PRAPANNA
PARIJATA

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This little book was written by Vatsya Varada Guru (more popularly known as Nadadoor Ammal) who was the preceptor of Vedanta Desika’s preceptor.

The name Prapanna Parijata was given to the work by the author himself. Parijata is a celestial wish-fulfilling tree capable of conferring all desired fruits on those who make wishes while in it’s shade.

The work consists of Ten Paddhatis or chapters. After 5 verses which constitute the invocatory portion the following topics are dealt with in the ten chapters that follow:

1. Pramana paddhati — On the authorities for Prapatti
2. Svaroopa paddhati — On the Nature of Prapatti
3. Adhikara paddhati — On The Right of Practice.
7. Bhagavad upasana praddhati — On Serving The Virtuous
8. vihita-vyavasthana paddhati — The Determination of Prescribed Karma
9. Varjaniya paddhati — On the Works that ought to be Renounced
10. Phalodaya paddhati — On The Dawn of Fruition

The words and sentences in the square brackets are not actually in the text but are supplied in order to make the paragraph more intelligible. The words in regular brackets indicate a meaning of a Sanskrit term.
PRAPANNA PARIJATA

The Parijata\(^1\) of the Seeker of Refuge

1. I salute the famous Varadarya who is the ornament of the family of the Vatsas who by giving the nectar of the commentary on Sri Bhashya revives even me.

2. I offer innumerable salutations to the feet of teachers who are like so many suns and by contact with whose \textit{pada} (feet or rays of light) the minds of people blossom like lotuses.

3. Salutation to the horse-headed God (\textit{Hayagriva}) who by gifts of imperishable acts has attained the quality of munificence and who is of great effulgence.

4. Salutations to that God who by constantly meditating on the eye of Lakshmi has (as it were) attained similitude with it and has thus attained the shape of a fish (\textit{Minavapuh}) and who freed the bestower of the Vedas (Brahma) from danger.

5. Taking shelter under the dust (\textit{rajas}) of the feet of saints which is potent enough to heal [the affliction of] passions (rajas) we shall endeavour to compose the work known as Prapanna Parijata.

\textbf{CHAPTER I}

On the authorities for Prapatti

1-2 By epitomising the teaching of the Vedanta\(^2\) and other works we shall here be dealing with these ten topics: (1) the great authorities for \textit{Prapatti} (taking refuge in God) (2) its nature (3) the persons entitled to practice it (4) the duties of a \textit{Prapanna} (a person who takes refuge) towards the guru (spiritual preceptor) (5) towards God (6) towards the eternals\(^3\) and (7) towards the other devotees (8) the determination of duties

\(^1\) Parijata: One of the five divine trees The author derives it at the end of the book thus: "\textit{Asesha pekshitam yatya paritojayate satam}" That is to say, the essential requisites of a virtuous character have been collected here from various sources.

\(^2\) Vedanta: Literally "the end of the Veda" — meaning an Upanishad which comes at the end of the Veda. Hence it is term applied to the \textit{Darsana} (the philosophical view point) of the Upanishads. Vedanta as a system of philosophy is one of the six principal systems of Hindu philosophy based on the Upanishads as teaching the ultimate aim and scope of the Veda. This system is also called \textit{Uttara-mimamsa} being regarded as a sequel to Jaimini's \textit{Purva-mimamsa} though practically quite a distinct system. It represents the evolution of the Hindu philosophy and as such it now actually covers the whole of orthodox India and forms the basis of its several religious sects. It regards the whole world as synthetically derived from one eternal Principle — the Brahman or the Supreme Being which is both the efficient and the material cause of the phenomenal universe, the all pervading Essence and Spirit or the universe; and everything as ultimately being absorbed into Brahman the one absolute esse.

\(^3\) According to the Visishtadvaita theology the \textit{Jiva} is of three kinds: \textit{Nitya} the eternal, \textit{Baddha} the bound; and \textit{Mukta} the liberated. Of these the eternals always attend on God, ministering unto Him and have no births except when they voluntarily incarnate with an Avatar for the purpose of serving Him.
from among those prescribed in the Shastras and (9) those practices that are to be avoided and (10) the result thereof.

3. For my sole endeavour is to fix in the mind, by constant contemplation, the teaching received, and nothing else. Any faults found herein should be excused by good people, because of the complexity of the subject.

4. Prapatti (seeking refuge in God) is first prescribed in the Veda of the Taittiriyas\(^4\) and there, in the hymn (mantra)\(^5\) commencing with "Vasuranya", it is mentioned by the name of Nyasa\(^6\) (i.e. delivering one's self up to God) together with its Modus Operandi.

6. There it is said that the Supreme Brahman, who is the object of meditation, who is the cause of all, who is all-pervading and is the Generator of all, is Himself worthy to be sought after — the Brahman whose glory is sung thus:— "You are (now) the giver of light to the sun etc. as in the previous cycle; you are brilliant and beautiful like precious gems!"

7. “Making the jivatman (Self) the oblation, one shall sacrifice It in the glorious fire of the Brahman whose body one is, repeating the (mantra)’OM’ which is the essence of the Vedas.”

8. Thus the application of Prapatti is declared in the sacred texts to assume the form of Pranava (the sacred syllable OM); where it is represented as a sacrifice in the body of those that know it accordingly.

9. Of the various penances mentioned therein, Prapatti otherwise known as Nyasa is stated as the highest. The Dwaya is considered in Kathavalli to be the primary mantra of Prapatti.\(^7\)

10. The Svetasvatara Upanishad is cited as a highly favourable authority [on this subject of Prapatti]. This Upanishad, in speaking about the course of practice also state as follows: —

11. “In order to obtain the knowledge of the Self, one who is desirous of Liberation should take refuge with Him who at the beginning created Brahma and taught him the Vedas.”

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\(^4\) The followers of the Taittiriya branch of the Yajur-veda known as the Black Yajur-veda which takes its name after the sage Tittiri its first teacher, or after the francoline partridge, a bird connected with a popular Puranic story.

\(^5\) Mantra: Originally the Samhita portion of the Veda as distinguished from the Brahmana; hence a vedic hymn or prayer addressed to any deity. It is of 3 kinds: (1) Rik — metrical and intoned loudly, (2) Yajus — prose and intoned in a low tone; and (3) Samam — metrical and sung. Later it came to be applied to any formula of prayer to a deity; and finally to an incantation or charm.

\(^6\) Nyasa: Literally ‘pledge’. Here it is synonymous with Prapatti meaning ‘pledging one’s self to God’. It is recognised by the Upanishads as one of the thirty two Brahmanvidyas (sciences teaching the knowledge of Brahman).

\(^7\) Dwaya: The sacred mantra of Prapatti. The word signifies 'Twofold' being a combination of two mantras the mula-mantra and another. sriman narayana charanau saranam prapadye, srimate naryanaya namah. 'I take refuge in the feet of Lord Narayana along with lakshmi devi, I salute the divine couple.
12 – 13. “A prapanna (one who seeks refuge) is never forsaken even though he deserves to be killed.” Many scriptural passages like this are also authorities on the subject. And in the Sri-Shastra (the Pancharatra Agama⁸) the Bhagavan (Vishnu) taught Brahma the Mantra called Dhava beginning with the words 'Sriman Narayana’ in the same way it was explained by Lakshmi to Indra in the Lakshmi Tantra.

14. The Sanat-kumara Samhita also mentions with respect that Prapatti yields the fruits of all desires and is independent of all other means [to achieve one’s goals].

15. Thus Prapatti is completely independent of any other means⁹. It yields (of itself) the fruits of all desires to all persons in all places and at all times.

16 – 17. It severs one’s bondage to Samsara when it is uttered even once. As the restraining capacity of the missile of Brahma even though it was irresistible was nullified at once, owing to the distrust of the Rakshasa (in its power) to bind Hanuman, so Prapatti becomes ineffecutual from the faithlessness.¹⁰

18. Therefore it will give freedom (mukti) to those that place their trust in it. Either in association with other means or by itself, Prapatti accomplishes the freedom of those that are desirous of salvation in the same way as Pranava.

19 – 20. The Bhagavan (Vishnu) has clearly said to the attentive Vishvaksena as follows: “It is difficult to follow other means [of self-liberation]; because there is always the danger of losing the qualifications which are required to practice [those means]: consequently I shall now mention in this connection the one method [of liberation] which is common to every one.”

21 – 22. “On account of the negative influence of time, because of the unsteady nature of the mind, on account of the attachment of the senses to their objects, on account of indulgence in forbidden acts and on account of not doing what is ordained to be done, and due to the (adverse) nature of the times during which we live, — O leader of hosts! It is impossible to conquer the drive for sensual pleasures.”

23. “Therefore, O great sage! Not everyone is qualified for Karma yoga¹¹; because there are so many prescribed duties [in the Scriptures] and not every one is qualified to perform them.”

24. “Very few people even have an interest in following the path of Jñana Yoga¹². In the absence of such [an interest] neither affection (priti) nor higher love (bhakti)¹³ for Me arises.”

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⁸ Sri-Shastra : The body of Tantric teaching known as Pancharatra Agama sacred to the Vaishnavas. The main portion of Sri Ramanuja’s philosophy is based on this. In this work the word Shastra alone is used to indicate it. Bhagavat Shastra is another name for it.

⁹ ‘Means’ are those religious projects which we engage in to bring about our own liberation and acquire spiritual merit, such as study, fasting, pilgrimages, purification, austerity, pujas, yajñas etc.

¹⁰ Hanuman was immobilised with a weapon known as the Brahmastra which was invisible, not trusting the power of the Brahmastra the demons further bound Hanuman with jute ropes which immediately negated the invisible and invincible power of the Brahmastra.

¹¹ Karmayoga: The performance of secular activities and religious rites with the practice of non-attachment and with the goal of eventually liberating oneself from Samsara. Some sects like the Vaikhanasas adopt it as the sole means and consider it to be perfect in itself.
25. “Therefore, as there is no qualification to practise Karma Yoga or any other Yoga, and as there is no other course of action for one to follow, one should take refuge in My feet as the only way.”

26. “Considering well the pitiful state that has befallen one, and considering also My [attractive] qualities, one who resorts to Me with the full awareness that I am the only means, is liberated for ever.”

27 — 28. Resolution to act in conformity [to His will] absence of opposition [to it] conviction that He will protect and solicitation for His protection; resignation of one's self [to Him — atma-nikshepa] and the feeling of helplessness — these are the six aspects of saranagati (taking refuge).

29. “By means of this [process of] Prapatti one should take refuge in Me, guided by the feeling that there is no other option, knowing Me to be Madhava (the Lord of Lakshmi). Thus resting in Me one attains fulfilment of the goal.”

30. The Bhagavan (Vishnu) has thus declared in the Ramayana and in the Mahabharata:—
   “To one who has sought protection with Me only once, and has implored Me saying; I am yours! I offer protection from the fear of all beings. This is my vow”.

31. “Forsaking all self-initiated means of liberation (Dharmas) come to Me alone for shelter; I shall liberate you from all your karmic reactions. Do not grieve” (Gita 18:66)

32. Parasara who came to know of the truth regarding the Deity through the boon of Vasishtha has also declared as follows in the Vishnu Purana:—

33. “One will continue to experience affliction and desire, delusion and misery until one takes refuge with You (Vishnu) the Destroyer of all sins.”

34. “O messengers of Yama! (bhata) keep far away from those sinless beings who say:— ‘O Lotus-eyed Vasudeva! Vishnu (the Pervader of the universe)! Supporter of the earth! The unchangeable One! The bearer of the conch and the discus! Be our refuge!’”

35. While stating the duties of the four castes (varna) and of the four orders of life (ashrama), the sage Manu has also referred to the glory of Samnyasa (self-surrender) under the heading:— “The worship of Narayana”.

36. “If you have no dispute with that Being who lives in your own heart, who is the Yama — the controller of the senses from within, who dwells in Vivasvan — the sun, who is the Raja — the Ruler, go not to the Ganges nor to Kurukshetra.”

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12 Jnana yoga: Contemplation and meditation as the means of acquiring spiritual insight into the true nature of one's own atman, and thus effecting liberation.

13 Love towards equals is priti; and love towards superiors is bhakti. Bhakti for God is transcendental love.
37 — 38. “Dwelling in the heart” does not primarily pertain to Yama (the God of Death) the lord of the Southern direction, but to Him, the Ruler of all beings, who having entered into them, controls them all; who is hidden even in the Self (atman) and is death even unto the God of Death; Hence “he abides in the heart”; and to have “no dispute with Him” who is the Supreme Ruler of all and lives in the disc of the Sun is to surrender one's self to His feet.

39. “Whoever conceives of the Self differently from what it really is, is a great sinner verily a thief who has stolen the Self (atman).”

40. "Therefore even the tirthas (holy places) etc. are purified by those who have taken refuge with the Lord who is the Ruler of all and abides in the hearts of all.

41. This idea has been expressed in diverse ways by Saunaka\(^\text{14}\) and other great sages: — "O King you may continue to visit tirthas (holy places) until your mind becomes devoted to Vishnu.”

42. "O mighty ruler! Devotees like you who have themselves become sacred, sanctify the tirthas through the Mace-bearer (Vishnu) residing within themselves."

43. This is enough scriptural testimony for Prapatti. Saunaka and Vyasa have (respectively declared thus in the Vishnu-dharma and the Mahabharata:—

44. “You have passed through a succession of many births. Considering well any one of them, resort to the taking of refuge!”

45. “O Bharata! You who art afraid of falling, abandon every other project and devote all your heart to Narayana.”

\(^{14}\) The author of this work quotes chiefly from the following authorities: The Vedas; Smritis especially Manu; Mahabharata of Vyasa; Vishnu Purana of Parasara and Vishnu-dharma of Saunaka; Sri Bhagavata and occasionally Varaha Purana and largely the Sastras i.e. the Pancharatra Agama
CHAPTER 2
On the Nature of Prapatti

1. Prapatti is defined as the mental attitude consisting of a determination which results in prayer of supplication by a person who has a desire to attain a goal but no means thereto.

2. The prayer which, with sincere conviction regards that (God) alone as the only means for the attainment of a desire incapable of being attained by any other means, is the Prapatti known as saranagati (seeking refuge with God).

3. Saranagati is synonymous with Prapatti. Therefore with sincere Bhakti (love and devotion) adopt this Prapatti also known as Saranagati.

4. Bhagavan Vishnu kindly instructed Vishvaksena in the type of Refuge known as Arta Prapatti (the surrender of the miserable); and it has five accessories (angas).

5. “I am a repository of negative acts, utterly incapable and helpless. O Lord! Please be my recourse!” — this is the attitude of supplication which is directed towards the Lord.

6. The prapanna who, reflecting deeply upon the lot that has befallen him and the [attractive] qualities of Hari, and being fully conscious that God is the only means, seeks refuge with Him, is released from the bonds of samsara.\(^\text{15}\)

7 — 8. In the above sentences, the Prapatti of five angas (limbs) is mentioned. There are also other synonyms for this Prapatti such as; Nikshepa (self-resignation to the care of God), Nyasa, Samnyasa (renunciation), Tyaga (relinquishment) and Saranagati (taking refuge). (Lakshmi Tantra 17-75)

9. According to the Lakshmi Tantra, by the two limbs viz. the resolution to act in conformity to His will and the relinquishing of opposition to it, are (in a way) predicated the nature of the [other three] limbs; moreover to these limbs the same fruit as that of their principal [act of Prapatti] is attributed and their various natures [are also pointed out].

10. Conformity to the will of God is grounded in the conviction that the divine presence resides within all beings, therefore loving kindness to all beings is said to be this ‘Conformity.’

11 — 12. By this knowledge of the universal pervasiveness of Him who is sought after in Prapatti and the resolution to relinquish all ‘nonconformity to His will’ — refraining from injury and hurt to all beings [is meant].

\(^{15}\) Samsara is derived from Samsri to flow continuously; course of circuit of worldly life. Hence transmigration or cycle of births and deaths.
13 — 14. Considering that the several means of attaining of moksha (i.e. Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jñana Yoga) are not guaranteed to succeed and there are also many pitfalls owing to the lack of perfection in practice, and deficiency of time, place and circumstances and the absence of qualification to engage in some of the practices, relinquishing arrogance and dejection is what is known as karpanya.

15. Stating that the other methods of achieving liberation are extremely difficult to practice is a suggestion that they should be abandoned and Prapatti should be resorted to instead by one who is incapable and unqualified.

16 — 17. Because of His easy accessibility and unwavering compassion, because of the connection of the Lord (Isa) and His dependent (isatavya) [a relationship] which is not new [but has been existing] even from the beginning; the firm belief that He will indeed protect us who are conformable to him is what is known as Vishvasa (trust) destructive of all negative karma.

18. After [thus] skilfully ascertaining the capability of the provider of refuge to protect one and with the [firm] belief that God will protect, one should resort to Him as the way and the goal.

19. Even though He is merciful, capable and the Lord of all beings, yet unsolicited He will not protect, therefore one should apply oneself to supplication.

20. To say; “Lord please protect me!” is what is known as choosing one's protector. Therefore it is important is actually invite the saving Grace.

21. But Prapatti is the means to receive the Grace of God by one who desires it. Atmanikshepa (self-resignation to the care of God) is the relinquishing of any rights one may have to the rewards of one’s actions, which results in the surrender to Kesava (God).

22. One should avoid self-exertion in both the method (Upaya) and the result (phala), both of which belong to the Lord (Swamyayatta);[16] and it is also [plain] that Nikshepa has accessories.

23. In Arta-Prapatti (the surrender of the desperate) all the afore mentioned aspects of Prapatti are combined at once. But in Dripta-prapatti (the surrender of the confident) they manifest themselves in succession.

24 – 25. The division of Prapannas into Arta and Dripta is mentioned in Srimad Ramayana:— “Even an enemy who takes refuge with another, whether an Arta or a Dripta aught to be protected by a well-cultured person by even giving up his own life.”

26. One who is averse to the idea of taking another body is called a Dripta (confident). One who grieves even while in this body which is the result of past Karmas is called an Arta (the miserable).[17]

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[16] Prapatti is a surrendering of oneself into the protective embrace of the Lord – much like a drowning person who surrenders herself to the lifesaver who then does the work of bringing her to the beach. Struggle is necessary while trying to stay above water but the struggle becomes a threat to life if continued after the lifesaver has taken hold of one.
27. Prapatti also is therefore mentioned as divided into Arta and Dripta. However there aught to be the firm conviction that the way for the attainment of God is He Himself.

23. That which is known as Sadhya-bhakti (love as the end) is also a form of Prapatti. The anecdotes of the Bhagavata conveying this message are as follows.

29. A Prapanna (the one who seeks refuge) is like the Chataka bird, prapattavya (one who gives refuge) is like the pigeon. These functions of the protected and the protector are indicated by the characteristics of these birds their analogies.\(^{18}\)

30–32. Prapatti is also explained elsewhere in general treatises. All those aspirants who seek to attain Liberation [from suffering and samsara] and those who desire to attain the Supreme Abode of Bliss from whence there is no return, they may strive through any of the other means such a Jñana-yoga (path of knowledge), Karma-yoga (path of disinterested engagement) or by Bhakti-yoga (path of devotion) but the only sure path to success and to the attainment of the Supreme Being (purushottama) is through nyasa — surrender.

33. Prapatti is the means to attain the goals of worldly life as well as the supreme goal of the Vedas which are so difficult to accomplish by other methods.

(The synonyms for Prapatti used in this chapter are Saranagati, Nikshepa, Nyasa, Tyaga and Sannyasa.)

\(^{17}\) A Dripta’s present contentment arises not out of any physical happiness which he disregards, but out of realising the working of God’s will in everything; so a Dripta is not dissatisfied with this body, because it is given by God and he is fully prepared to fulfil his temporal duties, but longs for the union with God after death. An Arta’s misery is not out of any physical suffering which is nothing to him. But he feels miserable even at a moment’s separation from God; and consequently grieves at this body which keeps him away from the Divine Union.

\(^{18}\) The Chataka bird in Indian poetry is supposed to live solely on raindrops — at the end of summer the Chataka bird waits patiently and desperately for the monsoon to quench its unbearable thirst — in the same way the prapanna desperately waits for Moksha. And God is like the pigeon of the story in the Srimad Bhagavatam. In a storm, a luckless and forlorn hunter took shelter under the tree in which the pigeon was living. After kindling a fire to warm the hunter he dropped himself into the fire in order to appease the hunter’s hunger.
CHAPTER 3

On the Right of Practice

The qualification of one who is entitled to this Prapatti is as follows:

1. All members of all castes who are unable to adopt any other means and have desires to fulfill are entitled to Prapatti if they possess sattvika qualities\(^{\text{19}}\).

2. As Prapatti yields the fruits of everyone’s desires at all places\(^{\text{20}}\) it is prescribed to all for the achievement of their goals.

3 – 4. The Prapatti mantra (dvaya) is found in Kathavalli and other texts. In the Padma Purana it is mentioned repeatedly in the discourse between Parasara and Vasishthha, along with all its accessory parts. The name of the sage (Rishi) who cognized it, its metre etc.,\(^{\text{21}}\) it’s being composed of twenty five letters and as having the same import as the Pranava.\(^{\text{22}}\)

5. It is also stated therein that everyone is entitled to receive it and it need only be recited once. So also elsewhere in the Pancharatra Shastra it is ordained by Bhagavan Vishnu.

6. Even members of all social groups other than the three initiated castes (dvijas = twice-born) are entitled to receive the dvaya mantra, this is also deducible from the Vedic authorities [as for example when a special rule is introduced into a Vedic Yajña] and on the authority of those that follow a practice [to indicate the practice].

7. For example, carpenters and others [who are non-dvijas] have the right to set up consecrated fires (agnyadhana) and participate in other Vedic rituals, and the wife of the yajamana (host of a yajña) has the right to recite the mantra in the ceremony of consecrating the clarified butter (ajyavekshana), and many other such instances.

8. There may be some reservations on account of negative consequences arising from mispronunciation of the mantra by non-dvijas [because of the lack of Sanskrit training],

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\(^{\text{19}}\) Prapatti requires that one practice kindness and compassion to all beings — this can only be achieved if one has some inherent underlying qualities of goodness, honesty, compassion etc.

\(^{\text{20}}\) Sanat Kumara Samhita — “sa hi sarvatra sarvesham sarva kama-phala prada”. How is this to be understood? How does Prapatti assist in the achievement of worldly goals as well as spiritual salvation? Prapatti as refuge connotes “acceptance”. The law of Karma dictates that all our material happiness & sorrow are due to our previous actions. There is only the play of action and reaction. Success & failure are due to many factors beyond our control. For example the success of any undertaking is dependant upon (a) personal effort, (b) the effort of others, (c) circumstances, (d) Karma, (c) the grace of the gods. There all we can do to succeed in anything is to apply maximum personal effort and then resign ourselves and accept the outcome — this is a form of Prapatti. It may not grant actual ‘success’ but it does grant peace and contentment.

\(^{\text{21}}\) In order for a mantra to be effective the reciter needs to know the name of the seer who congized the mantra (rishi), it’s meter (cchanda), it’s deity (devata), it’s seed (bija), it’s appropriate usage (viniyoga).

\(^{\text{22}}\) The Pranava is the syllable OM.
in that case the Dvaya mantra can be taken as a Tantric mantra [rather than a Vedic Mantra]^{23}.

9. The ignorant (Karma yogin), the wise (Jñana yogin) and the devotees (bhakta yogin)\(^{24}\), are all entitled to Prapatti. It is most suitable to the ignorant on account of their inability to follow any other of the three means.

10. The wise clearly realizing the futility of self-initiated means, turn away from the path of Yoga and seek refuge with Him instead.

11. Also the Bhakta, always meditating on God with focussed and unwavering intense love, finds it impossible to depend upon any other means or end.

12. Saunaka, in his commentary on the mantra “jitan te” (victory to you, O Lord!) has said that Hari shall be the means and the goal for the ignorant (ajña), the wise (Sarvajña) and the devotees (bhaktas).

13. “This Prapatti is the refuge of the ignorant, this alone is the refuge of the wise; this is for those that wish to cross the ocean of samsara, and this is for them also that desire to attain immortality.”

14. Also in Lakshmi Tantra under Prapatti it is described that the Shastras mention that the persons who have the qualities of faith etc., are entitled to Prapatti.

15. In the Pancharatra-Shastra, Bhagavan says to the attentive Vishvaksena that one who takes refuge in this way has accomplished the object of his pursuit.

16. This secret doctrine is in accordance with the teaching of the Vedas and the Puranas and in the Vedanta it is praised and declared as the most secret of esoteric doctrines.

17. It ought not to be divulged to the uninitiated and never to one who denies the Vedas (nastika) and neither to one who has no faith in guru (guru-bhakti), and in the root syllable (bij), the collection of the letters, (pinda) and the words (pada) and such other elements (of this mantra).

^{23} It is believed that some serious negative effects can occur through the wrong pronunciation of Vedic Mantras — hence they are forbidden to those who have not studied Sanskrit — such as non-dvijas. Tantric mantras on the other hand are dependant for their effects upon the mental content of the practitioner.

^{24} Bhakti Yoga is the path of the love of God in which one becomes totally absorbed in divine love.
CHAPTER 4.

On Serving the Guru

1. A great guru ought to be resorted to by one who is mentally afflicted by *samsara* and who is afraid of the three forms of suffering: (*adhyatmika*: pertaining to the mind; *adhibhautika*: pertaining to the body; *adhidaivika*: pertaining to natural disasters) and who has renounced the desire for worldly success or heavenly pleasures.

2. Having reflected upon the realms that are won by works, the sage (*vipra*) with a despondent mind, knowing that *moksha* cannot be achieved by works, should seek out a guru (spiritual preceptor) in order to obtain true knowledge (of *Brahman*).

3 – 4. One should please the guru who is proficient in the Vedas and conversant with *Brahman* with articles that are dear to him. The guru should teach the disciple whose mind has become calm and who is submissive *Brahma-vidya* (knowledge of *Brahman*) by which he might learn about the Changeless One, the True, the Supreme *Brahman* Narayana. This is verily the idea the Vedas teach.

5. *Bhagavan* has revealed [as follows] in the Agama Shastra, both in general and in particular the nature of a guru, of a disciple and of the teaching (*vidya*) and of the time (of initiation).

6. “He is called a *Desika* (spiritual teacher) who is born of (any of) the three castes, who has taken refuge with Me alone, who is devoted to the observance of daily and occasional duties, who takes pleasure in serving those that are Mine, and is the same towards both what is his and what is others.”

7. “A disciple is one who is a believer in the Vedas, a practitioner of the Dharma, who is good natured and a worshipper of *Vishnu*, and who is profound (*gambhira*), clever (*caturah*) and courageous (*dhirah*).”

8. This mantra (*dvaya*) needs no favourable circumstances of time and place, no auspicious star, no accessories like holy places and objects and the like and no program of repetition (*purascharana*) or daily recital.

9. Saluting the guru with any of the prostrations, commencing with that of the three. The disciple shall receive the king of mantras even like a penniless person who is eager to possess a treasure.

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25 The teaching should be freely given by the teacher but should not be freely accepted by the disciple, the guru should be recompensed by the disciple with articles that are useful to the guru to maintain himself and his family and to continue with the work of teaching.

26 The 3 types of prostrations are; simply bending down and touching the feet of the guru or the ground in front of him, kneeling down and touching the forehead and joins palms to the ground or lying full length on the ground with the joined palms extended towards the guru.
10. The guru shall first teach him the lineage of gurus (guru-parampara) and having made him pronounce the mantra dvaya in its entirety, shall teach him about the theory of Prapatti.

11. Always loving the disciple as his own child, the guru becoming focussed shall teach him everything he knows without any limiting conditions (upadhi).

12-13. With compassion and without the expectation of reward, the guru shall instruct the disciple who is peaceful, in the teachings of the Upanishads which foster belief (visvasa) and wisdom (jnana) and other spiritual teachings suitable to the disciple’s state of mind.

14. The disciple should give honorarium (dakshina) to the teacher as much as he can and as is ordained by the Shastras. He shall worship him at suitable times and do what is beneficial to him.

15 – 16. Also the treatise of the Pancharatra known as Jaya Samhita proclaims the glory of guru as follows:
   Guru alone is the Supreme Brahman; guru alone is the highest wealth;
   Guru alone is the supreme wisdom; guru alone is the highest object of devotion;
   Guru alone is the highest desire; guru alone is the highest God.

Because he is the teacher of Brahman he is the greatest of all teachers and should always be worshipped, revered and praised.

With love one shall meditate on him internally, repeat his name and bow to him in obeisance; with pleasure serve and worship him; with the thought that he is both the means and the end take refuge with him alone.

19. This is approved of by all the Vedas and by all the Shastras. An intelligent person should regard the teacher of the Dvaya mantra in this way.

20. Even Narayana becomes disturbed by the wicked who have neglected their duty to Guru. (Even as) The Sun withers the lotus which is taken out of water and does not nourishes it.

21. He alone and none else is considered a disciple who utilises his body, wealth, knowledge, home, actions, qualities and vital energies in the service of his guru.

22. The one who considers the icons of Vishnu to be merely metal [objects of art], and the one who regards the guru as an ordinary human — both of them fall into hell!

23. The acharya is [defined as] one from whom the general and specific teachings on the Eternal Dharma are obtained. He should never be deceived in any way whatsoever.

24. The syllable ‘gu’ is indicative of darkness and ‘ru’ the dispelling of it. By being the dispeller of darkness [of ignorance] he is known as ‘guru’.
25. The sage Manu also says that the giver of mantra should be worshipped even though he be a youth, and it is also laid down that among the priests, seniority arises from the knowledge of the meaning of the Veda.

26. The child Sukracharya the son of Angiras, taught his fathers [the Vedic lore]. While teaching them he addressed them as ‘children’.

27. They became angry and asked the devas what it meant, and the devas came and told them their child had spoken properly.

28. Even though he be a child, a vipra [a priest who has studied the Veda] has the privilege of age; and after giving mantra he becomes a father. Only an ignorant person is called a child and the giver of mantra a 'father'.

29. Not by old age nor by grey hairs, nor by wealth, nor by connections have the rishis taught the Dharmas. He who has learned the Shastras from an unbroken line of teachers (anuchana) is our guru.

30. Among the Vipras (Brahmins) the seniority is from knowledge; among the kshatriyas from valour; among the Vaishyas the seniority is from wealth, and among the Sudras alone it is from age.

31. All the gurus of the guru ought to be specifically venerated. Towards the wife, sons and other relations of a guru one shall behave in the same way as towards the guru.

32 – 33. If the guru deviates from the path of Dharma (virtue) he ought to be reproved in private. If the degradation of the guru is unable to be rectified by remonstrating, by praying to God on his behalf or by resorting to the company of good people, then the disciple shall abandon him and serve a virtuous guru. If he still continues to wish for the well-being of his previous teacher he will surely be liberated, there is no doubt.

34. If the disciple strays from the path of duty the guru should strenuously prevent him. He shall pray to the lotus feet of the Lord Vishnu for the rectification of the disciple.

35. He shall also encourage the bhagavatas (devotees of the Lord) to be gracious to him, while he himself should do everything in his power to uplift him. In case he is not rectified, then one should refrain from talking to him and socialising with him.

36 – 37. One should not exuberantly express one’s affection for the guru in his presence. Wherever detraction or disparagement of the guru is heard, a disciple shall either close his ears or immediately leave the place.

38. The one who sincerely believes that through the grace of the guru all cherished desires will be fulfilled is a happy person indeed.

27 The student has the right of reprimanding any misbehaviour by the teacher. This is to be done firstly by bringing the matter to his attention in private, then by praying to God on his behalf and resorting to the company of the good and Dharmic people — in the hope that the guru will be influenced by them to reform himself. If all this fails then the disciple has the right to leave the guru and to take refuge with another. This does not mean a re-initiation but simply “serving” as is stated in the text.
39. The one who receives the teaching on surrender (nyasa-vidya) regards the guru himself as Vaikuntha (empyrean of Vishnu), the milky Ocean, Dvarka and all.

40. The guru who gives the eight lettered mantra (ashtakshara) is considered to be [the fulfiller of all desires pertaining to] this world and the next. Those that do not think so should be forsaken by intelligent people.

41. One who insults the guru who has given even one syllable of mantra, even just the Pranava (OM) will be born as a dog for 100 births and thereafter shall be born among the chandalas. (Atri Samhita)

42. In the form of the mighty Varaha, Bhagavan Vishnu proclaimed that the human body is the boat for crossing the ocean of Samsara. The self (Atman) is the favourable wind, the guru is the pilot. Therefore with the help of a guru one should cross the ocean of Samsara.

43. That person is the self-destructive (atmaha) who first having secured the boat of a human body which is difficult to attain, then having met the dextrous pilot of a guru, crosses not the ocean of Samsara when the sky is favourable.\(^{28}\)

\(^{28}\)Vishnu is sky-blue in colour indicating His infinity, the allusion to a favourable sky in the context of the boat analogy is indicative of the ever present grace of God.
1. One who has, through the grace of the guru received the teaching on subservience to God (Sheshatva⁵⁹), and recognises the faults inherent in all happiness derived from sense-gratification, who has complete devotion to Vishnu, being indifferent to other deities, who desires only to obtain Vishnu is called a Vaishnava⁶¹.

2. The ekanti is one who comes to the conclusion that bhakti is ineffective [for Liberation] as is the worship of other devatas. Sense-gratification is incapable of delivering happiness, and Krishna as the means to attain Krishna Himself.

3. The Parama-ekanti is who concludes that the various methods [to attain moksha] all the deities other than Krishna, sensual pleasures, Bhakti and even Prapatti to Krishna are all equal [in pertaining to the realm of conditioning] and who has the exclusive vision of the Lord as master.

4. Fully realising subservience to the Lord, his entire life is spent only in the service of His Holy Feet and spends his time thinking of how he can be of useful service.

5. Learning from the guru the meaning of the ‘root mantra’ [om namo narayanaya], as being of the same import as the Dvaya and taking refuge in Hari alone one shall worship Him with that (mantra).

6 – 7. One shall make offerings with this ‘root mantra’ daily three times according to one’s ability. This mantra is the essence of the teaching of the Vedanta and it enables one to cross the ocean of Samsara. Of all the mantras this is the supreme mantra; it is the most secret of all secrets; it is the purest of the pure, it is eternal.

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⁵⁹ A shesha is defined as something that is completely dependant upon and whose sole existence is for the benefit of another. A Sheshi is defined as one who possesses sheshas and maintains and preserves them for His own purposes. According to Visishtadvaita philosophy the relationship between Isvara and the Jiva (shesh-sheshi-bhava) is like the relationship the King and the Kingdom, the King is not a king without a kingdom to rule, the kingdom on the other hand exists to nourish and maintain the king — it is a symbiotic and mutually dependant relationship which is eternal.

⁶⁰ According to Vedanta Desikan, all forms of material pleasure and happiness and all material goals have seven defects known as Sapta-dosha these are:-

1. alpa - their end results are trivial
2. asthira - they are transient and impermanent,
3. asukara - not easily obtained, they require much effort and are time consuming.
4. asukhavasana - ultimately ending in grief and disappointments.
5. dukhanvita - accompanied by disappointments and supported only by struggle.
6. anucitam - incompatible with our essential being.
7. abhimana-mula - they’re based upon a false sense of self and lead to further perpetuation of this delusive sense of identity.

⁶¹ Vaishnavas are again divided into 2 categories as will now be explained.
8. By those that are desirous of Liberation it should be recited constantly as it produces worldly enjoyment (bhukti) and final Liberation (mukti). By the Vaishnavas it is worthy of constant recitations as fostering knowledge (jñana) and devotion (bhakti).

9. It is the divine source of all the mantras and is capable of destroying all sins. With a focussed mind one should recite it diligently.

10–11. Vishvaksena, the commander of the hosts delivered an injunction to Gajanana (the elephant faced God) and other hosts, that the Vaishnavas should always make offerings and other acts of devotion with either this mantra or the Dvaya, preceded by salutation to his Guru.

12. Only after having put on the indications of a Vaishnava shall Hari be worshipped. The sage Vvasa declares that only those of all castes who have applied the symbols of a Vaishnava should make offerings, serve and adore Madhava.

13. These indications are said to be of two kinds — external and internal. The signs of the conch and discus etc are external, and the absence of selfish-desire and others is the internal.

14. From all the Upanishads the wearing of the insignia of the conch and discus is generally established. The Atharvopanishad specifically describes the wearing of these insignia for the discerning ones.

15. The knowers of the Truth (brahmavit) know well that a Vipra shall bear on his right arm the [brand of the] discus and on his left that of the conch.

16–17. If there be a doubt as to whether this practice [of branding] is Vedic we say that the same doubt can be applied to the entire corpus of mantras as well. If great sages have accepted the mantras as being authoritative, then this practice too cannot be doubted. [If doubt still persists then the] Padma and Agneya Puranas with raised arms declare this practice to be authorized!

18–19. By those that are advanced in Devotion (Bhakti) and Conviction (Sraddha), the five weapons (of Vishnu) are to be worn separately in specific places upon the body; on the forehead the mace (gada) is to be worn; on the head the bow (saranga) on the middle of the chest the sword (Nandaka) and on the two arms the conch and the discus.

20. The metallic brands of the weapons are to be heated in the fire and then applied to the body while reciting their specific mantras. Even the venerable Manu has affirmed this.

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32 The 6 afflictive emotions are kama = selfish desire, krodha = anger, moha = delusion, mada = hubris, lobha = parsimony, and matsarya = malicious envy.
33 The Vaishnava practice of branding the insignia of the conch and discus on the arms of initiates is the subject of much controversy. It is definitely a Tantric practice but is claimed by Vaishnava acharyas to be advocated and endorsed by the Vedas as well; this is disputed by many Vedic scholars who denounce the practice.
34 Where exactly this quotation is found is not known.
21. The one who daily wears the vertical insignia\textsuperscript{35} (\textit{urdhva-pundra}) and the discus\textsuperscript{36} (\textit{chakra}) will experience an increase of auspiciousness and a decrease in inauspiciousness.

22 – 23. The time for applying the discus and other insignia are mentioned by Bhagavan in the \textit{Pancharatra Shastra}. Before sixteen years of age is the most favourable time, until the fiftieth year is middling and after that lowest. Such is the determination of the propitious time; all the months of the year excepting the [two] months of the rainy season are auspicious.

24. In the \textit{Pancharatra} are prescribed in great detail the place [on the body\textsuperscript{37}], the measurement\textsuperscript{38} and the material of \textit{Urdhva pundra} — according to this (prescription) it should be applied.

25. The \textit{Urdhva-pundra} should be painted with white clay produced on the top of a sacred mountain\textsuperscript{39} and other such holy places, especially by the \textit{Vaishnavas}.\textsuperscript{40}

26. “The one who wears a pure and white \textit{Urdhva-pundram} with nice interspaces creates for Me a pure temple [in which to dwell i.e. the mind].”

27. [Keeping the] heart unsullied by craving and the other afflicting emotions\textsuperscript{41}, [maintaining] speech uncontaminated by falsehood etc.\textsuperscript{42} and [preserving] a body unimpaired by aggression and the rest\textsuperscript{43} are the three ways in which Krishna is worshipped.

28. The eight kinds of flowers that dear to Vishnu [and should perpetually be offered] are: Non-injury [in word, deed or thought]; control of the senses; kindness to all beings; especially forgiveness; knowledge, self-discipline, meditation and truth.

30 – 32. Thus with the body adorned with the external and internal insignia, having bathed in holy waters and offered libations of water to the Devas, the ancestors and the sages as ordained in the Shastras having diligently recited the \textit{mula-mantra} one hundred and eight times, having prepared all the offerings of touch (\textit{samsparshikam})

\textsuperscript{35} The vertical insignia are the 2 white lines drawn on the forehead representative of the feet of Lord Vishnu with the central red central line which represents Lakshmi. Women wear a central red line with a tiny white line underneath.

\textsuperscript{36} The discus would also include the other weapons as well.

\textsuperscript{37} There are 12 places on the body on which the insignia are drawn, the forehead, front and 2 sides and nape of the neck, chest, 2 biceps, front and sides of the abdomen and lower back.

\textsuperscript{38} The two vertical white lines should be the thickness of the forefinger at least.

\textsuperscript{39} The sacred mountain is Melkote in Karnataka state where Ramanuja spent his years of exile.

\textsuperscript{40} Smartas and Northern \textit{Vaishnavas} use a yellowish clay called Gopi-chandan to draw their \textit{Urdhva-pundarams}.

\textsuperscript{41} See note 31

\textsuperscript{42} The other contaminants of speech apart from lying are malicious gossip, verbal abuse, giving deceptive speeches.

\textsuperscript{43} The sins of the body are causing injury directly or indirectly to other living beings, sexual misconduct, not rendering help to others in the time of need and serving evil people.

\textsuperscript{44} Offerings consisting of oil bath, tooth-cleaning, bathing with powders, smearing with turmeric, offering of clothing, unguents, scent and garlands.
of service (aupacarikam⁴⁵) and activity (abhayavaharikam⁴⁶) and having completed the decoration of the place of worship (Yaga Bhumi⁴⁷), one should worship Vishnu according to the routine established by Ramanuja⁴⁸.

33. Just as a servant having great love for the king tries to please him, in the same way should one try to please one’s own Lord free from fear⁴⁹, through circumambulation (pradakshina) and by prostrations (namaskara) and praise (stotra) approved of by the ekantis,

34. In due course of time [as one develops] the entire process of Bhakti-Yoga as taught by Varaha to Agastya along with all its accessories should be diligently practiced.

35 – 37. “The eight kinds of Bhakti are: (1) maternal affection for other devotees, (2) rejoicing in their worship, (3) worship by one's self, (4) avoidance of all ostentation in ceremonies, (5) devotion to the listening to stories about My pastimes, (6) experiencing [emotional symptoms when hearing such stories] such as changes in the voice, tears and trembling, (7) thinking of Me daily and (8) [mindfulness of] never make a living from [devotional service to] Me. If these eight forms of devotion exist even in a mleccha ⁵⁰ (Barbarian) he should be regarded as the holiest of Brahmans; he is the greatest of the sages; he is a yati (a self-controlled renunciate) and a pandit. Gifts should be given to him and received from him; he should be venerated just as I am.”

38 – 39. Saunaka has instructed that icons for the purpose of worship (arca-avatara) should be beautiful images of Vishnu with a joyful face and eyes which inspire love [in the beholder]. They should be constructed from metals such as gold, silver etc. One should project the Brahman into the icon and then become mentally absorbed in it.⁵¹

40 [To the icon] alone should one make offerings; to it one shall prostrate; it alone should be served and contemplated upon, abandoning all impurities (dosha) one is absorbed in that which is the image of Brahman.

41. Doing whatever little one can, one should dwell in [the compound of] a temple of Vishnu. Always living in a Vishnu temple [compound] one shall serve the enshrined deity in the temple as best one can.

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⁴⁵ Offerings consisting of mirror, fan, parasol, a vessel overflowing, incense, lamp,
⁴⁶ All manner of cooked food offerings.
⁴⁷ Yaga-bhumi : Literally means the place for the performance of the Vedic Yajñas also known as Yagas. In the Tantric tradition the puja ceremony took the place of the Vedic fire-offerings.
⁴⁸ Ramanuja composed a work called “Nitya Grantha” in which he gives the details of the daily liturgy or puja program.
⁴⁹ Upadhi means both fear and deceit. Serving the Lord should be done from overwhelming love for Him alone, in which there is absolutely no fear either from service imperfectly done, overdone or even neglected. If one takes upadhi as ‘deceit’ then it would mean serving the Lord honestly with objects honestly obtained.
⁵⁰ mleccha — from ‘mlecch’ to talk confusedly. A term of disrespect for Non-Aryans who do not conform to the Aryan codes of practice or speak Sanskrit. Nowadays used mostly for foreigners such as Europeans and Muslims.
⁵¹ The process of icon worship is to first visualize the Lord seated within the lotus of one’s heart, one then projects that visualization onto the icon (avahana) for the purpose of making offerings. After the puja is completed the deity is then reabsorbed into one’s heart (visarjanam).
42. One should never even think of utilise anything belonging to Vishnu as a means for personal gain. Whether it be a great temple, a precious ornament or a pleasure [enjoyed by the deity].

43. An hour or even moment passed without thinking of Vasudeva is a loss; a huge opening to disaster; a confusion and distortion [of mindfulness].

44. If even a single hour were to be wasted without meditation it should be a considered source of grief similar to being robbed by a thief.

45. Having exhaustively studied all the Shastras and examined them again and again, we reach this one ultimate conclusion viz. that Narayana ought to be continually meditated upon.
CHAPTER 6

On The Worship of The Attendants of God

1. Then [after completing the worship of the Lord] the goddess Lakshmi ought to be specially worshipped by a Prapanna along with Bhu-Devi and Nila-Devi and the others also, along with Sutravati and the other attendants [on Lakshmi].

2. She (Lakshmi) is the resting place of Gurus and the empress of this world, the divine consort of the God of gods and is eternal and imperishable.

3. If the Pancharatra Shastra (Vishvaksena Samhita) Vishnu said to the attentive Vishvaksena:— “It is very rare to meet one on earth who is a devotee of Lakshmi of Myself and of you.”

4. After collecting all the materials for the worship of Hari, one shall also worship therewith the Goddess who is the beloved consort of the God of gods, in the same manner.

5. After mentioning the five kinds of manifestations like the Transcendent (para) the Hypostatic (Vyuha) and His own glories, Lord Hari in Tattva-ratna eulogises her as follows:

6. “Similarly I shall declare the nature of Lakshmi listen to me attentively. We both share the commonality of Pervasion by quality (guna) and essence (svara-pa).

7. Just as the universe is pervaded by Me both in essence and quality all this is also pervaded by Her. Therefore she is the Disposer and Ruler of all.

52 Lakshmi who is personification of compassion, is considered to have many expansion, the three most important being Bhu-devi who is the personification of the Earth and represents the quality of forbearance and Nila-Devi is the lord’s Hladini-shakti — or pleasure potency.

53 Sutravati is the consort of Vishvakarna the Commander in Chief of the Lord’s entourage.

54 The term used is anapayini which can generally mean imperishable or specifically inseparable from the Lord.

55 The Five manifestations of God (Isvara) according to the Pancharatra Shastras are: (1) Para — the transcendental Supreme Absolute form from which all the others emanate. (2) Vyuha — the four hypostatic emanations Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha; which have cosmic function of projection, preservation and transformation. (3) Vibhava — Incarnations which appear from time to time to rectify and restore harmony and balance to the universe, such as Rama, Krishna etc. (4) Antaryamin — the form abiding within all living beings. (5) Archa-avatara — the appearance out of condescension and love, in icons that are made and consecrated according to the Pancharatra rituals.

56 This teaching on the nature of Lakshmi is a major topic of dispute between the 2 major factions of the Srivaishnavas. Here the learned acharya is expounding the Vadagalai view. The Tengalais counter that she does not have essential pervasion (svara-pa-vyapti) but only pervasion of qualities (guna-vyapti). According to the Vadagalais, Lakshmi is co-equal to Narayana. The Tengalis claim that she is a jiva that has a particular relationship with Narayana to act as the mediatrix of Grace.
8. She is pervaded by Me and similarly I am also pervaded by Her. Listen, O Senesha to the differences between us.

9. My consort, who is the ruler of all is dependant on Me. It has been revealed by the Vedas that I am the Controller of both Her and the Universe.

10. In the Vedanta and Pancharatra Shastra it is taught that both the realms of Nitya Vibhuti (The eternal transcendental realm) and Lila Vibhuti (The material universe which is the playground of the Lord) are under our control and exist for both of Us.

11. In the same way Bhumi and Nila are also considered subservient to Me. As all monads (individual jivas) are pervaded by consciousness, these two (manifestations) are pervaded only by quality and not by essence.

12 – 13. In the same Shastra elsewhere, (Lakshmi Tantra 2;11 – 18.) Lakshmi Herself has also taught about the relation between Herself and Her Lord, their mutual pervasion and rulership. “Since the Brahman is non-differentiated from Shakti, it is said to be non-dual (advaita).

14. I [Lakshmi] am the Supreme energy (Shakti) of Brahman, and am [to Brahman] as light is to the moon. I am the immortal one, who identifies all states of being with her own self, Brahman’s “notion of self”.

15. He [Hari] being “I” (the Self) is regarded as the Self in all beings. I am the eternal “notion of Self” in all beings.

16. I am considered to be the eternal Vasudeva state of existence. Brahman embraces both the principle of existence and state of existence, hence It (Brahman) is the eternal state (padam).

17. [When differentiated] the principle of existence is Narayana, and in its state of existence (becoming) it is I, the supreme Lakshmi. Therefore Brahman the eternal is called Lakshmi-Narayana because the “I” entity is always inherent in the “notion of self”.

57 Bhu-devi and Nila-devi are considered to be lesser manifestations of Lakshmi. An example would be that of a High Court Judge who has absolute authority in his own court but when playing cricket is limited by the authority of others involved in the game. Lakshmi is the empress of the universe but when she manifests as Bhu and Nila she is limited by time, place and circumstance.

58 Brahman is the Absolute in Vedanta philosophy. It means “the Immensity” or the “Expansiveness”. This Unitary Absolute splits into male and female — Narayana and Lakshmi for the process of manifestation of the universe. Hence Brahman is said to be “non-dual”!

59 This implies that in all manifestations of God, Shakti being His quintessence follows Him.

60 Here a subtle difference is being made between the Self and the “notion of self” — between consciousness and self-consciousness. Brahman is the Absolute in which everything is latent and unmanifest. In the Lakshmi/Narayana phase the divinities manifest themselves in their fullest glory as Persons. Narayana is consciousness and Shakti is self-consciousness, Narayana is the principle of “Self” whereas Lakshmi is the “notion of self”. “I-ness and “I-hood”.
18 – 19. The I-entity is always cognised as the source of “I-hood”, for one cannot exist without the other and as such each is invariably fused with the other. Realise that the relationship between me and the Lord is that of identity."

20 — 21. Sage Parasara says of Her who is the form of Brahman:—

“She is eternal, the mother of the universe, the imperishable glory of Vishnu. O best of Brahmins! Just as Vishnu is all pervading so also is She”

22. “Among gods, animals and humankind O Maitreya! Bhagavan Hari is the masculine name and Lakshmi is the feminine name, there is nothing higher than these.

23 – 26. “I salute that consort of the Bestower of boons (Varadavallabha) who by being the Beloved of God, of Her own accord assumes the position of mediatrix for those, who are attached to the performance of offensive acts and have for a long time been unworthy, and fosters maternal compassion and such other feelings in Her Lord. When the Lord becomes the means [for Liberation of jivas] She activates His knowledge, energy and other attributes. For enhancement of the pleasure of the Liberated ones, She augments [the Lord’s] attributes of beauty etc. and is endowed with the three capacities and who dwells in a lotus and is the empress of the whole world.

27. Similarly one shall worship Bhumi and Nila and other innumerable consorts and the foremost of the eternals (nitya-suris) by their respective mantras.

28. One shall worship the Divine Retinue beginning with the chief minister of Vishnu; Senesa who carries the rod of justice and in whose hand the entire world consisting of the sentient (chit) and insentient (achit) beings lies.

29 – 30. In due order one should also worship, Ananta and Garuda and all the other eternals along with all their retinues, [also] the [personified] weapons [of the Lord] such as Discus (Sudarshana) etc. as well as all the goddesses such as Sutravati (consort of Vishvakarman) and others; who serve Lakshmi.

31. Those who desire Liberation should not worship the other gods who have casually gone to the temple of Vishnu to serve Him, unless they are ranked as eternals.

61 The 6 attributes of the Lord that relate to sentient beings are: jñāna = knowledge, bala = strength, aishvarya = sovereignty, shakti = omnipotence, virya = creative potency, tejas = splendour. It is because of these six that He is called ‘Bhagavan.’

62 These are known as the svabhava dharmas and include the attributes of beauty, easy accessibility, condescension, tenderness, sweetness, compassion, love, friendliness, solicitude etc.

63 akara-trayam — there are a number of possible interpretations of this term; (1) akanta = “notion of I”, shakti = omnipotence, and bhava = empathy. Or, (2) nityanapayatvam = eternal inseparability form the Lord, vyapti = pervasion, aishvaryam = sovereignty. (3) Being the mediatrix, increasing the Lords redemptive graces and promoting His communicable attributes. (4) upayatva = beings the means, upayatva = being the goal and purushakarata = being the mediatrix.

32 – 33. Brahma, Rudra, Arjuna, Vyasa, Bhargava of a thousand arms, Kakutstha, Atreya, Kapila, Buddha these and innumerable others are Shaktyavesha avatars — jivas that are utilised by the Lord for accomplishing some specific task, they, along with Indra, Agni and the other eight guardian deities of the directions ought not to be worshipped by those who are desirous of Liberation.

34 – 37. As the Lord said to the attentive Vishvakesena;— “Those who have been entrusted with some cosmic authority should not be worshipped by those desirous of Liberation. I shall specifically mention those partial manifestations (pradurbhavan). The four-faced Brahma was entrusted with the work of projecting the universe into being (srishthi) and the great God Shankara with the work of withdrawal of the universe (samhara). The function of Buddha was to delude and Vyasa was appointed to compile the Vedas. Arjuna was the greatest of archers and Parasurama (Jamadagni) of powerful beings. Agni is the foremost of the Vasus and Vitesseha (Kubera) [of the Eight directional lords].

38 – 39. O Senesha! Whoever is possessed of sovereignty and harmony, prosperity and is agreeable, and devoid of attachment and hatred and of itself influential and exceptionally endowed [for good], is to be known as a portion of Myself, manifested for the purpose of fulfilling My objectives. All of them are governed by Divine decree, they are individual jivas and should not be worshipped by those desirous of Liberation.

40 – 41. They are merely entered into O Limitlessly glorious one! By my spirit on purpose and they are all unworthy of worship because they indeed partake of the nature of jivas and are possessed of egotism.

41 – 43. Those manifestations who, on account of being largely parts of My spirit are important, who have not given up their own true essence and who are Divine and have non-material bodies, who have arisen like one light from another for the protection of the world; those O Sensesha, are indeed worthy of worship in order to cross the ocean of samsara.”

44 – 46. As Bhagavan Vyasa has said to Parashara [in the Mahabharata Sha. 350] “O tiger among men! Brahma and Shiva and all the other Devatas should not be served as their rewards are limited. Other deities are not proper objects of resort for the sages — all of them are impure; for the Devas and other celestial beings are born from Karma.” (Vishnu Purana 6:7:77)

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65 Kakutstha was a king of the Solar dynasty, the son of Bhagiratha and an ancestor of Rama. His son is Raghu.
66 According to Vaishnavas the Buddha incarnation was taken in order to delude the demons and cause them to reject the Vedas. The function of Shankaracharya was to re-establish the Vedas and the subsequent Vaishnava acharyas to re-establish Theism.
CHAPTER 7

On Serving The Virtuous

1. For the removal of doubt in regard to the teachings that have been heard, and for mutual enlightenment; sages (Sadhus) should be sought out; for the virtuous are a remedy for attachment.

2. Bhagavan Vyasa says regarding the remedy for the renunciation of sense-objects as follows:—
“Attachment must be given up at all costs, if it is not possible to [spontaneously] give it up, then Sadhus should be sought after; for [the company of] the virtuous is the cure of attachment.

3. Whenever a doubt arises as regards one’s own conduct and action, one should approach with humility, such sages (vipras) who are reflective and are perfect and steady in the path of Dharma, and from them one shall learn the solution. Whatever course of conduct they pursue, in the particular case at hand, that course a virtuous person should adopt.

5. Sages ought to be associate with even though they do not give a single [formal] instruction. For even their spontaneous conversation becomes Shastra.

6. Saunaka mentions the benefit of visiting Sadhus as follows:—
“The place where a holy man (bhagavata) lives, even though it be a long way off should be visited and great effort made to see the holy man for therein dwells Hari.”

8. Indeed, Narada has said exactly the same thing to Saunaka:— Those who wish to be absolved of all their sins always resort to Vishnu, but the Sadhus who purify the world become a tirtha for the righteous people who pay them a visit to see them, no matter how far away the may be. A holy tirtha yields fruit in the course of time but the association with Sadhus immediately.

9. Bhagavan Suka says that praising the qualities of the Sadhus is, as it were, the fruit of knowledge that has been acquired over a long time — in the following terms:—

10. “No reward has directly been proclaimed by the sages from the long arduous labour of accumulating knowledge; therefore is [prescribed] the constant thinking of the qualities of those, in whose heart are the lotus feet of the lord (Mukunda).

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67 See Taittiriya Upanishad 1:11
68 Tirtha literally means a ‘ford’ or place of crossing and signifies a holy place with a sacred tank or river, bathing in which, is believed to wash away one’s sins.
11. The good should attentively worship the sages that have come to their house, with kind words, with offerings of water to wash the hands etc. and with agreeable food in a suitable manner.

12. “The Smritis (Manu) enjoin that one shall not wash the feet [of a visitor] from a vessel made of bell-metal. Therefore one should use other vessels such as those made of clay. And Bhagavan Suka says:—

13. “Those houses that are devoid of the holy water [obtained] from [washing] the feet of spiritually great men, even though they may not be devoid of all sorts of prosperity, are verily the [sandalwood] trees which are the [favourite] abode of snakes.”

14. “The wise have determined that the atonement for all sins is the utilization of the water from washing the feet of the devotees of the Lord.”

15. “This water is to be sprinkled on the head as well as on the arms and eyes. It is to be taken in the same way as the Soma Juice where there is no necessity of sipping water for purification before or after (achamana).”

16. “Of best of the twice-born! If the water from the feet of Vishnu and especially of the Vaishnavas be drunk, then no ceremony of sipping should be done just as in the case of the Soma Juice”. (Vayu Purana 45)

17. Lord Krishna washed the feet of the guest Narada with his own hands in the houses of all the beloved (Gopis) and then drank the holy water of the feet of that sage.

18. In order to deepen one’s awareness of one's subservience to God (Seshatva) with the triple knowledge (trividha-jñana), one should gratify the Vaishnavas in one's house with repasts which are to their liking and conform to the Shastras.

19. After they have finished eating a truly pious person should eat the food that is left over. For those virtuous ones who eat the leavings [of a sacred offering] are liberated from all sins. “Those who cook for themselves alone verily eat sin!”

20. The conversation and such social intercourse with them has mentioned in the Pancharatra Shastra:—

“What the twice-born, who ride the chariot of the Vedas wielding the sword of knowledge shall say even in jest, is considered as the highest Dharma.”

21. The Vedic scholars know that the practices of those who have taken refuge with Vasudeva alone to be the Dharma-Shastra (codes of law).

22. People are purified not so much by holy places as by the mere glance of the Vaishnavas cast but playfully, Shaunaka says as follows:—

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69 It is unclear why bell-metal vessels are forbidden.
70 Triple knowledge is that of (1) object of attainment, (2) the means (3) the appropriator. A variant reading is trividha tyaga — the triple relinquishment = relinquishing the reward of actions, attachment to the activity and idea of agency.
23. “O King! a being is not purified by holy waters from thousands of sacred places as by the mere glance Vaishnavas cast as if in sport.”

24. “Residing within a cage of the flames is preferable to the torment of association with people who are averse to the thought of Sauri (Vishnu).”

25. “Great sage! I am the slave of those that touch the Bhagavatas (the devotees) with their limbs, even just sit near (them) see (them) and hear (them).”

26. With the good alone should one live, also with the good should one associate, with the good alone should one argue and make friendship; but with the wicked should one have nothing to do.

27. As Yayati\(^{71}\) having fallen among the good regained his own position from there, even so, one will never become deluded when falling among the good.

CHAPTER 8

The Determination of Prescribed Karmas

1. The determination of the duties of a Prapanna from among those prescribed [by the Dharma Shastras] is dealt with now.

2. The obligatory duties prescribed in Shruti\(^{72}\), Smriti\(^{73}\) and other Shastras aught to be performed. For the lord of Lakshmi says “Shruti and Smriti are my injunctions.”\(^{74}\)

3. A Prapanna shall also perform what is specifically prescribed for him in the [Pancharatra] Shastras; always engage in activities such as making garlands for Vishnu etc.

4. Lakshmi responded to Indra’s question in Her own Tantra (Lakshmi Tantra 17:82-91) about the duties prescribed for those practising Nyasa-vidya (the path of surrender) as follows:—

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\(^{71}\) The reference is to a story in the Mahabharata. When Yayate son of Nahusha the celebrated king of the lunar race was enjoying the fruits of his merit in Svarga-loka, blinded with pride one day used vile language towards the sages which destroyed his merit and resulted in his fall due to a curse from Indra. But by the favour of the king of gods he fell from heaven among sages called Ashtakas and by their grace regained his lost position.

\(^{72}\) Shruti — lit. ‘What is heard’ – refers to the Vedas. There are very few specific injunctions imbedded in the Vedas, most are of a general moral nature such as ahimsa paramo dharma — non-injury is the highest religious practice, satyam vada — speak the truth etc.

\(^{73}\) Smriti — lit. “What is remembered” – refers to the Law Books all of which have human authors and which have more specific injunctions covering every aspect of one’s life, social, domestic as well as political and criminal.

\(^{74}\) They are God’s laws only in a figurative sense not literally.
5. “He who rejects both *upaya*\(^{75}\) and *apaya*\(^{76}\) and, convinced of God’s protection, practices the middle path by surrendering to God all that he possess will realise that Purushottama the God of gods is his protector.”

6 – 7. Indra said:— “O Ambika, what is the middle path between *upaya* and *apaya*? Since all actions arise from either *upaya* (stratagem) or *apaya* (detriment) accordingly as the injunctions or prohibitions laid down in the Shastra are obeyed or disregarded, it would appear that every activity necessarily falls under the category of either *upaya* or *apaya*.”

8 – 9. Sri said: — “O King of the Devas! There are three mysterious types of Karma; learn to distinguish between them by applying the prohibitions and injunctions laid down in the Shastras. Some deeds produce harmful results and some beneficial, others again expiatory actions for sins. In the light of the Shastra recognise these three types of actions.

10 – 13. The first two types known as *upaya* and *apaya* should be relinquished. The third group of expiatory actions is of two types. *Prayaschitta* are those expiatory rites which are done to counteract the negative consequences of misdeeds. The intelligent ones should avoid these deeds as well as the first two. Only those deeds should surely be done which, when done produce no benefit but which, when left undone produce harm.

This is the attitude taken by the Vedas, which endorse the middle way between the detrimental and expedient. One who follows this road seeks refuge and surrenders wholeheartedly to Janardana the Lord of the Universe (*jagannatha*).

14 – 16. What has been taught here is this:— Injury to other beings (*himsa*) and theft etc. are detrimental actions [which lead to ruin]. Desiderative (*Kamya karmas*) are those various acts which lead to some personal achievement — they may include Sankhya\(^{77}\) and Yoga\(^{78}\). Similarly the expiatory acts (*Prayaschitta*) which remit all kinds of misdemeanours already committed are of two kinds; one is fasting e.g. *chandrayana* and the other is *sandhya* (the morning, noon and evening devotions) as well as worship and such other [obligatory] karmas.

17 – 18. Of these, injury to other beings and all other detrimental activities (*apaya*). building temple and other activities [performed for some personal achievement and with

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\(^{75}\) *Upayas* are stratagems for worldly success and achieving one’s goals or self-initiated methods for attaining Liberation recommended by the Scriptures such as Bhakti, Jñana and Karma Yoga, pilgrimages, austerities, and other spiritual practices.

\(^{76}\) *Apayas* are detrimental criminal activities such as violence, aggression, theft etc.

\(^{77}\) *Sankhya* — The system of non-theistic philosophy attributed to the sage Kapila. It is called Sankhya because it enumerates twenty five Tattvas or various categories of reality beginning with Prakriti or Pradhana — primordial matter; and Purusha or Self. The conscious Self Purusha is passive and Prakriti Active. Purusha becomes entangled in samsara and its attendant sufferings and is born again and again. A correct knowledge of the 25 categories will enable one to overcome ignorance and suffering and achieve liberation from samsara.

\(^{78}\) *Yoga*: A practical methodology attributed to sage Patanjali who taught that the means to liberation was eighth-fold — *ashtanga*. Four of the limbs apply to physical and moral development and the other four deal with meditation.
a view to future rewards] as well as [the study of] Sankhya and other activities concerned with self-liberation (upaya) and also all forms of penances (prayaschitta) should never be practiced at any time.

19 – 20. Those karmas (rites) which are mentioned as absolving future misdemeanours such as sandhya (the morning, noon and evening prayers) archana (worship) Pancha Maha Yagna (the five great sacrifices) and such others as a recommend by those that are desirous of liberation (mumukshus) and the occasional rites such as the oblation consisting of first fruits at the end of the rainy season (agrayana) the [sacraments such as] parting of the hair during pregnancy (simantonnayana) etc. and also the setting up of the sacred-fires (agnyadhana) etc. aught to be done by the twice-born (dvijas) if they have a right to them. But those deeds that are proscribed (nishiddha), those done for some gain (Kamya) and those that are the means for securing some future fruition (upaya) should not be performed.

21. Should an occasion arise, one should perform that Prayaschitta (expiatory rite) which is specially prescribed for a Prapanna by Lakshmi in Lakshmi Tantra.

22 – 24. Sri said — “The method prescribed by this Shastra if practiced even once will liberate one, whereas by following both upaya and apaya one is bereft of the advantage [of Prapatti]. If one intentionally commits some misdemeanour (apaya) an expiatory rite should be performed without delay, but one who has taken refuge discovers that the act itself [of taking refuge] is as efficacious [as an expiatory rite]. Again even if the upayas are accepted as such the position remains unchanged.”


26. Therefore whatever may be the misdemeanour of a Prapanna done either intentionally or through neglect, is immediately rectified by taking refuge (saranagati).

27. The fool who knowing full well that misdemeanours (apaya) lead to one’s detriment, continues to act in that way shall surely only experience the [negative] Karma of those deeds, there’s no atonement even by this (Saranagati).

28. A Prapanna aught not to commit misdemeanours through pride that one is a Prapanna. The fool even while being conscious of performing detrimental acts falls down.

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79 Pancha Maha Yagna:— The five daily duties incumbent upon every householder in particular. The 5 acts discharge the debts with which we are all born — 1. Debt to parents, 2. To the gods, 3. To the sages, 4. To other members of society and 5. To the environment.

80 The Vadagalai position is that a lapsed Prapanna should either perform the act of Prapatti again or perform atonements mentioned in the Dharma Shastra for misdemeanours committed after saranagati. This also disputed by the Tengalais who declare that no actual expiation is needed other than recalling to mind the original act of Prapatti.
29. The wise never commit [such deeds]. If through ignorance or mistake they do act negatively, they burn them all with the fire of knowledge through clarity [of perception].

30. In this connection Bhagavan Krishna says to the attentive Arjuna:— “As a well-kindled fire reduces to ashes fuel so does the fire of knowledge reduce to ashes all Karma.” (Gita 4:37)

31. To the sages whose minds are purified by the knowledge of God, the knowledge of God mentioned in the Shastras is itself the atonement for all the sins they may commit.

32. “One’s accomplishments are equal to the degree of belief (visvasa) one possesses. The efficacy of belief cannot be measured.”

33. An intelligent person should always follow the approved customs mentioned in the Vedas. The Pancharatra Shastras refer to the transgression of the prescribed Vedic conduct as follows:—

34. – 35. “In order not to maintain Dharmas, for the preservation of the family, to govern the world (loka) without disturbance, for the establishment of social norms, and to gratify Me and Vishnu the God of gods, the Wielder of the bow (Sarangin), the wise shall not transgress the Vedic laws even mentally.” (L.T. 17:94,95)

36. – 37. "Just as [even] the favourite of a king who destroys a beautiful channel inaugurated by the king even though he [the king] be indifferent towards it, which is of public use and which sustains the growth of many plants, shall be impaled on a spike; in the same manner, a person who violates the usage established by the Vedas even though he be dear to Me, ceases to be my beloved on account of the transgression of My command.

38. – 39. With reference to these Vedic injunctions, a wise person shall abandon the idea that their performance is the means to an end. But remaining in his own caste and order of life (varna-ashrama\textsuperscript{81}) according to place and time, he shall perform only those actions agreeable to God that have been specially prescribed by Him.

\textsuperscript{81} The varnashramam system was means for ordering and governing society. There were four recognised social communities, the Brahmins = intellectuals, Kshatriyas = administrators and security forces, Vaishyas = businessmen and merchants, Sudras = workers. The three communities other than the workers had four stages of life: brahmacharya = studentship, grihastha = householder, vanaprastha = retiree, sanyasa = renunciate. The workers had only one — that of householder and were exempt from the other stages.
CHAPTER 9.

On the Works that ought to be Renounced

1. The worldly and Vedic activities which ought to be renounced by the Prapannas are now described. One should always shun what is incongruent with one's own status, place and time.

2. What is particularly mentioned by Manu and others as contrary to varna-ashrama Dharma and what is said in the Pancharatra-Shastra to be inconsistent with one's own competency shall not be done.

3 – 4. All those acts that are sanctioned in the general Shastras but are contrary to the special ones, such as the reverential clockwise circumambulation around a cross-roads or intersection, a sacred tree, an auspicious object, the worship of Siva on the 13th day of the lunar fortnight (pradosha) and such other acts which are said to remit sin, as well as yielding the enjoyments of both the worlds i.e. performed for some particular worldly object and future fruition (kamya) should not be done by those who are professed Vaishnava practitioners (Paramekanti), as also wearing marks and other tokens which are prescribed in the general Shastras but are contrary [to the practices of] the initiated Vaishnavas.

5. Singing and dancing etc. which are enjoined by specific Agamas should be done by a Vaishnava as attested to by Yama and Shaunaka:—

6. “O best of men, except the singing of the glories of God no other [worldly] songs should be sung by a Brahmin. Therefore [if you sing other songs] you have committed a sin!” (Matsya Purana)

7. “Singing about Vishnu, and performing dance and drama about Vishnu, O Brahmin! ought to be especially done by those of the Brahmin caste just like the obligatory daily acts.” (Nitya Karma)

8. The birds of great sins which inhabit the bodies of those who dance in the presence of God, are scared away by the clapping of hands etc.

9. A Vaishnava shall never give up the insignia of the disc of Vishnu and other symbols which are mentioned in the special [Pancharatra] Shastras.

10 – 11. Because there are so few [sincere] followers in the world, and because it is an easy means to a mighty result, and also due to specious reasoning [regarding Prapatti] some disparage the expediency of Prapatti for achieving Liberation.

12. They are wicked and foolish and are deemed the vilest of men. Their intelligence has been obscured by delusion and they have assumed a demoniac nature.
13. Those sinners, who at the time of birth, do not receive the glance of Vishnu but rather that of Brahma or Rudra shall be either of a Rajasic (passionate) or Tamasic (indolent) nature; with such a person one shall not converse. “For with the unrighteous one shall not have any dealings whatsoever!”

14. Manu has said in the Dharma Shastras that belligerent people are vulgar and forbids intercourse with them, even just by speaking to them.

15. Those texts which are contrary to the Vedas and those philosophical views which are erroneous, are all useless after death; therefore they are indeed considered as being established in Tamas.

16. One shall not honour even verbally, heretics who practice deviant acts who are impostors acting like cats\textsuperscript{82} and religious hypocrites behaving like cranes\textsuperscript{83}.

17. A Prapanna should never engage in any activities which cause hindrance to [actualising the act of] Prapatti.

18–21. Worshiping deities other than Vishnu except in the established usages of daily ritual practice\textsuperscript{84}, resorting to means other than Prapatti [to achieve liberation] and malice towards holy men, blind faith, excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures, and in any way reviling Lakshmi, the Lord of Lakshmi and their attendants, and acting remorselessly, committing egregious sins without any form of atonement, these are all obstacles, a Prapanna should not engage them.

22. If the devotees do become involved in any of these activities and if they become remorseful then they should atone (prayaschitta) for them — both privately and publicly.

23. A repentant Prapanna is not authorised to atone only in private. Thus has Lakshmi replied to Indra’s query.

24. In the days of yore, secret atonement was recommended to a Prapanna. Imposing the same idea Parasara said as follows:

25. “When an individual experience remorse, the merely the remembering of God alone is the highest atonement.”

\textsuperscript{82} Baidala-vrtti — “Cat-like observance” concealing one's malice or evil designs under the garb of piety or virtue. The allusion is to a characteristic story of a cat which after gaining the confidence of rats by show of assumed piety then begins eating them by carefully preying on the stray ones. Manu gives the following definition of a Baidala-vratika — “One who vaunts his piety by brandishing the flag of Dharma who is always malicious and who is a religious hypocrite, deceiver of the world, fierce as a beast and a traducer of all: is known as a Baidalavratika.”

\textsuperscript{83} Bakavrtti — “Crane-like conduct” = religious hypocrisy. The reference is to the crane which stands dead-still on one leg watching the fish passing by till a big one passes, then it suddenly pounces upon it. Manu defines a Bakavratika thus: “He is a dvija (twice-born) acting like the crane who (appearing like a yogi in contemplation) has a downward look, who is false and cruel, who is always intent on securing his own interest, who is a rogue and who is falsely modest.

\textsuperscript{84} For example in the daily fire-offerings oblations are made to Indra, Agni, Soma, Prajapati, Rudra etc.
26. “O Maitreya! Swayambhu and other sages have declared that atonement should be proportionate to the sin — a severe one for a great sin and a light one for a small sin.”

27. “All atonements consist of austerity (tapas) and ritual (karma). Of all of them the constant remembering of Krishna is the best.”

28. “The sacred texts teach us that all errors committed in a sacrifice either from negligence or from deviation from the program become rectified by the remembering of Vishnu alone.”

29. To one who is devoted to meditation on the Lord, expiatory rites (kriyas) end with the onset of meditation; but to a foolish unbeliever [expiatory rites] of twelve year's duration are enjoined.

30 As the expiatory rites which ought to be done (kartavya) for twelve years duration are prescribed only to an unbeliever, by thus clarifying the subject there can be no confusion of the severe sin and the light one.

31. “The purification that an embodied one (Kshetrajna) achieves from the knowledge of Ishvara (the Lord) is considered the best by Yajñavalkya who also described the purification of the embodied one that arises from a knowledge of the relationship of the appropriated and the appropriator (sesha-seshi) — that exists between the embodied one and God (Atman and Isvara)

32. “Even though a person is much addicted to detrimental practices, through meditating on God even for a moment, he becomes anew an ascetic (tapasvin) and the purifier of the pure who sanctify by their presence those persons that sit with them in the same row to dine (panktipavana).” (Vishnu Dharmottara Purana)

33. Whether one be in a state of ritual purity or impurity, whatever condition one may be in, one who remembers the lotus-eyed One (Krishna) becomes pure both internally and externally.

34. For those meditators upon God mentioned by Saunaka and others, who feel repentant when they commit a misdeed, their expiatory rites culminate with the setting in of that meditation [on God].

35. A Vaishnava should give up association with those that are devoted to other deities and also with those that are practicing any means other than Prapatti and shall dwell with other Prapannas.

36. A virtuous person (sadhu) shall not accept help from a fool, nor should a guru teach a fool. For one who takes refuge in ignorant person becomes ignorant and tamasic as well. And the teaching given to a fool falls on barren ground.

37. The guru and the disciple shall never ever bear malice towards each other. Either of these two that are maliciously inclined falls from the path of Liberation.

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85 This is a very popular verse and is recited before most ritual activities.
38 – 39. No one shall [attempt to] commune with God (Hari) using a mantra that was not given by a guru. A disciple should never reproach a righteous guru from self-referent greed for wealth. An intelligent person should not appropriate anything without first offering it to the guru. A good Vaishnava shall abandon all those that hate the guru.

40 – 41. A Prapanna shall never spit or in any way defile a temple of Vishnu; one shall not wash one’s feet there; not walk between the deity and the sacrificial-altar; nor enter the temple by any passage other than a proper doorway.

42 – 43. A Vaishnava shall never enter a temple wrapped in a blanket of black wool; nor in a temple of Vishnu perform any other work but the recitation of the sacred mantras (japa) or the making of garlands and other such services.

44. One shall not salute nor gaze upon any other deity; nor shall one go up into any other temple nor enter any other sanctuary.

45. In the Varaha-Purana thirty two offences against God are especially mentioned. A Vaishnava shall abstain from them all. (vide appendix)

46. A Vaishnava shall not appropriate for himself perfumes, flowers, clothes, jewels, animals, houses and other objects of personal enjoyment.

47. One should never regards one’s sons etc as subservient to one but rather as the manifestations of the glory of God (Vishnu). For a wise person should always avoid the feeling of possessiveness (mamata).

48. A person who is totally devoted to spiritual practice (ekanti) should never be designated with the name of his village, family etc. but should rather be called by the names of Vishnu because Vishnu is his everything.

49. Just as when rivers of various names enter into the ocean, all names are merged into that of the ocean alone, so it is of Ekantis who have completely dedicated themselves to the service of Vishnu.

50. One shall also not step on the shadows of sages, nor do such other acts [of disrespect]. One should always keep company with spiritual people and shall avoid entering into disputes with them.

51 – 52. The Vishvaksena Samhita of Pancharatra Agama thus enjoins a Prapanna:— he shall not develop a taste for an non-vaishnava literature or become fond an false scripture. He shall not take a false oath nor consult [with astrologers] for auspicious or inauspicious [timings and events].

53. One should not use common mantras to extract poison, exorcise pisachas and other spirits and for the curing of all diseases.

86 The sacrificial altar or bali-pitha is situated beside the flag-pole – dvaja-stambha, when circumambulating a temple one should not cross between the deity and the altar but walk around it.
54. One shall not wear matted dreadlocks, nor smear oneself with ashes. One shall give up all forms of heterodox symbols of identification for the rest of one’s life.

55. My view is that one should only ever dwell in those places in which ethics are practiced and where a Vaishnava course of conduct approved of by the wise is in vogue, and no where else.

56. One shall not take up a mundane profession for the sake of livelihood, but rather choose a profession which is approved of the good and is consistent with place and time; one should never be tempted to follow an objectionable out of greed.

57 – 58. Bhagavan Vyasa has said in this connection with what ought to be rejected by the virtuous:— “There is no moksha for one who takes delight in literature (sabda sastra) and also for who is fond of fine habitation; nor for one who is exclusively obsessed with food and clothing; nor for one who is bent on popularity. But for one who is of a retiring disposition, has a firm practice, who has withdrawn from the pleasures of the five senses, who’s intent on acquiring the knowledge of the Supreme and who is always non-aggressive, moksha is certain”.

59. “Not longing for death nor craving continuation of life but rather as the hireling awaits his wage so shall one bide one’s time.” (Manu 6:45)

60. Generally those people who have not accomplished their life’s goals are disturbed by death; but those who have accomplished their objects await death like a welcome guest.

61. One should never pray to Vishnu for any other reward than devotion (Bhakti) and knowledge (Jñana); for by praying for other things one will surely be ruined.

62. If one should offend a sage either from negligence or from intention and regret it afterwards then one should seek him out and request forgiveness otherwise there will be no peace.

63. Even in the case of an offence against God this expiation [of requesting forgiveness] is unsurpassed. A wise person shall avoid [carnal] association with the opposite sex.

64. Therefore shall a wise person should completely renounce sensuality like poison. An ignorant person is called a commoner but a wise person a Vaishnava.

65. A wise person shall not engage in any way with the ignorant. This has been said by the Lord in the Pancharatra Shastra and also by Manu and others.

66 – 67. Therefore a pious Vaishnava shall avoid socialising with common worldly people. Socialising is said to be of eight kinds; sharing the same bed or seat, dining while seated in the same row, using one pot, mixing cooked food, conducting sacrificial

87 Sabda-sastra — delighting in merely intellectualising rather than practicing the doctrines.
rites, teaching the Vedas, marriage and inter-dining — all these should be rigorously avoided with materialists.

68. One becomes corrupted by conversation, touch, and by the way in which one sleeps and sits together with another, also through the function of priestly duties, teaching the Veda and by intermarriage.

69. Through priestly function, teaching the Veda and through lying down, sitting and marriage with a fallen person one is degraded within a year.

70. Brihaspati and Manu have discussed this socialising (sankara) in it’s diversity, but through priestly functions and such other activities degradation is immediate.

71. To the high-minded Vaishnavas who are devoted to the practice of self-surrender (Nyasa-vidya) the praise given by materialists is declared to be a censure, and their censure is said to be praise.

72 – 78. “O materialists henceforth you are yourselves, and we are ourselves. You are devoted to worldly prosperity and sensual enjoyments and we are devoted to Narayana. There can be no intercourse whatever between you and us. You are servants of the senses but we are servants of Vishnu.”

CHAPTER 10.

On The Dawn of Fruition

1. Overcome with intense love, Vishnu Himself pursues those that have taken refuge in His feet and are like His life-breath (Prana).

2. In the Gita the Lord declares:— “That the wise one is my very self — is my opinion.”

“The high-minded one who at the end of many deaths and births, by good fortune resorts to Vasudeva knowing full-well that He is the All, is very difficult to be find!”

3. It has been said by Bhagavan Vishnu in the Pancharatra Shastra that the satisfaction of a Prapanna in having achieved his objective is the unsurpassed love of God and the awareness of His distinction from all else.

4 – 5. One, who accepting Vishnu as the means [to liberation], strives after other pursuits is said to be the lowest [of those that surrender]. One who resorting to other [prescribed] means aims at the attainment of Vishnu, is said to be mediocre. One who resorts to Madhava's two feet as the means and attains those feet is the best qualified, and has here in this very birth achieved the goal of life.
6. God of his own accord, receives on His head, all the offerings which are made by those whose minds are singularly devoted to Him.  

7. “Even an atom of an offering given with love by the devotees is greatly estimated by Me and offerings made by a non-devotee however great it be does not give me satisfaction.” (Srimad Bhagavatam 10:81:3)

8. Here the word “devotee” primarily indicates a Prapanna. In his own Samhita (Vishvakṣena Samhita) the leader of the hosts (senesa) has said as follows:—

9 – 10. By the word bhakti, copious devotional service is indicated by the sages; and “service” is entering into a state of humble servitude towards one’s Lord. Therefore the act of taking pleasure solely in the service of the Supreme is called Bhakti.

11 – 12. “Some [considered] as the best of people, have realised that they are destitute of any [efficient] means [for their Liberation], but yet are highly fortunate in that they have chosen Lakshmi as their mediatrix, and are desirous of attaining Me alone, who am inseparable from Sri, having thus taken shelter with Me, they reach me alone.” (Lakshmi Tantra 17:60)

13. “One who has thus surrendered to Me, who is free from grief, fear and fatigue and who abandoned all [happiness] projects, free from all hopes, possessiveness and ego-sense, shall indeed cross the ocean of samsara.

14. Those that are devoted to the performance of good works, that are pure and learned in sankhya-yoga (the path of knowledge) are not worth even a ten millionth part of one who seeks refuge.

15. And one who has thus taken refuge, is freed from the effect of subsequent and previous aghas [unwholesome acts causing bondage] which are of the nature of merit (punya) and demerit (papa).

16 – 17. All the [karmic] effects of the previous aghas of a confident prapanna (dripta) are destroyed except those that have given rise to, and are meant to be experienced in this body (prarabdha karma); and no other karmas continue to cling to one, except those major ones that are intentionally committed, persist till the decay of the body — if one does not repent for them.

18 – 19. This purport has been specifically declared by Bhagavan Vishnu:— “Upaya Bhakti (devotion as the means of accomplishing one's desired purpose) is the destroyer of all karmic reactions (agha) excepting those that have already begun to operate (prarabdha); but Sadhya Bhakti (devotion as an end in itself) which is greater, is the destroyer even of the operational karmas.

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88 The oriental gesture of respect upon receiving a gift is to touch it to one’s head.

89 Agha is often mistranslated as “sin”. In a Hindu context an agha is an act which is unbeneificial in terms of one’s spiritual evolution and results in further bondage and entrenchment in samsara.
20. “Bhakti yoga with all its auxiliary parts is here called upaya bhakti (bhakti as a means) It shall not destroy the aghas begun (prarabdha) which is verily the cause of many births

21. “Prapatti which is itself moksha is also called sadhya bhakti (devotion as an end in itself). This higher form of devotion shall destroy even the operative karmas of the afflicted Prapannas (artas), but it shall not destroy the karmas of a confidant Prapanna which are to be experienced in the body already possessed.

22 – 24. This is gist of the teaching:— Through Bhakti-yoga one is freed from operative Karma which [usually] requires many births. “From Karma which is the cause of suffering — “I shall liberate you grieve not!” (Gita 18:66) As it has been thus said by the Lord, also on account of feeling unhappiness with embodiment, the arta-prapanna (the desperate prapanna) is immediately Liberated, for Prapatti is higher [than Bhakti-yoga].

25 But a confident prapanna (dripta) — since he does not feel disenchanted with embodiment which arises due to prarabdha karma is liberated when the body dies. This is the determination of their time of Liberation.

26 – 30. This [liberated] Prapanna therefore solely through the grace of the Lord of Sri who resides within the lotus of the heart, with ease bursts open the 101th subtle channel of the body (sushumna-nadi), and through it immediately rises [in the subtle body — sukshma-sharira] reaching those employed to convey it to the other world (ativahikas). It is then conducted by those [beings] who show kindness at every step through the different stages of the path of light (archiradi), and then by the touch of the superhuman being (amanava) it abandons the subtle body (Sukshma sharira). Then by the mind it crosses the river Viraja (devoid of passion) and marked with holy sandal paste etc, it passes through the various states of beatitude — dwelling in the same realm (Salokya) possessing the same form (Sarupya), staying in proximity to the Divine (Samipya) and finally complete union with Brahman (Sayuya). Moving about from world to world and pursuing all desires, taking form at will, in the company of the eternals (Suris) one perpetually serves by the chanting of the Samaveda.

31. Or else, it is also taught by the Shruti that God, unable to suffer the delay caused by the regular path (archiradi marga) [such is His longing to be reunited with the jiva] He speedily snatches the prapanna away.

32. The Lord Varaha, who is eminent among the mighty, spoke to His attentive consort Bhumi, on this subject as follows:—

33 – 34. “I think of My devotee who thinks of Me, the omnipresent and the unborn, when the mind is calm and the humours\(^{90}\) of the body in a state of harmony, when he is it the point of death like a stick or stone, and lead him to the final goal.”

34 – 35. At any time whatever, when the humours of the body are in harmony due to the absence of disease, and when the mind is peaceful, if any one thinks of Me who am

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\(^{90}\) A reference to the Ayurvedic concept of the physical constitution which is made up of 3 humours — Vata = Windy, Kapha = phlegmatic and Pitta = bilious.
the ocean of sovereignty, easy accessibility, maternal affection and other good qualities inspired by Lakshmi, if one thinks of Me, Narayana, the Omnipresent, the unborn and the one who incarnates at will, even once, saying — “O Narayana! O Lord, There is no other refuge than you! I have taken refuge at your feet!” Then I instinctively think of him who is free from other means which cause obstruction, and who remains steady in that state [of mindfulness]. And who, when death approaches, is like a block of wood i.e. whose mind is perfectly steady, who [is so focussed upon Me that] he can only be aroused by others, or like a stone i.e. who cares not for his own good or that of others either. While my dependents are deeply asleep, I am that Purusha (person) who, remaining mindful, steady and vigilant [within their hearts] brings to fruition all their desires. And in order to manifest Liberating Grace (kripa), I Myself shall take this person who is worthy of enjoying the bliss I have to offer to the highest region, without any need for travelling on the path of the light (archiradi), effortlessly mounting him on the shoulders of Garuda, as desired.

44. The terrified servants of Yama with their nooses in their hands, quickly fall away from the side of a Prapanna who is possessed of such glory.

45. Parasara and Suka have both declared that this person is the servant of none whatsoever:—

“Seeing his own emissaries with nooses in their hands, Yama indeed whispers in their ears: shun those that have taken refuge with Madhusudana for I am the master only of others and not of the Vaishnavas!” (Vishnu Purana 3:7:14)

46. “O King! One who has whole heartedly surrendered to Narayana who is the world-teacher, the worthy of being resorted to, is neither a servant nor a debtor of the gods, the sages, the elementals, humans and the divine manes (Pitris).” (Srimad Bhagavatam 11:5:41)

47. A great bridge over the causal ocean of the practices of Prapannas has been built by bringing together the mountains of the Vedanta, Smritis, and other principal teachings of great sages and the Pancharatra Shastra. Those that wish to quickly cross over to the other shore of the ocean of Samsara by this route, are very soon freed from the store of previous and subsequent (Purvottara) negative Karmas and are completely liberated.

48. The wise who are fearless quickly, therefore embark upon the boat of Nyasa (self surrender) which has no holes and is able to sail to the final goal, which has for it's bottom the realisation arising from the feeling of helplessness, which is held together by the nails of belief, which is controlled by the pull of the rope (Bandana rajyu) of supplication, and which enables embodied beings to cross the ocean of Samsara.

49. This composition known as Prapanna Parijata, has been complied on earth, a work in which all the desires of the virtuous are completely fulfilled.

|| Shubham astu ||
Appendix

There are 35 offences which are enumerated in the Varaha Purana they are as follows;

1. Approaching the Icon of the Lord without brushing the teeth.
2. Touching an Icon after having sex (without bathing).
3. Entering the temple after touching a menstruating women.
4. Touching the Icon without having washed the hands after seeing a corpse.
5. Touching the Icon after having touched a corpse without having bathed.
6. Entering a temple directly after visiting the cemetery (without having bathed).
7. Interrupting the liturgical proceedings to answer calls of nature.
8. Entering a temple wrapped in a blanket.
9. Lying, gossiping, praising or deprecating another deity or person in the presence of the Lord.
10. Touching the Icon against the procedural rites - in other words when unauthorised to do so.
13. Touching the_icon in the dark without having lit a lamp.
14. Worshipping the Lord wearing unwashed garments. (Silk or woollen garments need not be washed everyday but only as the need arises whereas cotton garments must be washed every day.)
15. Worshipping the Lord wearing the garments borrowed from others.
16. Wearing shoes during worship.
17. Tasting the food or smelling the flowers before they are offered.
18. Combing the hair, or clipping nails or spitting in the vicinity of the temple.
19. Eating meat prior to worship.
20. Drinking alcohol prior to worship.
22. Carrying an umbrella while circumambulating the temple.
23. Weeping or lamenting in the temple.
24. Entering a temple after having anointed and massaged the body with oil.
25. Offering incense without offering flowers.
26. Opening the gates of the temple without sounding the kettle-drums.
27. Stretching the feet towards the Icon or turning the back towards it.
28. Sitting with one leg across the other during worship.
29. Wearing an upper garment while saluting the Lord.
30. Not prostrating to the Lord in the temple or saluting with one hand.
31. Sleeping or eating in the temple.
32. Sitting upon an elevated seat in front of the Lord.
33. Stealing or using the temple vessels or paraphernalia for oneself.
34. Observing untouchability during festival processions.
35. Stealing the jiva (atma-apaharanam). The jiva is considered to be the thing most precious to the Lord, therefore pride is considered to be theft of the property of the Lord and as such is a grave offence.