityu, the God of Death."

At that moment, Mrityu appeared and explained, "I did not act on my own. I was only carrying out the will of Kaala, the Supreme Lord of Time."

Then, Kaala himself manifested before them all and declared, “Everything that happens is a consequence of one’s own karma. A being reaps the fruits of its past actions, and events unfold at the destined time. The boy’s death was inevitable—neither the serpent nor Mrityu is to be blamed, for they were merely instruments in executing what had already been set in motion.”

Gautami, wise as she was, accepted this truth, and the hunter, enlightened by the lesson, released the serpent.

Finishing the tale, Bheeshma said to Yudhishtira, “The fate of the Kauravas was not of your making. Their own actions led them to destruction, and you were merely an instrument in the grand design of *Dharma*. Therefore, do not be worried.”

From this story we learn a timeless truth: One has to reap the results of one’s karma either in the same birth or in a future birth. So, wisdom consists in performing meritorious deeds and avoiding sinful ones.





## 19. Roots Forgotten, Values Lost

There once lived an orthodox Brahmana who had devoted his life to the study of the Vedas, Shastras, and other sacred scriptures. He diligently performed his daily rituals with unwavering discipline and sincerity. Beyond his spiritual pursuits, he was also a devoted husband and a loving father, deeply committed to his family's well-being.



Understanding his son's aspirations, the Brahmana supported him in pursuing a secular education. With his father's encouragement, the young man eventually became a successful professional, establishing his practice at home and meeting clients in his office there.

One day, as the son was engaged in discussions with a group of affluent clients, his father, having just completed his daily rituals, entered the hall. As was his routine, he quietly sat in a corner, absorbed in his scriptures, clad in a simple dhoti with sacred ash adorning his body. The son, however, felt a surge of embarrassment. "What will my clients think?", he wondered anxiously.

Noticing the elderly Brahmana sitting humbly in the corner, one of the clients curiously inquired, "Who is this gentleman?" The son hesitated, torn between truth and pride. Then, in an attempt to downplay the situation, he replied casually, "Oh, him? He is just a priest who comes here for the daily puja."

The father, overhearing his son's words, was stunned. He could hardly believe his ears. Rising from his seat, he walked up to the client and, pointing at his son, declared with quiet dignity:

“Do you know who this young man is? He is this priest’s only son!” A heavy silence filled the room.

Never be ashamed of your roots. True success lies in honouring those who shaped you, for humility and gratitude define one’s true character. Progress and professional success should never come at the cost of one’s roots, values, and *Dharma*.



## **20. The Rule about Speaking Truth**

Truth is a virtue of the highest order, yet it must be spoken with wisdom and discretion. Even when the truth is undeniable, one must be mindful of the timing and manner in which it is conveyed.

Imagine a gentleman deeply immersed in a sacred ritual, experiencing joy and peace. Now, if you have unpleasant news to deliver, would you disrupt his mental tranquility by sharing it immediately? While you may feel a sense of duty in conveying the truth, have you considered the impact it may have? Would delaying the news until a more appropriate moment cause any harm? Certainly not. On the contrary, it would prevent unnecessary distress and allow him to complete his religious observances with a calm mind.

This is why it is said that even when speaking the truth, one must exercise discrimination and convey it in the gentlest possible manner, especially when it is likely to cause pain. At the same time, truth should never be sacrificed for the sake of temporary comfort. Suppose a student has failed an examination, and his roll number does not

appear on the pass list. If you falsely assure him that he has passed with distinction just to make him momentarily happy, what happens when he later discovers the reality? The disappointment and humiliation he experiences will be far greater than the fleeting joy you provided.

Thus, never speak a lie, even if it seems harmless or momentarily uplifting. The consequences of deception, however small, can be intense. Instead, let truth be spoken with compassion and wisdom, ensuring it does not cause undue anguish. Truth must be softened with tact, but it must never be distorted.



## 21. What is True Valour ?

Everyone is familiar with the great epics like the Mahabharata and Bhagavata. Lord Sri Krishna, in His divine prowess, could have slain Sisupala in an instant. Yet, He chose restraint, despite enduring Sisupala's relentless insults. His reasoning was profound: "Let me give him another chance. Perhaps he will realize his mistake. Only if he proves to be utterly incorrigible should I strike him down."

Similarly, Yudhishtira and his brothers were mighty warriors. He himself was strong and capable, yet he made every effort to prevent war with his cousins. He even sent Lord Krishna as an envoy of peace—a testament to his magnanimity. However, when Duryodhana arrogantly dismissed the proposal, insisting that Yudhishtira should fight for the kingdom if he desired it, Yudhishtira still counseled him to avoid bloodshed and uphold the honour of their dynasty.

Even when Bhima and the other Pandavas—eager to vanquish Duryodhana—awaited his command, Yudhishtira pacified them. Since childhood,



he had firmly believed that every action must be undertaken only after careful consideration of its consequences. Why should we avoid impulsive actions? It is because they may lead to unforeseen difficulties. Only through thoughtful deliberation can we achieve the desired outcome. This is the moral Yudhishtira exemplified.

Thus, we see that true valor is adorned by patience, forgiveness, and wisdom. Let us never forget this timeless lesson.



## 22. Knowledge is Enhanced by Modesty

When does knowledge or scholarly learning attain its true value? The Jagadguru addressed this profound question, enlightening His audience on the essential qualities that define a truly accomplished individual. To illustrate His point, He presented two compelling examples.

Consider the case of Kalidasa—an unparalleled poet of extraordinary renown and reverence. Yet, what did he humbly declare while composing the celebrated work *Raghuvamsa*? “Where is the illustrious lineage of the Sun, and where am I, a man of little knowledge?” Would anyone expect such self-effacing words from a literary giant like Kalidasa? Certainly not. Yet, it was his deep humility that led him to make such a statement.

A similar instance is also found in the Prashnopanishad. Once, a group of young sages approached the enlightened Sage Pippalada, seeking to dispel their ignorance and realize the ultimate Truth. With great reverence, they entreated: “We wish for the darkness of our ignorance to be dispelled by your grace.

We have come to you. Please enlighten us about the Truth.”

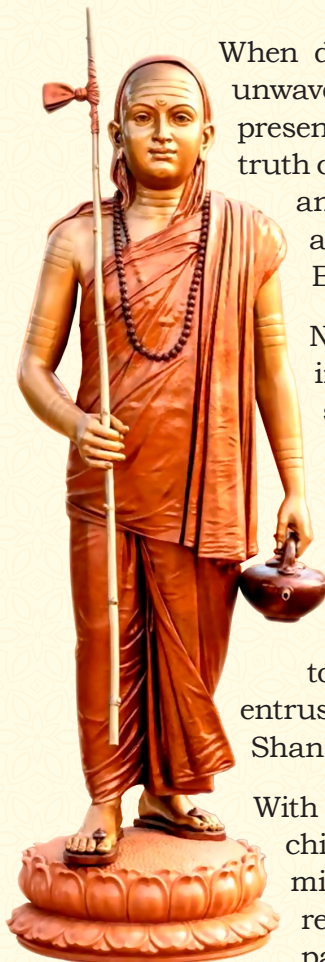
The sage, a true Jnani, responded with remarkable humility: “Engage in deep inquiry (*Vichara*) and undertake austerities (*Tapas*). Then, if you have any doubts, come to me, and I shall answer, if I happen to know.”

How striking the modesty in his words is! Sri Bhagavatpadal, in his commentary on this incident, clarifies that Sage Pippalada’s statement—“if I know”—should not be interpreted as an admission of ignorance. In fact, the sage subsequently answered all the questions of his disciples with great wisdom and clarity. Why, then, did he phrase it this way? It was purely an expression of his humility.

Even the Shastras affirm that acquiring knowledge alone is not a true achievement. Humility must accompany it. Indeed, knowledge finds its highest beauty and value when adorned with modesty.



## 23. True Devotion Works Wonders



When devotion is pure and faith unwavering, God remains ever-present with His devotees. This truth could be illustrated through an inspiring episode attributed to Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada.

Near Sri Shankara's home in Kalady, there stood a shrine dedicated to Goddess Katyayani. Every day, his father would offer milk to the deity, then bring it back to share as sacred prasadam. One day, when he was unable to visit the shrine, he entrusted the task to his child, Shankara.

With innocent sincerity, the child placed the container of milk before the idol and requested the Goddess to partake of it. His

unconditioned mind did not perceive the idol as a mere lifeless object; instead, he truly expected the Goddess to accept his offering. However, nothing happened.

Disheartened, the child waited, but when the Goddess remained silent, he began to weep. Moved by his pure devotion and unwavering faith, the Goddess manifested before him, lifted the container, and drank the milk. Overjoyed, young Shankara was about to return home when he realized that the container was empty. Worried that he had nothing to take back as prasadam, he asked the Goddess why she had consumed it all. Pleased by his innocence, the Goddess smiled and miraculously refilled the container with milk.

Narrating this episode, His Holiness reminded the audience of Lord Krishna's promise to Arjuna: "Whatever is offered to Me with devotion, be it a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water—I accept it with love." True devotion never goes unanswered.









## 24. Sincere Devotees Stay Protected

God always protects His sincere devotees, no matter the circumstances. A fitting example of this can be found in the Ambareeshopakhyaṇa, the story of King Ambareesha, as narrated in the Srimad Bhagavata.

King Ambareesha was a great devotee of Lord Sri Mahaviṣṇu. He observed *Ekadashi Vrata* (fasting on the eleventh day of every lunar fortnight) and would break his fast on *Dwadashi* (the twelfth day) within the time limit prescribed by the Śāstras.

On one such *Dwadashi*, Sage Durvāsa, known for his fiery temper, arrived at the palace and expressed his desire to be the King's guest for the day. Overjoyed, Ambareesha welcomed the revered sage with great respect, considering it a divine blessing to serve him.

Before partaking of food, Sage Durvāsa set off to the riverside for his ablutions, assuring the King that he would return soon. Ambareesha assumed that the sage would be back in time, allowing him to offer food to his guest before breaking his own fast as per the scriptural injunctions.

However, time passed, and there was no sign of Durvasa's return. Ambareesha now faced a difficult dilemma—if he delayed breaking his fast beyond the prescribed time, he would violate the rules of *Ekadasi Vrata*. On the other hand, eating before serving his guest would be an act of disrespect toward the great sage.

Seeking a solution, Ambareesha consulted the learned scholars in his court. They advised him to sip a little water, as this would technically end his fast without constituting a full meal, thereby upholding both his religious duty and his duty as a host.

When Sage Durvasa returned and learned that Ambareesha had sipped water before serving him, he was enraged. Considering it a grave offence, he cursed the King and summoned a fearsome demon to destroy him.

As the monstrous being lunged at him, Ambareesha remained calm and surrendered to the Lord in prayer. Instantly, the Sudarshana Chakra (Lord Vishnu's divine discus) manifested there and destroyed the demon in a flash. The Chakra then turned toward Durvasa, ready to strike.



Terrified, Durvasa fled for his life, seeking refuge with the Trinity—Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu—but none could help him. Lord Vishnu Himself declared, “A devotee is dearer to Me than My own Self. If one causes harm to My devotee, only that devotee can grant forgiveness and offer a remedy.”

Realizing this, Sage Durvasa hurried back to Ambareesha, fell at his feet, and begged for forgiveness. The kind-hearted King, ever humble and compassionate, prayed to the Lord to spare the sage. At his request, the Sudarshana Chakra withdrew, and Durvasa was saved.

Ambareesha’s tale reminds us that God never abandons those who surrender to Him with unwavering faith. A true devotee is always protected.



## 25. The Need for Faith and Perseverance

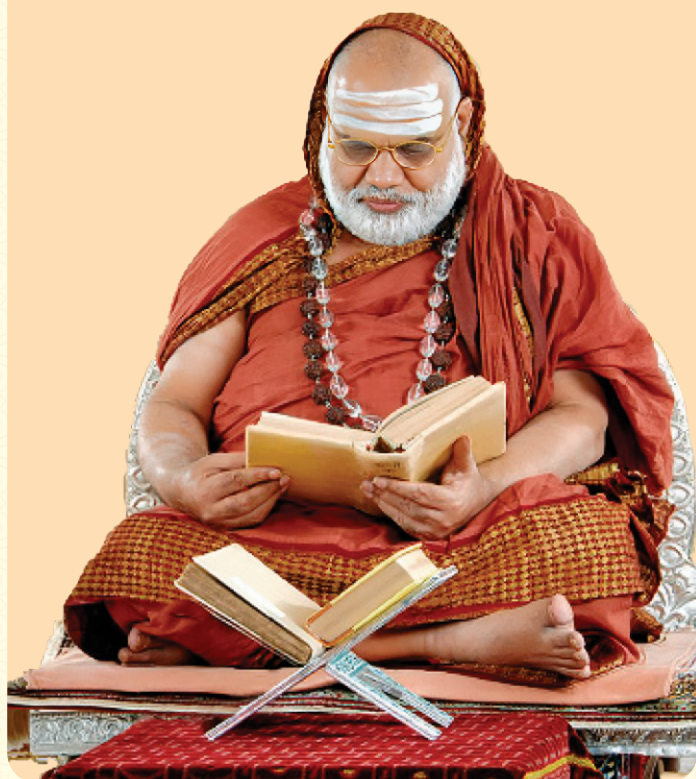
“The words of the scriptures are immensely powerful and should be followed with absolute faith,” proclaimed His Holiness while addressing a large gathering. To emphasize this, He recounted an episode from Shankara Digvijaya.

Shivaguru and Aryamba, a pious couple from Kalady, led a comfortable life but were deeply saddened because they were not blessed with children. Despite performing numerous rituals and sacrifices, their prayers remained unanswered. One day, noticing her husband’s despair, Aryamba consoled him: “If our prayers remain unfulfilled, it does not mean God is partial. It only means that our sincerity and effort must be even greater. Let us not lose heart; let us intensify our prayers.”

With renewed determination, they immersed themselves in intense prayers. Their faith and perseverance bore fruit. Lord Shiva Himself came to them as a son who was none other than Sri Adi Shankara Bhagavatpada!









## 26. Sincere Devotion Alone Counts

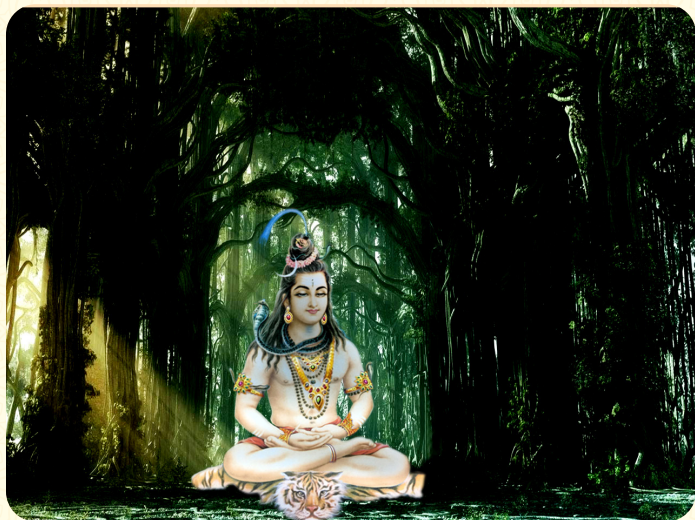
Pushpadanta was a Gandharva and a great devotee of Lord Shiva. He composed a masterpiece, a hymn on Lord Shiva, known popularly as Shiva Mahimna Stotram.

The greatness of Ishwara is beyond the realm of words and human comprehension. Can only those who fully grasp His infinite glory sing His praises? Pushpadanta provides a profound answer to this question in his hymn:

“If Ishwara could only be eulogized by those who completely understand His greatness, then even the hymns of Brahma and other celestial beings would fall short, for they too are incapable of fully realizing the Lord’s boundless magnificence. However, if one may offer praise according to one’s own intellect and devotion, then I too can glorify Bhagavan to the best of my ability.”

This insight reveals that sincere devotion, rather than complete knowledge, is what truly matters in worship.





## 27. The Power of Prostration

A devotee expressed his helplessness to the Lord through a poem:

“O Lord, I did not bow before You even once in my previous birth, nor will I be able to offer salutations to You in my next birth. Kindly forgive me for both these transgressions.”

Why does he speak this way? His words stem from an unshakable conviction—the belief that a single prostration before Ishwara is enough to attain



liberation. A liberated soul is never reborn. Therefore, he reasons that since he has taken birth, it must mean he failed to bow before the Lord in his past life. Now, having offered his salutation in this lifetime, he knows he will not be reborn, and thus, he will not have the opportunity to prostrate before Ishwara in another life.

This profound realization beautifully underscores the power of sincere devotion and the boundless grace of the Divine.







## 28. God's Protective Shield

Prahlada—a soul devoted to Lord Vishnu from birth—was the son of the mighty Rakshasa king, Hiranyakashipu. Though born into a lineage of demons, his heart was untouched by their ways. From an early age, he was immersed in unwavering love for Bhagavan, constantly chanting His holy name, much to his father's fury.

To Prahlada, Lord Vishnu was the sole protector and provider, and no force—be it persuasion, punishment, or peril—could shake his steadfast faith. His devotion was so pure and radiant that it effortlessly inspired those around him, spreading the light of bhakti wherever he went. Yet, his father despised this devotion. Hiranyakashipu, blinded by arrogance, wanted to be worshipped as the supreme being and could not tolerate his own son's allegiance to Vishnu. Teachers, family, and ministers all tried to dissuade Prahlada, but his faith remained unshaken.

At last, in a fit of rage and desperation, Hiranyakashipu sought to end his son's life. He subjected

him to unimaginable tortures, believing that brute force would succeed where persuasion had failed. Prahlada was trampled beneath raging elephants, yet he emerged unscathed. He was cast into a pit of venomous snakes, yet remained untouched. He was tied to a blazing pyre, yet not a single hair was singed.

Each time, his father watched in disbelief as his son stood calm and unharmed, shielded by the divine grace of Lord Vishnu. Who else but the Supreme Lord could offer such protection in the face of certain death? If one were to seek help from an ordinary mortal, they might hear: "I can do no more. If only you had come sooner..." But Bhagavan never speaks such words. To those who surrender to Him completely, He remains ever-present, ever-faithful, and never forsaking.

This timeless story of Prahlada's unshakable devotion is a testament to the truth: God always protects those who seek refuge in Him.





## 29. Chanting God's Name Liberates One

The Bhagavata Purana recounts the remarkable story of Ajamila. Born into a noble Brahmin family, Ajamila was virtuous, well-versed in the Vedic scriptures, and deeply committed to his scriptural duties. However, fate had other plans. One day, he became infatuated with a woman. Overcome by desire, he abandoned his wife, family, and spiritual obligations, choosing instead a life of indulgence. As time passed, Ajamila sank deeper into sin, engaging in theft, deceit, and intoxication.

Ajamila had many children, and his youngest son, whom he loved dearly, was named Narayana.

Having spent his entire life in material pleasures, Ajamila eventually lay on his deathbed. As his final moments approached, the dreaded servants of Yama, the god of death, appeared before him, ready to take his soul for judgment. Terrified by their fearsome presence, Ajamila instinctively cried out “Narayana, Narayana”, the name of his beloved son.

But before his soul could be taken away, something extraordinary happened. As Ajamila uttered the sacred name, the celestial messengers of Lord Vishnu descended from Vaikunta. They stopped Yama’s servants in their tracks, forbidding them from taking Ajamila’s soul to the underworld.

A heated debate ensued. The servants of Yama argued that Ajamila had lived a life of sin and deserved punishment. But the messengers of Lord Vishnu countered it with a profound truth: “Even if spoken unknowingly, the divine name of the Lord has the power to destroy all sins and grant liberation.” With these words, they not only saved Ajamila but also restored his life, giving him a second chance.

Overwhelmed by this miraculous grace, Ajamila experienced a deep transformation. He renounced his sinful ways and devoted the rest of his life to prayer and unwavering faith in Lord Vishnu.

When death finally came for him, it was no longer a moment of fear but of divine fulfilment. Ajamila's purified soul reached the eternal abode of Lord Vishnu.

The story of Ajamila is a testament to the boundless mercy of the Lord and the transformative power of chanting His holy name. No matter how lost a soul may seem, divine grace is always within reach, one sincere call away.





### 30. God is Omnipotent

Despite the Pandavas being exiled to the forest for 13 years, Duryodhana remained unsatisfied. He was constantly seeking ways to eliminate them permanently. One day, sage Durvasa, accompanied by his 1,000 disciples, visited Duryodhana. Eager to impress, Duryodhana welcomed them warmly and ensured their needs were met to their full satisfaction. Pleased with his hospitality, the sage offered to grant him a boon.



Aware of Durvasa's fiery temper and tendency to curse those who displeased him, the



devious Duryodhana saw an opportunity to bring harm to the Pandavas. Concealing his true intentions, he suggested that the sage and his disciples visit the Pandavas too and allow them the same privilege of hosting them. Unaware of Duryodhana's cunning scheme, Durvasa accepted the suggestion and even praised him for his noble intentions. Duryodhana rejoiced, believing that the Pandavas, living a simple and austere life, would be unable to provide for such a large gathering and would incur the wrath of the sage.

However, Draupadi, the wife of the Pandavas, possessed the celestial *Akshaya Patra*, a divine vessel gifted by the Sun God, Surya. This miraculous vessel provided an endless supply of nutritious and delicious food but it came with one condition: It would cease producing food once Draupadi had eaten her meal for the day.

Unfortunately, when Sage Durvasa and his disciples arrived at the Pandavas' hut, Draupadi had already finished her meal, rendering the *Akshaya Patra* inactive. Yudhishtira welcomed the sage with utmost respect, and Durvasa stated, "We are all very hungry. Please arrange food for us after we complete our rituals at the river bank and return here." With no option but to agree,

Yudhishtira consented, though he knew they had no means to feed the guests.

Worried, Draupadi turned to Lord Krishna in prayer, seeking His divine intervention. Moments later, there was a knock at the door. To their amazement, it was none other than Lord Krishna Himself. However, to their bewilderment, Krishna, too, expressed His hunger! The Pandavas and Draupadi pleaded with Him, explaining their dire situation, but Krishna simply smiled and asked Draupadi to bring the *Akshaya Patra* to Him. Upon inspecting the vessel, He found a single grain of cooked rice stuck to its corner. He picked it up, placed it in His mouth, and declared, “The hunger of the Lord of the Universe is now satisfied.”

Miraculously, at that very moment, Durvasa and his 1,000 disciples, who were still at the river, felt completely full, as though they had eaten a grand feast. Realizing they could no longer eat, they became fearful of returning and offending their hosts. When Yudhishtira sent Bhima to summon them, Durvasa humbly declined, stating that they were no longer hungry and would continue their journey without returning to the hut. Through this divine intervention, Krishna protected His devotees from calamity.

God is all-powerful, and nothing is beyond His capability. God always comes to the aid of His true devotees.





### **31. A Miracle of True Devotion**

Sri Appayya Deekshitar was a revered scholar, known for his unwavering devotion to Lord Shiva. One day, the Chola King invited him to his court and honored him with a luxurious shawl. Aware that Deekshitar had no interest in material possessions, the king grew curious about how Deekshitar would treat such a lavish gift. To satisfy his curiosity, he discreetly assigned someone to follow Deekshitar and observe his actions.

Upon returning home, Deekshitar bathed, anointed himself with sacred ash, and sat before the sacrificial fire to perform a *Yajna*. As the ritual progressed, he took the expensive shawl and, without hesitation, placed it into the flames as an offering. The spy, astonished by what he had witnessed, hurried back to the king and recounted everything.

Outraged, the king summoned Deekshitar and demanded an explanation. With calm composure, Deekshitar replied, "I have offered the shawl to Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram." The king, convinced that Deekshitar was lying, scoffed at his response. But Deekshitar remained unshaken. "If you doubt me, O King, check it for yourself," he said.

Determined to uncover the truth, the king traveled to the temple of Lord Nataraja in Chidambaram. He ordered the sanctum to be opened and as he stepped inside, he was stunned beyond words. There, draped over the sacred idol of Lord Nataraja, was the very shawl he had gifted to Deekshitar! Overcome with remorse, the king fell at Deekshitar's feet, begging for forgiveness.

This story beautifully illustrates the boundless power of true devotion.









### **32. In Peril? Think of Divine Mother**

Sage Appayya Deekshitar shared a deep fondness for his brother's grandson, Neelakanta Deekshitar, a bright young boy with a natural flair for poetry and a strong command of Sanskrit. The two often engaged in eloquent Sanskrit conversations, their bond strengthened by wisdom and devotion.

At the time of this incident, Appayya Deekshitar was 72 years old, while Neelakanta was just eight. As his life neared its end, the great sage called the young boy to his side and posed a profound question: "O Child, if one finds oneself in danger, what should one do?", The divine boy responded without hesitation: "One must think of the lotus feet of Amba, the Divine Mother." "In such case, what will that do?" prompted Appayya Deekshitar. Pat came the reply: "Then Brahma and the other divinities will come to one's aid." Thus the divine lad unequivocally stated that the worshippers of the Supreme Goddess are protected by all the other gods.

Hearing this insightful response from the child, Appayya Deekshitar was deeply pleased. With a

heart full of joy, he blessed Neelakanta wholeheartedly, recognizing the divine wisdom that already shone within the boy.

This timeless exchange reminds us of a profound truth: In moments of peril, the Goddess is our ultimate refuge. One who surrenders to Her with unwavering faith finds protection, both in worldly affairs and on the path to spiritual liberation.





### 33. A Prayer to Goddess Meenakshi

Neelakanta Deekshitar composed a series of exquisite hymns known as Ananda Sagara Stava dedicated to Goddess Madurai Meenakshi. Within these verses, he offers a heartfelt prayer to the Divine Mother:

“I may be reborn in any form, in any family. This is beyond my control. Even if I am born into a household that lacks devotion to You, I will accept it. But I have just one plea, O Meenakshi. Do not

let me suffer the misfortune of a life that is not spent in Your service.”

In another moving passage, he expresses the unbreakable bond between him and the Divine Mother:

“You and I share the eternal relationship of mother and child. No one can sever this sacred connection. Even if, in my ignorance, I stubbornly turn away from You, it remains Your duty as my Divine Mother to bring me back to Your embrace. I am Yours, no matter how far I stray, for my limited intelligence does not change the truth of our bond.”

To illustrate this, Neelakanta Deekshitar presents a striking analogy:

“Consider a king who owns a cow. If the cow wanders into a neighbouring land, will it cease to be the king’s property? Certainly not! In the same way, I belong to You, O Meenakshi, even if my mind foolishly wanders elsewhere.”

In another instance, his words brim with devotion and surrender:

“I pray to You, asking for Your protection. But truly, do I even need to ask? Saving me is not a choice for

You, O Mother. It is Your sacred duty! You have no right to refuse me refuge!”

Through these powerful verses, Neelakanta Deekshitar beautifully conveys the depth of a devotee’s love and the unwavering grace of the Divine Mother. His words remind us that no matter how lost we may feel, we always belong to Her.





### 34. An Ideal Offering to God

Sri Adi Shankara beautifully expresses the essence of devotion through a profound prayer, contemplating the most fitting offering to God.

“O Lord, what can I offer You? What do I possess that is not already Yours?” he pondered.

“One might think of offering gold, but the Lord holds Mount Meru, the golden mountain itself, in His hand. At the time of ‘*Tripura Samhara*,’ He even used it as His bow. Thus, offering gold to Him would be meaningless.

“What about money? But Lord Kubera, the treasurer of the gods, stands ever ready to serve Him.

“What about modern gifts or novelties? The Lord already has *Kalpavriksha*, the celestial wish-fulfilling tree, and Kamadhenu, the divine cow, at His service, capable of bestowing any desired object.

“Could we at least offer Him sandalwood paste for comfort? But, He already wears the cool crescent moon upon His head.”

Realizing this, Sri Shankara arrived at a profound conclusion: “O Lord, I have nothing worthy to offer You, except one thing - my mind.”

Indeed, the greatest and most meaningful offering to God is a heart filled with unwavering love and devotion. When one surrenders one’s mind at the feet of the Lord, one attains the highest realization of life.



## 35. Narada Learns His Lesson

Saint Narada, revered as one of Lord Vishnu's greatest devotees, once found himself consumed by pride. Feeling superior, he approached the Lord and asked, "Is there any devotee greater than me?"

Lord Vishnu, ever compassionate, recognized Narada's growing ego and decided to teach him a lesson. With a knowing smile, He replied, "Yes, there is a devotee greater than you, living on Earth." Narada was taken aback. "How could there be a devotee more devoted than me?" He was fuming. Eager to uncover the truth, he asked the Lord for details. Vishnu directed him to observe a humble farmer.

Curious, Narada descended to Earth and carefully watched the farmer's daily routine. Each morning, upon waking, the man simply murmured "Narayana" once before heading off to toil in the fields. And at night, just before closing his eyes, he whispered the Lord's name once again.

Narada was bewildered. How could this man, who barely spent a moment thinking of the Lord, be a

greater devotee than me who chant His name tirelessly? Perplexed, Narada returned to *Vaikunta* and questioned Vishnu. “Lord, I am not able to understand. This farmer remembers You only twice a day, while I remain immersed in chanting Your name at all times. Yet, You say he is the greater devotee! What is it that I fail to see here?”

The Lord, with a gentle smile, proposed a task. Handing Narada a pot filled to the brim with water, He instructed, “Take this pot and walk around without spilling a single drop. Once you return, we shall talk.” Narada, ever obedient, took the pot and carefully navigated his way, focusing all his attention on ensuring not a drop was lost. Upon completing the task, he proudly presented the full pot to Vishnu.

The Lord then asked, “Tell me, Narada, how many times did you chant My name while carrying the pot?”

Narada hesitated. He had been so preoccupied with keeping the water from spilling that he had completely forgotten to chant even once.

Vishnu chuckled softly. “That, dear Narada, is the answer you seek. You could not spare a single thought for Me when assigned with a simple task.

True devotion is not in how many times you chant, but in how sincerely you keep Me in your heart amidst the duties of life.”

Narada humbly bowed, understanding at last that devotion is not measured by quantity, but by the depth of love one holds for the Divine.





### **36. God is Omnipresent**

One day, a wise Guru, having completed teaching his disciples the sacred scriptures, decided to test their understanding. Handing each of them a banana, he gave a simple instruction: “Eat this banana in a place where no one can see you.”

The disciples set off, each seeking the perfect hidden spot. One returned and proudly declared, “I locked myself in a room and ate it alone.” Another said, “I hid under a blanket in complete darkness before eating mine.” Others shared similar methods, believing they had successfully fulfilled the Guru’s task.

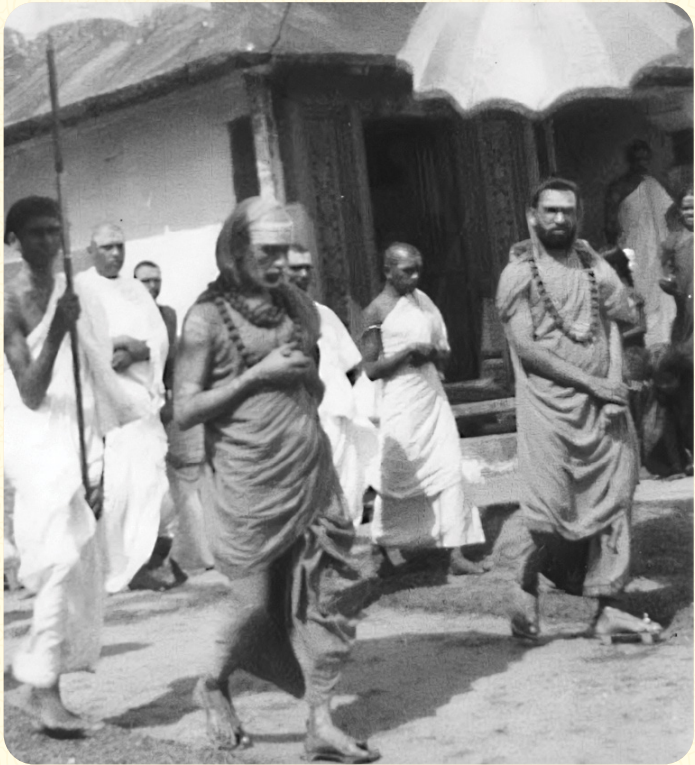
Finally, the last disciple returned, still holding his banana, untouched. The Guru looked at him and asked, “Why have you not eaten yours?” The disciple lowered his head and softly replied, “Guruji, I searched everywhere, but I could not find a place where no one was watching me.”

The Guru, intrigued, asked, “But your fellow students all found such places. Why could you not?” With deep humility, the disciple answered,

“They may have found places where no human could see them, but I remembered that the Lord sees everything. No matter where I went, I knew His eyes were upon me. So, I could not find a place where no one was watching me.”

The Guru’s face lit up with joy. Placing his hand on the boy’s head, he said, “You alone have understood the truth. The Lord is omnipresent, and nothing escapes His gaze. Blessed are you, my child, for truly grasping this wisdom.”





### **37. Immersed in the Divine**

Even as a small boy, Jagadguru Sri Chandra-shekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji (named Narasimha Shastry then) displayed extraordinary devotion. He held the conviction that no moment should

pass without the remembrance of the Divine. His lips were always engaged in chanting sacred verses, and among them, his favourite was the Mooka Panchasati—a collection of 500 verses in praise of Goddess Kamakshi.

One day, young Narasimha was sent to the market to buy some household essentials. Holding a cloth bag in His hand, He set out, immersed in chanting the divine verses. His mind was so deeply engrossed in the meaning of the hymns that He lost all awareness of His surroundings.

Completely absorbed in His devotion, He unknowingly walked past the shop He was supposed to visit. He continued walking, crossing streets, and even leaving the limits of His village (Sringeri) without realizing where He was going.

It was only when a passerby stopped Him and asked where He was headed that He suddenly snapped out of His trance-like state. It was then He realized that He had completely forgotten His errand! He retraced his steps, made the purchase, and returned home.

Such was His pure and effortless devotion, a love so deep that it made Him forget everything but God.



### **38. A Remarkable Prayer**

Udayanacharya, the renowned logician and philosopher, dedicated his life to establishing the existence of Ishwara through reason and debate. In one of his greatest works, he meticulously laid out logical arguments proving the presence of the Divine. Yet, at the end of his treatise, he penned a remarkable verse that reflected not just his intellect but also his deep compassion:

“O Lord, I have presented numerous arguments to establish Your existence. Still, there are those with hearts hardened by doubt who refuse to believe in You. I feel pity for them. But, O Compassionate One, please protect even these skeptics! For, in their rejection, they unknowingly engage in constant remembrance of You. They repeatedly cry out, ‘There is no Ishwara’, and in doing so, they utter Your name countless times. Surely, if nothing else, this alone should earn them a portion of Your divine grace.”

Such was the wisdom and kindness of Udayanacharya.



Despite all logical reasoning, if a person still refuses to believe in Ishwara, what can be the cause? Udayanacharya suggests that the answer lies not in intellect, but in karma—the unseen consequences of past actions. The lingering effects of one's past sins can cloud the mind, creating an inner resistance to divine truth. Such individuals may be unable to counter rational arguments, yet they cling stubbornly to disbelief, their minds unwilling to surrender. This very obstinacy, he suggests, is itself a form of spiritual misfortune.

Udayanacharya's words offer a fascinating perspective: Even denial of the Divine can lead one closer to Him—if only by the unconscious repetition of His name. This paradox highlights the all-encompassing nature of divine grace, which reaches even those who resist it.

In the end, whether through devotion or denial, the Lord finds His way into the hearts of all.



### **39. A Sacred Lesson**

The story goes that there was once a competition between Lord Ganapathy and Lord Subrahmanya. The quarrel between Them was over the possession of a particular sacred fruit, and it was stipulated that the fruit would go to the one who first completes a trip around the three worlds. Lord Subrahmanya wasted no time in setting off on His peacock to complete the task. On the other hand, Lord Ganapathy simply circumambulated His parents, Lord Parameshwara and Goddess Parvati, thrice, only to be presented with the fruit as the prize for finishing the race first!

Lord Subrahmanya questioned this decision by pointing out that Lord Ganapathy did not even leave the place, let alone go around the three worlds. The clarification given at that point is that since the three worlds are considered as being within one's parents, Lord Ganapathy's circumambulation of His parents amounts to His circumambulating all the three worlds.

Lord Ganapathy has, through this divine play, taught us the importance of our parents and also demonstrated to us that they should, in fact, be considered our supreme Gods.



## **40. The True Meaning of Protection**

After commencing an activity, we often find that numerous obstacles crop up, hindering the completion of the task. As such, anxiety that a task that we commence should get completed without impediments is but natural.

Impediments are much too common when it comes to noble activities that are aimed at doing good to people. We can attribute this phenomenon to the proclivity of humans to not only strive to earn fame for themselves but also to prevent others from earning a good name. As a result of this tendency, one desires the successful completion of one's own activities, but when it comes to tasks commenced by others, this desire is reversed, for one resents others' success. Since this mentality is seen in everyone, there will always be someone or the other to create problems in our path.

If a person plans to construct a temple, there will be people who think on the lines of, "I will send an anonymous petition full of complaints to the authorities concerned, and then watch the fun."

If you ask them what they gain from such destructive activities, they will nonchalantly reply, “We do it just for fun! Let us now see how he constructs the temple!” The philanthropist who proposed to build the temple would never have imagined that obstacles of this kind would materialize.

How does one tide over such unexpected obstacles that are placed on one’s path? Let us take the example of an institution with numerous employees. If there is a problem in regulating the activities of the employees or in enforcing discipline or rules among them, the way to solve the problem is to request the intervention of the Chairman of the institution, for, when orders are issued from the top of the institution’s hierarchy, the desired objective is achieved without ado.

This world is an institution. God, the *Paramatma*, is its Chairman. Instead of wasting our energies trying to appeal to mortals around us to stop creating impediments to our good deeds, we should approach God and pray to Him to remove all hindrances in our path. In response to our prayers, the Supreme Lord will thwart the wicked thoughts in the troublemakers’ minds by inducing a *Prerana*, which will cause them to muse along the lines - “It is true that we originally wanted to hinder this

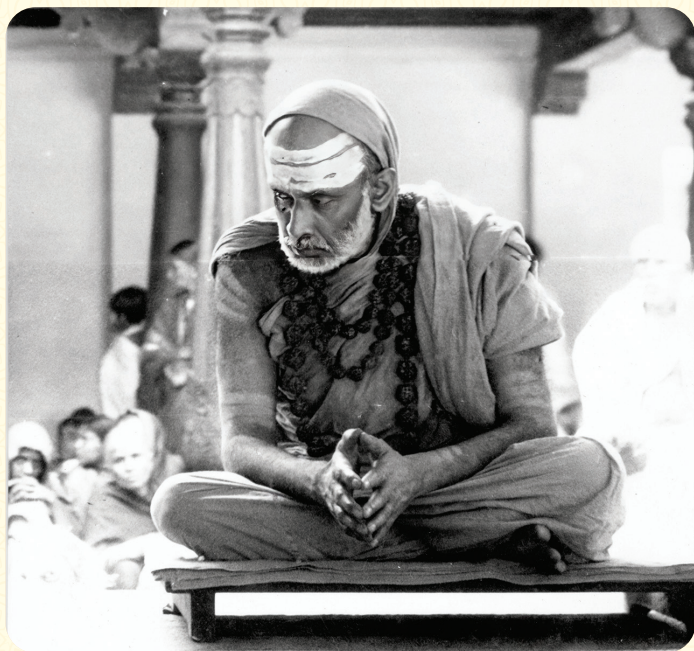


man's activity. However, we now realize that he is actually engaged in a noble task. Rather than causing problems, why don't we try to be of some assistance instead?" Only the Lord can cause such a turnaround in people's thinking.

What does the statement, "Ishwara protects us" mean? Does it mean that Iswara handles us like a shepherd herding His cattle with a stick in His hand? No, what is meant is that the Lord protects us by entering our minds and inducing appropriate thoughts in them. The following prayer finds a place in the Vedas: "May that Supreme Lord, Who is the sole cause of the entire cosmos and of even Hiranyagarbha, the Creator, induce noble thoughts in my mind."

Noble thoughts generate good deeds while sinful ones have harmful consequences. As such, it is clear that unhindered progress of what we have commenced is indicative of the presence of noble thoughts, which are in turn the effects of the *Prerana* induced by God, otherwise known as God's grace. Hence, prayer to God before commencing any task is *sine qua non*.





### **41. The Best Ever Lesson**

A disciple once entered the room where His Holiness Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji was seated quite alone. After a slight gesture asking the disciple to sit down, His Holiness relapsed into silence and continued in it for some time. Then the disciple noticed a smile flickering on the face of His Holiness and looked up.

His Holiness said, “I was in perfect peace when a thought disturbed it. I realised that you were sitting near me and perhaps expected me to speak. This led me to the further thought that if I had to meet your expectations, I must speak. I recollected immediately that ‘to speak’ was a verb requiring an object. I thought therefore that I must find an object as otherwise there could be no speech.

“Then I recollected that all objects in the universe came under either of two categories, the True and the False. The True is Brahman and the False is the world of form. Either of these two things must therefore be spoken of. But the Vedanta has declared in unmistakable terms that Brahman, the True, is beyond all speech and even all thoughts. So Brahman as an object of speech was out of question.

“There was thus only the world to be talked about. But regarding the world, the Vedanta is equally emphatic that it is *Anirvachaneeya* (incapable of being explained in words). So the world also seemed to be out of the question as a fit object of speech. There was no third entity available. There was therefore no fit object of speech. For want of an object, there could be no speech.

“When I came to this conclusion, I realised that I had come back only to wherefrom I started and that I need not have allowed these thoughts to disturb me. Evidently I smiled at myself for all this waste of thought and you looked up.”

The disciple, for his part, felt that it was the best ever lesson in Vedanta that he had had till then from his peerless Guru!





## 42. Smartness Outsmarted

One day, a devotee sought to engage His Holiness Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji in a long, insightful conversation. Hoping to spark a profound discussion, he believed that introducing a thoughtful subject would draw the revered sage into a detailed dialogue. With this intention, the devotee approached His Holiness and humbly requested, “I beseech Your Holiness to bless me with a thorough explanation of a particular verse from the Vivekachudamani.”



The sage, with his characteristic calmness, inquired, “Which verse is it? Recite it.”

The disciple eagerly read the verse aloud. The Jagadguru then asked, “Which part of this verse do you find difficult to understand?”

“I understand its meaning,” the devotee responded. “However, I long for Your Holiness to offer a more detailed exposition.”

His Holiness, with serene wisdom, replied, “The teachings of our revered Acharya, Sri Shankara, are clear and self-evident in this verse. It is neither necessary nor appropriate to add anything to it. The verse speaks for itself. Simply contemplate and enjoy it as it is.”

In that moment, the devotee’s well-intentioned plan to elicit a lengthy discourse had failed miserably. It became clear that when approaching a great soul with genuine thirst for knowledge and open-hearted honesty, one is sure to gain profound insight. However, when driven by hidden motives or agendas, such efforts are destined to fall short.





### **43. The True Spirit of Guru Bhakti**

Jagadguru Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji (known as Narasimha Shastry before embracing Sannyasa) was a living embodiment of unwavering faith and devotion to His Guru, Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati Mahaswamiji.

One day, as a young boy, He chanced upon the sacred Padukas of the Jagadguru in someone's home. Overcome with reverence, He immediately prostrated before them, His heart brimming with devotion. In a voice trembling with excitement, He exclaimed, "I have seen and touched the Jagadguru's Padukas! What a rare fortune! The very purpose of my life has been fulfilled."

Such profound devotion at such a tender age is truly extraordinary. How many children display such unwavering faith and deep attachment to their Guru? For young Narasimha, the mere sight of His Guru's Padukas was a moment of divine bliss, a testament to His pure and unparalleled Guru Bhakti.



## **44. An Admirable Attitude**

Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji's devotion to Adi Shankaracharya was unparalleled. While many may chant the name of Sri Shankara, how many truly embody unwavering devotion to the great Acharya? Indeed, only a rare few.

Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharati had consecrated a statue of Adi Shankaracharya at Kaladi, his sacred birthplace. For Sri Chandrashekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji, Sri Shankara's presence there was not merely symbolic. It was eternal, living and ever-resplendent.

In 1927, during His stay at Kaladi, His Holiness founded a Vedanta Patashala to uphold and spread the wisdom of Advaita. On the day of its inauguration, the distinguished scholar Karuvanam Krishna Shastry was in the hall which was facing the sacred image of Sri Shankara, while his Vidyarthi (students) remained in the backyard. As the Jagadguru entered the hall, Krishna Shastry called out, "O Vidyarthi, come here! The Guru has arrived."

No sooner had he spoken than the Jagadguru, in His characteristic humility, gently remarked, “O Krishna Shastry, Sri Shankara Bhagavadpada alone is the Guru here. In His divine presence, we—you, me, and everyone else—are all *Vidyarthi*s. There is no need to address them alone as students.”

What a profound humility! What a boundless devotion! In that single moment, the Jagadguru reminded everyone that before the eternal light of Sri Shankara’s wisdom, all are but seekers, forever students at the feet of the great Master.







## **45. Significance of Inward Worship**

Once, while addressing an assembly of devotees, His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji shared an inspiring episode from His personal experience:

In the sacred verses of the Lalitha Sahasranama, there is a profound epithet of the Divine Mother: Antarmukha-Samaradhya—one who is best worshipped by those whose minds are turned inward. To be antarmukha (inward-turned) means we should restrain the mind from outward diversions and direct it towards Bhagavan, the Supreme Being. Ambal, the Divine Mother, is most pleased when worship is performed with such inner focus and deep devotion.

An incident from my own personal experience illustrates this profound truth.

Once, my revered Guru and I were travelling through North India. During our pilgrimage, we visited a sacred kshetra known as Tarakeshwar, near Kolkata. This holy place is home to an Advaita monastery, whose Pontiff had immense faith and devotion towards my Guru. In his great reverence, he made elaborate arrangements for the worship of the Lord of Tarakeshwar. He ensured that all the necessary materials for the sacred worship were meticulously arranged so that my Guru, himself, and I could offer our prayers in the sanctum sanctorum of the Lord.

As we entered the sanctum, the resident Swami performed the worship in accordance with his own

Bengali tradition. I too joyously commenced my Pooja. My Guru, however, closed His eyes and remained utterly motionless, deeply absorbed in meditation. Time passed and forty-five minutes elapsed. By then, the resident Swami had completed his worship, and I too had concluded my worship. Yet, my Guru remained seated in an unwavering state of sublime stillness.

After a while, He slowly opened His eyes, radiant with spiritual bliss, and softly spoke to me, saying: "I performed the pooja mentally, to my utmost satisfaction. I enthroned the Lord upon a gem-studded royal seat. I offered countless divine objects of worship unto Him. I recited sacred hymns and mantras, and in response, the Lord was supremely pleased."

Even though the external pooja materials lay in front of Him, My Guru had worshipped the Lord purely within His mind and had derived immense joy from this inward offering. This incident stands as a living testament to the meaning of the Lalitha Sahasranama epithet—Antarmukha-Samaradhya.

From this, all can learn an invaluable lesson: when we sit for the worship of Bhagavan, we must strive to detach ourselves from worldly distractions and engage our minds wholly in God's adoration.

To the extent possible, we must avoid letting our thoughts wander into mundane concerns. Only then does the worship yield immense spiritual benefit. This is the essence of true worship—a sacred communion with the Divine, free from ostentation or external display.

May we all aspire to cultivate such deep, inward devotion, pleasing to Bhagavan, and realize the boundless joy that arises from pure, heartfelt worship.





### **46. A Guru is Essential**

There was a person who was regarded as a Yogi and a Mahatma. That person used to sleep during the day and stay awake at night. A man asked that person, “O, Holy one! Why do you behave



thus, for normally one is expected to keep awake during the day and to sleep at night? On the other hand, your behaviour is the reverse of the normal practice.” The Yogi said, “O Brother! There is the injunction of Sri Krishna, that one should stay awake during the night and sleep during the day. Lord Krishna is a Jagadguru. It is said: Once we encounter an injunction having its origin in the Jagadguru Sri Krishna, it becomes imperative on all of us to implicitly act according to it.”

The man asked, “Where has Sri Krishna so ordained?” The Yogi replied, “The injunction is found in the Bhagavad Gita wherein it is said, ‘At the time when all beings are asleep, the wise one is awake.’ I am a Yogi and so I stay awake at night. ‘When all beings are awake, then the sage is asleep.’ That is why I sleep during the day.”

The man persisted, “How do you know that this is the meaning?” The Yogi retorted. “Why, I have studied grammar and this is the meaning that stems from my knowledge of grammar.”

The man calmly said, “You cannot understand the import from just a knowledge of grammar. To get at the true import you must be aware of the proper tradition. It is said by Sri Shankara in the Gita

Bhashya: No matter how much scriptural knowledge a man may possess, if he is ignorant of the tradition then he must be disregarded. Even though you have studied grammar, you are ignorant of tradition. The meaning of the utterance of the Lord is quite different.”

Knowledge of the Atma is not there in common people but a true Yogi has that knowledge. The true Yogi is aware of the state regarding which common people are in the dark. That is the implication of the verse. Such a meaning can be known by us only if we are familiar with our tradition and have an enlightened Guru to teach us the Truth in the traditional way.



## 47. The Real Goal

In the Taittireeya Brahmana, there is a story about Sage Bharadwaja. He sought to master the entire Vedas. Though this was an impossible task, Bharadwaja refused to give up. Even after studying the Vedas throughout his life time, he could not realise his goal. Because of his countless meritorious deeds, he was granted three successive lifetimes to continue the study of the Vedas. In spite of it, his attempts were in vain! He was nowhere near his target.

Out of compassion for the sage, Indra, the king of the celestials, appeared before him and asked, "What will you do if you are granted yet another birth?" Without hesitation, Bharadwaja replied, "I will use that life as well to study the Vedas." Indra, seeing the sage's unyielding obsession, gestured toward three enormous mountains nearby. He then took a fistful of sand from each mountain and showed it to Bharadwaja. "Look at these mountains," said Indra. "The Vedas are like these vast mountains, and the knowledge you have acquired is as little as the sand in my hand."

How many more lives will you spend in the pursuit of learning? Your desire to master the entire Vedas is simply not feasible.”

Indra then initiated Bharadwaja into *Saguna Upasana* (worship of the Supreme with attributes), guiding him toward a more practical and spiritual approach.

The story of Bharadwaja serves as an important lesson about *Paata Vyasana*—an obsession with the pursuit of knowledge. One who becomes fixated solely on intellectual pursuits may never make real progress on the spiritual path. Such person can become trapped in an endless cycle of births and deaths, unable to attain liberation. True spiritual advancement requires balance, and knowledge should lead us towards the realization of the ultimate Truth, not just an endless accumulation of facts.





## 48. What Constitutes True Wisdom?

People generally have an addiction or obsession with learning numerous subjects. This excessive attachment to academic knowledge is called *Shastra Vyasana*. While learning is important, an addiction to mastering too many subjects is likely to generate arrogance or pride, which is not at all desirable. The more subjects one masters, the



greater one's arrogance grows. A person filled with arrogance loses his mental balance and is therefore bound to fall. This is why *Shastra Vyasana* is considered an impure tendency which hampers one's spiritual progress.

A story from the Chandogya Upanishad illustrates this point beautifully. Sage Narada, in spite of his exceptional knowledge in a wide variety of subjects, could not find a way to transcend sorrow and attain eternal bliss. So, he approached Sanatkumara, the mind-born son of Lord Brahma, and prayed to him: "O Bhagavan, I have learned the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda, the Atharvana Veda, the Itihasas, the Puranas, Vyakarana, Pitrukalpa, Nirukta, Deva Vidya, Brahma Vidya, Bhootha Vidya, Kshathra Vidya, Nakshathra Vidya, Sarpa Vidya and Gandharva Vidya. But, despite mastering all these subjects, I am still engulfed in sorrow. Please show me the way to go beyond it." Moved by Narada's sincere plea, Sanatkumara then imparted the knowledge of Brahman, guiding Narada to realize the Self.

This story highlights an important lesson: Mastering all subjects without knowing the Self is ultimately futile. Knowledge that does not lead to Self-Realization is incomplete. True wisdom is not just in accumulating vast knowledge, but in

understanding the true nature of the Self, transcending sorrow, and attaining spiritual liberation.





## 49. An Important Lesson

We have all heard of Kamadhenu, the celestial cow of boundless blessings. When the Devas and Asuras churned the cosmic ocean in their quest for *Amruta* (the nectar), many extraordinary treasures emerged. Among them was the divine cow Kamadhenu, a being of unimaginable power. She had the ability to grant any wish to those who stood before her in prayer.

Indra, the king of the Devas, bestowed Kamadhenu upon Sage Vasishtha, who brought her to his ashram on Earth. One day, King Vishwamitra arrived at

the ashram, accompanied by his vast army—thousands of soldiers, horses, and elephants, all weary and hungry from their journey. Seeing their plight, Vasishta prayed to Kamadhenu, and in an instant, a grand feast appeared, nourishing every single person present.

Amazed by the cow's miraculous powers, Vishwamitra pleaded with Vasishta to give Kamadhenu to him. He wished to take her to his kingdom to solve the problems of hunger and disease among his people. However, Vasishta firmly refused, knowing that Kamadhenu was not meant to be owned or used for personal ambitions.

Enraged, Vishwamitra attempted to seize Kamadhenu by force. But the celestial cow, in an astonishing display of power, summoned thousands of fierce warriors from her body, who swiftly repelled Vishwamitra and his army. The mighty king, humiliated and defeated, was left in awe of her divine strength.

Now, imagine that this same Kamadhenu is gifted to a humble farmer as a reward for his devotion. But, unaware of her true power, he simply harnesses her for ploughing his fields, treating her as nothing more than an ordinary cow. Can there be a greater fool in all the three worlds?

The purpose of this story is to awaken us to a far more precious gift that has been granted to us—a gift earned through the immense *punya* (merits) of past lifetimes. That gift is this human birth.

Among all forms of life, only a human being has a greater chance to seek Moksha (liberation) and break free from the endless cycle of *samsara* (birth and death). But if one wastes this rare opportunity by chasing only material pleasures, is he not just like the ignorant farmer who uses Kamadhenu to plough his fields?

True wisdom lies in recognizing the divine potential of human life and using it for its highest purpose—to seek the path of liberation and divine grace.





## 50. The Goal of Human Life

In the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Chapter 2), we encounter a profound episode that imparts a timeless truth about the ultimate purpose of human existence.

Yajnavalkya, an enlightened sage and unparalleled scholar, was also a man of immense wealth. As a householder, he led a comfortable life with his two wives—Maitreyee and Katyayani. Yet, despite his affluence and high regard in society, he felt the call for renunciation. One day, he summoned Maitreyee and said, “Dear Maitreyee, I have decided to embrace Sannyasa. Before I leave, I wish to divide my wealth between you and Katyayani.”

Maitreyee, a woman of deep wisdom, pondered over his words. “My husband enjoys extraordinary comfort and public respect. He lacks nothing, and yet he chooses to renounce it all. If he is willing to abandon such prosperity, he must be in pursuit of something far greater than material wealth. What, then, is the true value of worldly riches?”

Turning to Yajnavalkya, she asked, “O Swamin, if I were to possess wealth as vast as the entire earth, would it grant me immortality?”

The sage gently replied, “No, Maitreyee. Wealth can provide a life of comfort, but it cannot bestow eternal life. It can only offer the same pleasures that other wealthy people enjoy and nothing beyond that.”

Hearing this, Maitreyee’s resolve deepened. “What use is this affluence if it cannot lead me to the eternal?” She asked earnestly. “I do not seek perishable riches. Instead, I implore you to teach me that which leads to Transcendence and that which conquers death.”

Yajnavalkya, moved by her sincerity, smiled and said, “Maitreyee, you have always been dear to me. What you just spoke truly pleases my heart. Come, sit beside me. I shall impart to you the supreme knowledge—the knowledge of Brahman, the very essence of existence itself.”

Thus, with unwavering devotion, Maitreyee became the recipient of the sacred wisdom—the ultimate Truth for which one takes birth as a human.

This episode teaches us that material wealth, no matter how vast, is fleeting and cannot grant true

fulfilment or immortality. True wisdom lies in seeking the eternal-knowledge of the Self and the realization of Brahman—rather than being bound by temporary worldly pleasures. We should strive to discern what is truly valuable in life and pursue the higher purpose of our existence.





Attaining eternal bliss and freedom from sorrow is the ultimate goal of all beings. The key to this transformation lies within - the mind. A *Sattvic* mind elevates one spiritually, while a mind influenced by *Rajasic* and *Tamasic* tendencies leads to suffering and distress. True wisdom, therefore, lies in transcending these lower tendencies and cultivating a wholly *Sattvic* mind, making it receptive to spiritual enlightenment and lasting peace. One of the most effective ways to achieve this transformation is by heeding the guidance of an enlightened Guru.

This book presents fifty priceless gems of insightful narratives drawn from the benedictory discourses of Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji, the 36<sup>th</sup> and current Shankaracharya of the revered Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham. A beacon of spiritual wisdom, an epitome of scriptural erudition, and an ocean of compassion, His Holiness illuminates countless seekers on their spiritual journey.

