

## Unto Bliss.

That devotee is wise who keeps all his senses, as well his mind and intellect, engaged in occupations consecrated to God. Employ your ears in listening to the praises of God, and your eyes in seeing saints and holy men; sing praises of the Lord with your tongue, serve the Lord with your hands, frequent places of worship with your feet, think of God with your mind and reflect on the nature of God with your intellect. In this way you will be able to make your life sacred and divine.

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It is company which makes a man good or bad. It is not the company of persons alone that counts; all sense-objects with which we come in contact exercise a wholesome or adverse effect on our mind. Have recourse to good company and avoid bad company. Never listen to evil talks with your ears, never see bad sights with your eyes, never utter bad words with your tongue, never perform evil deeds with your hands, never allow your feet to resort to bad places, never harbour bad thoughts in your mind, and never allow your intellect to give you a wrong lead. In this way you will be rid of all vices.

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Never read a book which may tend to increase your avidity for sense-enjoyments and lead you to sin, even though it may be classed as a *Śāstra* (scripture). Read only such books as may help in withdrawing your mind from sense-enjoy-

ments and warn you against sin; nay, always hear such words alone and live in an atmosphere surcharged with such ideas.

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Musing on the objects of sense is the root of all evil and ultimately leads to complete ruin, whereas remembrance of God is the surest road to freedom from woe. Apply yourself with great diligence to the task of banishing all thoughts of enjoyment from your mind and keep it constantly fixed on God. In proportion as your musing on sense-objects is minimised, and remembrance of God becomes more frequent, peace and happiness will draw nearer to you. Whereas musing on sense-objects drags even a virtuous man into the mire of sin, remembrance of God turns even the vilest man into a saint and a devotee.

There are two regions—one of pain and the other of bliss. So long as you are in the region of pain you can never be happy, however glibly you may talk of happiness; and once you step into the region of bliss you can never experience pain. Dependence on the world is the nucleus of pain, whereas dependence on God is the nucleus of happiness. However tall talks we may indulge in, we can never hope to be happy so long as we seek to derive happiness from the world, even as one who is encircled by flames cannot get cool air through mere talk of the same. Hence give up dependence on the world and seek dependence on God. Once you

are established in that region of bliss you can never be touched by pain, even if you talk of the other region, the region of pain, just as one who is sitting on the snows of the Himalayas can never be affected by heat.

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Taking every creature to be a temple of God, treat all with respect: at least insult no one. If you give up self-esteem and respect all, if your behaviour does not offend the self-respect of others, you will endear yourself to all. In that case you will be liked by all and you will be able to bring round most of them to the path of virtue.

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Never do unto others what you would not have others do unto you. If you seek honour, respect, benevolence, compassion, service, active sympathy, friendship, love and so on from others, you should give the same unto others first of all.

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Put forward your views before others with love, but never insist that they should see eye to eye with you. Nay, you should never decry those who do not fall in with your views nor should you entertain a low opinion about them. You should submit your views before them rather than try to bring them round to your convictions. If you find that you are mistaken, do not hold fast to your views for fear of losing your prestige. There can be no harm in acknowledging your mistake; on the contrary, you will be immensely benefited by coming round to the right view of things.

Never invite the opinion of others with a view to having your point of view confirmed by them. Consult them only with the object of having your mistakes pointed out by them; and, if any one points out your mistake, do not take offence, but think over the mistake pointed out by him and acknowledge your indebtedness to him for this favour. If he points out a mistake which you do not find yourself guilty of, never question his motive. Examine your heart and conduct critically once more and you are sure to detect a mistake lurking somewhere. If you are unable to discover the mistake pointed out by him, and if you find that the man pointing out the mistake is himself mistaken, even then acknowledge your gratefulness to him for his having taken upon himself the unpleasant duty of pointing out your mistake and wasted his time over it.

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If any one does not follow your advice, do not feel offended thereby, much less hate him. Nay, if he should have sustained any loss or damage by not acting according to your advice, and if you happen to meet him again, never tell him that he has reaped the consequences of not having followed your advice. Receive him with great cordiality and on some future occasion repeat your wholesome advice and try to make him follow the right course.

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Should you detect any fault in any one, do not take him on that score to be a bad man. It is just possible that you may have been misled in detecting his

mistake, or that he may have been compelled by sheer force of circumstances to commit that fault in spite of himself. Every one has got some good points as well as weak points. Observe his good points alone and love him.

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Even if you detect a real fault in any one, do not insult him, nor should you try to purge him of that fault by angry looks or harsh words. At times your insulting behaviour or bad temper may succeed in curbing the evil propensity of the wrong-doer, for the time being; but the same will not be eradicated. Your insulting behaviour or ill-temper will continue to prick him and, if his mind takes a wrong turn, he will busy himself in devising means of retaliation instead of feeling remorse for his remissness. This will give rise to fresh faults in him and his vindictive behaviour will add fuel to the fire and make you ferocious. If you want to purge any one of his faults, you should first of all win his heart by endearing yourself to him and rendering him good offices, and then expostulate with him. This process may prove a dilatory one and it may be long before you achieve success thereby; but success you must have and it will be a lasting one, besides. Remember: the state, society and individuals have by punishing offences multiplied the number of offenders. Those who are offenders themselves and, being under the sway of likes and dislikes, cannot really determine the fault of any one, have no right to judge the faults of others and punish them.

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Always remember one thing. Never insult any one, not even your own son, younger brother, servant or any one else who is subordinate to you in rank or position, in the presence of others. No one is willing to put up with insults. The man who is insulted may not be in a position to grumble against you, but he will resent the insult very much and will surely bear grudge to you. Hence, if you find yourself under the painful necessity of warning any one, do so when he is all alone, and that too in a most sympathetic and loving tone.

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If you detect any one committing any fault and if he comes to know of this, do not say anything to him: he must himself be feeling ashamed of his conduct. Do not remove his shyness and make him bold by telling him anything in that connection.

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Look after others' interests as scrupulously as your own. See that whatever you borrow from some friend or acquaintance does not get spoiled and that it is returned to him with due care as soon as you no longer require it. Take particular care in this matter, otherwise your friend will take offence and people will refuse to lend things, which will deprive poor people of this benefit. Again, just as you borrow things from others, you should never hesitate to lend things of your own to them. As far as possible, try to do without borrowing things from others. By asking a thing on loan, you will be putting yourself as

well as your friend of whom you ask it in an awkward position.

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Treat those who are in want or distress with greater love and sincerity. While doing them a good turn, never think for a moment, nor make them feel by your words or behaviour, that you are a well-to-do man or a man of means, and as such you are helping or obliging them. If ever you are able to do a good turn to any destitute person, never commit the mistake of reminding him of your having done so; on the contrary, you should be grateful to him at heart for his having accepted your services. But you should take care not to express your sense of gratitude to him in this behalf, either; for, in that case, he might think that you are indirectly reminding him of your good offices to him and may accordingly feel humiliated and unhappy at the thought of his indigence. He who helps others in order to remind them of their obligation to him kindles fire to burn them, rather than relieve them of their suffering.

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If you want to help or serve those who are in want or distress, do so in a most secret way and, if possible, without letting them know of your having done so. And, having done so, forget what you have done once for all, as if you did nothing.

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Have the same amount of regard for others' time as you have for your own. Do not encroach upon the time of others by sitting by their side without

any purpose. If you find it necessary to visit any gentleman by way of courtesy or on some business, do so at a time when it is not inconvenient to him and leave him as soon as your work is finished. Do not put him in an awkward position by detaining him unnecessarily. If you find others waiting there, finish your talk quickly, so that they may also get an opportunity to talk to him.

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If you find two persons talking, never try to overhear them. On the contrary, if you find that your presence makes them uncomfortable, you had better withdraw therefrom. And even afterwards do not put searching questions to them concerning the topic of their conversation. If they have any secret which they do not want to disclose to you, you will be putting them in an awkward position by importuning them to do so or they will find themselves compelled to tell a lie in order to conceal the truth, which may lead to further harm.

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If you find it absolutely necessary to seek the help of others and if any one willingly helps you, avail yourself of his help with a grateful heart; but do not take undue advantage of his sympathetic attitude. If any one is kind to you and has helped you at a critical moment, do not harass him by repeatedly approaching him with a tale of your woes.

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While conversing with any one, first hear what he says. If he comes to

you with a tale of his woes, hear it all the more attentively. His trouble may be very insignificant in your eyes; but to him it is great. Your duty, therefore, is to console him, to exhort him to face the situation bravely and calmly, and, if possible, to help him out of the same. But, mind you, you should never treat him impolitely. You should be particularly careful not to be impolite in hearing the tale of a poor man. Treat him in such a way that he may shake off all fear and shyness and may feel encouraged at least to submit his case before you without any hitch and may begin to look upon you as his friend.

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While conversing with others, make it a point not to talk of your own self, much less indulge in self-praise or praise of your dear and near ones. Others

would not feel the same amount of relish in hearing your talk as in talking of themselves. You should only hear their talk, and, if you ever feel the necessity of saying anything, speak only about them and say such things alone as may be agreeable to them and may rouse in their hearts feelings of love and friendship towards you, similar to those which a mother feels when you talk of her child before her.

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Never interrupt the talk which may be going on between two or more persons by intruding yourself. Nor should you contradict any one while he is having his say. It is much better if you can do without uttering a word. If at all it is necessary to do so, you should say whatever you have got to say, afterwards and that, too, with calmness, respect and humility.

“Siva”



## Offer thy all to Me.

Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever thou doest of austerity, O Kaunteya, do thou that as an offering unto Me.

Thus shalt thou be liberated from the bonds of action, yielding good and evil fruits; thyself harmonised by the *Yoga* of renunciation, thou shalt come unto Me when set free.

( *Gītā* IX. 27-28 )

