

God's Grace or Self-Effort? An Analysis Regarding Svāminārāyaṇa-Sādhanā

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Abstract: *Over the years, scholars have given considerable attention to the circulation of key philosophical principles and the development of religious practices in the Svāminārāyaṇa faith. Svāminārāyaṇa had revealed both sādhanā and siddhi (the final attainment) in his teachings. However, less attention has been shown to its unique spiritual endeavors (sādhanā).*

From ancient times, the question has been posed in front of the scholars in the various philosophical debates that which is the most indispensable factor in attaining emancipation or moksha? One group of scholars believe that God's grace is the only factor to attain moksha. On the other hand, the second group claims that personal endeavor is the only key to obtain liberation.

In this paper, we are exclusively analyzing the role of God's grace and the self-effort regarding Svāminārāyaṇa sādhanā explored in the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣya in light of the Svāminārāyaṇa's Vacanāmṛta.

Key Words: *Svāminārāyaṇa Vedānta, sādhanā, God's grace, self-effort, Akṣarabrahman, Guru*

Abbreviation

BG – Śrīmad-Bhagavad-Gītā

IU – Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad

IUSB – Ishavashya-Upaniṣad-Svāminārāyaṇa-Bhāṣya

KeU – Kena Upaniṣad

KU – Kaṭha Upaniṣad

MU – Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad

SSS – Svāminārāyaṇa Siddhānta Sudhā

SSSK – Svāminārāyaṇa Siddhānta Sudhā – Kārikā

SU – Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad

SV- Svāmīnī Vāto

Vac. – Vacanāmṛtam

1. Introduction :

The Svāminārāyaṇa School of Vedānta aims to provide a coherent system of philosophy combined with the tradition which satisfies aspirants to sustain their faith and attain the spiritual goal which can be realized during one's life-time through the Guru-directed discipline enlivened and enlightened by brahmavidyā coupled with dutifulness (dharma), (vairāgya), knowledge (jñāna) and devotion (bhakti), which is crowned by the grace of God earned through the devotionals in its truly cognitive spirit.¹ Svāminārāyaṇa's philosophy is realistic. In it, man, the world and God are all real. Man's outlook on life and the world is real. The values, spiritual endeavor, bondage and liberation are real. The

¹ SSSK – 366, 387

denial of these things would reduce the whole spiritual efforts into a sort of mock-battle. The denial of all these would lead to spiritual anarchy of values and virtues; and would cause disinterest, inactivism and a loss of inspiration and enthusiasm, self-ascent and freedom. Svāminārāyaṇa, therefore, holds that without assiduous spiritual endeavor (sādhanā), the jīvas cannot attain the highest goal.²

2. Spiritual Endeavor (Sādhanā):

The Svāminārāyaṇa School believes in five eternal ontological entities, jīva īśvara, māyā, Brahman and Parabrahman.³ Among this, the jīvas and īśvara are under the clutch of māyā, with the grace of Brahman and Parabrahman, they engross in the spiritual endeavors and free themselves from māyā and attain mokṣa. All the efforts that an aspirant does by thought, word, and deed to achieve the final goal of his life are called Sādhanā or disciplined and dedicated spiritual endeavors. Bhadreśādāsa⁴, the Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyakāra elaborates:

कार्या तत्रैव भक्त्या प्रकटहरिसुधीर्दिव्यभावं निधाय
सेव्यो ब्रह्मस्थदेवो भवभयतरणे स्वामिनारायणोयम्॥ (SSS⁵ Pg. 306)

“To overcome and become free from the fear of māyika samsāra, one should worship the manifest Svāminārāyaṇa, who resides within the Brahmasvarūpa Guru with intense divinity.”

The final aim of life is the ultimate liberation of one’s Ātman to attain Parabrahman and the realization of Ātman and Paramātmān. To accomplish this ultimate aim of life, an aspirant performs endeavor according to the given place, time, actions, company, mantra, śāstra, initiation meditation.⁶

3. Grace and Self-Effort:

What does self-effort play a role and what is the significance of God’s grace to attain the ultimate spiritual goal? Or both have the same weightage? These are some of the most discussed questions in the Indian Vedānta tradition. In the Svāminārāyaṇa tradition, both factors are accepted to attain liberation, yet each has a perfect proportion and essential role which are elaborated in the Vacanāmṛta.

Firstly, Svāminārāyaṇa chides those who rely on their endeavors to achieve liberation while discounting the absolute need and power of God. Evoking the classical imagery of crossing the ocean of life and death, Svāminārāyaṇa explains:

“A person without such a [resolute] conviction [of God's nature) attempts to attain liberation using the strength of his own endeavors, but he does not strive for it by relying on the grace of God. Such a senseless person is as foolish as someone wishing to cross the ocean by his own efforts, without the aid of a ship. Conversely, one who wishes for liberation through the grace of God is wise, like one who wishes to cross the ocean by traveling in a ship.” (Vac. Gadh. 1/37, Pg. 94)

On the other hand, Svāminārāyaṇa highlights personal endeavor as well:

“Hence, the personal endeavor itself is the greatest of all spiritual endeavors for attaining liberation.” (Vac. Gadh. 2/12, Pg. 416)

Now we will elaborately analyze that what roles do God's grace (krpā) and on effort (prayatna) play in securing liberation.

4. Ocean of Compassion:

In the Svāminārāyaṇa tradition, with the inspiration of the Guru, when the aspirant’s spiritual endeavor (sādhanā) reaches its peak of performance, it draws a quicker response from God and His consequent grace. He showers His grace,

² Vac. Sar. 11

³ Vac. Gadh. 1/7, Pg.36; Vac. Gadh. 3/10, Pg.599

⁴ Sadhu Bhadreśādāsa is a Sanskrit scholar and an ordained sadhu of the Bochasawanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha. In 2017 he completed the Swaminarayan Bhāṣyam, a five-volume classical Sanskrit commentary on the Prasthānatrayī (the Upaniṣads, the Gīta and the Brahmasūtra).

⁵ SSS- M-1- Svāminārāyaṇa Siddhant Sudha, Mangaldhara, there are also some abbreviations like, only BS for Brahmasūtra, BSSB- Brahmasūtra Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, xUSB, respectively Upaniṣad Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam, BGSB- Gīta Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyam and so on. For detail see at appendix. The Bhāṣyakāra stands for Svāminārāyaṇa Bhāṣyakāra; Bhadreśādāsa.

⁶ Brahmadarshan Sādhu, Brahmvidyano Rajmarg-2, Pg.1. Svāminārāyaṇa Akṣarapīṭha, Ahmedabad.

draws the seeker closer to Him, uplifts him to the height of perfection, and blesses him with the place in His divine abode. God is the beginning and God is the end of all efforts. He is both necessary and sufficient to realize the highest goal. A seeker treads the path of perfection by His grace, derives the strength to work out appropriate efforts, finds inspiration at each stage to get His closer and succeeds in attaining perfection through His grace. Bhadrēśādāsa cites:

दयार्णवः कृपासाध्यः प्रसादात् सुलभा कृपा।

ब्रह्मभावात् प्रसीदेच्च ह्यक्षरपुरुषोत्तमः॥SSSK 366॥

“Parabrahman is an ocean of compassion and attainable through His grace. His grace is easily attainable through his favor. Puruṣottama, who is accompanied with Akṣara, is pleased through brahmabhāva.”

To remind the power of God’s grace, the Śruti reveals:

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो

न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन ।

यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यः

तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम् ॥ KU 2/23॥

“This Self (Paramātman) cannot be attained by instruction, nor by intellectual power, nor even through much hearing [i.e. learning]. He is attained only by the one whom the Self [Paramātman] chooses. To such a one, the Self (Paramātman) reveals his own form.” (MU 3/2/3, KU 2/23) When elaborating on the term 'chooses' (vrnute), Bhadrēśādāsa explains:

“यं मुमुक्षुं वृणुते स्वानुग्रहेण स्वीकरोति, यस्मिन् प्रसन्नो भवति इति यावत्, तेनैव परमात्मानुगृहीतेन कृपापात्रेण भक्तेन एषः परमात्मा लभ्यः साक्षात्कर्तुं शक्यः।” (KUSB 2/23, Pg. 118-119)

“Of the worshipper who is dedicated solely to Him (svaikānistha upāsaka). Only to such a vessel of Parabrahman's grace {Parāmātmakṣābhājana} does he become realizable {labhya} and reveals himself.” This as the gracious and loving acceptance by Parabrahman - whom he variously describes as 'an ocean of great compassion' {Parāmadayāsāgara} and a treasure true love of grace {Kṛpānidhi} –

Bhadrēśādāsa adds at KU 2/23 that instruction, intellectual power, and scriptural learning are representative of all endeavors that can be performed in an attempt to reach God. They alone are inadequate. Parabrahman thus remains 'Kṛpā Sādhyā', attainable by grace alone.⁷

5. Efforts Earn Pleasing:

If God does everything, then what is the need of other spiritual endeavors? By keeping this question in mind, Bhadrēśādāsa is careful, however, of not being overly forcefully pitting human effort against divine grace. In adding the word 'kevala' his comment above, he clarifies that while all endeavors are adequate in realizing God, they are inadequate alone, in and of themselves. They can still be effective in pleasing God, who will then bestow his liberating grace upon his beloved devotee. To be absolutely clear here: God is pleased with the seeker's devout, sincere and persistent effort, or striving, not necessarily the 'works' themselves. God himself remains infinitely beyond the reach of those actions. So, God's grace is absolutely indispensable, but efforts are not totally useless either, even though they can only please God and never (fully or directly) earn his grace.⁸ Thus,

“परमात्मा न स्वतःकल्पितसाधनसाध्योपि तु तत्कृपैकसाध्य इति सिद्धान्तितम्” (MUSB 3/2/3, Pg. 293)

“God is not realized by self-imagined means but by only His grace. This is the principle.”

6. Self-imagined Means :

In the Svāminārāyaṇa Darshan, whatever spiritual endeavors are described are directly guided by God or the brahmasvarūpa Guru, on the other hand, self-imagined endeavors have no value at all, even they may seem very stringent and difficult to be applied on an average seeker. Guṇātītānanda Svāmi proclaims:

⁷ KUSB 2/23, Pg. 119

⁸ KUSB 2/24, Pg. 120

“Even if only a little is done by the commands of God, much is achieved. And even if one does more by one’s own will, little is achieved. And those commands which erode dharma should be followed judiciously.” (SV 2/26)

He further goes:

“For tens of millions of years, this jīva has acted as per its own wishes. In fact, it is not possible to state for how many years. But now, with this body, do what God likes. Do not be deceitful in obeying commands. Do not enjoy everything that is offered, but learn to renounce.” (SV 2/83)

If there are any efforts that Bhadrēśādāsa does dismiss as utterly futile, they are the 'self-imagined means' (Svataḥkalpitasādhanā) of a person who refuses to follow the authoritative teachings enjoined in revealed texts or by the Guru. These qualifications are necessary because of the immediately following verse in the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad:

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यो
न च प्रमादात् तपसो वाप्यलिङ्गात् ।
एतैरुपायैर्यतते यस्तु विद्वां-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम ॥ MU 3/2/4॥

“This Self [Paramātman] cannot be attained by one who is weak, nor by inadvertency, nor by austerities marked without authoritative endorsement. It then concludes:

“But the knower [of Brahmavidyā] who strives by these means [i.e. learning, austerities, etc.] attains this Self [Paramātman] and enters Brahmadhāma. (MU 3/2/4)

Thus, when these same efforts - including those mentioned in MU 3/2/3 and all others are informed by correct philosophical knowledge, practiced according to the calling and guidance of the Guru and directed solely to please God, they can indeed play some useful part in securing liberation by God's grace.

Praxis, therefore, is not in total contradistinction to the idea of sola gratia (liberation by ‘grace alone’). All efforts are directed to pleasing God and thereafter receiving his grace, which alone is capable of granting liberation. Liberation thus comes at the end of one's endeavors, but not as the fruit. With liberation being totally unattainable by human effort alone, it leaves no scope for finite souls to boast of it as their accomplishment.’

7. Receiver of Grace:

What praxis does do, however, is to develop the aspirer of liberation into a vessel (patra or bhājana) as Bhadrēśādāsa states, capable of effectively receiving and, importantly, retaining and responding to God's grace. Without in any sense diminishing the potency of God's grace, this also helps explain why God is not an unjust or capricious distributor, injudiciously doling out his favor.

In so saying, however, nor does God relinquish his absolute native to shower his grace upon whomsoever he pleases. Thus, even if God's grace is regarded as absolutely free and un-earnable,

Yet available fully and equally for everyone, like the rain that showers upon the earth, it is only those who are adequate ‘vessels’ who can receive that grace and make use of it. Svāminārāyaṇa elaborates on this in Vac. Sār.11. When Muktaṇanda Svāmi asks, “Personal endeavor is mentioned in the scriptures, but how much is actually achieved by personal endeavor and how much is achieved by God's grace?”

Svāminārāyaṇa goes on to describe a worthy recipient of God's grace. Such a person, he explains, strictly observes dhārmika disciplines such as nonviolence and eightfold brahmacarya, has an absolutely firm realization of him/herself as the ātman, is firmly detached from worldly pleasures and has an intense and enduring devotional faith. These four aspects of sādhanā correspond to what is traditionally termed within Svāminārāyaṇa texts as dharma {observance of scriptural injunctions}, jñāna (ātman-realization) (not to be confused with the broader, more philosophical knowledge of Brahman and Parabrahman), vairāgya (detachment) and bhakti (devotion). Collectively, they are called 'Ekāntika Dharma' or 'Bhāgavata Dharma', which we learned earlier is one of the reasons for God's manifestation on earth (Vac. Gadh. 2/46, Gadh. 3/21), and which features repeatedly in the Vacanāmṛta and Svāmīni Vāto as a matrix for pleasing God (e.g. Vac. Gadh. 1/21, SV 3/25). In Vac. Sār. 11, Svāminārāyaṇa is sure to add that all of these endeavors should be enjoined by the words of a true Guru and the scriptures', before concluding:

“God’s grace is only bestowed upon one who has such characteristics.”(Vac. Sār. 11, Pg. 228)

Perhaps sensing the enormity of the task of perfectly cultivating these characteristics, Nityānanda Svāmi firstly acknowledges Svāminārāyaṇa's point but then immediately asks:

“What becomes of one who has some deficiency in cultivating these characteristics?”

Svāminārāyaṇa forthrightly answers:

“Then he does not attain ultimate liberation, i.e. God's Akṣaradhāma. Instead, he attains some other abode of God.”

Svāminārāyaṇa refers here to the abodes of other avatāras and paradisiacal realms of the devas, which, in comparison to Akṣaradhāma as good as naraka, he states. After further elaboration Svāminārāyaṇa ends by reiterating his answer by reiterating his earlier position, this time with added force.

“Hence, whether it takes one life or innumerable lives, only when one develops the previously described characteristics and becomes extremely free of worldly desires, does one become a worthy vessel of receiving God's grace, and only then will one attain ultimate liberation. Without it, one will definitely not attain it.”

Svāminārāyaṇa is clear, then, that liberation is a result of God's grace only, and that spiritual praxis is necessary to receive and apply that liberating grace. BGSB echoes:

“विधेयात्मा विधेयः शास्त्रगुर्वदेशवर्ती आत्मा यस्यास्वच्छन्दाचारः प्रसादं गुरुह्यनुग्रहम् अधिगच्छति प्राप्नोति”(BGSB 2/64, Pg. 64)

“A devotee who treads the path of righteousness shown by the scriptures and the Guru will attain the grace of God and the Guru.” Moreover, in the very next verse of the BG declares the benefit of the grace: “all the miseries and problems of that devotee are removed and he can engross freely in the form of God.”⁹ In this manner, the BG invariably demonstrates the micro role of both factors.¹⁰

The BSSB also emphasizes the fact.¹¹ We can draw a connection between the grace and the efforts by this example:

“परमात्मकृपयैव तदुपाकस्य स्वाभीप्सितसकलसाधनोद्योगसंभवात्तदृते केवलानां साधनानामकिञ्चित्करत्वात् सच्छास्त्रप्रतिपादिततदलौकिकमाहात्म्यानुसन्धानलक्षणस्तदभिसंबन्धः सर्वत्र साधनेषु नियमेन उपसंहार्य इति भावः”(BSSB 3/3/55, Pg. 351)

“Only by the immense grace of God, an aspirant can accomplish his spiritual endeavors, without Him, all the spiritual efforts are worthless, so one must add the brahmabhāva in his spiritual efforts in order to make them fruitful, which are asserted in the scriptures.”

At this point, we should ask the more pointed question: What form does this loving grace take?

Bhadreśādāsa answers while commentating on KU 2/23, the same verse found in MU 3/2/3 cited above.

This is the form of his [Paramātman's] grace: Seeing his devotee earnestly endeavoring by several means to please him, God, the ocean of grace that he is, grants that devotee access to the profound association of the Akṣarabrahman Guru – who is his [Paramātman's] supreme worshipper, who has the greatest love for him, who eternally has a complete and perfect realization of him, and who can be regarded as his own form - so that his devotee can easily realize him [Paramātman]. Then, by listening, reflecting, etc. upon the Guru's teachings, and serving him with the belief that he is the very form of God - as directed by such statements as 'Who has the highest devotion to God and, as he does to God, also to the Guru (SU 6/23)', etc. – that devotee, having developed an oneness with his self and Brahman and having received the grace of God, realizes Paramātman.(KU 2/23)

In this way, the Svāminārāyaṇa school deciphers explicitly the role of God's grace and personal endeavors.

8. The Prominent Sādhana to Attain Unhindered Grace :

Brahmabhāva is the most prominent spiritual endeavor in the Svāminārāyaṇa tradition to attain the grace of Parabrahman and Akṣarabrahman. All the spiritual endeavors, for realizing the ultimate reality are included in brahmabhāva. Bhadreśādāsa proclaims:

यद्वैभवात् परा शान्तिः कर्मांश्लेषोऽप्यवाप्यते। सुकरः कर्मयोगश्च देहभावनिवारणा॥

⁹ BGSB 2/65; Pg. 64

¹⁰ BG 18/56,58,62,73,75

¹¹ “प्रत्यक्षब्रह्मस्वरूपगुरुदृढतमप्रसंगोपदेशाभिर्ब्रह्मात्मैक्यं संपाद्य प्रत्यक्षपरमात्मसमाराधान लक्षणभक्तावनुष्ठितायां तस्यैवानुग्रहतस्दिव्यस्वरूपं साक्षात्क्रियते” (BSSB 3/2/23, Pg.300)

स्वजने ममताऽभावः स्त्रीविषयादिनाशनम्। परभक्त्यधिकारित्वं जीवन्मुक्त्यनुभावनम्॥

दिव्यभावोऽक्षरप्राप्तिरित्यादि सहजं भवेत्। इहोच्यते ब्रह्मभावो ब्रह्मसङ्गप्रभावितः॥SSS Pg.307॥

“After attaining brahmabhāva through accompany of Brahman, an aspirant attains the ultimate peace, no bondage of karma and the affection towards his body remain. Karma yoga becomes easy, the sense of I ness, my ness, and attraction towards the opposite gender is removed. He gets the ability for ultimate devotion and experiences the divinity, acquisition of the abode of God in this very life.”

What exactly this brahmabhāva is? Bhadrēsādāsa answers the question in the SSS:

Brahmabhāva means to acquire oneness with Brahman. One who attains this Brahmabhāva state is called brahmarūpa. Here oneness means acquiring the virtues of brahman which are indispensable for attaining the ultimate liberation.¹²

Svāminārāyaṇa invariably states the importance of brahmabhāva. For example,

“Only one who is brahmarūpa has the right to offer bhakti to Puruṣottama.”(Vac. Loya. 7, Pg. 303)

9. Accepted Essential Daily Sādhanā for Grace:

Svāminārāyaṇa was more interested in dealing with the practical problems faced by the seekers of salvation; and their solutions which would enable them to reach the goal easily. In his Vacanāmṛta we find a large section dealing with these problems put forth by the disciples in the form of questions and queries. The practical guidance and solutions suggested by him, after discussing each of the factors which help or hinder the spiritual perfection, is a unique contribution of Svāminārāyaṇa forcing us to call his teaching a 'practical philosophy'. Therefore, in this section, we shall deal with the same.

Satsaṅga is a cognitive act of keeping the company of the holy. The word Satsaṅga' is composed of two words, namely, 'sat' + 'saṅga'. The word 'sat' connotes 'true', 'real', and 'holy'; whereas the word 'saṅga' connotes 'congenial company'. Thus, the word 'Satsaṅga' means the sincere maintenance of the company of the holy (which is true and real). The word 'sat' refers to 'ātman', 'Paramātman', Satpuruṣa (the Akṣarabrahman Guru) and the holy scriptures (satśāstra). In its broader sense, the word Satsaṅga refers to the holy fellowship of the devotees consisting both of sādhus (monks) and Gṛhasthas (householders) who are committed and dedicated to God.

A seeker on a pathway to God must do Satsaṅga to acquire virtues. The development of certain ethico-religious virtues and eradication of untoward elements i.e. vices and habits is an integral part of spiritual perfection. The discipline, the qualities and the virtues that ought to be acquired and developed with systematic sincere efforts and constant Goal-awareness and practice are discussed in the passages that hereunder.¹³ The nature and place of each one, in the life of a seeker, is mentioned here.

इन्द्रियसंयमो मायाविकारादिविदारणम्।
एकान्तधर्मपुष्टिश्च स्वात्मनि ब्रह्मरूपता॥SSSK 136॥
माहात्म्यसहितः सम्यङ्निश्चयः परमात्मनः।
मोक्षः सर्वार्थसिद्धिर्हि प्रत्यक्षब्रह्मसङ्गतः॥SSSK 137॥

¹² SSS Pg. 308

¹³ परमदिव्यभावनरसितप्रत्यक्षपरमात्मैकान्तिकभिवाञ्छा (BSSB 1/1/1, Pg. 3)

श्रेयसाभिकाङ्क्षा तत्परमप्रसादलाभः (BSSB 1/1/1, Pg. 3)

बाह्यान्तः करणसंयमनलक्षणं तपः (BSSB 1/1/1, Pg. 3)

वेदान्तादिशास्त्राणां वचनेषु चाऽऽस्तिक्यादिरूपः परमो विश्वास इत्यादि (BSSB 1/1/1, Pg. 4)

यः सर्वज्ञः सर्वविद्यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः। (BSSB 1/1/1, Pg. 6)

हि यतः ततः परमात्मसङ्कल्पलक्षणाभिध्यानादेव अस्य जीवेश्वरात्मनः बन्धविपर्ययो जाग्रत्स्वप्नादितत्तदवस्थासु गमनरूपं बन्धनं तद् विपर्ययेण तत्तदवस्थातोवस्थान्तरप्राप्तिलक्षणा मुक्तिश्चेत्युभौभवतः। (BSSB 3/2/5, Pg. 287)

तं स्वाच्छरीरात् प्रवहेन्मुञ्जादिवेपीकां धैर्येण। (BSSB 3/2/13, Pg. 294)

अविवक्षितार्थव्युदासको मात्रशब्दः। (BSSB 3/2/16, Pg. 295)

सेव्यसेवकभावाद्यापादको भेदसम्बन्ध इष्यत इत्यत्राह। (BSSB 3/2/28, Pg. 303)

परब्रह्मप्राप्तिपरमोपायतया सेतुत्वेन व्यपदेशात्। (BSSB 3/2/30, Pg. 304)

“Control over the senses,¹⁴ eradication of worldly desires,¹⁵ nourishment of ekāntik dharma,¹⁶ realizing one’s Ātman as brahmarūpa, a complete conviction in God along with the knowledge of his glory,¹⁷ mokṣa,¹⁸ and achievement of all there is to be achieved- all this is to be achieved- all this is realized through association with the manifest, Akṣarabrahman Guru.”

उत्साहोऽभ्यसनं धैर्यं विश्वासः संयमो बलम्।
सुहृद्भावस्तथैक्यं च दासत्वं गुरुसेवनम्॥SSSK140॥
प्रार्थना च मुमुक्षा च सहस्र गुणग्राहिता।
प्राप्यादिकाऽनुसन्धानमनन्तर्दृष्टिस्थाहिनकम्॥SSSK141॥
एतानि साधनानि स्युर्गुरुप्रसन्नता यतः।
साक्षाद् बह्मप्रसङ्स्तु तेष्वपि प्रमुखं भवेत्॥SSSK142॥

“Enthusiasm¹⁹ repeated practice of spiritual endeavors,²⁰ passions,²¹ faith,²² self-control,²³ strength,²⁴ fraternity, unity,²⁵ humility, service towards the Brahmasvarūpa Guru,²⁶ Prayer,²⁷ a desire for mokṣa,²⁸ tolerance,²⁹ perception of the good in others,³⁰ awareness of such concepts is the significance and glory of that which we have attained in the form of Satsaṅga, introspection, and daily offerings of bhakti.

These are spiritual endeavors through which one earns the guru’s grace. However, amongst all of these, association with the Brahmasvarūpa Guru itself is truly the foremost endeavor.”

10. Conclusion:

The present study was designed to determine the essence of spiritual endeavors prescribed by Bhagavān Svāminārāyaṇa and his Gunātīta Sādhus, who have lived and taught a unique and practical path of spiritual Sādhanā that leads to the realization of Ātman, Brahman and Paramātman. Svāminārāyaṇa Sādhanā provides a detailed description of the importance of God’s grace and self-effort. However, the grace of Parabrahman and the Brahmasvarūpa Guru is indispensable and plays a vital role in acquiring the ultimate spiritual goal; nevertheless, the value of spiritual endeavors is not overridden.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is the deep inclination with every sādhanā. This article provides an enumeration of specific spiritual practices that the devotee is to undergo to obtain the brahmasvarūpa Guru’s grace on earth ; thus, he attains the ultimate liberation.

These findings contribute in several ways to our understanding of various spiritual practices performed by millions of people every day. Thus, we have indeed touched upon the most fundamental topic and question within the field of spiritual endeavor of the Svāminārāyaṇa tradition.

¹⁴ Vac. Gadh. 1/8, 2/1

¹⁵ Vac. Gadh. 3/18

¹⁶ Vac. Gadh. 1/19

¹⁷ Vac. Loya 7

¹⁸ Vac. Gadh. 1/54

¹⁹ Vac. Kar. 10

²⁰ Vac. Sar. 11

²¹ Vac. Gadh. 1/29

²² Vac. Sar. 18

²³ Vac. Gadh. 2/2

²⁴ Vac. Gadh. 2/12

²⁵ Vac. Gadh. 2/61

²⁶ Vac. Gadh. 2/7

²⁷ Vac. Gadh. 1/47

²⁸ Vac. Gadh. 1/70

²⁹ Vac. Gadh. 1/27

³⁰ Vac. Gadh. 1/6,

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