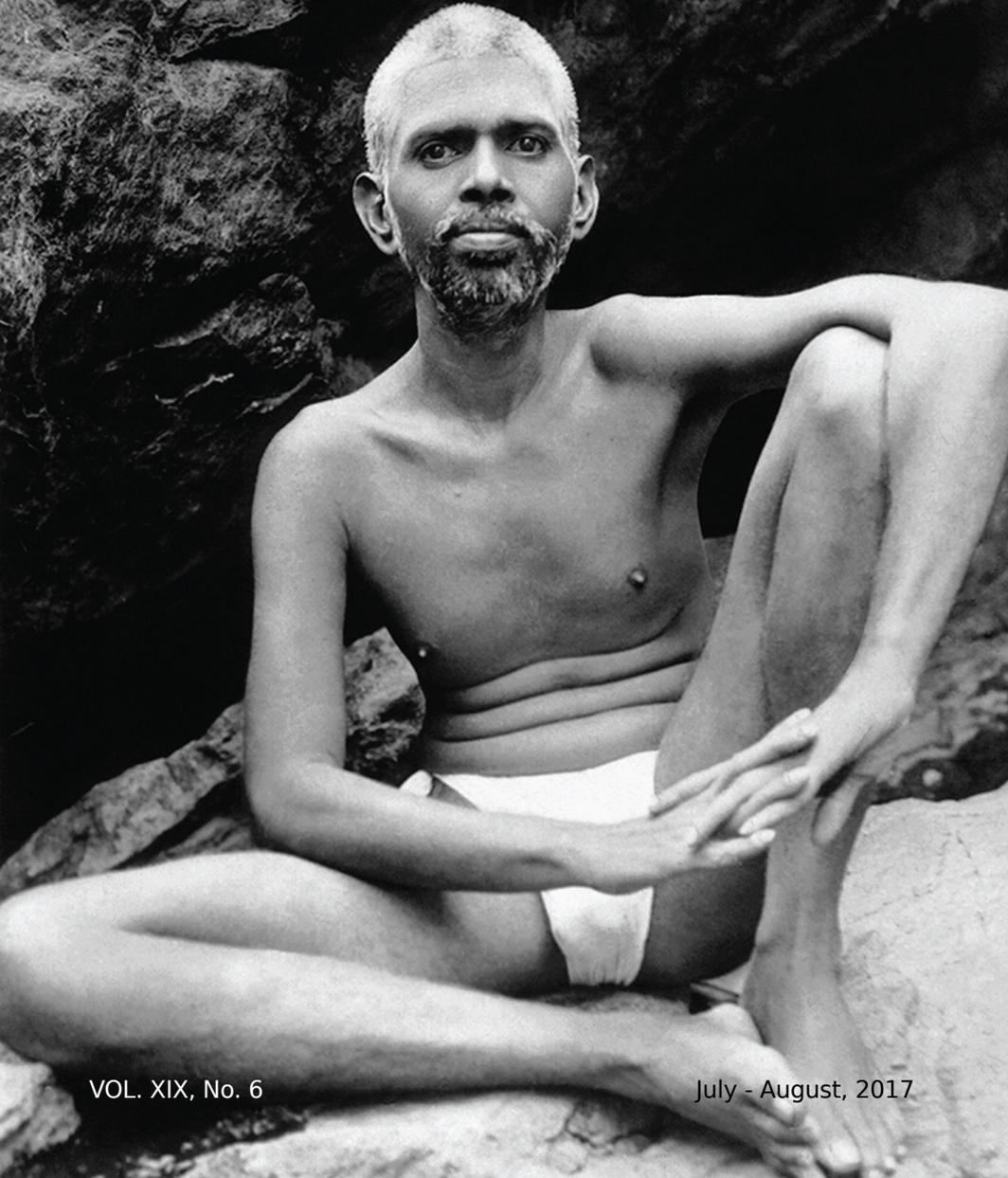




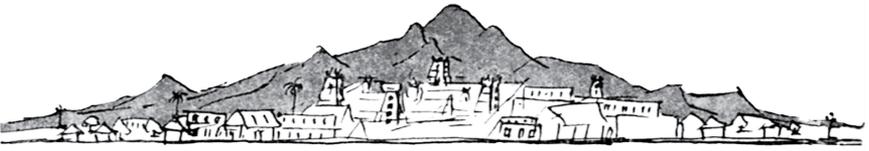
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# RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH



VOL. XIX, No. 6

July - August, 2017



Original ink sketch of Arunachala by Sri Ramana Maharshi from Kunju Swami's notebook

# RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH

VOLUME XIX ISSUE 6

JULY - AUGUST, 2017

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Cover: Bhagavan sitting majestically on the rocks of Arunachala



## Editor's Note

We again urge devotees to get their spiritual queries answered by Swamijis and Ramana scholars through the columns of this magazine. Such answers may benefit all devotees. Please send the queries to **shiromani.vijay@yahoo.co.in**

All views are welcome to make the magazine better. Some of the articles may have been edited for clarity and brevity.

Please send your articles for consideration to **directpath@rediffmail.com** cc **shiromani.vijay@yahoo.co.in**

Readers are welcome to express their views on the articles printed (in not more than 200 words) and send them to **directpath@rediffmail.com** cc **shiromani.vijay@yahoo.co.in**

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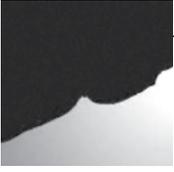
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# Guru Poornima

*Shiromani Vijay*

**W**e are about to observe Guru Poornima on 9<sup>th</sup> of July. While all spiritual seekers are planning big celebrations, let us examine what the significance of this day is and what we really mean by a Guru. Guru Poornima falls on the Poornima (Full moon) of the month of Ashaad (July-August) and is appropriately celebrated as the birthday of Vyasa Bhagavan who edited the four Vedas, wrote the 18 Puranas, *Mahabharata*, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* and the Brahmasutra. The ritual is marked by Guru Puja. The aspirants generally accelerate their Sadhana by taking a fresh resolve on this day as it is believed that the “Guru *Tattva*” is a thousand times more active on this day.

What is this Guru *Tattva* or principle? In Sanskrit, “*gu*” means darkness or ignorance, and “*ru*” denotes the remover and hence “Guru” means is the remover of our ignorance. Let us now examine who qualifies for the “Guru”

status according to our scriptures. First and foremost, Guru should be well-versed in the Shastras and live a life as dictated by the them with his mind continuously dwelling in Brahman. Guru is totally unattached to worldly things and is living in utter peace. Guru should be able to understand the difficulties of the disciples both subtle and explicit, as though he were omniscient. Guru should have an innate urge to solve the problems of the disciples according to the scriptures and should be able to go to the level of the disciples and bring them up the curve just as a mother brings up a child with boundless compassion. Importantly, Guru should only impart knowledge to the disciples who have faith (Shraddha and Vishwas) in the Guru and the Shastras.

Having seen the qualities of Guru, it appears that it is very rare to come across a person with all the qualities. It also sets us thinking whether a Guru is necessary at all and if so, should it

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be a living Guru? It is very clearly given in the Shastras that it is only the Guru who shows us the path to liberation. In this age of internet, even for acquiring worldly knowledge, we need a teacher present in person and so for acquiring spiritual knowledge we would definitely need a Guru. How does one identify a Guru? In today's world, when a person analyses all the material aspects of the society and finds that there is still something lacking and there are many situations one is not in control of, one starts to look for answers elsewhere. In such a search, we come across lives of many sages and saints and their teachings which point us to the answers we are looking for. We should choose one such saint appeals to us both intellectually and emotionally, as our Guru. If that person has shed his/her mortal coil, we must understand the teachings of our chosen Guru through the disciples who are striving to emulate the master. Though God is our ultimate Guru, we need sufficient evidence through the lives of saints that to corroborate what is said in the Shastras as the ultimate goal is an achievable one. The way to approach the Guru should be with all humility and surrender. Serving the master in the physical sense, enhances our humility. It also makes the master available to us at all

times to lead us in our liberation. As we worship the master, we should be aware that what we are worshipping is the path that the Guru is showing and not the physical body. However, Guru has to come in a physical form to show the path. Even after the physical form is gone, the path will remain to guide us through persons who have mastered the path.

In this day and age, we come across many self-appointed Gurus who might be very proficient in explaining the scriptures. But if they do not possess the other qualities such as living according to the Shastras, being totally unattached, leading unostentatious lives - we should be wary of them.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi had all the qualities of a Guru – He was a jivan muktha (self-realised) full of compassion to all the lives that touched Him. He was omniscient and removed the doubts from the minds of the seekers even before the doubts were expressed. Let us all pray to Bhagavan on the occasion of Guru Poornima to shower His grace to relieve our suffering.

Om Gurave Namah! Om Shri Ramanaya Namah! ■

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## Inaction, Non-Action and Action

*Dr. Vijay Vancheswar*

**I**n the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that one has right to one's actions but not their results. Yet again when Arjuna is perplexed and worried about killing his own near and dear ones, Krishna mentions that it is not for Arjuna to debate this as He as the supreme Lord has already killed them! He demonstrates this with a cosmic vision where Arjuna sees the inevitable destruction, loss of lives and outcome of the war.

Bhagavan Ramana and Ramakrishna Paramahansa among the many revered masters have focussed on the importance of giving up one's sense of doership. They highlight the impediment that the sense of 'doership' creates on one's progress in the spiritual path. Sri Ramana also says, "The biggest mental tapas is to give up the sense of egoism and surrender to the will of the Lord". According to them, even undertaking

noble tasks such as serving society or taking up humanitarian work runs the risk of strengthening one's sense of 'I and mine'. Thus, Sri Ramana was not in favour of lecturing or addressing people on spiritual matters. According to him the silent power of a realised soul far exceeds the power of words and sermons. Sri Ramakrishna highlighted the same thing in response to a query by one of his devotees as to the role of action or activity. The same individual then questioned Paramahansa as to why then was he talking to his devotees?! The response by the Master was that, "I don't talk-talking happens through me; I am a mere instrument and He is the doer"! In other words, actions happen as ordained if they are meant to be, as per the divine scheme of things. This point while crucial and important is a subject of a lot of misinterpretation.

The illusory power of maya

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shrouds us into believing that we are the controllers and executors of actions. Actions are inevitable as the nature of the innate gunas will compel each one of us to act in a particular way. An individual who has ripened on the strength of his inner quest is conscious and aware of this. But this is limited to the few who are aware of the Truth. The vast majority of people despite intellectually acknowledging this fail to wholeheartedly recognise it. They are unable to as Sri Ramakrishna says give the 'power of attorney' to the Lord. Why so? Because of the inscrutable and deceptive power of maya. The Bhagavad Gita gives an answer to solve this riddle with the phrase 'right to action but not the outcome'. The German mystic Eckhart Meister provides an equally powerful solution to this riddle, "Act as if you have free will, knowing fully well that it is always God's will that makes you act."

If we struggle with deciphering the truth, it will elude us. We then get into the realm of inaction which leads to mental turbulence. Arjuna was advised this by the Lord – 'you cannot avoid action as your very

nature will prod you to act...accept it and perform what you are destined to'. The preferred course is non-action- detached and non-involved. Is this a tough ask? Of course, it is ... it can only be perfected through a combination of the Lord's grace and one's longing for and true devotion to the supreme power. Then it really does not matter whether we act or not...for what happens is a flow of events directed by the One, who masterminds all moves in ways that defy clear answers to the ever questioning mind. What happens when we slowly realise this? .We become quieter, less concerned about events and happenings, outcome of our actions, finding peace within ourselves not searching for answers external to us. In Swami Vivekanada's words, "The peace of the devotee's calm resignation is a peace that passeth understanding, and is of incomparable value". Supreme Master like Sri Ramana or Ramakrishna invoke that peace within us not through their sermons and actions but by their very thought and presence. ■

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## Poondi Swami

*Neera Kashyap*

Poondi Swami's shrine lies about 30 kms north of Tiruvannamalai. Even though I have visited Ramanashram every winter for twelve years, I had not heard of Poondi Swami. Before traveling to the ashram in January this year, I received an early morning call from an ardent Ramana devotee from Delhi, Mr V.P. Mittal, advising me to read a series of three articles on Poondi Swami freshly published in the January-March 2017 issue of the Mountain Path and the author of two of the articles - Ram Brown Crowell - a resident of Tiruvannamalai, and a person whose *satsang* he urged I should have. The third piece was a reprint of an earlier article written by Sri Sainathuni Sarath Babuji, who was for countless Sai followers in India and abroad a beloved paragon of light, guiding devotees on the beatific path of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi.

At the ashram, the first few days

passed just getting the mind to settle so one could open up to Bhagavan's presence. One evening, half an hour before the Tamil parayana. I sat across the road from the main gate of the ashram along with a swedish woman, waiting for Laxmi, my favorite coconut vendor, to prise open a coconut for me. Spontaneously, I asked Anki, the foreigner if she had heard of Poondi Swami. I could have been surprised by the exchange that followed, except that when a convergence takes place naturally, there is no surprise, only the rhythm of naturalness.

Anki was a devotee of Sri Sainathuni Sarath Babuji - Guruji - and a fellow-devotee of Ram Brown Crowell, and one of the editors of a series titled Rose Petals - selections compiled from satsangs with Sri Babuji. Meanwhile, Anki spoke of her deep association with Poondi Swami's shrine, having visited it on several

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occasions, both with Sri Babuji and with fellow devotees. She agreed to accompany me to Poondi swami shrine. So two days later we went - via Shirdi Sai Baba's beautiful new shrine on the Giripradakshina road - where Anki tearfully and lovingly held to a large luminous picture of her Guruji.

There are different versions as to how Poondi Swami was discovered. Crowell spoke to the wife of the farmer in Kalasapakkam (who had originally found him) but no longer lived. Around 1957, this farmer was driving his buffalos to the Cheyyar River for a drink when one of the animals' hooves caught in the soft mud and was sucked under. While releasing the hoof, he noticed blood on its underside. On examining the mud to locate its source, the farmer saw that the blood was coming from a human skull where the buffalo's heavy hoof had grazed it. Digging feverishly to excavate mud from around the head, he and his friends were astonished to uncover a giant of a man almost seven feet tall, sitting in a *samadhi* so deep, he could not be awakened. Since he had been earlier seen sitting on the riverbed for weeks without moving, it was reasoned that when the monsoon caused the river

to flash flood, he became immersed in mud as he sat unmoving.

Bharanidharan's account in his book, 'Six mystics of India' differs somewhat. Around 1950, Poondi Swami was found in the Mettupalayam stream to the left of the Cheyyar River and was housed in a newly constructed hut. He would wander about throughout the day and retire to the hut at night or sleep sometimes in a cremation ground nearby. It appears that someone who had been kind to Poondi Swami, expecting a favor in return, felt so disappointed that he berated him mercilessly. This caused Swami to leave the area for Pulluru, a nearby village, where he lived amid thorny bushes and cacti. He then settled in a running brook which he would not leave even during a downpour. Fearing that he may be washed away by gushing waters, the villagers prepared a bamboo cage for his safety. One day, he was caught in a flood and almost drowned. He was rescued by the villagers, his body warmed back to life by burning straw.

From Sri Sarath Babuji's article, 'Example of a perfect saint: Sri Poondi Swami' we learn how the villagers had first dismissed him as another madman. The miracle that

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he lived, after being submerged in a flood so long, made them see that he was no madman but a great *mahatma* who had assumed the form of a madman for his own mysterious purposes. Becoming famous in the surrounding region, he came to be called "Artragal Swami" or "River Swami" (*artra* in Tamil meaning river). Once he sat down, it would be days or weeks or even months before he would move again. Once he would move, he would go where his fancy took him. Nobody could predict when he would sit still or move, or where he would be at any time. Till 1960, he wandered hither and thither till he came to the village of Poondi. Once there, he sat down on the raised porch of a house by the side of the road. Writes Sri Babuji, "He never left that porch again for eighteen years until he attained *mahasamadhi* in 1978. The Swami was the personification of the *ajagarabhava* or the immobile, passive state as defined in the *yogasastras*.....Nobody knew his antecedents, his parents or where he came from. None knew his caste or creed or even his name. None ever heard him take the name of God or speak of spiritual matters."

Crowell helps us understand the state of *ajagarabhava* in the context

of two of Patanjali's *Yogasutras*. These sutras state that the posture is perfect when it is *sthira* (steady) and *ananta* (endless) - both qualities exhibited by Poondi Swami - the fruit of this perfection being freedom from the pairs of opposites or *dvandvas*, the source of all suffering. Writes Crowell: "Since experientially this state entails ego-transcendence, the *Yogins* (gathered around Swami during Crowell's 18-day stay at the Master's feet) rightly saw Poondi Swami's *ajagarabhava* as tantamount to *mukti*, which it surely was."

Yet to the untrained eye, it is difficult to fathom a behavior pattern that seemed more steeped in the darkness of indolence than in the luminosity of bliss. Poondi Swami ate if he was spoon fed, he never asked for anything. Sometimes he would eat on and on, other times reject food summarily. Offerings were accepted on the *pyal* (verandeh), lay scattered around till removed and stored in a room behind it. Cigarette packets, matchboxes, garlands, fruit, plantain leaves, sweets, biscuits, chocolates rose up to the rafters. He would not allow anything to be thrown, yet even as fruit dried, it remained fresh. There was no foul smell, no ants or flies. A giant of a man, nearly seven feet tall

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with enormous hands, penetrating eyes and an unkempt look, it was uncertain whether he slept at all, though he was made to recline on a ledge for a few hours every night. Like a child, he would answer the call of nature where he sat, washed and cleaned where he sat.

In a typical start to the day described by Bharanidharan, Poondi Swami could be heard cracking his fingers before dawn. After drinking tea served around 4 a.m. by a boy from a tea shop who would call out to him, one of his omnipresent devotees Subramaniam Swami - the other being Chimta Swami - would wipe his face with wet cloth, change his shirt, apply *vibhuti*, *chandan* and *kumkum* to his forehead, garland him before removing the curtain to perform his puja before devotees who had already arrived by the first bus to offer worship. His royal 'durbar' was one of two *pyals* that flanked both sides of this small tiled house fronting a road, the *pyal* measuring four feet in length and two feet in width.

Bharanidharan returned to Poondi Swami's & 'durbar' many times, irresistibly drawn to this sage and to tracing out the origins and places related to his life. While visiting Swami's 'haunts' in villages north

of Poondi - Prayapapattu, Mottur, Natchatrakoil - he found that the villagers worshipped him - both as God and as their own child. Through personal experience they cited that his mere look could relieve them of their troubles, a pinch of sacred ash handed by him could cure incurable diseases. He would predict things with complete knowledge to help a devotee solve a problem or gain new direction. He could never be forced to give *prasadam* with his own hands, even when an affluent man once tried various offerings as temptation, a villager recounted.

Poondi Swami's interactions with his devotees on the *pyal* reveal scant talk, some acknowledgement and blessing, and often the stillness of a rock - stoically silent. On occasion, he gives a sympathetic hearing to personal problems, proffering advice or imparting knowledge in a colloquial language or through a familiar proverb, all with a deep underlying import and significance. To an old woman who is tragically hurt by her son's spendthrift ways, Poondi Swami expresses deep concern, then adds, "It is not without significance that it is said, 'You will hurt the same leg again and again, and the very same famished family

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is destined to suffer more and more'. Bad company. Who can help it, this is the Kali Age? You need not take much precaution if you raise greens in the garden. But if you plant a drumstick sapling nearby, you must put up a fence all round. Otherwise someone will steal the drumsticks when the tree starts yielding...this is such a hopeless age."

Sri Babuji offers a significant explanation to the mirror-like reflecting transparency of this great sage. He writes, "He was a perfect mirror in his conversation. If one talked to him informally, he would reply informally. If one talked to him with awe and respect, he would reply briefly with awesome gravity. The *sastras* say that the mind of the perfect sage is like a mirror which reflects truly the feelings of those who approach him." When one of Sri Babuji's own devotees learns that Sri Babuji's longings had been fulfilled at Poondi Swami's feet, Sri Babuji said, "Yes, I am experiencing it continuously. I haven't found any words in the *sastras*..... and can only be interpreted." Further, when asked how Poondi Swami's love was expressed, he said, "His love was so much that he had no other object: he was the object. And he simply

sat, totally focused.....he himself had no expression at all - he was so transparent that through him I saw Shirdi Sai Baba only. That is why I always say that it is Sai Baba who gave the experience. His personality was not a veil... And I haven't seen such transparency anywhere else."

Crowell's own experience came on the sixteenth day of his stay with the Master. He writes: "I was standing at the bar for the evening *darshan*, gazing intently into the Master's right-sided look. Suddenly a tiny shaft of white light shimmered serpent-like in the Master's left eye, then shot into both mine. It went down immediately to the bottom of my spine, then rose slowly up it as though someone were blowing softly into the bottom of it like a tube. When it reached the back of my head I experienced such intense bliss I lost body consciousness, and fell in a swoon at the Master's feet. Luckily, I was standing between two *sannyasins* who grabbed me as I fell and held me upright until I regained consciousness. The whole drama lasted less than a minute; never before or since have I felt such ecstasy."

Bharanidharan, too, experienced a thrill that went beyond words when the Master suddenly directed a look at him. He felt a cool spark strike

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him. Unimpressed till then, he fell at Poondi Swami's feet in an act that was completely spontaneous. In his many interactions with the Master, what intrigued Bharanidharan most were his often cryptic statements. Seeking permission to undertake the very difficult climb of Parvata hills – one of the many haunts of Poondi Swami where siddhas were believed to offer worship every night – the Master gave his blessings with the words: “You may proceed.... big rails...small rails...crowbar... all jumper work.” The meaning of these words came alive only during the climb. ‘Small rails’ was a small iron ladder to climb to reach the top. ‘Big rails’ were girders bridging a yawning gap between two rocks. ‘Crowbar’ was a huge rock studded with iron bars that had to be held, one by one, to inch up! Bharanidharan then learnt that fixing bars in the rock is known as ‘jumper work!’

My own experience in the small hall which must have once included the *pyal* was infinitely more humble. On one end of the hall is an enclosure sealed with glass and marble with a sculptured image of Poondi Swami in gold. His face is in profile, his neck garlanded with red roses and yellow chrysanthemums – his right hand raised in blessing. His forehead is

graced with *vibhuti*, a large circle of *chandan* and *kumkum* resting between his eyebrows. This must have been how he gave *darshan* to his devotees. The floor is white marble and cool. I quickly find my position of comfort, switching from *padmasana* to stretch my legs in front - facing an open gateway into the hall. I am aware of people coming and going but my eyes open only when a priest slides open the glass enclosure to offer worship. Poondi Swami's sculptured head is crowned with flowers. He looks like a royal emperor – an emperor whose field force is so strong that one has felt his state of *ajagarabhava*, if only for a moment, or timelessly – till it is the moment to witness the glory of his crowning.

Anki is circumambulating the adjoining temple shrine. Together, we watch the *abhishekam* of this Master and the puja that follows. The gathered devotees look as if they have been there forever. Large photographs of the Master grace the walls. He is everywhere. Christopher Quilkey, editor of Mountain Path, writes in an email a few months later, “He has a connection to Arunachala. From where he sat on the *pyal* he could see the peak of Arunachala.” ■

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## Be Still

Swami Chidananda

*If you keep your mind from judging and aren't led by the senses, your heart will find peace. Lao Tzu*

**W**e live in contradictions. We are tired of work and seek to be free of work, not doing anything. At the same time, we are unable to sit quietly also. We are not at peace with work and not at peace without work either. There is tremendous unrest within us and our organs of action are restless. Take the organ of speech, it is so difficult to control it - as to speak only that which is true, beneficial, and pleasant; to avoid words that may cause agitation. Habits drive our life and even the smart ones among us are very mechanical, repeating certain patterns of behavior. The ego remains as strong as ever amidst this maze of simple or complex habits being a ego itself is very long-standing habit.

“What are we to do?” is the most common question in the minds of seekers. We want to do something. We call it spiritual practice. Used as we are to situations in life where effort leads to achievement, we imagine that some

hard work and sincere effort will bring realization as their result. Freedom is also viewed as the product of action. The Upanishads declare, “not by action, not by progeny, not by wealth is achieved the state of immortality; it is only renunciation that the doors of freedom open.” The finite cannot produce the infinite. The state of freedom, characterized by the absence of any limitation, is to be discovered, and not created.

Devotees asked Maharishi Ramana, “What is the essential spiritual practice?” His answer “Be Still”. This is then the great yoga of doing nothing. We know however that the sage advises to inquire. “Who am I?” It is very important to understand this distinction between effort involved in our activities and the vigil involved in inquiry or observation. The former has hope, fear and above all, a sense of being the doer. The latter is marked by silence, intelligence and watchfulness. This observation has no thought in

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itself, though there is observing of a thought. We are aware of fear, for example, but there is no reaction to fear, we notice, a wave of ambition rising in us but we do not comment upon it. The ego has risen in the medium of thought, no doubt, but the passive awareness of it is quiet. There is no 'me' in the awareness of the movement of 'me'.

"Be still and know that I am God," is a statement from the Old Testament (Psalms 46.10) to which Maharishi Ramana made a reference to many times. In this statement, the devotee is asked to keep calm and appreciate the glory of God. A hidden meaning could be that the devotee stays quiet and realizes her own divinity. Such an interpretation applies to the use of the pronoun I at several places in the Bhagavad-Gita, where Sri Krishna sings the 'glory of Supreme Self and employs the word "aham". "I am not in them but they are in Me," for example, is just to the Lord instructing Arjuna but to every seeker as she realizes her true nature. Identified with her ego she finds she is a small speck in the vast universe. Staying as Awareness, she realizes that the vast expanse of space and time rises and falls in her (Self).

Krishnamurti said "Just be alert and do not do anything else." These

masters notice that the ego gets created in all conscious activities including spiritual practices such as meditation. In the name of meditation, we entertain hope and fear, we enjoy the thought, "Ah, my mind is so quiet," or we react, "Oh, I am so restless today." These thoughts, being of the nature of judgment, cause and strengthen the self. True meditation is where the self is not. Effort, which is a conscious, psychological phenomenon, erects the self. When the question, "Who am I?" ceases to be mere verbal affair and instead is an aspect of an all-inclusive probing, it does not spare even the thought, "I am meditating." The meditator gets dissolved in this exploration; just awareness remains. The Vedanta calls this the Self, of the nature of Pure Awareness.

Being still is about being the light of unbiased watching even as thoughts, words and action may keep flowing from the personality. This state of attention does not exclude anything and therefore does not focus on anything. There is no agenda. There is the joy of journey with no destination defined. Anxiety about reaching somewhere keeps us in perpetual incompleteness. Enjoying the journey itself, learning continuously and exploring the mystery of life as we go along, has a fragrance about it. There is no self

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and therefore no incompleteness. Generally we feel incomplete when we are attached to a goal and we find there is quite a long way for us to reach the goal. Psychologically, the thoughts, "That is my goal; I will be fine when I reach there," create the sense of self that is defined to be full if the goal is reached and incomplete if the goal is not reached. So it is not the reality of who we are, but a projection or definition by thoughts, that decides the subjective experience. This incompleteness would vanish if thoughts were to remain silent.

As birds do not leave any mark in the sky as they fly, as fish no footprints in water as they move, so is the movement of wise," quotes Adi Sankaracarya as he comments on Mundakopanishad (3.2.6). There is silence amidst speech; there is absence of agency in the midst of activity. "Be Still" is such a profound advice that it calls for total abandonment of all sense of doership or enjoyership. We go through events without letting the idea of "I won" or "I lost" to get formed. We come out unscathed in all situations. Peace is thus gained not through external comforts but by cleansing ourselves within totally. A beautiful house on the hill top with nice gardens around may not give us peace. Without all such convenience

or pretty surroundings, we can have a serene bosom when, thanks to the alertness, no trace of ego remains in our bosom.

Who is stressed? I am, goes the answer. Who am I? the answer is bundle of self-descriptions, all of which are memories. Behind our stress is the conflict created by thought. We think, for example, we should be performing on a certain level of efficiency; the reality may be we are unable to work at even half the efficiency. The difference between what should be and what is creates conflict. In another scenario, we might expect people to treat us in a certain way but they do not respect us enough. Here again, please note, there is the difference between how we should be treated and how we are treated. How our children should behave and how they actually are behaving; how our son or daughter should have married by now and the fact that he or she is single; in countless ways, we are torn between the ideal and the actual.

A master like Ramana does not ask us to on "what I should be." Rather he asks us to examine the notion, "what I am." Questioning the notion of the self can have a healing influence on us. Presuming who we are, we were on a wild run of imagination. But, Self-inquiry shifts the focus of

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our attention. Rather than justifying and embellishing our ego, we take a second look at our present. The question is who am I? It is not who was I? Scholars have therefore rightly remarked that self-inquiry helps a man return to true humility either from ill-conceived pride and prestige or from the falsely imagined sense of being low or inferior. Having gained an open mind we then can do what needs to be done. We give our best without getting stressed. Do the best, observed Swami Chinmayananda, and leave the rest.

Even the Himalayan peaks will not give us peace unless we learn the art of managing our own restless mind. Tending to be judgemental all the time, labeling others and ourselves as good sometimes and as bad at other, this mind goes on a roller coaster ride. If it has to gain equanimity, it should give up judging. Stress-free living is ours the moment we keep away from evaluating people in areas that are by nature subtle. Whether somebody dresses well, speaks good English, sings admirably or knows history or geography are relatively gross matters. Whether he is a good man, lovable, trustworthy or morally upright are pretty subtle questions for the simple reason that these are psychological domain and the deciding factors or components are too many. Our

perception may not be precise and our knowledge may be inadequate. There may be situations where we have to evaluate and give our opinion if not take decisions. At other times, where there is not such pressure of the situation, it may be wiser for us to look but not leap to a conclusion.

Habits of the mind known as *vaasana* are the main obstacles that hinder Self-realization. This seems to be a *catanch-22* situation here in as much as: without tackling the *vaasana*, you cannot realize the self; without realizing the Self, you cannot eliminate *vaasana*. However, when we get to the root of the matter, the ego subsides and all perplexing paradoxes are resolved.

We may wonder sometimes, “Who is suffering from ignorance? Who has to inquire? Who has to gain liberation?” Adi Sankaracarya has taken up this issue in his commentary on the Gita (Chapter-13). To the question, “To whom does *avidya* (ignorance, nescience) belong?” The witty answer given is : *avidya* to him who is asking the question! So the problem and the man who has the problem are inseparable. When we analyze, the puzzle gets more complicated. When we remain still, it silently vanishes. ■

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## Dear Death

*Dr. Sarada Natarajan*

**T**here is no half-way house. There are no soft alternatives on the Selfward way. It seems there is no way one can continue to have a taste of desire and at the same time get back to Self-abidance. Like one with jaundiced eye, all action must be tinted with a yearning for Self-knowledge. Muruganar sings ‘What else can I behold with the eyes that have seen Ramana’s eyes?’

Does this mean one should become indifferent to the beauty that is strewn around? Should our eyes be closed at a glorious sunset? Should our ears turn deaf to the flute’s melody, to the morning song of the birds and a child’s laughter? Should our hands be numb to the velvet touch of a rose, the round smoothness of a pebble? Should our nose be blocked to the earth smell of the first rains, to the fragrance of the night queen? Should we know no longer the tang of tamarind, the juicy crispness of

an apple? Should one say ‘no’ to the million bounties, the million wonders of life?

Certainly not. There is no call to become a stone, to be callous and disinterested. But it must be remembered that if we wish to participate in the laughter of life, we must also be willing to share its tears. When we enjoy the cool breeze through the windows of our cozy homes, it would be well to remember that for many homeless the open breeze may be biting chill. Rich cakes would taste better mixed with memories of hunger. The sight of the magnificent starry canopy may bring thoughts of the sightless, it may be tinged with an awareness of the transience of one’s own sight. This awareness is not to create a sense of hopelessness and despair, not to generate in us feelings of fear and self-pity. Rather, our joys and sorrows would be more intensely lived in the

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awareness of this fragility, in their contrasting and thus heightening each other. It would be like the expert cook who always adds a pinch of salt to heighten the sweetness of desserts and dash of sugar or jaggery to add punch to salty and spicy dishes. Our greatest joys are often touched with a hint of sorrow and our greatest griefs carry silent echoes of peace.

But we do not really wish to savour our joys, let alone taste our sorrows. So totally caught up in expectations of the future we hardly taste the present joys. So busy comparing experience with the moments past we push the present back with carelessness. The joy of the present moment is ever clouded over with some fear or anticipation if not comparison. If we would only care to stop and look at our lives for an earnest moment, we are likely to discover that we hardly derive joy from the desires we cling to so tenaciously. There is always something lacking, some lacuna that prevents our cup from being full to the brim. Again we convince ourselves that if only the bit were filled, we would be happy. And we strive for that. But a thousand lacunae filled still leave us with thousand new dissatisfactions. If one has everything that one could ever want, then one

is simply struck by ‘ennui’ as the disease of boredom is described. One is simply bored because there is nothing new to be achieved, no motivation, no challenge, they say. Then why is it that those with motivation, those with desire, those with goals are also unhappy. Does it not clearly indicate that happiness lies neither in pursuit of desire nor its conquest? Yet, we are repeatedly told that happiness is our very nature, our eternal companion. Then why are we ever alienated from it? Because our attention is on all things other than that joy which is here and now. Unless attention is totally riveted in the now, that joy cannot be tasted. And the now is the very atomic second, with no awareness of a single moment past or single moment yet to come.

How is one to wipe the slate clean? How is one to make this clean break from all propensity to think? For, it is clear it must be the perfect cut, the total break. There are many ways advocated to create this sense of complete detachment. The awareness of transitoriness of things is one. The precious bliss to be obtained as a result of detachment could be remembered as the positive counter-pull. Of course, the intense attitude of self-enquiry immediately

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scorches every second thought. If one believes that one does not know oneself, where is the question of thinking of anything else? However, such intensity in self-enquiry also is not easily cultivated. Even when one intellectually believes that one has taken oneself to be, one continues to be habitually attached to it. It is to break the habit that continuous self-enquiry is advocated. If the attitude of self-enquiry is not intense enough to keep it continuous, aids are suggested to create this intensity. One such aid is the awareness of temporality. To be aware of the transience of all things is an aspect of this. But more important is to be acutely conscious of death to recognize that death may come the next minute.

And it must be just that, 'the next

minute' and not a thought that death may come in the near future. There is a world of difference between the two. When one thinks death may come soon one may wish to cram into that time all the fulfilment of one's desires. Thought may well take the turn 'I must satisfy these yearnings somehow before dying'. On the other hand, if death is coming the next minute then there is just this minute to live and it must necessarily be intensely savoured, here and now. If each minute is lived in this awareness there would be no room for desire to grow. Time and death would no longer be enemies to defeat but dear friends who introduce us to deepest joy, the pulsating life. ■

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“Your own Self-Realization is the greatest service  
you can render the world.”

**Ramana Maharshi**

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## **Enlightenment July 17 th 1896**

Ramana, at the tender age of 16, spontaneously initiates a process of self-enquiry that culminates within a few minutes in his own permanent awakening.

“One day I was alone in the first floor of my uncle’s house. I was in my usual state of health. But a sudden and unmistakable fear of death seized me. I felt I was going to die. Why I should have so felt cannot now be explained by anything felt in the body. I did not however trouble myself to discover if the fear was well grounded. I did not care to consult doctors or elders or even friends. I felt I had to solve the problem myself then and there.

The actual inquiry and discovery of ‘Who am I?’ was over on the very first day, after a short time. Instinctively I held my breath and began to dive inward with my inquiry into my own nature . . . . I stretched myself like a corpse, and it seemed to me that my body had actually become rigid— ‘I’ was not dead—‘I’ was on the other hand conscious of being alive, in existence. So the question arose in me, ‘What was this “I”?’ I felt that it was a force or current working, despite the rigidity or activity of the body, though existing in connection with it. It was that current or force or center that constituted my personality, that kept me acting, moving etc. The fear of death dropped off. I was absorbed in the contemplation of that current. So further development or activity was issuing from the new life and not from any fear.”

Ramana, on his Enlightenment



## Bhakti Yoga in the Knowledge Society

*Ashok Vaishnavi*

Like bubbles in the water, the worlds rise, exist and dissolve in Supreme Self,  
which is the material cause and prop of everything.

Atma Bodha - Adi Shankaracharya.

**W**hat should one do in the geostrategy driven knowledge society where concord is shook up by shallow interests? Should one choose the status quo over change; flight over fight; renunciation over action? Or smack the forehead, blame past karma, and endure iniquity?

Bhagwan Krishna asserts. Do not run away, but stay. Fight! Millenniums after Bhagavad Gita was expounded, the advice of Krishna resounds in Swami Vivekananda: If what you are now is your past karma, then it follows that, provided you know how to act, you can through your present actions become whatever you want to be in the future.

Hinduism promotes a dynamic harmony in the environment. The non-dogmatic, non-authoritarian philosophy nurtures tranquility for the happiness of the individual by

focusing the invisible eye of the mind on universal good sense. Believe Supreme Self is in everyone, and everyone is in Supreme Self; chuck out discrimination, doubt, and self-delusion; perform the apportioned work; serve without expectations; be good, do good, seek the innocent within you; be as fragrant as is the jasmine flower; spread cheer and joy; live an austere and a simple life; share your good fortune, intellect and emotions; never lose your head for failure, pain, joy, wealth, life, empires nothing lasts forever.

### **Purusha**

That Supreme Self is in the ritual, oblation, herbs, hymn, fire, and offering (Bhagavad Gita: 9.16) was revealed by the sacrifice of the greater than all greatness Purusha in the fires of creation that begat everything that exists. (Rig Veda, Hymn 10.90.) Without the sacrifice there is nothing.

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Neither the Big Bang nor the Dark Matter, or space and gravity; neither parallel universes nor fundamental forces; neither you nor I.

Hymn 10.129 of the Rig Veda adds colour love to the sacrifice.

In the beginning, Love arose,  
which was the primal germ cell of  
the mind.

The Seers, searching in their  
hearts with wisdom,  
discovered the connection of  
Being in Nonbeing.

The Yajur Veda sees eternity in the sacrifice. 'The one who loves all intensely begins perceiving in all human beings a part of him...and becomes a part of Universal Joy.' Purusha glows in the ultimate Hymn of the Rig Veda (10.191.) 'Assemble, speak together: let your minds be all of one accord...One and the same be your resolve...United be the thoughts of all that all may happily agree.'

We are the children of Purusha; all are equal; speak and listen; hold accountable and be held accountable; rejoice in the welfare of all because Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the whole world is one family (Maha Upanishad).

### **Moksha**

According to the Narayana

Upanishad, the preferred path for moksha is the renunciation of the desire for a wife, son, or wealth. The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad is point-blank, 'Action, progeny, or wealth do not lead to moksha.' The Taittiriya Upanishad is explicit, 'Renunciation is excellent.' The Jabala Upanishad demands the cessation of all action (participation) from the Brahmacharya (student) stage.

Bhagwan Krishna refutes the construct. The mind is a dangerous thing (Bhagavad Gita: 2.60). Action (participation) is the essence of human nature; the world is action-bound; cessation of action is impossible; self-denial cannot ensure actionlessness; renunciation from action cannot lead to perfection; action is superior to inaction; even the maintenance of the body is not possible without action. (Bhagavad Gita: 3. 4-5- 8.)

When the cessation of action is impossible and renunciation cannot lead to moksha, does action (to stay and to fight), therefore, forever damn the worker to the cycle of birth-and-death?

Not so. Bhakti Yoga -- control your intellect to control your life -- recognises there is more to the Kurukshetra of life than renunciation.

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## **Bhakti Yoga**

Of the Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, and Sannyasa Ashrams, the grihastha-jeevan (householder) is the most important. S/he works the fields to keep people from starvation, guards the borders to protect the nation, creates wealth to banish poverty, and marries to beget children. Without the householder, the human race would cease to exist.

The first two slokas of the Isavasya Upanishad are the foundation of Bhakti Yoga. Sin is not incurred when action is undertaken in the belief that ‘this moving world is enveloped by Supreme Self,’ and when one neither balks at self-denial nor covets what belongs to others.

Bhakti Yoga fuses the tremendous power of the discipline of Jnana Yoga (renunciation through the knowledge of Supreme Self) and the discipline of Karma Yoga (head-on action/participation.) The dynamic action-strategy extinguishes the duality of pleasure and pain, ends the subjugation by joy or sorrow, and helps in realising the ‘ancient effulgent One who is hard to be seen, is unmanifest and hidden, but who dwells in the buddhi and rests in the body of everyone.’ (Katha Upanishad: 2.12.)

Bhagwan Krishna speaks thus in

the Bhagavad Gita. The pure mind that beats to the rhythm of ‘Brahman is the offering, Brahman the oblation; by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman...’ (4.24) does not sin through action because s/he has mastered the senses; vanquished attachment; treats everyone as an equal; suffers for and bears the pain of others; is free of envy; neither hates pain nor the source of the pain, and neither desires pleasure nor seeks the source of pleasure. (5.7.) Her/his only concern is the action and not the result. ‘Let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be for inaction.’ (2.47.)

## **Karmayoga-Sanyasa**

In 1947, on the eve of his departure for Srinagar for booting out jihadis from Jammu and Kashmir, Brig., L. P. Sen was advised by the karmayogisanyasi Gandhiji ‘make full use of every means’ to ‘protect innocent people, and to save them from suffering and their property from destruction.’

3000 years ago, Chandragupta Maurya and Kautilya – an alumnus of the world’s first university Taxilashila (in Gilgit) – established the then world’s largest empire. After resigning as prime minister of the Mauryan Empire, Kautilya did not meditate in the forests of Kashmir. Instead, the

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karmayogi-sanyasi sought moksha by basing the treatise on governance The Arthashastra on the extensive compendium of Dharamashastras mentioned in the Mahabharata.

King Kuru, the ancestor of Pandavas and Karuvas, established the city of Kurukshetra for austerity, truth, forgiveness, kindness, purity, charity, devotion, and celibacy and fidelity. Kuruvas violated the code.

The ensuing War of Kurukshetra is colour Rudra Tandava of Bhakti Yoga. 'An archer letting off an arrow may or may not kill a single man, but a wise man using his intellect can kill even reaching unto the very womb.' (The Arthashastra.)

Great karmayogi-sanyasies enriched humanity by combining the energies of detachment and participation in the Kurukshetra of their time.

Adi Shankaracharya renewed Hinduism. Acharya Abhinavgupta saw the perceiver, the perception, and the perceived in Supreme Self. Swami Vivekananda revealed the universality of Hinduism. Mahatma Gandhi echoed the modernity of the Rig Veda: 'I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together

for unity and peace.'

In the Devloka, gods will ask the karmayoga-sanyasies 'What's your wish?' Shunning the eternal silence in the merger with Supreme Self, the sanyasi-karmayogis will demand rebirth to continue their nishtha-karam of serving humanity. Gods, desirous of the human form because true knowledge and pure love can be only had by a human being, will gladly comply.

Time past and time future are indeterminate. The here and now is relatively definitive. The vartaman horrible individual and collective suffering of the vast populace is not our past karma. The unholy mess is the work (adharma) of selfish people who violated the code, disrespected the sacrifice of Purusha, abused the Constitution, and battered the trust of people.

Parvati and Shiva came down from their abode Mount Kailash to the banks of the Ganges in Varanasi and began samay (time.) Hear! Swami Vivekananda whispers from the depths of eternity 'Those vessels whose sails are unfurled catch the wind, and go forward... those who have their sails furled will not catch the wind.'

Shantih! Shantih! Shantih hi!■

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## Tirukkural - The Tamil Veda - Part II

PN Vijay

In the Mar-Apr issue we had studied some of the interesting verses of the first five chapters of the First Book of the Kural known as Arathupal or Book on Dharma. We will continue with the next few chapters.

### **Bk I : VI – Virtues of a Good Wife**

The Sixth Chapter is on the Virtues of a Good Wife. In the third verse Valluvar says

*Illadhen illaval maanpaanaal ulladhen*

*Illaval maanaak kadai?*

If a wife is eminent in virtue what is it that man does not possess?

If she has no excellence what does he really possess?

*Tharkaathu tharkondaar peni thakagaisaandra*

*Chorkaathuch sorvilaal penn*

An ideal wife not only protects her

virtues but tirelessly cares for her husband

And care of family traditions with pride.

### **Bk I.VII- Joy of Parenting**

The next chapter deals with the Joy of parenting and is most lyrical.

*Amizhdinum aatra enidhetham makkal*

*Sirugai alaaviya koozh.*

To the doting parents the soup in which the child has dabbled its little hand

Is sweeter than the ambrosia of the Gods in heaven.

*Kuzhalinidhu yaazhinidhu enbar tham makkal*

*Mazhalai chol keladavar*

Only they will praise the melody of a flute or a harp

Who have not heard the melody of their baby's babbling.

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## **Bk I Section VIII- Value of Love**

Having dealt with love of the wife and children, the Saint now dwells on the value of love itself. Here are one or two of the gems.

*Anpilaar Ellaam Thamakkuriyar Anputaiyaar*

*Enpum Uriyar Pirarkku*

Those who are devoid of love appropriate all they have to themselves; but those who possess love consider even their bones to belong to others.

*Enpi Ladhanai Veyilpolak Kaayume Anpi Ladhanai Aram*

The Lord will burn up the soul which is without love, even like the sun burns up the creature which is without bone(ie worms).

*Anpin Vazhiyadhu Uyirnilai Aqdhilaarkku*

*Enpudhol Porththa Utampu*

That body alone which is inspired with love contains a living soul: if void of it, the body is just a collection of bone overlaid with skin.

## **Bk I Ch IX : Hospitality towards guests**

This is a beautiful chapter which the Saint plants in the middle of the

virtues of a householder illustrating how important it is to be a Good Samaritan.

*Irundhompilvaazhva Thellaam Virundhompil*

*Velaanmai Seydhar Poruttu*

The very purpose of creating wealth and leading a family life, is to be able to be hospitable to guests.

*Akanamarndhu Seyyaal Uraiyum Mukanamarndhu*

*Nalvirundhu Ombuvaan*

The Goddess of wealth will reside happily in the house of a person who entertains all guests with a smile.

*Selvirundhu Ombi Varuvirundhu Paarththiruppaan*

*Nalvarundhu Vaanath Thavarkku*

One who is hospitable to his guests and on their departure awaits the next one is the honoured guest of the Gods in Heaven.

## **Bk I Ch X Soft Spokenness**

This chapter is full of advice on why being soft spoken is an important virtue for any person in his spiritual journey.

*Mukaththaan Amarndhuinidhu Nokki Akaththaanaam*

*Inso Linadhe Aram*

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The kindly look, the beatific smile and the soft word are the true signs of a man of wisdom.

***Insol Inidheendral Kaanpaan Evankolo***

***Vansol Vazhangu Vadhu?***

When a person sees the happiness that his sweet words bring why does he prefer harsh words?

***Iniya Ulavaaka Innaadha Kooral***

***Kaniiruppak Kaikavarn Thatru***

To be nasty when you can use sweet words is like eating unripe fruits when you can eat ripe ones.

### **Bk I Ch XI – Gratitude**

Having discussed the virtues of Hospitality and Soft Spokenness the great Saint now turns his attention to another cardinal virtue namely Gratitude.

***Payandhookkaar Seydha Udhavi Nayandhookkin***

***Nanmai Katalin Peridhu***

If we analyse the impact of a deed done without any expectation of reward it is bigger than the mightiest ocean.

***Payandhookkaar Seydha Udhavi Nayandhookkin***

***Nanmai Katalin Peridhu***

The wise man is he who remembers with gratitude the help given by another for seven births.

***Nandri Marappadhu Nandrاندru Nandralladhu***

***Andre Marappadhu Nandru***

Forget in a moment the harm done by another to you; but remember all through your life the help he rendered to you.

***Kondranna Innaa Seyinum Avarseydha***

***Ondrunandru Ullak Ketum***

Even the murder committed by a person is forgiven if only he does a favour to a needy without expecting any reward.

***Ennandri Kondraarkkum Uyvuntaam Uyvillai***

***Seynnandri Kondra Makarku***

There is a salvation for every crime but not for the crime of ingratitude.

### **Bk I Ch XII- Fairplay**

The Saint considers fairplay as an important virtue in the dealings of a Householder and gives several pointers on ehy that is so.

***Thagudhi Enondru Nanre Paghdiyaar***

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***Paarpat Ozhiyap Perin***

Neutrality is a virtue only when it is practised unfailingly with friend foe and stranger

***Nanre Tharinum Naduvigandham Aakkathai***

***Anre Ozhiya Vidal***

Even if some gain comes by being unfair in your dealings one should desist from that temptation

***Kedum Perukkamum Illalla Nenjathu***

***Kodaamai Sandrork Ani***

Ups and downs are inevitable in a person's life but true virtue consists in being fair in one's dealings in both situations.

In Kambaramayana Kamban recalls these words from Thirukural when describing Lord Rama one the day he had to leave Ayodhya. Kamban says that like a true student of the great Thirukkural Rama was a portrait of a full blown lotus forever serene and perfect.

***Saman Saidu Seerdookum Kolpol Amaindhoruppar***

***Kodamai Sandrorkani***

Like a Balance scale that weighs things with absolute rectitude, a

man of rectitude shows absolute dispassion in all that his actions

**Bk I Ch XIII- Self-Restraint**

Having talked about Fairplay and Gratitude the Saint now turns his attention on another important quality that a man has to possess and that is Self-Restraint.

***Tahgudhi Enavondru Nandre Paghudhiyal***

***Paarpat Ozhiyap Perin***

Practising self-restraint will give a man a place among the Gods; lack of it will land him in utter ruin

***Sollarkum Nandram Panidhal Avarullum***

***Selvarke Selvam Thagaithuu***

Self-restraint and humility are virtues for all but for the Wealthy it is more important than their wealth itself

***Yakavaar Ayinum Nakakka Kaavakal***

***Sokappar Sollizhukkap Pattu***

Whatever one is unable to control, one should control one's tongue; otherwise one's own words will lead him to total ruin ■

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## Aksharamanamalai Part 4

20

*koor vaat kanniyar kodumayir  
padathu arul,  
Koorndu yennai Cherndhu arul,  
Arunachala.*

O Arunachala! Without letting me fall to the viles of those who are cruel and deceitful, bestow thy grace on me and be in union with me.

The world is too much with us. We fall into its viles, not knowing that that way lies our doom. Our senses drag us away from what is good and permanent, the supreme Self. Our mind becomes captive to the passing shows that only distract and demoralize it. The play of *maya* deceives us; its agents, the objects, spread a net as it were in which we are caught. Having made slaves of us, they harass and rack us without mercy. Who can save the devotee-soul from this sad plight but God, her Lord? So, she appeals to Him to come to her

succour and save her from her dire distress. If only she could get united with her Lord through His grace, no harm would happen to her.

21

*Kenjyum vanjiyay konjam  
irangilai,  
Anjel yendru arul, Arunachala.*

O Arunachala! Although I implore, Thou, as one deceitful, dost not show mercy. Saying 'Do not fear!' bestow grace on me.

This is praise in the form of blame (*nindastuti*). It is not that God is deceitful, or that He is unmerciful. Arunachala has already been described as the ocean of grace. If the field has not been prepared and if the seeds do not sprout, it is not the fault of the gentle rain. The defects resident in the soul prevent the descent of grace. The devotee-soul who has

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turned Godward realizes this fact and prays to the Lord for removal of the defects. In the course of her journey she becomes impatient sometimes and accuses the Lord for her delay. Let Him not even run immediately to the soul to save her. Let Him at least give the assurance that she need have no fear. Let Him promise her protection from fear (*abhaya pradana*).

22

*Kelathu alikkum un kedil pugazhai,  
Kedu cheyyathu arul, Arunachala.*

O Arunachala! Bestow Thy grace without tarnishing Thy blemishless fame for giving without asking.

The devotee-soul continues to invoke the grace of the Lord. In the case of an earthly lord, one has often to ask *30 Arunachala Siva* explicitly what one wants from him. For one thing, he may not know what is wanted from him; for another, even if he knew, he may not be able to give it. The characteristic of a finite person is that he has little knowledge and less power. God, on the contrary, is omniscient and omnipotent. He knows the needs of all beings, and has the power to satisfy them. Such, indeed, is His greatness. If He does

not now come to the succour of the pining devotee-soul, what will happen to that greatness? What will people think of the Lord? Will they not either belittle His knowledge or accuse Him of heartlessness? So, at least to safeguard His reputation, He should shower His grace on the devotee soul.

23

*Kaiyinir kaniyul mey rasam kondu  
uvagai,  
Veri kola varurl, Arunachala.*

O Arunachala! Grant Thy grace that I may become mad with joy drinking Thee, the genuine juice, as from a fruit on the palm of one's hand.

'The fruit on the palm of one's hand' is the usual simile for anything that is crystal clear and has been attained without doubt. The fruit that is ordinarily mentioned in this connection is the *amalaka* (Emblic Myrobalan). In the present context, however, a fruit like the grape would be more appropriate. God is compared to fruit juice because of His delight giving nature. He is the supreme essence (*rasa*). The *Taittiriya Upanishad* (II, vii) declares:

*raso vai sah rasam hy evayam*

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*labdhva*

*anandi bhavati ho hy evanyat kah  
pranyat yad esa akasa ananda na  
syat.*

*esa hy eva anandayati*

‘The essence is He. Having obtained the essence, one becomes happy. Who can breathe in or breathe out if this happiness in the heart-ether were not? And, it is He that brings in happiness.’

24

*Kodiyittu adiyarai kollunai kkatti,  
Kondu engan vazhven, Arunachala.*

O Arunachala! Determined as Thou art to kill Thy devotees — how am I to survive after embracing Thee?

The goal of *Advaita* mysticism is the identity realization, which means the transcendence of even the devotee-devoted relationship. This is the significance of the sentiment,

that God is determined to kill His devotees. The ego of the devotee is totally destroyed by God’s grace. Thereafter, how could difference exist? Although we speak of spiritual marriage, there is a good deal of difference between what we know as marriage and spiritual union. In the latter there are no two entities, while the former requires two. There is no individuality left in the devotee-soul after the divine embrace. The act of embracing the divine is a process of self-noughting. Sureshwara, in his *Brihad Vartika*, makes the Sage Yajnavalkya address the following words to his wife Maitreyi: 32 *Arunachala Siva* “Impelled by her great love for Siva, Parvati wrought herself into half his body. But you long for gaining the whole of my being with your whole self.”■

*Source TMP Mahadevan’s  
Book Arunachala Siva  
Aksharamanamalai*

"The Self cannot be found in books. You have to find it for yourself, within yourself,"

**Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi**



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## Joy and Woe

Joy and woe are woven fine,  
A clothing for the soul divine,  
Under every grief and pine  
Runs a joy with silken twine.  
It is right it should be so;  
Man was made for joy and woe;  
And when this we rightly know,  
Through the world we safely go.

William Blake

## Sonnet

One day I heard a whisper: 'Wherefore wait?  
Why linger in a separated porch?  
Why nurse the flicker of a separated torch  
The fire is there, ablaze beyond the gate.  
Why tremble, foolish soul? Why hesitate?  
'However faint the knock, it will be heard.'  
I knocked and swiftly came the answering word,  
Which bade me enter to my own estate.  
I found myself in a familiar place;  
And there my broken soul began to mend;  
I knew the smile of every long-lost face –  
They whom I forgot remembered me;  
I knelt, I knew – it was too bright to see –  
The welcome of a King who was my friend.

Maurice Baring



## श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

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स्वामी रंगनाथनंद, रामकृष्ण मिशन के प्रसिद्ध संन्यासी, अपने देहावसान के समय, अप्रैल 2005 तक, रामकृष्ण मठ, बेलूर, के प्रेसीडेंट थे।

श्री रमणाश्रम की मेरी पहली यात्रा 1936 में हुई। महर्षि का व्यक्तित्व असमान्य था, जिससे विश्वभर के लोगों के मन और हृदय उनकी ओर आकर्षित होते थे। श्रीमद्भागवत के एक श्लोक के अनुसार, 'वे जो अत्यंत शांत स्वभाव के हैं, जिनका मन तरंग-रहित समुंद्र जैसा स्थिर है, जिनका हृदय दया और सहानुभूति से परिपूर्ण है, जो प्राणीमात्र के मित्र हैं, जिनका कोई शत्रु नहीं है, यदि उनके प्रति आसक्ति हो जाए तो मुक्ति की प्राप्ति होती है।' यह वर्णन हमारे महर्षि पर एकदम खरा उतरता है।

महर्षि ने अमर, अनश्वर, शाश्वत को अपने भीतर समेट लिया था। इसी कारण उनके जीवन की महत्ता ऐसी आश्चर्यजनक है। वे हमारे मध्य एक सीधे-सादे मनुष्य के समान रहे। आप महर्षि का आकलन नहीं कर सकते थे, जैसे शिव का अग्नि-स्तंभ, जो अरुणाचल में प्रकट हुआ था, जिसकी गहराई और ऊँचाई की माप असंभव थी। [कथा के लिए देखें परिशिष्ट 2 का अंतिम पैराग्राफ]

उनका स्पर्श अमरता का स्पर्श था; ऐसा स्पर्श जो आपको उन्नत कर देता है और आपको ऐसी अनुभूति प्रदान करता है कि आपका जीवन भी

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सार्थक है। इस भौतिक युग में जहाँ सब प्रमाण पर आधारित है, हमें महर्षि में शाश्वत सत्य का मानवीय रूप मिलता है।

महर्षि निरंतर दिव्य चेतना में मग्न रहते थे, चाहे वे अकेले बैठे अपनी उपस्थिति की आभा बिखेर रहे हो, चाहे वे अपनी पुस्तकों के प्रूफ पढ़ रहे हो, चाहे वे रसोईघर में शाक-भाजी काट रहे हो, वे आनंद से झलकते थे। वे अनंत का दिव्य मूर्त रूप थे। उनके द्वारा बोला गया एक-एक शब्द आत्मविद्या के ज्ञान से अनुप्राणित होता था। 'सोहम्'— वह मैं हूँ, के वेदांतिक सत्य का वे स्वतः प्रमाण था। महर्षि का कहना था कि आत्म विद्या सरल है इसके लिए किसी व्यायाम की आवश्यकता नहीं है, हमें केवल अपनी चेतना का केंद्र बदलना होगा।

भागवत में वर्णित शुकदेव जी व रमण महर्षि में बहुत समानताएँ हैं। उन्हें आत्म में आनंद मिला और वे आत्म में ही भ्रमण करते असीम आनंद का अनुभव करते रहे। वे बंधन से मुक्त थे। वे अहेतुक प्रेम से परिपूर्ण थे। जिसे हम रमण महर्षि कहते हैं, वे मानवीय आकार में प्रकट एक द्विव्य सनातन संदेश है।

शंकराचार्य द्वारा रचित 'विवेक चूडामणी' में एक सुंदर श्लोक है, जो महर्षि के संदर्भ में पूर्णतः उपयुक्त है: नितांत अकिंचन, किंतु आनंद से पूर्ण; कोई सेना साथ नहीं, किंतु अनंत शक्तिशाली; इंद्रिय सुख-अनुभव से हीन, किंतु सदा सुखी; उनके समान कोई नहीं, किंतु वे सबको अपने समान माने। इसका एक उदाहरण देता हूँ।

दूसरी बार जब मैं रमणाश्रम गया, तो मैंने उन्हें बताया था कि तीन दिन ठहरूँगा। मुझे रेलगाड़ी से वापस जाना था। मुझे समय का ध्यान नहीं रहा। उन्होंने उचित समय पर मेरी ओर देखा और बोले, "आपके स्टेशन जाने के लिए तांगे की व्यवस्था कर दी गई है, आपके जाने का समय हो गया है।" कितनी मानवीयता। इतने विराट होते हुए भी, सामान्य व्यक्ति

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के समान बातचीत।

भागवत में श्रीकृष्ण के विषय में जो कहा गया है, वह महर्षि पर भी उतना ही लागू होता है: जितना भी उनके विषय में सुनो, उतनी ही अधिक इच्छा होती है, और अधिक, और अधिक सुनने की।

महर्षि विस्मयकारी आध्यात्मिक डाइनॅमो (Dynamo) हैं, जो हमारी जानकारी के बिना हमारे हृदय में प्रवेश करते हैं। ईश्वर हमें उनके योग्य बनने की शक्ति प्रदान करे।

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पास्कलिन माले, फ्रेंच लेखिका एवम् साधिका, 1937 में नौ मास की भारत यात्रा पर आईं। उनकी यात्रा-वृत्तांत पुस्तक Turn Eastwards को महर्षि से भी सराहना मिली।

हमने आश्रय के कक्ष के छोर पर एक मौन अचल आकृति देखी, जो सोफे पर तकिए के सहारे बैठी थी। महर्षि गहरे ध्यान में डूबे थे कदाचित्त ऐसा लग रहा था कि अपने आस-पास की सब वस्तुओं और व्यक्तियों से सर्वथा निर्लिप्त थे। हम चुपचाप सबके बीच भूमि पर बैठ गए। उस अनोखे, अविस्मरणीय दृश्य को मैंने धीरे-धीरे अपने अंदर उतार लिया। मेरा पूरा ध्यान उस आकृति पर था जिसकी शांत भव्यता, महिमामय शक्ति, और पूर्ण संतुलन से सारा वातावरण अकथनीय शांति से परिपूर्ण था।

आश्रम में संध्या-कालीन वेद पारायण हुआ, किंतु वह मौन मूर्ति एक बार भी नहीं हिली और न ही किसी प्रकार का ऐसा संकेत दिया कि उन्हें इस पूरे कार्य-कलाप से कोई सरोकार है। वे तो दिक्काल (Space and time) की सीमाओं से परे किसी अन्य क्षेत्र में रह रहे थे। मुझे ऐसा लग रहा था कि वे एक ऐसी अवस्था में हैं जिसका वर्णन हो ही नहीं सकता। मेरे लिए यह एक अविस्मरणीय अनुभव था।

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इसमें कोई सेदह नहीं कि सबसे बड़ा सुख या सहायता महर्षि के नज़दीक आने में निहित था। यह एक तथ्य है कि आश्रम में जो भी आते थे उनमें से एक भी खाली हाथ नहीं लौटता था। सब अपनी पात्रता के अनुसार भरपूर पाते थे। अनेक लोगों को ऐसा आंतरिक अनुभव मिला, जिसने उनका जीवन ही बदल दिया।

**सन् 1939 में माले ने फ्रांस से जो पत्र महर्षि को लिखा, उसका कुछ अंश इस प्रकार है :**

“यद्यपि दो वर्ष पहले मैंने आश्रम की दहलीज पार की थी, किंतु मन से तो मैं अभी भी वहीं हूँ।

“आपकी परस्थिति के मौन-क्षणों की धन्यता में जो सच्चाई प्रकट हुई थी, उस पर कई बार भ्रम का आवरण आ जाता है। जीवन की धूप-छाँह में आत्मबोध का सुनहरा धागा अक्सर हाथ से छूट जाता है। आत्म-साक्षात्कार की आंतरिक प्यास बराबर बनी हुई है और बलवती होती जा रही है। कभी स्वतः ही बिना किसी स्पष्ट कारण आत्मबोध की झलक मिल जाती है और हृदय आनंद से परिपूर्ण हो जाता है।

“मैं आपसे उस प्रकाश और मार्ग-दर्शन की प्रार्थना करती हूँ, जो मुझे सदैव आपकी कृपा से प्राप्त होता रहेगा। मैं आपके चरणों में सच्चे हृदय से अपने प्रेम की पुष्पांजली चढ़ाती हूँ।”

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**इथेल मस्टॉन, एक फ्रेंच भक्त, 1939 में महर्षि के पास आई थी। उन्होंने कई वर्षों तक रमणाश्रम के पास निवास किया।**

सन् 1937-38 में पॅरिस में साधकों का छोटा सा वर्ग जे. कृष्णामूर्ति तथा अन्य कुछ लोगों के विचारों पर चर्चा के लिए एकत्र हुआ। हम सब ने ब्रंटन की *A Search in Secret India* (सं 1) पढ़ी हुई थी। हममें से

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एक, पास्कलिन माले (सं 57) रमणाश्रम की यात्रा कर चुकी थी और महर्षि से बहुत प्रभावित हुई थी। माले ने महर्षि द्वारा रचित **Who Am I ?** पुस्तक के फ्रेंच अनुवाद में मेरी सहायता ली थी। इस पुस्तक ने मुझ पर गहरा प्रभाव डाला। हम सब उस महात्मा को देखने के उत्सुक थे, जिसके ब्रंटन ने इतने गुणगान किए थे।

अंततः महर्षि ने मुझे 1939 में तिरुवण्णामलै बुला लिया। उनके कक्ष में प्रवेश करने के कुछ क्षण पश्चात् मुझे बोध हो गया कि मैं आज सबसे महान गुरु के समक्ष खड़ी हूँ। उनके सामने आते ही मुझे अपनत्व का अनुभव हुआ। उस छोटे से कक्ष की संपूर्ण शांति ने मुझे ऐसा आकर्षित किया जैसा किसी स्थान ने पहले कभी नहीं किया था। हमें केवल दो दिन ठहराना था, किंतु जब मैं जा रही थी तभी मुझे लगा कि मैं पुनः वापस आऊँगी। वह वापसी दो वर्ष बाद हुई। तब से पाँच वर्षों तक निरंतर हर ग्रीष्म अवकाश में महर्षि के समक्ष बैठने के लिए, रमणाश्रम आती रही। सन् 1944 में जब उत्तर भारत में मेरा कार्य समाप्त हो गया, मैं स्थायी रूप से उनके निकट रहने के लिए तिरुवण्णामलै आ गई।

महर्षि के दर्शनों के लिए भिन्न-भिन्न जाति, संप्रदाय और देश-विदेश से लोग आते थे। उनमें से, राजा से झाड़ू लगाने वाले तक के लिए, महर्षि सौम्य व समान मित्र थे।

आगंतुक, जिनमें से मैं भी एक थी, प्रश्न पूछने से शुरुआत करते किंतु शीघ्र ही समझ जाते की प्रश्नों की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है। एक या दूसरे ढंग से, बिना पूछे ही सबको अपने प्रश्नों के उत्तर मिल जाते थे, समस्या सुलझ जाती थी।

एक बार मैं तीन दिन तक समस्या से परेशान थी, कोई समाधान नहीं मिल रहा था। चौथे दिन समस्या से परेशान महर्षि के सामने बैठी थी। महर्षि ने मेरी ओर देखा और कुछ क्षण के पश्चात् अपने परिचारक से

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पुराण—कथाओं की एक पुस्तक लाने को कहा। उन्होंने उस पुस्तक के कुछ पन्ने पलटकर जो परिच्छेद (Passage) उन्हें चाहिए था, निकाला, और एक अंग्रेजी जानने वाले भक्त से उसे जोर सक पढ़ने को कहा। उस कथा में मेरी समस्या का समाधान छुपा था, जो मुझे मिल गया।

महर्षि प्रत्येक साधक को उसकी आवश्यकता अनुसार ही सिखाते थे। वे अतीन्द्रियदर्शी (Clairvoyant) थे और हमारे विचारों को पढ़ लेते थे। वे मौन रहकर विचारों को प्रेषित करने की महान क्षमता से संपन्न थे। उनका विचार—प्रेषण इतना शक्तिशाली हो सकता था कि उसके कंपन (Vibrations) लहरों के समान कक्ष में फैल जाते थे। उनका प्रभाव केवल उन लोगों तक ही सीमित नहीं था, जिनके लिए वे होते थे; कक्ष में उपस्थित अन्य व्यक्तियों को भी कंपन की अनुभूति होती थी।

महर्षि के सम्मुख बैठने मात्र से यह अनुभव होता था कि वास्तविक विश्राम क्या है, और शांत मन का अर्थ यह नहीं कि व्यक्ति अपने आप को सबसे अलग कर ले, किंतु सबके बीच में होते हुए भी अपने भीतर रहे, संसार में होकर भी संसार में न रहे। ■

**क्रमशः**

“श्री रमण महर्षि 120 व्यक्तियों के प्रबोधनकारी, प्रेरणादायक संस्मरण”  
पुस्तक से उद्धृत

(संपादक - प्रो. लक्ष्मी नारायण  
अनुवादक - डॉ. छाया तिवारी)

*Translated from Hindi version of book  
'Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi'*



## श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत

20 जनवरी, 1937

334. श्री भगवान् ने बताया कि उनके पैरों में मालिश की जाने पर भी उनको संवेदना नहीं होती। उन्होंने पूछा, “यदि वे चलने का कार्य करते रहें और संवेदना न भी हो तो क्या अन्तर पड़ता है ?” तदनन्तर वार्ता—क्रम में उन्होंने बताया कि प्रकाश की एक किरण की जानकारी के बाद उसके प्रक्षेपण पर वह यन्त्र—चालक को प्रकट नहीं करती किन्तु उसे चित्र देखने में सहायक हो जाती है। सिद्ध पुरुषों की भी यही रीति है। वे केवल शुद्ध प्रकाश होने से अन्य व्यक्तियों को देखने में समर्थ हैं, जबकि दूसरे व्यक्ति उनको नहीं देख सकते। उदाहरण के लिए, प्रभुलिंग को उत्तर भारत की यात्रा करते समय गोरखनाथ मिले। गोरखनाथ ने उनको अपनी यौगिक शक्तियों का प्रदर्शन कराया। उदाहरणार्थ, जब उनकी बाँह को तलवार से काटा गया तो उनको कोई चोट नहीं लगी पर तलवार मोथरी हो गयी। यह ‘काया सिद्धि’ है जिसमें शरीर पर चोट नहीं लगती। प्रभुलिंग ने स्वयं को तलवार का प्रहार सहने को प्रस्तुत किया। जब तलवार से प्रहार किया गया तो उनकी पूरी देह में से तलवार इस ओर से उस ओर ऐसे निकल गयी मानो शरीर वायु का बना था और शरीर पर कोई चोट नहीं आयी। गोरख चकित रह गये तथा उन्होंने प्रभुलिंग का शिष्यत्व स्वीकार कर लिया।

कैलाश पर शिव—पार्वती के मध्य सम्वाद हुआ। शिव का कथन था कि अल्लामा ऐसा है जो पार्वती के मधुर भाषण से प्रभावित नहीं हो सकता।

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पार्वती परीक्षा करना चाहती थीं। अतः उन्होंने अपने तमोगुण को एक राजकुमारी की आकृति बनाकर पृथ्वी पर अल्लामा को रिझाने के लिए भेजा। राजकुमारी अत्यन्त गुणवती कन्या बन गयी। वह मन्दिर में गायन करती थी। अल्लामा वहाँ जाकर मृदंग-वादन करता था। मृदंग-वादन से राजकुमारी स्तब्ध हो गयी। उसे अल्लामा से प्रेम हो गया। राजकुमारी के शयन-कक्ष में उनका मिलन हुआ। राजकुमारी ने अल्लामा का आलिंगन किया तो वह अगोचर हो गया। राजकुमारी विरह से दुखी होने लगी। किन्तु एक दिव्य अप्सरा को उसे पृथ्वी पर अवतरित होने के प्रयोजन का स्मरण कराने को भेजा गया। उसने अल्लामा को भ्रष्ट करने का संकल्प किया किन्तु वह सफल न हो सकी। अन्त में वह कैलास लौट आयी। तब पार्वती ने अपने सतोगुण को भेजा जिसने एक ब्राह्मण संन्यासिनी के वेश में जन्म लिया। संन्यासिनी ने जब अल्लामा को समर्पित किया तब उसे अल्लामा की वास्तविक महानता की अनुभूति हुई।

श्री भगवान् ने नायण अर्थात् काव्यकण्ठ गणपित मुनि की लगभग एक घण्टे तक अत्यधिक प्रशंसा की—किस प्रकार उन्होंने 'उमा सहस्रत्रम्' की रचना की, किस प्रकार वे अपने छात्रों को अध्ययन कराते थे, किस प्रकार उन्होंने भट्ट श्री नारायण शास्त्री से शास्त्रार्थ किया। इतने अधिक विद्वान एवं समर्थ होकर भी वे कैसे विनम्र एवं विनयशील थे।

श्री भगवान् ने बताया किस प्रकार नक्कीरार, जो कवि थे, उन्हें शिव की एक तमिल रचना के सम्बन्ध में संशय व्यक्त करने के कारण शिव के कोप का शिकार होना पड़ा था, किस प्रकार उन्हें एक दूत द्वारा बन्दी बनाया गया और बाद में मुक्त किया गया।

नक्कीरार एक तीर्थ के तट पर तपस्या कर रहे थे। एक वृक्ष से एक पत्ता नीचे गिरा; आधे पत्ते ने जल को स्पर्श किया तथा शेष आधा भूमि पर था।

अचानक जल वाला आधा भाग मछली बन गया तथा भूमि वाला

आधा भाग पक्षी बन गया। दोनों एक-दूसरे से पत्ते द्वारा जुड़े हुए थे तथा अपने-अपने तत्त्व में जाने के लिए संघर्ष कर रहे थे। नक्कीरार आश्चर्य से यह दृश्य देख रहे थे कि अचानक ऊपर से एक दूत नीचे आकर उसे उठाकर ऐसी गुफा में ले गया जहाँ पहले से अन्य 999 बन्दी थे, वे सब तपोभ्रष्ट थे।

**भक्त :** क्या नक्कीरार तपोभ्रष्ट था ?

**महर्षि :** हाँ। जब वे ध्यान में थे तब उन्होंने वहाँ से गिरकर अपने सामने घटती रहस्यमय घटनाओं को क्यों देखा ? तदुपरान्त महर्षि ने बताया कि किस प्रकार नक्कीरार ने तिरुमुरुहत्रुप्पडई की रचना कर सभी एक हजार बन्दियों को छुड़ाया।

21 जनवरी, 1937

335. **भक्त :** कामवासना के आवेग का निवारण कैसे होगा ?

**महर्षि :** जब भेदभाव का निवारण हो।

**भक्त :** यह कैसे हो ?

**महर्षि :** लिंग-भेद तथा उसका सम्बन्ध केवल मानसिक कल्पनाएँ हैं। उपनिषद् कहते हैं कि सब प्रिय हैं, चूँकि आत्मा सबको प्रिय है। जीव की प्रसन्नता आन्तरिक है; प्रेम केवल आत्मा का ही है। यह केवल आन्तरिक है; इसे बाहर मत समझो; तभी भेदभाव कार्य करना बन्द करेगा। ■

**क्रमशः**

“श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत” पुस्तक से उद्धृत

(संग्रहकर्ता - श्री मुनगल एस. वेंकटरामैया

अनुवादक - श्री दिनेशचन्द्र शर्मा)

*Translated from 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi'*



## Kendra Bulletin

**W**e had a busy schedule replete with Spiritual discourses. While continuing his Atmabodha classes, Swami Durgeshananda started his talks on Bhagavan's composition Upadesa Saram which was enthusiastically received; so much so the venue had to be shifted to the Auditorium to accommodate all devotees. Shri Vijay gave important insights into the Gita while completing his talks on Ch V- Yoga of Renunciation.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

<b>July 2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 30<sup>th</sup>, Aug 6<sup>th</sup></b>	Swami Durgeshananda Upadesasaram
<b>July 9<sup>th</sup>, Aug 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Swami Prabhuddhananda Katopanishad
<b>July 16<sup>th</sup>, Aug 20<sup>th</sup></b>	Shri P N Vijay Bhagavad Gita Ch VI
<b>July 23<sup>rd</sup>, Aug 27<sup>th</sup></b>	Swami Durgeshananda Atmabodha

### Other discourses hosted at the Kendra:

#### Swami Prabhuddhanda

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Mon	9-10am	Ashtavakra Gita	10.30-11.30am	Bhagavad Gita
Tues	9-10am	Taittiriya Upanishad	10.15-11am	Brihadaranyaka
Wed	9-10am	Naishkarmya Siddhi	10.30-11.30am	Bhagavad Gita
Thu	9-10am	Taittiriya Upanishad	10.15-11am	Brihadaranyaka
Fri	9-10am	Vishuddha Vedanta Paribhasha	10.15-11am	Sanskrit Grammar
Sat	9-10am	Vishuddha Vedanta Paribhasha	10.15-11am	Sanskrit Grammar
Sun	8.30-10am	Brahmasutra		

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*The results of Karma (Action) pass away,  
and yet leave seeds that cast the agent  
into an ocean of Karma.  
Karma yields no salvation*

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