

PART — V

VAIRĀGYA MĀRGA

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Towards Self-realization is the only direction in which to advance ; all the rest is vain and leads to suffering.

298

The path of renunciation is indeed the path of bliss. The man who is on the pilgrimage to God is fortunate. The path to Him is alone worthy of being called a path ; all others are wrong paths, where one meets with troubles and calamities at every step.

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The man who has gone out in quest of the

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Eternal can no longer remain engrossed in anything that does not lead to Self-realization, to the realization of God. Just as when a house is on fire one opens the door and leaves it, so once discrimination and dispassion have been awakened, the question of proceeding in any other direction does not arise.

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It is a matter of rejoicing that he wishes to join the Ashram. The moment his desire to do so is genuine, he has already as good as entered the Ashram.

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The One for whose sake you have chosen

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this path in order to dedicate your life to Him, should be remembered constantly. Talk solely for His sake. Be mindful of His words ; ever aware of Him, listen to His promptings alone.

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The purer the mind becomes by the remembrance of Him in everything, the more excellent will your work be. As action also none but He manifests. In one's work one must cultivate purity and sincerity. Having chosen the spiritual path, one should never at all covet anyone's affection or respect, or wish to be helped in one's tasks. At all times practise patience and self-discipline. Just as when a drop of acid falls into a large quantity

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of milk, all of it turns sour, so even if a little attachment or anger steals into one's work or service, it is very harmful — remember this !

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For those who are pilgrims on the path, it is imperative to forge ahead vigorously, energetically, steadily and at great speed. Sitting in a rickety cart will not do. Dynamic strength of mind is always needed. You yourself have to mould your own life — keep this in mind !

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Undertake only work that can be done as worship, so that no time may be wasted by attending to it. Anything at all can be

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accomplished by sustained effort. You must spare no pains to make the mind concentrated. How many lives has man not frittered away in eating, drinking and sleeping ! “I am immortal” — this is the idea that should give direction to your life.

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A *brahmacārī* should never allow his religious practices, his acts of service and so forth to be tainted by anger. For has he not chosen the path of God to attain to the love of Him ? Travellers on the path are long-suffering, humble and patient — God in His compassion has turned their minds in this direction. Suffering is to be looked upon as *Bhagavān's* mercy to exhaust one's evil karma.

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“Even if Thou wouldst make me Thine own by punishing me, let Thy Will be done !” Endeavour to remain steadfast and serene. Remembering His presence constantly, do service.

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Since you are living the lives of sādhus, you should try to ignore the cold as much as possible. If one moves about and takes exercise one feels it rather less. By leading a strictly regulated life one becomes firmly anchored on the spiritual path and then one does not have to suffer so much. You might exert yourselves a little more in this direction. If the cold is extreme do not bathe early morning but later in the day ; on rising from

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sleep change your clothes, sprinkle some Ganges water on your body and then proceed with your *sandhyā* (morning worship) and other spiritual exercises.

*Brahmacārīs* must completely shun sarcasm and frivolous jokes. It is therefore important to observe silence as much as possible. *Brahmacārīs* are forbidden to sleep during the day. Rising early they should take great pains not to fall asleep during the day. If for a prolonged period of time one makes a special effort in this direction, the habit will be established. Do not lose courage and be persevering in your *sādhanā*.

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The vessels used for *pūjā* and one's own vessels should always be scrubbed by oneself.

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Moreover, it is only fitting to do so for one who lives the life of a sādhu. The other day I met a young man who told me that if it was for the Lord's service he enjoyed doing any kind of manual labour, such as going shopping, cutting vegetables, cooking, performing *pūjā*, cleaning vessels and so forth. Even if someone offered to relieve him he would decline, saying that he wanted single-handed to attend to everything necessary for the service of the Lord. He delighted in carrying out all these tasks. At the same time he looked healthy and fit. In this way one keeps happy and contented, for one is working for the Lord, and it is work performed as service that purifies heart and mind. To live in this manner promotes physical and mental well-being.

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Furthermore, use your leisure to read religious books, to listen to discourses on spiritual subjects or seek *satsang* and so forth. Do not give the mind a chance to indulge in impure thoughts. The young man mentioned above had hardly enough to eat. If someone gave him a fruit he would be exceedingly pleased. Sri Gopinath Kaviraj was saying in this connection that through need and poverty one could learn what was favourable for one's *sāadhanā*, such as dependence on God and so on. For those who have dedicated their lives entirely to the supreme quest, it is good to live in this spirit, although among householders there are many who enjoy affluence and plenty. Anger, pride and the like are not helpful on the path. Reliance on God is of real assistance, and to feel at all times :

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“Whatever He arranges is for my true welfare”. For you yourself do not know by what means God will draw you nearer to Him.

Drink a quarter of a litre of milk a day and eat rice or *roṭi* with *dāl* and vegetables twice daily. For so many days you have lived on half a litre of milk or fresh cheese without specially benefitting by this diet. Therefore, try now for some time to take normal diet and exercise; do not strain yourself unduly and see how you feel as a result.

You will have to strive earnestly to remain ever centred in God, no matter in what way He may keep you. If the mind is fixed on God, the question of material wants and complaints, of honour or disgrace does not arise. The more you let your thoughts dwell

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on Him, the more will you find yourself improving in health of body and mind. By discussions on divine things and by a simple frugal life, you will have to prepare yourself.

You must become calm and healthy. When thinking, think of Him alone; when working let it be His service only. You are by nature good and kind-hearted, but you will have to become good in every respect. On no account allow your thoughts to dwell on wants and complaints. Learn to adapt yourself to circumstances as they arise — then only can there be hope of peace and tranquillity.

Mataji expressed joy on hearing of your daily programme and your collective timetable, your observing silence at fixed hours, etc...She also said: “Really, it would be a

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matter of rejoicing if, like good boys, they could pass day and night in divine thoughts and occupations. What is required of a pilgrim on the supreme path is that he should ever keep on walking. To spend one's time in the remembrance of the Eternal does indeed mean to be a traveller on this path."

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To regulate one's life in accordance with the injunctions of the *sāstras* is one's duty in human life. To accept what one is not entitled to is forbidden by the *sāstras*. Those who live as *sādhus* in the ashram may accept people's gifts as well as their obeisance in keeping with their merit. Unless one has attained to a certain state of achievement it is

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not helpful on the path to the Supreme to accept veneration and gifts. It is not fitting to take pleasure in what one is not entitled to.

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Blame may be likened to cowdung. When it lies about just anywhere it is of no use. But when, mixed with earth and turned into manure, it is put under plants, what lovely flowers, fruits and grains will not grow! Similarly, if an aspirant can bear to be blamed and criticized, that is to say, if he uses it to improve his character, it will be very beneficial — just as the soil is made fertile by manure. Do you see what a fine thing blame is? Blame also is none but He, the One.

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If the aspirant on the spiritual path can, full of endurance, patience, steadiness, calm and serenity, remain engrossed in his religious practices, then even if a wave of ill-luck comes, it will not be able to touch him. To try his utmost to reach such a state is indeed man's duty.

311

They are living in a locality where *tapasyā* is practised, in the foothills of the Himalayas, in the vicinity of a Śiva temple. By the atmosphere of their *sādhana*, their *tapasyā*, the place should become so filled with spiritual vibrations that even people coming from

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outside would be able to notice this distinctly. Ashram life must be made worthy of its name, must be blessed — this is as it should be. Eyes, face, the whole body will then radiate tranquillity, gentleness. All travellers on the supreme path must be full of devotion, ascetic, the very embodiments of love — great yogins. The pilgrimage is undertaken for the sake of self-forgetfulness, for the revelation of one's true Being, to experience the touch of Him.

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The faithful devotee, the ardent lover of God, the ascetic, the great yogi — all are pilgrims on the path to the Supreme; the revelation of their forgotten Self, of His touch, their common goal.

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For the *sādhaka* and the *sādhika* it is imperative to be constantly absorbed in the thought of the Supreme. No other thoughts of any kind are to be tolerated. The more time one devotes to meditation on the Highest the fewer worldly considerations will arise. For those who have dedicated themselves to this path unreservedly with heart and soul, even some negligence in the duty to their parents will not result in any obstacle or setback to their *sādhanā*. If one's firm and undivided attention is given to the supreme path, God Himself takes care of everything.

Change your life totally, from its very root.

Become a *sādhaka* and go ahead on the spiritual path with splendid vigour and energy. At every single moment He is with you as your helper — try to be aware of this : The One to whose service you are devoting your life is Himself the Saviour. In order to experience this deep within, try with all your might to purify yourself — body, heart and mind. If for a whole year one strictly speaks the truth and adheres to truth scrupulously in every respect, the result of advancing towards the light of Truth will be noticeable to a certain extent. Let there be not even a hint or suggestion of falsehood.

By constant practice one finally achieves.

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They all should make up their minds to try and follow the advice of their friend\* to the minutest detail. At what moment He will grace us with His touch lies with Him ; our duty is to continue to invoke Him without interruption. Enough time has been spent in wandering hither and thither aimlessly, in leaving the path in order to enjoy the sights of the world and to have fun in various ways in the manner of the world. Now all one's time should, as far as possible, be spent in the attempt to find one's Self. Vain, idle talk is of no benefit and only prevents one from advancing towards Him — it is but an obstacle to one's efforts. Ages and ages have been wasted in this manner. Now, friend, return to your real Home ! By lingering on the

\*Mataji.

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way you only prolong the agony of the troubles and difficulties that have to be endured on the pilgrimage. Ever remember that one who is eager to advance towards Him and practises His Name and His Presence, progresses no matter what his condition may be. To say, "I do not feel His response" and therefore to take pleasure in mundane things can never be for one's good — always bear this in mind.

When in association with great souls — saints and sādhus — you are striving to embrace the Highest and to relinquish ephemeral pleasures, it is not proper to criticize any action of those great ones. Whatever

they say should be accepted without argument. To speak of falsehood or error where they are concerned is an offence on your part and therefore harmful. Are not all those whom you are judging in this manner your own people? So long as one's true being has not been realized, everybody should be treated as one's very own Self. Try to find God in everyone. This is the attitude to be cultivated. Good and evil are all within the One who pervades the entire cosmos. Therefore, the duty of those who have gone out to realize Truth is to regard everything that saints and sādhus undertake in the quest of Truth, as the various manifestations of their *Iṣṭa* or Guru. This is the spirit to be adopted.

Embrace that which takes you to the goal of human existence and renounce mere sense enjoyment. There is but one family of seekers spread out all over the whole earth. Thus it is the duty of those who have gone out in search of Truth to accept everything that sādhus do in search of Truth as the various manifestations of their own *Iṣṭa* or Guru.

“Thou art Mother, Thou art Father, Thou art Friend, Beloved, Master.” Where everything is based on the One alone, there one single ashram exists, pervading the entire universe. There is no question of boundary or limit — it is boundless, unlimited. All is of the One, *is* the One. Only because of duality

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is there conflict. Blindness and bondage are but due to the veil of ignorance.

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How enviable their lives (the lives of the ashramites) are! Free from the numerous ills, worries and embarrassments that harass the householder, what a wonderful chance is given to them to perfect themselves, to attain to inward beauty, to make themselves fit for the achievement of the supreme object of life. By enduring the difficulties that arise when people from different places, of different upbringing and temperament are thrown together one's power of forbearance grows strong, the capacity for endurance is developed. Do not pay attention to the shortcomings.

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of others, but try to discover their positive qualities, remembering that it is your way of looking at things (namely of finding fault with people) that causes you pain.

All these difficulties are due to your own karma. In God's creation the results of one's actions have to be enjoyed and suffered to the minutest detail. Everything is His dispensation. You will have to find Truth! Always bear in mind that you have to exhaust all kinds of karma and that He is thereby cleansing you to make you fit to be united with Him. At all times and for everyone He is. The nearer you draw to Him, who is the fountain of mercy and compassion, the more will you experience His presence. Spend your time in *japa*, meditation, the study of scriptures and so forth. Be truthful in thought, speech and

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behaviour. Let others do as they please, as their nature dictates. To the good the world appears good. Be straight and sincere with those with whom you have to work. By your example others will be changed.

Man should be full of generosity and broad-mindedness in outlook and conduct. The harmony in the home between husband and wife, between parents and children is based on worldly attraction and affection. But to live in harmony with a large group of people — in this lies real greatness.

In whatever circumstances God may place you at any time, cast aside distractions and be ever intent on kindling a spiritual atmosphere. The foundation for it is truthfulness in speech and conduct, patience and long-suffering. Depend on God in all matters. That all

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kinds of difficulties should occur on a pilgrimage is but natural, it is the rule of the world.

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Invaluable time is gliding away. Men and women who have come to live in the ashram must try to attain to the ultimate Good by regulating their time in such a manner as to abide in the remembrance of the Divine Presence throughout the whole day. Nobody can tell at what moment God may grant him the experience of His revelation. Therefore, to keep his attention ever grafted upon God is man's duty. Everyone in the ashram must develop serenity, love, friendliness, joy, truthfulness, tolerance and patience.

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People of different *saṁskāras* are staying with Ma. What you are experiencing is due to these manifold *saṁskāras*. To remove the wrong idea of distance (between God and man and between man and man) one comes to live in an ashram. Ma does not turn out anyone. Continue to live in *satsang* in your organization and strive strenuously for the awakening of right intelligence (*sadbuddhi*).

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You have assembled here in search of Truth. Where your place is there is also his. Everyone talks according to his natural disposition, but you have not taken to the spiritual

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path for the sake of this kind of thing. The supreme Goal to which you aspire, the same claim is yours and also his. You are both in one position ; you both have the same spiritual relationship with Ma. Where this body is, there *all* are without exception. None of you have come here for anything worldly. Everyone receives according to his attitude of mind and heart. You are all pilgrims in quest of the Supreme.

322

Ashramites must not pay attention to honour or insult, to praise, position and fame. Everything has to be surrendered at the feet of the Lord. Have you not chosen this life, renouncing everything? To be insulted

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(*apamāna*) means to bear animosity willingly (*apa mene noua*). In all shapes without exception is He ; be friendly and affectionate towards all.

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Human beings are not all made to the same pattern. From various places many people have assembled together in the sole endeavour to find the highest good. It is then not always possible for everyone to give expression to his inborn tendencies and inclinations (*samskāras*) and this is why difficulties arise. The all-prevading One assumes particular forms at particular times. If, anchored in patience, you adopt this view, is it not likely that you will find peace ? There are some who

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create disturbance and vexation for others as well as for themselves, but this is not what this body (Mataji) wishes ; on the contrary, it requests everybody to refrain from such behaviour.

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It is Ma's *kheyāla* that you should live in the pursuance of the supreme object of life, constantly remaining in this atmosphere so that He Himself may stand revealed. Men and women of the most varied temperaments and conditioning gather around Ma. One lives in an ashram to drive away the habit of considering others as distant from oneself which is foolishness. Mataji does not send anyone away. By prolonged residence in a

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*satssthāna*, in other words, a place dedicated to the Divine and the search after Truth, and by *satsang*, (the company of saints and seekers after Truth), *sadbuddhi*, (true understanding), will be awakened.

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Spiritual affinity is undoubtedly stronger than blood relationship. The happiness it gives is very special. By the atmosphere created by your meditation, your spiritual endeavour, the place ought to become so wonderful that even people coming from outside will be able to notice it. Ashram life must be made worthy of its object. This surely is as it should be! And then your

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eyes, your face, your whole countenance will radiate peace and tranquillity.

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By entering on this path you have overcome the world. There is only one Brahman without a second, one *Ātmā* — towards That should you strive. Let there be no ill-feeling, no angry or excited talk, no quarelling, no distinctions among you. If you foster a spirit of friendship, your tolerance and courtesy towards all will increase. Whenever you feel hurt by anything that has been said, you should eject the matter like poison. You all are very, very good. By goodness kindle the Light.

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In response to someone's remarks and questions, Mataji gave the following rules for the behaviour of the inmates of the Ashram :

1. When elders or superiors talk, do not interrupt by commenting on what is spoken about. You may give your opinion only if you are asked. If you have anything to say on the matter, you may afterwards in private tell the elder : "In connection with what was said, such and such thoughts have occurred to me."

2. When an elder or superior is conversing with someone, one should not disturb by saying something or by chatting. If one has something important to say, one may do so after the elder has stopped talking.

3. When conversing with one's compa-

nions one should neither make fun of anyone nor pass critical remarks about others.

4. With antagonism at the back of one's mind, one should not talk about anyone in either praise or blame.

5. Do not judge your companions or discuss them with others.

6. If someone insults or abuses you or accuses you unjustly, think, "Lord, Thou hast in this manner given me a blow to teach me a lesson. Be pleased with me again !" Do not hate the person who has dealt the blow.

7. Do not feel or speak unkindly about anyone.

8. Be truthful in speech and action.

9. Speak little and only when necessary .

10. Be always cheerful.

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11. Remain calm, firm, serene and serious.

12. Talk to everyone with calmness, serenity, steadiness and equal consideration.

13. Cherish only what pertains to the supreme quest (*paramārtha*).

14. Your conduct must be gentle and exemplary.

15. Be honest and frank in what you say.

16. The search after Truth must continue at every moment. When by the accumulated force of the sustained practice of discrimination between the Real and the unreal, of *japa*, meditation, ceremonial worship, the study of scriptures, singing the praises of God — whichever of these be the main line of approach for any particular person — one becomes engrossed in the supreme quest, then one

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cannot remain without the remembrance of God ; and consequently, foolishness, wrong knowledge and suffering are removed. To be a human being means to aspire to God-realization. Man's calling as a human being is to find God.

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In the new year a *sādhaka* should make renewed efforts for new realizations.

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At every single moment try to be aware of Him ; for have you not chosen this path to dedicate your lives to Him ? Therefore, when speaking speak of Him ; when thinking think

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of Him ; when listening listen to His words or to what is said about Him. Further try, each one of you, to keep a diary, so as to check your mind from turning outward. This may also make you watchful and help you in your striving. Those who are pilgrims on the path must develop great inner strength, energy, agility and swiftness, so that their lives may become beautiful and so as to fill their new life with a new current. It will not do to sit and ride in a rickety, jolting bullock cart. At all times the mind must be intensely vigorous, energetic and alert — then only can one forge ahead with great speed. Remember that every person has to mould his or her own life. Accept cheerfully whatever He may bestow on you or take away from you.

