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

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Obsession with Technology

Dr. Vijay Vancheswar

Technological tools are great enablers in our everyday interactions. However, they can also trap us through their addictive tendencies. The rise of social media and its ubiquitous use across diverse channels is a primary cause. In the spiritual journey what is emphasised is reflection and experiential learning. Technology with its attractive range of applications makes us unwitting victims of it. Blaise Pascal the well known French mathematician trenchantly remarks “All of humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room”. This resonates with the teachings of many spiritual masters. More than the physical activities that we are involved with, we need to be vigilant about the trappings of our mind and thoughts. Ramana Maharshi emphasises this with his simplistic advice ‘Be Still’. If we honestly analyse our behavioural traits we will find that in varying degrees, the crux of our problem is unwarranted

thinking leading to worry. Hence the inability to be quiet. Technological outlets used in moderation help us connect and learn. However, we need to guard against becoming enslaved to them. In an age of multiple options, the natural inclination of our minds to reach out and connect finds alluring opportunities. In the name of seeking, sharing and learning; with the easy availability of technological outlets, we get drawn into thinking and discussing threadbare the teachings of many masters. We run the risk of proving, establishing and reinforcing our beliefs on spiritual subjects. In today’s era of new age media, this can lead to overuse and an obsession with technological aids. Bertrand Russell says, “The chains of habit are too light to be felt until they are too heavy to be broken”. An objective review of the behavioural patterns of like minded groups of people using the medium of face book and mobiles can be an eye opener. The question arises, ‘rather than uses these medium as aids, are

we becoming their victims from dawn to dusk'? Mindful actions can guard us so that technology facilitates rather than hinders our spiritual progress. One way to address this issue is to disconnect and be more within ourselves every day, for a few minutes.

Extending this to a day in a week could be a good 'sadhana' by itself. The case of children and youth addicted to these tools is all too evident as of some elderly, who prone to 'verbal

diarrhea', now have become victims of 'technology diarrhea'!

On the spiritual path, the ultimate challenge is to be in a state of vigilant witnessing. Disengagement from external trappings and introversion helps in this. The alluring traps laid by technological channels can lure us through ego gratification into a false sense of contentment. J Krishnamurti, points out that as a class, human beings are keen on changes externally, rarely internally. Internal change

demands an honest and critical self review. Have listening to multitude of lectures or reading and discussing the writings of masters brought about a change within us? Have we become more kind, tolerant, caring, forgiving, less egoistic and critical? These are

“Have listening to multitude of lectures or reading and discussing the writings of masters brought about a change within us? Have we become more kind, tolerant, caring, forgiving, less egoistic and critical? These are important questions that we need to honestly ask ourselves.”

important questions that we need to honestly ask ourselves. In most cases, we will find that the change in behaviour while transient is not consistent and significant.

Lasting transformation within us demands diligence, time and effort.

As we increase the duration of our inner sojourn, we will observe a positive change in our attitude and responses to situations and events. Experiential wisdom gained through quiet introspection is more enduring. This sustains beyond the temporal pleasures of incessant chatting across multiple technological platforms. ■

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Shrink thinking through Meditation

A S Rajaram

Sri Ramana Maharshi said that meditation is concentration on a single thought. Other thoughts are to be kept out and that single thought also must vanish at the right time. Thought-free consciousness is the goal. When Kavya Kanta Ganapathi Sasthry, the great scholar and sanskrit poet wanted Ramana to instruct him about how to perform “Tapas”. Maharshi said, “Watch where from the 'I' starts and when the mind merges at the source, that is Tapas. If a mantra is pronounced, if watched where from the sound of the mantra starts, there the mind will merge: that is Tapas”. Thus, abiding in the source is pure meditation according to Ramana. When the mind with a tremendous longing to find the source which gives it light, turns inwards, that is meditation.

“The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation” declares Swami Vivekananda. In meditation, we divest ourselves of all material conditions

and feel our divine nature. We do not depend on any external help in meditation. It is attachment, identification which makes us miserable. To think I am the spirit and not the body and I am only a witness to this whole universe with all its relations, with all its good and all its evil is true meditation.

So intraverting the mind is the prime thing says Maharshi. There is no need for anyone to meditate “I am Brahman”. Only the annihilation of I is liberation. But it can be gained only by keeping the I-I always in view. So the need for the investigation of the I thought. If the I is not let go, no blank can result to the seeker. Otherwise the meditation will end in sleep. Meditation on “I am He” or “I am Brahman” is the activity of the mind. “Since we are ever That, why should we forever be meditating that we are That? Does a man meditate “I am a Man”?” (Satdharshanam, verse 36)

The attention of the aspirant should

be focussed only on the Self, which always shines and should be kept there without being allowed to move away to second or third person objects. If the mind goes towards objects, the ego will get strengthened whereas if the attention is directed towards the first person I, it is equal to committing suicide, “for only by enquiry into the first person will ego itself die.” Not only should one pay attention but, “there should be constant attention”. No other effort is necessary. Your effort is only meant not to allow yourself to be distracted by other thoughts. (Talks, p272) “The mind is contaminated when it takes an object. Otherwise it is pure. The main factor in Dhyana is to keep the mind active in its own pursuit without taking in external impressions or thinking of other matters.”(Talks, p68)

To meditate by thinking “I am He”, “I am Brahman” by people with little understand may become counter productive. “Man misbehaves acting without restraint and as he pleases, even when he only imagines “I am this trifling body”. If he were to imagine “I am Brahman Himself” of what evil would he then be incapable of, cautions Maharshi (Guru Ramana Vachana Mala, verse 149). that is why Ramana in his benedictory verse in “Forty verses on reality” says “Since

the reality “I” exists within beyond thought, who can and how to meditate upon that Reality, which is called the Heart? To abide in the Heart as it is (ie, without thought) is truly meditating (upon it). Thus should you know.”

The desire to know the Real is false, for there is no knowledge separate from the Real to make it known. Truth is not an achievement, nor an act of knowledge. But it is simply an awareness of Being. All our mind's riches are only an expression of our ignorance. Thus, sadhana or meditation is not doing anything but Being.

Thus, “Realization” is false since Real cannot be made real. We have only seemingly lost ourselves; being incorruptible, we cannot truly besmirch or bind our essential nature; all that is required is for us to stop thinking, start disrealizing. All thoughts proceed from the thinker, who himself is a self projection in consciousness. The path of work, devotion, knowledge or yogic exercises is a hand maiden of the ego and becomes false like a thief becoming a policeman to apprehend himself.

True wisdom lies in turning inwards, go to the source of thoughts, which resolves into the root thought - “I”. The 19th verse in Upadesha

Saram teaches us that “the inner-most shrine is the shrine of “I”. And when the seeker of truth, storms this citadel, baring the sword of truth, he slays himself, his head bows and falls.”

“Meditation” declares Osho is effort without a goal. Meditation has no goal. It has no desire to attain anything. The dropping of the achieving mind is what meditation is all about. The understanding of desire and the understanding of constant ambition

for goals for achievement, brings you to a point, a point of tremendous awareness, when you see clearly that all goals are false that you need not

go anywhere, that you need not attain anything to be blissful, that to be blissful is your nature. You are missing it because you are running here and there, and in that running you are going on forgetting yourself. The discovery of yourself is not a goal, because you are already it.

When the mind is no longer running towards the past and towards the future, when all the running has disappeared,

when there is no mind as such when you are simply there doing nothing, just being, this is meditation. Again, “All seeking is futile, but one learns only through seeking. One learns this tremendously important fact that all seeking is useless only through seeking. There is no other way to learn it. You seek and you fail, you seek again and you fail. Slowly, slowly it becomes clear to you that seeking itself is the cause of missing it. Then

seeking drops of its own accord. And when there is no longing, no desire, when you are utterly silent, when the very mind of the achiever has disappeared,

“When camphor burns no residue is left. The mind must be like camphor. It must melt away and be wholly consumed by the earnest resolve to find and be the real Self. Only by this resolve the “Who Am I” meditation will fructify. When the mind is thus consumed, ... ”

you are surprised that what you have been seeking all along has always been with you. How can you seek the seeker? How can you know the knower? That is impossible, you cannot encounter yourself. You are the Truth.” (So Lost, So At Home, p122)

Meditation with a battle for it is the effort to hold on to one thought to the exclusion of everything else. In the

beginning, other thoughts will arise and try to sink the single thought. Only when the single thought gains sufficient strength, the other thoughts are put to flight. Maharshi said, "When camphor burns no residue is left. The mind must be like camphor. It must melt away and be wholly consumed by the earnest resolve to find and be the real Self. Only by this resolve the "Who Am I" meditation will fructify. When the mind is thus consumed, i.e. no trace of it as mind is left, it becomes resolved into the self. " Therefore, one should gather all the energies of body and mind by banishing all alien thoughts and

direct these energies into a single current to solve the question of the truth of the one who seeks, the source of the sense of Self in the ego. One should turn inwards into the Heart like a pearl diver. And for such a one success is assured. The ego will get swallowed up by the infinite Self. In the egoless state, the Self will abide in all its glory. The annihilation of the meditator as a separate individual alone is an enlightenment. When the mind thus perishes what remains is the knowledge of the Self. What remains is the truth. ■

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Neera Kashyap talking about her experiences on "Advent Day"



Karthigai Deepam Festival

P.N.Vijay

Every year Karthigai Deepam festival is celebrated with great devotion in Tiruvannamalai on the Poornima day in the month of Karthigai. This year it occurred on 25th November. In Ramana Kendra Delhi also devotees thronged the Shrine and celebrated with recitations from the Vedas and Bhagavan's compositions. After the Deepa puja, devotees did the Parikrama of the Shrine thrice. Finally a flame was placed on top of the Shrine which is shaped like the Arunachala Hill. While many will know the significance of the festival, for those who may not be aware, I will give a few interesting insights.

In Tiruvannamalai at sunset a huge flame is lit on top of the Hill and lakhs of people perambulate the Hill chanting "Arunachalarukku Arohara". Hindus believe Lord Shiva appears as Arunachala Hill at Tiruvannamalai. Indeed, the very names 'Tiruvannamalai' and 'Arunachala' translate as 'holy fire hill.' The

Shivalinga in the temple here is the Agni Linga. The tiny lamps lit during Karthigai Deepam are believed to be the miniature replicas of this Agni Linga.

Mythology has it that once Lord Shiva - in order to test Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma who both claimed to be the greatest - took the form of an endless flame and asked the two of them to reach the top and the bottom of the flame. Brahma tried to search for the top and took the form of a swan and flew up. Vishnu took the form of a boar and went down below the earth. Both tried and tried but failed. While Vishnu returned and admitted defeat, Brahma tried to play false. On the way up he had encountered a Thazhambu, a flower which claimed that it had been floating down thirty thousand years and was coming back after seeing top of Shiva's flame. So Brahma reported to Shiva that he had also seen the top. Shiva immediately saw through his lie and condemned

himby saying that Brahma will never have a temple. He also said that the flower Thazhambu-which had also told a lie- will not be used for worship any more.

The famous composition of Shri Papanasivam brings out this story very beautifully

“Ari Ayanum Kaanaa Aria Jyoti
Adhi Antham Illa Pazhaman Aadhi”

You are the rare flame (aria jyoti) that has no beginning (aadhi) or end (anta). Even Hari (ari) and Brahma (ayanum) who tried to search for it could not see (kaanaa) your limits. You are the ancient ageless one (pazhamanaadhi).

The star Karthigai is not a single star and is in fact a constellation of six stars. The six stars are considered in Indian mythology as the six celestial nymphs who reared the six babies in the Saravana tank which later were joined together by Lord Shiva to form the six faced Shanmukha (six-faced God) with mother as Parvati and worshipped as his second son after Lord Ganesha. As the six nymphs helped in fostering Shamukha, Lord Shiva blessed immortality to the six nymphs as ever living stars on the sky. Any worship performed to these six stars is equal to worshipping Lord

Shanmukha himself. Rows of oil lamps (Deepam) in the evening of the festival day in homes and on the streets to worship Shiva, Shamukha and the Stars. Lighting lamps is considered auspicious in all Hindu festivals but on Deepam day it is the very core of festival itself and gives its very name.

The philosophical implication is that Lord Shiva created Shanmukha from himself. The six faces represent six primary aspects of Shiva which are described as Tatpurusam (Face of Concealed Grace), Aghoram (Face of Annihilation) Sadyojatam (Face of Creation), Vamadevam (Face of Healing and Preservation), Eesanam (Face of Revealed Grace) Adhomukam (Grace of Expansion).

Deepam festival has its own traditional cuisine and for this also there is a legend! Once upon a time there lived a King and he had only one daughter. She loved an elephant which grew with her and she considered the elephant as her own brother. After her marriage she missed her brother elephant very much. So on every Karthigai Deepam occasion, she would light an elephant lamp (Gajalakshmi vilaku), Pori Urundai, Adhirasam, VellaSeedai and keep them as Neivedhyam (offering) for

this festival. Likewise devotees make these preparations and also light an Elephant lamp.

For Bhagavan the Arunachala Hill and Deepam had a great philosophical significance. He rushed to the holy town after his Death Experience and lived either in caves on the Hill or at the foothills all his life. . He identified the Hill as a manifestation of Lord Shiva and the Kartigai Deepam as a

symbol of the knowledge that destroys the false I in us. So no wonder for all Ramana devotees the Deepam festival is an important date in their spiritual calendar.

May Lord Shiva, His beloved son Lord Shanmukha and His Incarnation Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi bless all devotees with knowledge, security and happiness. ■

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Happiness is our true nature, our essential being. The transient happiness that we seem to derive from external experiences actually arises only from within ourself, and is experienced by us due to the temporary calming of our mind that occurs whenever any of our desires are fulfilled. So long as our mind is extroverted, attending to anything other than our own essential self-conscious being, we can never experience perfect, permanent and unqualified happiness. To experience true and eternal happiness, we must attain the experience of true self-knowledge — that is, absolutely clear consciousness of our own essential being, ‘I am’. Such is the truth revealed by Bhagavan Sri Ramana

**(From Happiness and The Art of Being
by Michael James)**



Kendra Bulletin

November-December 2015

KARTHIGAI DEEPAM DAY

On November 25th, Ramana Kendra Delhi celebrated Karthigai Deepam festival. P.N.Vijay talked about the significance of the festival which is celebrated with a lot of fervour in Thiruvannamal. Lakhs of devotees from all over Tamil Nadu throng to the place to witness the Deepam. There was a large gathering of devotees at the Kendra. After Vedaparayanam and Deepa puja, Deepam was placed on top of our shrine which is built in the shape of Arunachala hill. It was nice to see young students of Vedanta school join in the recitation in their sonorous voice.

TALKS

Shri P.N.Vijay concluded Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita and has started the next chapter. Swami Prabhuddananda has completed his discourse on Bhagavan's Sat Darshanam. Shri. Ambarish Dave has started a series on Bhagavan's Upadesha Saram. Shri Prashant Tripathi gave a lecture on Freewill and Destiny. Shri Shadi Lal Verma spoke about the concept of Shakti.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

January 2016	February 2016
3rd Jan - Bhagavad Gita Ch III by Shri P.N.Vijay	7th Feb - TBA
10th Jan - Katopanishad by Swami Prabhuddananda	14th Feb - Katopanishad by Swami Prabhuddananda
17th Jan - Spirituality and Daily Living by Dr. Vijay Vancheswar	21st Feb - Bhagavad Gita Ch III by Shri P.N.Vijay
24th & 31st Jan - Upadesa Saram by Shri Ambarish Dave	28th Feb - Upadesa Saram by Shri Ambarish Dave



Destiny and Freewill

Shri Prashant

The topic is Destiny and Freewill. The mind has always been interested in knowing about these. The individual that we sometimes call as man, sometimes refer to as ego, sometimes as the self - the fragmented self - is always curious about this particular topic because it is related to his freedom. He wants to know whether he really does have any freewill, any choice, and any real power to determine things by himself, or is it a totally deterministic world. That's what makes everybody very curious in this topic.

The ego wants to know that to what extent things are destined and to what extent does its own discretion, its own will and volition apply and matter. And when we look at it, at least superficially it appears that these two or a combination of these two are the only options that are available to us. It seems that man is either destined or he does enjoy freewill, or his predicament, his position lies

somewhere in between, but on the same plane.

And the first glance also suggests as if these two are opposites of each other. As if those who talk about destiny are taking a position counter to those who talk about freewill. At least that is how psychologists look at it. So a Skinner for example would say that we are purely mechanical and had all of our past had been known then our future could be predicted with absolute certainty - it is just that we do not have all the data of the past. So he says, "Well, everything is destiny, there is nothing called freewill". And then there are other intellectuals who take a counter position and say, "No, man's consciousness has an important role to play, not everything is predestined".

That brings us to an important word - intellect, when we are talking of intellectuals. Intellect. I'll ask you: are both of these - destiny and freewill - not concepts of the intellect? And in

that sense are they really opposite to each other or are they the same thing? Concepts of intellect.

THAT MIGHT SURPRISE US.

How can these two be same? Or even similar? Because these two are supposed to be the two ends of the debate. 'Destiny *versus* Freewill' that is what we always say. How can these two have something in common between them? I want to assert that just like the two poles of duality these two are not different at all! They are one and the same thing. They both are mental creations and mental concepts and imaginations. And like everything else that is mental the ego wants to think about them because it seeks security and because it wants knowledge as a tool for contentment and fulfillment.

LET'S SEE:

When we say 'destiny' what is the mental model that we have? We mean that there are two entities. One: the self, the me, the ego. And the other, is the universe with its whole history of evolution. And the other determines the 'me'. The universe with its entire vast systems, with its whole time and space, with its cause and effect chains is determining what I am and what I would be. So what am I doing

in creating this mental model? Please see what I am doing. In talking of destiny I am creating a 'me', a 'me' which is separate from universe, even if it is controlled by the universe. I have played a very smart trick upon myself. I have said that even if I am at the mercy of circumstances, even if I am at the mercy of all players outside of me, even if I am just an evolutionary product, yet 'I am' – separate, individualized.

And this 'I am'ness is not the same as what the Maharshi would call as the Aatman. This I amness is I amness of the ego. The ego that wants to retain its individuality. So in talking of destiny the mind has done what the mind always does: *it has preserved itself*. The world is acting upon me, so I am.

We are so insecure that we somehow want to convince ourselves that we are. With death looming large around us, with everything being so ephemeral, there is always the threat of us not being at all. So, through a thousand means, the mind wants to convince itself that it is. It is. It really is. The *anitya* trembles in fear and somehow wants to touch *nityata*.

At the other end are those who talk of freewill. Let us see what the mind is doing when it is talking of

freewill. Again a mental model is being constructed in which the ego is there, and the ego has the power to determine, to act. And if the ego has the power to determine and act, certainly there has to be a substance upon which it will act. That substance then is the universe. Again the same division is being created. Again I am saying, 'I am there, and outside of me something else is there, and I act upon it'.

The mind really is a trickster. Superficially the debate is about determinism. But actually it is the same old strife: the ego somehow trying to assert itself and using intellect as a tool, using argumentation as a tool. To a silent mind, I ask you all, where is destiny? And to a silent mind where is freewill? In your deepest moments of joy are you thinking of destiny? Immersed in freedom are you conceptualizing about freewill? Submerged in love would you get into this debate -- destiny versus freewill? These questions arise only to the troubled mind and these questions give no peace at all. Because there can be no peace in a dualistic debate. There can be peace only in silence beyond this debate.

Whether we take this position or that position at either end of the

duality, we are only fragmenting. We are only creating a self and the world outside of the self. We are only trying to violate the basic principle of duality that the two ends though seem opposite of each other are actually one. The contradiction between them is just superficial. They are not different at all.

But the mind won't be satisfied by this much only. It still wants to know what is destiny, what is freewill.

Just telling it that this debate is useless does not help it. We are basically restless beings. *Man is nothing but restlessness personified.* And if you tell restlessness that you are uselessly restless then it doesn't assuage it, that doesn't help it. So we'll have to come to the questions: What really then is destiny? What really then is freedom? What really then is this thing called 'will'?

If you look at the etymology of the word destiny, destiny means something that is established, that is there. In that sense the word destiny is very-very close to the word Truth: Sat- That which Is. That which really exists is destiny. Usually we place destiny somewhere in the future, usually we act as if destiny lies in time and time brings us to it. That is not the real meaning of the destiny; time

doesn't bring us to destiny. Destiny is that which we really *are right now*, timelessly, spacelessly. Destiny is not what we will become. Destiny is 'What we Are' - the Self, the *Aatman* - and time is a very inefficient way to come to it. Most of us want to use time to come to the timeless. It's a very circuitous route, very longwinded, unnecessarily tortuous. And it fails. After all that it takes and promises, *{smiling}* it fails.

Even after hundreds of years and hundreds of births time alone never bring anybody to the timelessness. They are different dimensions. One can keep roaming on this floor for centuries that would not make him fly, the Sky is a different dimension. You will never *come* to your destiny. When you drop all thoughts of coming and going and becoming then you are what you are, and you have reached your destiny. Your destiny has been revealed to you, that is a better way of saying.

What is our destiny? The Non-dual Silence is our destiny. That is what we really are.

Nothing more can be said about it. In fact saying even this much is a transgression. But as we said the mind is like a restless monkey, it needs some fruits to entertain itself.

So we have to give it some words, some concepts. But even when we are treating the mind with concepts, we must ensure concepts are kept to the minimum. You see, concepts must be like *Om*, which is a word but the most minimal of words, a sound quickly dissolving into silence. Only such minimum quantity of concepts must be given to the mind, and the mind must be of a nature that is able to sustain itself with this much. That is the meaning of *austerity*. That is the real meaning of austerity. Austerity is not about eating less or consuming less, it is about having a mind that thinks less, and even without thinking it is at peace with itself.

You know, that's what we do. We try to use our peacelessness to come to peace. We try very complex ways to come to simplicity. Because that's the only tool available to the mind, the mind doesn't know simplicity, it knows complexity. So, mind will use violence to come to love!

Why are we fighting?

Because we love each other so much.

Why do you have such a large army?

{Sarcastically} Because it is a peace-keeping force.

And don't we give those names? After all what is happening at the macro level is just a reflection of the micro. What nations are doing is just an aggregation of what the individual mind is.

NOW, FREEDOM AND WILL:

I want to ask: Can there be freedom when one system is acting upon the other? Can there be freedom when there is the 'me' and there is the universe and the universe is not me? Which means by definition the universe is outside the control of my volition. That is the definition. There is 'me' and then there is this 'not me'. Can there be freedom in this framework? If by definition I have created a model in which there is something outside me, where is the question of freedom? That which is outside me has a life of its own; that's how I have defined it.

Now, where is the question of freedom? The other will always limit you and your freedom. Sartre said, "The other is hell". He might not have said this in a deeply spiritual sense but I find it apt to quote him because the other will always limit your freedom. Let me put it this way: *Otherness limits your freedom*. The moment there is something that is conceived as outside of you, where

is the question of freedom? Would this wall correspond to my will? It is outside of me. But mind you, there is this wall outside of me only as long as *I am this body*.

And the moment you talk of freewill you are definitely thinking of yourself limited in space as a body. Now, this is quite amusing, on one hand you are defining yourself as a limited being whose contours are decided by the extent of his skin bag, whose flesh and blood decide his very expanse and on the other hand you are talking of freedom! What freedom? You do not even exist outside of your body! Where is the question of freedom? Your first slavery is that you are limited by the dimensions of your body. Where is freedom?

So, the first step for those who talk so much about freedom is that they really inquire into their body-identification, they really inquire into their identification with anything. This is a world of opposites, this is the world of duality; the moment you identify with something you have left out its opposite and companion. You have reduced yourself to a half. Where then is freedom?

Unfortunately, today, the only definition of freedom that we know is either the freedom to do something

-- gross or subtle, or freedom from something. We never ask the question: Freedom from whom? And we have intellectuals who are constantly talking about freedom but they never answer -- they never ask in the first place -- Freedom from what and for whom? Who is it who wants to be free? Who is it who is so particular about maintaining his freedom? They say there is something that they do not want to do, so freedom simply means freedom from that activity or freedom from that obligation.

I don't want to take a bath in the morning, so freedom *from* taking a bath. And I am crazy about pizza, so freedom to eat a pizza. That is the definition of freedom that we have! Is this freedom? Freedom from something or freedom to do something without even asking whose freedom are we talking about? Can the ego ever have freedom? But the ego is the one that rants the most about freedom. The saint has hardly any problems even when slavery comes to him. For him even bondage is sacred and holy, but the egoistic man is deeply concerned about his freedom. He will say "No, this is a touchy subject, don't talk about it". And you see there are so many codes and constitutions that are placing the highest value upon their idea of freedom. That is how the most

profound words are misused.

See how words like Love, Freedom, Truth and Joy are misused. See how we have equated Joy with entertainment and pleasure. See how we have brought down the truth to the level of facts. See how attachments masquerade as love. And these words have gained great currency; we all use them so casually. Don't we? They have entered our everyday parlance:

I love the way you look!

Smoking is sheer joy!

Tell me the truth!

And we keep on saying these things. Is it any wonder then that the destiny versus freewill debate becomes meaningful and so attractive? A mind that is attracted to such notions about Truth, Joy, Love and Silence, would also be attracted to knowing the extent to which is controlled by a power outside of itself.

Only the Total can have freedom and will. And that will is a Non-dualistic will because it does not operate upon anything. The Non-dual by definition has nothing outside of Itself, so there is nobody else to act upon. It laughs within Itself, It dances within Itself, It is It's own joy, It Loves Itself. And sometimes in a jolly mood *{smiling}* It divides Itself into

an infinite variety. And sometimes in the mood of *Pralaya*, It obfuscates all divisions again and then there is nothing but the singular Silence, all pervasive. From *prabhav* to *pralaya*, one thing is common that there is no other, just the One.

In general, my submission is that debates must be left to intellectuals; they can do no better than debating. And they are proud that they can talk a lot. Let them talk. Spirituality is not the province of words. We all know how Maharshi loved *maun*.

Whenever two things appear to be different, let us please remember that both of them are false because difference itself is the guarantee of falseness. If it appears as different to anything else, it cannot be. Only names and forms appear different, only limitations and boundaries can be used to say that 'This is this'. And only then a thing can be compared to something else and said that it is, and it is different.

We have this wall here. And we would like to assert that this wall is different from this floor. Why? And how can the mind even come to that assertion? It is because this wall has a boundary; it is because this wall is limited in space. Had this wall had no boundary, there was no way to

claim that it is different or similar to anything else. And boundaries are false. What is the criteria of falseness? *The criteria of falseness is that it exists only in time.* It has come as a result of time and very soon time will obliterate it. It is not there.

There is neither destiny nor freewill. Such notions are projected by the ego just to sustain and entertain itself. There is only the great, wonderful, beautifully expressive Silence of the Truth. You can call that Silence as destiny, and only in that Silence is freedom, and only there is will. Everything else is just conceptualization.

[Talk by Shri Prashant at Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, 25th Oct, 2015, Founder Advait Life-Education]

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Editor's Note:

As in the case of most of the subjects that concern spiritual aspirants, the views of Bhagavan Ramana on "Freewill and Destiny" was explicit, clear and simple.

According to Sri Ramana what the body has to go through is fully chartered out at birth...in His words "THE WHOLE PROGRAMME IS

CHALKED OUT. (NOT AN ATOM MOVES EXCEPT BY HIS WILL... expresses the same Truth)”. “The only freedom that we have is to go within (anthar mukam) and disassociate ourselves from what happens to the body, whose experiences are decided at the time of conception.

Interestingly, when queried further

as to why we have only this freedom, He would explain that that is the ‘niyam’ (cosmic law) and if we have to go to the fundamentals, we need to ask and investigate as to who has the freewill or destiny. The answer would be ‘I’ which in its true sense is the real SELF which transcends both freewill and destiny. ■



P.N. Vijay giving a talk on Bhagavad Gita



Boundless Grace

Geetha Ravichandran

The story of Ajamila is found in the Sixth Skanda of the Srimad Bhagavatham. Ajamila was a learned and devout Brahmin who lived with his old parents, wife and children. One day while going to the forest to gather material for the prescribed rituals, he chanced to see a man and woman locked in deep embrace. Despite knowing better and trying his best to restrain his senses Ajamila found himself strangely drawn to the woman, who was a prostitute. He took her home to work as a maid but she soon became the great love of his life. He gradually abandoned his family, his loving wife and old parents, alongwith the piety and the values he had been steeped in. He took to thieving, gambling and violence to bring in the money needed to support his mistress and the ten children he fathered with her.

Ajamila spent many decades being a slave to sensual pleasures, enamoured by the woman he lived with and particularly attached to

his youngest son Narayana. He was eighty eight years old, when one day he found himself facing imminent death. The messengers of death, the Yamadhootas who could be identified by their fearsome forms were waiting to drag him by the noose to hell as he had committed grave and unpardonable sins. The terrified and helpless Ajamila called out to his youngest son Narayana who was playing nearby. Since Narayana is the name of the Lord, the Vishnudhootas - the messengers of God appeared immediately. They battled the emissaries of Yama for the soul of Ajamila. The Yamadhootas did not let go. They argued that as Ajamila had transgressed the ordained law and was guilty of evil actions he deserved punishment. The Vishnudhootas were not impressed. They argued eloquently with the Yamadhootas that as Ajamila had called out the name of God it was expiation for the sins he had committed. According to the Vishnudhootas calling out the

Lord's name instantly guarantees the protection of the Lord. It is immaterial whether a person understands the significance of the name of the Lord. Even if the name is uttered casually or in jest or in disregard it is capable of conferring redemption. They likened the name of God to a potent medicine that cures irrespective of whether the patient knows the ingredients it is made up of. It has an inherent power not dependent on any extraneous factor.

The Yamadhootas had to surrender to the Vishnudhootas. Ajamila was thus snatched from death's door. Ajamila who got a new lease of life now realised the futility of his pursuits. It is said that when Ajamila was saved by the Vishnudhootas he also gained freedom from fear. He was not merely released from the fear of retribution for his evil actions but was also given a benediction of courage. Ajamila not only repented his past deeds, he also found within himself the strength to throw off the baggage-being the desires of the body and mind which had weighed him down. He spent the rest of his days in Haridwar in devotion and prayer till he gave up his body and ultimately obtained salvation.

It was the boon of fearlessness

that pulled Ajamila out of worldly entanglements. Fear and desire are two sides of the same coin. They coexist and fuel each other. They ensure that a person oscillates in the dimension of misery. To escape beyond this dimension it is necessary to discard both fear and desire and call upon the omnipresent Cosmic force that is pure, all pervasive and benign. It is name of the Lord that compels that Cosmic force to respond and ensures that a person is liberated both from desire and fear. In Ajamila's story it was only when he was confronted with the greatest fear- that of imminent death and listened to the tussle between the Yamadhootas and the Vishnudhootas for his soul that he realised the folly of his desires.

The power of the Lord's name is considered invincible and an unfailing remedy in all difficult situations. Even when the name is invoked without faith, it proves to be a source of redemption. It is capable of acting independently without the catalyst of faith. The beauty of this fact lies in the inherent assurance that hope is never lost even in the most dire situations. Grace is in anxious attendance waiting for a call ready to attend to the despairing . If the name of God were only to be invoked by those with faith, the mitigation of the

trouble could well be a result of the faith. However to cultivate faith is a challenge in itself . A mind that is prone to doubts and lacks insights is itself a big obstacle. It is seen from the story that an accidental prayer or a casual invocation is itself potent enough. Ajamila with his grave mortal failings was able to extricate himself from the certain retribution by sheer grace.

This story is often told to illustrate how powerful the name of the Lord is. But it is also the story of the omnipresence of grace. Even when the name is invoked without any conscious feeling or intention or faith ,it confers a shower of grace. Ajamila called out to Narayana in sheer helplessness, remembering in desperation a beloved son, as he was still unable to let go of attachment. It was perhaps the utter sense of his impending doom when all the resources of his mind failed him that brought about the presence of the Vishnudhootas and his subsequent transformation. The efficacy of the name of God is the testimony to the truth that grace is just a call away. Ramakrishna Paramahansa said-“ The birds of sin dwell in the tree of the body. Singing the name of god is like clapping your hands. As at a clap of the hands, the birds in the tree fly away, so do our sins disappear

at the chanting of God’s name and glories”.

Ajamila’s attachment to the woman which was triggered by one casual encounter is very telling. It is an example of the tremendous power of imagery on the senses and how the external world insinuates itself into the mind and gains control over reason and judgement. We live in times where we are constantly assaulted by advertisement and opinion and ideals set by media and newsmakers. The danger in being permeable to influences is that of being swept away from the core of cherished values and ultimately forfeiting discrimination. Ajamila had indeed tried valiantly to keep his mind under check, resorting to prayer and reasoning. However neither his learning, nor his pedigree nor the fact that he had a beautiful wife could stop him from being sucked into the swirling torrent of desire. In society today adults are held responsible for the consequences of their action. But the independent person whose actions are dictated by reason and judgement is largely a hypothetical character. Often the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Or as the robot who produced the Russian translation of this line, would have it “the meat is rotten but the liquor is strong.” The intoxication of desire is

overwhelming. A man or a woman is more often than not a creature of circumstances and reason does not prevail in the presence of objects of desire. The role of subtle influences can never be overstated.

Ajamila is said to have lived a life of sin. The sin was not merely in the transgression of a moral law and societal norms, it was in the identification with the body and its senses and forgetfulness of the nature of reality. It was folly rather than depravity. In the Vedantic view of life, there is no original sin. There is no fall of man. The entire creation is only maya - a delusion and has no truth in it.

The allegorical significance of the story is in the name itself. *Aja* means the maya that binds and *mila* means being mixed and entangled in it. The cause of this illusion is ignorance of one's true nature and not seeing beyond the façade of the senses and the limitations of the mind. To move from the darkness of ignorance to light, to escape the vortex of the illusory pleasures and sorrows of the world and reach the stage of permanent peace, to escape the snares of Maya, to know the real from the unreal is only possible through the operation of grace. Both

the functions of veiling or Maya and grace or Anugraha that ensures release from its delusory clutches are considered aspects of the same Supreme reality. This provides some clues to unravelling the mysteries of the bewildering human predicament concerning good and evil.

A puzzling question that bothers people is why some who transgress accepted norms of behaviour manage to get away without any retribution. Or why 'good' things happen to 'bad' people. In this context there is a story told by the Paramacharya Of Kanchi. *"Once there was a king. An ordinary commoner was asked, to come and see him in his camp for an important mission. The commoner entreated the king to give him some kind of an authentication, like a ring, which would enable him entry to the king's presence when he presented himself at the camp. The king gave him such a ring; but the ring did not have his (the king's) seal. It had the seal of the enemy king. The commoner was perplexed. Why is this king giving him a ring which would only be identified as the enemy's? The king himself removed his doubt by saying: 'There are so many of my own courtiers and courtiers who have obtained from me the royal seal so that they can meet me any time they like.*

The line of such people would be so large at any time, that you would not get anywhere near me when you come to meet me. But if they see the seal of the enemy king in your hands they would take you to be a spy and would present you before me in no time!"

Sometimes the presence of undesirable qualities like anger or desire seems to accelerate the working of Grace. The manifestation of human frailty and weakness is perhaps a ruse for attracting grace just as light enters through a crack in the window. Imperfections and flaws are not out of bounds for the reach of Grace. Ramana Maharshi emphasized that while Grace is necessary for understanding the reality that exists it is always present. *"That which is – is only Grace; there is nothing else"*-Talk 287

The realization that grace is a constant presence is an assurance of redemption. However human effort is also necessary. In the words of Ramana Maharshi- *"Divine Grace is essential for Realisation. It leads one to God realization. But such grace is vouchsafed only to him who is a true devotee or a yogin, who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom"*-Talk 29

Ajamila in his younger days was

a holy and devout person. It was the force of circumstances and being drawn into the whirlpool of desires that led him astray. But apparently sincere efforts are never lost. Even the slightest effort made on the path fructifies although tangible results may not be immediately evident. As the old Hindi saying goes-

Tulsi mere Ram ko, Reejh bhajo ya kheej,

Bhaum pada jame sabhi, Ulta seedha beej.

Meaning-When a seed is sown in the soil, it does not matter whether it is kept straight or upside down. In course of time the seed sprouts and the sapling emerges from the ground. Similarly the manner of chanting the name of Ram whether with devotion or not does not matter.

The fact that name of God has its own effect and is potent whether it is chanted with faith or as a matter of routine is a reassuring consolation. Sometimes when life feels like a leaky boat in a stormy ocean it is difficult to bring faith into the picture. In such circumstances the name of God is a certain source of strength and succour.

The story of Ajamila is an illustration of the fact that while

aberrations in behaviour may mask a person's true nature for some time they do not efface the vital essence which is pure like ether. The sky remains the same even when it is covered by dense clouds. It is a trite saying that every saint has a past and a sinner a future. In the moment when neither the past intrudes nor the future projects itself, pure consciousness prevails in its pristine glory. Action and consequences associated with the body- mind complex cease to affect a person in the fullness of the moment, when there is no room for the past or future. The choice not to be affected by what befalls the body- mind complex is available to everyone who realises the value of the present. That choice when exercised is the path to

liberation. ■

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Editor's Note: " This article collaborates fully with Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's reply to a devotees query : ' I am a sinner, will I be eligible for grace and realisation'. Bhagavan gives his reassuring response that grace and realisation is vouchsafed to all.. 'why do you consider yourself a sinner". We are all pure and pristine in our true state'.

The fact that the body goes through certain experiences does not deter anyone from realising his or her true potential. What is required is faith, patience and earnestness on the inner path.



"As we embark on yet another year, may we pray and seek the blessings of Bhagavan Ramana to guide us on the inner path with dedication to his teachings... Direct Path wishes all its readers peace and joy throughout 2016"



Deciphering God in Vedanta

Shiromani Vijay

God or Ishvara (ईश्वर) generally has three meanings according to the context. First and the most common meaning of God is that God as one form Ekarupa (एकरूप). Here God is in a personal form like Rama, Krishna or Christ. This finite personal, God performs super human tasks, Leela (लीला) and is subject to arrival and departure. Next is the Anekarupa (अनेकरूप) or Visvarupa (विश्वरूप) Ishvara who is the all pervading universe and all forms in the universe are His forms. The third meaning is of the highest nature which is Arupa (अरूप) or Nirguna Brahman (निगुण ब्रह्मन्). This Brahman (ब्रह्मन्) is the topic of Vedanta.

In Vedanta (वेदान्त), we refer to Brahman (ब्रह्मन्) as God. What is this Brahman? Brahman is derived from the root “bruh (बृह्)” which means vast. How do we apply this vastness?

In Taittiriya Upanishad (तैत्तिरीय उपनिषद्), Brahman is defined as

“Satyam Jnanam Anantham (सत्यम् ज्ञानम् अनन्तम्)”.

* Satyam (सत्यम्) is reality or Truth

* Jnanam (ज्ञानम्) is knowledge

* Anantham (अनन्तम्) is infinity or limitlessness

Therefore Brahman is to be known as that reality which is limitless.

Let us try to unravel the above definition of Brahman starting with Anantam. Anantam means limitless or infinity. The limitlessness can be only of the following 3 dimensions – space, time and entity.

Space Desa (देश)– All objects as we perceive through our senses have particular location and size and hence are limited in space. It is known in Sanskrit as “desa parichheda (देशपरिच्छेद)”. However according to the definition of Brahman, it is limitless or “desa parichhedashunya (देशपरिच्छेदशून्य). In other words, it is omnipresent, sarvavyaapi (सर्वव्यापि) or

sarvagatah (सर्वगतः).

Time Kaala (काल)– all entities we aware of, are created and destroyed at some point of time. For example, a person is alive from the time he is born till he dies, thoughts come and go, even objects like earth, river exist for a limited time though this time is very long. This means all entities are limited in time known as “kaala parichheda (काल परिच्छेद)”. If Brahman is limitless, it has to be eternal or Nityam (नित्यम्) – which has no beginning or end – neither created nor destroyed, being present at all times.

Object/Entity Vastu (वस्तु) – all entities we know are limited to what it is defined as. For example, if an object is a river then it is not a mountain. This is known as “vastu parichheda (वस्तु परिच्छेद)”. Brahman being limitless, has to be “vastu parichheda shunyam (वस्तु परिच्छेदशून्यम्)”. That means there can be no entity apart from Brahman – that means it is one or non-dual- Ekam (एकम्) or Advayam (अद्वयम्).

Brahman according to Anantam is omnipresent, eternal and non-dual - Sarvagatah, Nityam and Advayam.

The definition of Brahman according to Anantam has to be valid for Satyam and Jnanam also.

Satyam means reality or that which exists from the root sat. (सत्). For example, a man exists, a thought exists, a room exists. But does it mean that these are Brahman, No, because it would not be valid according to our definition of Anantam, as these objects are not omnipresent, eternal or non-dual. How do we then reconcile? We need to take the implied meaning known as “lakshanaartha (लक्षणार्थ)”. In implied meaning, we take a part of the entire meaning that is appropriate for the situation. For example, when I say I ate watermelon for breakfast, I mean I ate the red fleshy part only and not the rind and seeds etc. Similarly, In Satyam, we need to take the implied meaning. In our example, when we are looking at existence of various entities, what we see in common is the existence principle or is-ness or being or Ashitva (अस्तित्व). All things are in existence. This existence principle has no limit in space - there is existence of something or the other everywhere and we cannot transcend existence – Sarvagatah, it is not limited in time - something or the other exists always - Nityam, and there is only existence appearing as different names and forms – Advayam. This is consistent with Anantam and Brahman. However, to appreciate existence, names and forms are necessary.

Next we have to validate the Brahman definition according to Anantam for Jnanam.

Jnanam means knowledge. Any conscious experience is Jnanam. For example, we are conscious of a book, a table, a person, a thought. Each of these conscious experiences is fleeting, different from one another and limited to a space. Therefore it does not fit our definition of Anantam. Then how do we call this Jnanam as Brahman? Again we have to take the implied meaning here. In all our above experiences, consciousness is inherently present. This makes consciousness omnipresent. We are conscious in waking, dream and deep

sleep states – making consciousness eternal. Every experience should have consciousness making it one non-dual entity. Hence this consciousness principle which fits in with the explanation of Anantam, is Brahman.

Now that we have elaborated the meaning of God as Satyam Jnanam Anantam Brahman, how can we experience this entity? This becomes a whole new topic! In brief, on the seat of meditation, when we start investigating 'who am I?', we witness Brahman as our own existence consciousness, atman (आत्मन्). ■

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Wanting to reform the world without discovering one's true self is like trying to cover the world with leather to avoid the pain of walking on stones and thorns. It is much simpler to wear shoes.

From 'Happiness and God's Grace'

by Ramana Maharshi



**Arunachala.....An intended pilgrimage
unto the enlightened void.**

Dr Pallavi Kwatra

Life has a manner of passing by
Where seeking and striving, a deep conditioning.
In the enthusiasm for results,
The beauty of the journey most often missed.
Spirituality, another zone of the mind game
Where striving to moksha, a high end illusion.
The shortest routes in the fastest times
Are what are the favoured way.
I had intended to be on a pilgrimage
With a similar chaste desire.
In a meditative mood, I was awakened to this.
In the ambience of arunachala,
In the gaze of your grace,
All I need is to surrender in silence
And be open to receiving bliss.
No striving, no reaching, no talking
Only 'being'; must be the qualified way.
So, I'll come to you
Only to participate
In your enlightened void.



अरुणाचल तेरा अहसास

दिनेश छाब्रा

आँसू थे की रूकने का नाम नहीं ले रहे थे सब अनोखा—सा महसूस हो रहा था। कहाँ से यह आँसू और बह निकले और क्यों ? हालाँकि आध्यात्मिकता से जुड़ने की यह मेरी पहले बारी थी। मैं नौ सल की उम्र से ही भागता रहा हूँ इस खोज में। कई जगह गया हरिद्वार, ऋषिकेश, वैष्णोदेवी, नीलकंठ महाराज, चारों धाम की यात्रा की किन्तु सब व्यर्थ तो नहीं परन्तु मैं जो पाना चाहता था शायद मिल नहीं रहा था।

ऋषिकेश में श्री बॉबी दीवान से मिलना भी कम अचरज भरा नहीं था। दोबारा फिर ऋषिकेश में श्री बॉबी दीवान के संपर्क में परमार्थ आश्रम जाना और वह भीगी वर्षा भरी शाम शायद मेरे जीवन की कुछ अच्छी यादों में शामिल हो गई। इसी दौरान डॉ बॉबी ने मुझे महर्षि भगवान् रमण के बारे में कुछ शब्दों ने मुझे अन्तःकरण तक उत्साहित कर दिया। उनके यह कहने पर मैं ३० सितम्बर को अरुणाचल आश्रम में चलूँ चाहकर भी कुछ सोच यह निर्णय ले पाता। शायद कहीं कोई दैवीय शक्ति कुछ भी सोचने न सोचने देती। मैं शून्य की ओर खिंचता चला गया। न जाने कैसे मैंने आश्रम में मेल कर दिया और जैसे ही अनुगृहित हुआ वैसे ही आने की जो व्यवस्था बनी वह सब कल्पनीय एवं अद्भुत थी। १७ जुलाई से ३० सितम्बर का समय जो शायद बयाँ ही न कर सकता।

और मैंने स्वयं को पाया महर्षि रमण के समक्ष चक्षुओं के उन साक्षात्कार का जो मैंने अंतस् से न सिर्फ महसूस किया बल्कि यह भी जाना कि शायद मेरी दौड़ जो ६ साल की उम्र से शुरू हुई थी थम—सी गई है असंभव—सा

लगने वाला वह वातावरण जिसने मुझे वह शक्ति प्रदान की जो यह जान सके समर्पण क्या है ? कौन है ? वह मुझे वह दे पाये जो यहीं है बस यहीं है ।

आश्रम का वह स्नेहिल वातावरण जहाँ बन्दर, मोर, कुत्ते, इंसान सभी के लिए प्यार ही प्यार, महर्षि रमण की मंद-मंद मुस्कान जो सभी का मन मोह लेती है । अरुणाचल की वह छत्रछाया जहाँ एक बालक ने निर्वाण पाया । मैंने महसूस किया जैसे स्वयं "रमण" वहीं हम सभी के बीच रमण करते हैं । अपलक मेरी आँखों का उनकी आँखों में उतर जाना क्या क्षण था वह मैंने न जाने कितनी देर पलक नहीं झपकाई मुझे समय का एहसास नहीं रहा शायद समय रूक गया । मेरे दो दिन ध्यानकक्ष मैं महर्षि रमण से जो मौन वार्तालाप हुआ शायद न किसी से कह सकूँ क्योंकि मुझे लगता है सभी को यह अनुभव हुआ होगा ।

मुझे यह अफसोस है कि मैं गुफाओं की यात्रा पूर्ण न कर सका क्योंकि परिक्रमा मे मेरे पाँव में छाले पढ़ गए मेरा वजन बहुत ज्यादा है । महर्षि रमण ने मुझे बहुत कुछ अर्पण कर दिया । निःसंदेह मुझे दोबारा वहाँ बुलाने के लिए मुझे अरुणाचल, गुफाएं, परिक्रमा में अधूरापन रह गया शायद मुझे महर्षि इससे कहीं अधिक देना चाहते हैं । मेरी अंतस् की पिपासा को शांत कर पाये ऐसा मेरा अनुभव रहा परन्तु अभी और प्यास की खोज में मुझे आना ही पड़ेगा ।

“अभी नहीं है मुझ में पाने की काबिलियत तेरे काबिल बन जाऊँ तो जरा.....”!!!! ■

[e- mail: alloysdk@gmail.com]



श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

40

शिव प्रकाशम् पिल्लै (1875-1948), दर्शन शास्त्र के स्नातक, सरकारी ऑफिसर, महर्षि से पहली बार 1902 में मिले और उन्हीं के हो गए। महर्षि का इनको दिया गया उपदेश, जो महर्षि की शिक्षा का सार है, इनकी नोटबुक के आधार पर 'मैं कौन हूँ ?' शीर्षक से प्रकाशित हुआ। महर्षि के प्रति इनकी भावनाओं और अनुभवों का पद्य रूप में संकलन 'श्री रमण चरित अहवाल' नामक पुस्तक में प्राप्त है। इस पुस्तक के कुछ अंश गद्य रूप में यहाँ प्रस्तुत हैं।

हे रमण भगवान, जो लोग अशांत और थके हुए मन से तुम्हारे पास आते हैं, चाहे वे भक्ति भावना से रहित और पातकी हो, तुम उनके दुखी हृदय को अपनी अनुकंपा से उसी प्रकार आश्वस्त कर देते हो, जैसे माँ बच्चे को कष्ट में देखकर प्रेम से पिघल जाती है। तुम उनके माता और पिता बन जाते हो। उन्हें भोजन देते हो, उनमें ज्ञान का संचार करते हो और उनकी पीड़ा नष्ट कर देते हो।

अनुग्रह भरे वचनों से तुमने कहा, 'मैं' शब्द का अर्थ है एक अखंड सत्, जो परमानंद के रूप में स्थित है। वह अविनाशी है। यद्यपि वह इस अस्थिमज्जामय शरीर में है, तथापि वह इससे भिन्न है। इस परम तत्व को जानने के लिए उन आसक्तियों को छोड़ो जिन के कारण तुम इस शरीर को ही 'मैं' समझने लगे हो। फिर अपने से ध्यान लगाकर पूछो 'मैं कौन हूँ' बार-बार भीतर डुबकी लगाओ, जौ गोताखोर मोती पाने के लिए लगाता है।

तब तुम अपने आप को जान पाओगे। यह आत्माज्ञान ही मुक्ति है।

परमेश्वर ने कृपा करके मानव शरीर धारण किया है, जो रमण नाम से अरूणाचल में निवास करता है। हे रमण देवा ! यदि संसार वाले यह कहें कि तुम भी हमारी तरह मनुष्य हो तो वह ऐसा ही होगा जैसे वर्षा के जल से भरे काले मेघ को, धुँएँ का बादल समझना।

रमण, मेरे सदगुरु, जाल में फंसे हिरण के समान, जिसे छूटने का मार्ग ज्ञात नहीं है, मैं आपके चरणों में गिरकर बोला, “आपके चरण ही मेरा आश्रय हैं।” आपने उत्तर में कहा, “आकुल होने की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं।” इस प्रकार मुझे भय से मुक्त किया और मेरा रक्षण किया। इस प्रकार आप मेरे स्वामी, मेरे पिता और मेरी माता हो गए।

पिल्लै के विषय में लिखते हुए माइकेल जेम्स (www.happinessofbeing.com) कहते हैं:

पिल्लै अपनी कविताओं में बार-बार महर्षि के उपदेश का पालन करने में अपनी असमर्थता प्रकट करते हुए उनसे कृपा करने की प्रार्थना करते हैं। किसी भक्त ने जब महर्षि से पूछा कि जब शिव प्रकाशम् पिल्लै जैसा परम भक्त महर्षि के उपदेश का अभ्यास पूर्णतः नहीं कर पाया तो अन्य लोगों की क्या स्थिति होगी ? महर्षि ने उत्तर दिया, “आदि शंकराचार्य भी जब किसी देवता की स्तुति लिखते हैं तब ऐसी बातें कहते हैं। यदि कोई व्यक्ति भावपूर्ण होकर ईश्वर की स्तुति करता है तो अपनी कमजोरी, दोष व त्रुटियों की बात करता है, और ईश्वर से शक्ति की प्रार्थना करता है। इसमें ग़लत क्या है ?” ■

क्रमशः

**“श्री रमण महर्षि 120 व्यक्तियों के प्रबोधनकारी, प्रेरणादायक संस्मरण”
किताब से निष्कर्ष**

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

Translated from "Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi".



श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत

3 जनवरी, 1937

अमृत बिन्दु

314. कल के प्रश्नों का समाधान करते हुए श्री भगवान् ने कहा था कि गहन निद्रा में आत्मा शुद्ध चैतन्य है। उन्होंने यह भी संकेत किया था कि नींद से जाग्रत अवस्था का जो परिवर्तन है वह समय आत्मा का साक्षात् करने के लिए आदर्श है।

महर्षि से इसको स्पष्ट करने की प्रार्थना की गयी।

श्री भगवान् ने अनुग्रहपूर्ण उत्तर दिया : आत्मा सुषुप्ति में शुद्ध चैतन्य है। परिवर्तन अवस्था में 'अहम्' ('मैं') बिना इदम् ('यह') के विकसित होता है तथा जाग्रत अवस्था में यह 'अहम्' ('मैं') एवं इहम् ('यह') के रूप में व्यक्त होता है। व्यक्तिगत अनुभव केवल अहम् ('मैं') से होता है। इसलिए उसे बताये हुए मार्ग से ही साक्षात्कार की प्राप्ति करनी चाहिए। (अर्थात् अन्तर्कालीन 'मैं' के माध्यम से)। अन्यथा सुषुप्ति के अनुभव का उसके लिए कोई महत्त्व नहीं। यदि अन्तर्कालीन 'मैं' का साक्षात्कार कर लिया जाय तो आधार मिल जाता है और उससे लक्ष्य की प्राप्ति हो जाती है।

फिर सुषुप्त को अज्ञान की संज्ञा दी जाती है। यह केवल जाग्रत अवस्था में प्रचलित मिथ्या ज्ञान की तुलना में है। वास्तव में जाग्रत अवस्था अज्ञान है तथा सुषुप्त अवस्था प्रज्ञान है (पूर्णज्ञान)। श्रुति के अनुसार प्रज्ञान ही ब्रह्म है। ब्रह्म नित्य है। सुषुप्ति के अनुभव करने वाले को प्रज्ञ कहते हैं। वह तीनों

अवस्थाओं में प्रज्ञानम है। इसका सुषुप्त अवस्था में विशेष महत्त्व यह है कि वह ज्ञान से परिपूर्ण (प्रज्ञानघन) है। घन क्या है ? एक ज्ञान है, एक विज्ञान। समस्त अनुभूतियों में दोनों एक साथ परिचालन करते हैं। जाग्रत में विज्ञान विपरीत ज्ञान अर्थात् अज्ञान है। यह व्यक्ति के साथ सदा रहता है। जब यह विस्पष्ट ज्ञान (स्पष्ट ज्ञान) होता है तो यह ब्रह्म है। जब मिथ्या ज्ञान का सर्वथा अभाव होता है—जैसे सुषुप्ति में तब वह केवल शुद्ध प्रज्ञान रहता है। यही प्रज्ञानघन है। 'ऐतरेय उपनिषद्' के अनुसार प्रज्ञान, विज्ञान, अज्ञान, संज्ञान सब ब्रह्म के नाम हैं। केवल शुद्ध ज्ञान का होने से उसका अनुभव कैसे होगा ? अनुभव सदैव विज्ञान से होता है। अस्तु अन्तर्कालीन शुद्ध 'मैं' को प्रज्ञानघन के अनुभव हेतु दृढ़ता से पकड़ना आवश्यक है। जाग्रत अवस्था का 'मैं' अशुद्ध है; अतः ऐसे अनुभव के लिए उपयोगी नहीं है। इसलिए अन्तर्कालीन 'मैं' अथवा शुद्ध 'मैं' का उपयोग है। इस शुद्ध 'मैं' का साक्षात् कैसे हो ? विवेक चूड़ामणि के अनुसार, "विज्ञान कोष विलसत्यजस्त्रम्" (वह विज्ञान कोष में सदा ही प्रकाशित हो रहा है) 'त्रिपुरा रहस्य' तथा अन्य ग्रन्थों के मत से दो संकल्पों के बीच में जो सन्धि होती है, वह शुद्ध अहम् 'मैं' के सदृश है। अतः शुद्ध 'मैं' पर दृढ़ रहकर प्रज्ञानघन को लक्ष्य में रखना चाहिए। इस प्रयास में ही वृत्ति है। इन सबका उपयुक्त क्रमानुसार स्थान है और यही साक्षात्कार कराते हैं।

फिर 'विवेक चूड़ामणि' में आत्मा को असत् से परे अर्थात् असत् से भिन्न बताया गया है। यहाँ असत् जाग्रत अवस्था का अशुद्ध 'मैं' है। असद् विलक्षण का अर्थ है सत् अर्थात् सुषुप्ति की आत्मा। आत्मा को सत् तथा असत् दोनों से भिन्न कहा गया है। दोनों का एक ही अर्थ है। वह अशेष (सर्व) साक्षी भी है।

यदि शुद्ध है, तो अशुद्ध 'मैं' द्वारा उसका अनुभव कैसे सम्भव है ? मनुष्य कहता है, "मैं आनन्दपूर्वक सोया"। आनन्द उसका अनुभव था। यदि ऐसा न होता तो जिस वस्तु का उसने अनुभव नहीं किया, उसकी चर्चा कैसे करता ? यदि आत्मा शुद्ध था तो उसने सुषुप्ति में सुख का

अनुभव कैसे किया ? वह कौन है जो उसकी चर्चा अब कर रहा है ? कहने वाला विज्ञानात्मा है और वह प्रज्ञानात्मा के बारे में कह रहा है। ऐसा कैसे ठीक हो सकता है ? क्या यह विज्ञानात्मा सुषुप्ति में विद्यमान था ? उसका अब सुषुप्ति के सुख के अनुभव का वर्णन करने से यह निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि सुषुप्ति में उसका अस्तित्व था। तब वह कैसे रहा ? निश्चय ही जाग्रत अवस्था के समान नहीं था। वहाँ यह अत्यन्त सूक्ष्म रहा। अत्यन्त सूक्ष्म विज्ञानात्मा प्रज्ञानात्मा के आनन्द को माया—वृत्ति द्वारा अनुभव करता था। यह शाखा, प्रशाखा व पत्तों के नीचे चन्द्रमा की किरणें दीखने के समान है।

इस क्षण के प्रकट विज्ञानात्मा को सूक्ष्म विज्ञानात्मा अपरिचित प्रतीत होता है। हम सुषुप्ति में उसके होने का अनुमान क्यों करें ? क्या हमें आनन्द के अनुभव को अस्वीकार कर इस अनुमान को समाप्त नहीं कर देना चाहिए ? नहीं। आनन्द के अनुभव की वास्तविकता से इनकार नहीं किया जा सकता, चूँकि प्रत्येक व्यक्ति नींद की प्रबल इच्छा करता है तथा गहन निद्रा का आनन्द लेने के लिए सुन्दर शय्या का प्रबन्ध करता है।

इससे हम इस निश्चय पर पहुँचते हैं कि ज्ञाता, ज्ञान और ज्ञेय सभी, तीनों अवस्थाओं में विद्यमान हैं, यद्यपि उनकी सूक्ष्मताओं में अन्तर है। अन्तर्कालीन अवस्था में 'अहम्' (मैं) शुद्ध है, क्योंकि वहाँ 'इदम्' (इसका) विलीन हो चुका है। अहम् (मैं) ही प्रधान है।

उस शुद्ध 'मैं' का हम अब सब साक्षात् अथवा स्मरण भी क्यों नहीं कर पाते? क्योंकि उससे परिचय नहीं है। जागृति के साथ लक्ष्य लगाओगे तो उसे पहचान सकोगे। अतः जागृति के साथ प्रयत्न करो और उसे प्राप्त करो।

315. परिचालकों में से एक ने प्रश्न किया : श्री भगवान् का कथन है : "सत्य तथा कल्पित दोनों एक ही हैं" यह कैसे है ?

महर्षि : तान्त्रिक तथा उनके समान अन्य व्यक्ति श्रीशंकर के दर्शन को बिना ठीक प्रकार से समझे मायावाद कहकर खण्डन करते हैं। शंकराचार्य का

कथन क्या है ? उनका कथन है : (1) ब्रह्म सत्य है; (2) जगत् कल्पित है; (3) ब्रह्म ही जगत् है। वे दूसरे कथन पर ही रूक नहीं जाते, अपितु तीसरे कथन से उसकी पूर्ति करते हैं। इसका क्या अर्थ हुआ ? जगत् को ब्रह्म से अलग माना जाता है और ऐसा मानना मिथ्या है। प्रतिपक्षी उनके रज्जुसर्प के दृष्टान्त की ओर संकेत करते हैं। यह स्वतन्त्र अध्यारोपण है। रज्जु की सत्यता मालूम होते ही सर्प की भ्रान्ति सदैव की लिए नष्ट हो जाती है।

किन्तु उन्हें प्रतिबन्धी अध्यारोपण पर भी विचार करना है जैसे मरुमरीचिका अथवा मृगतृष्णा।

मृगजल को मृगजल समझ लेने के पश्चात् भी वह अदृश्य नहीं होता। दृश्य दीखता है, किन्तु मनुष्य जल हेतु उसकी ओर दौड़ता नहीं। श्रीशंकर को दोनों दृष्टान्तों के प्रकाश में समझना चाहिए। जगत् कल्पित है। यह जान लेने के बाद भी संसार बराबर दीखता है। इसे ब्रह्म ही जानना न कि प्रथक।

यदि जगत् भासित होता है, तथापि यह किसको भासित होता है ? तुम्हारा क्या उत्तर है ? तुम्हारा अनिवार्य उत्तर होगा आत्मा। यदि नहीं तो क्या जानने वाले आत्मा के अभाव में जगत् दीखेगा ? अतः आत्मा ही सत्यता है। उनका यही निष्कर्ष है। आत्मरूप में दृश्य पदार्थ सत्य हैं तथा आत्मा से पृथक कल्पित हैं।

अब तन्त्रिक आदि क्या कहते हैं ? वे कहते हैं कि दृश्य सत्य हैं, चूँकि वे उस सत्य के अंश हैं जिसके अन्तर्गत वे भासित होते हैं।

क्या यह दोनों वक्तव्य एक ही नहीं हैं ? मेरा सत्य तथा मिथ्या को एक ही कहने से यही आशय था।

प्रतिपक्षी कहते हैं : स्थिति—सापेक्ष तथा स्थिति—निरपेक्ष भ्रान्तियों पर विचार करने के पश्चात् प्रकट होता है कि मृगतृष्णा में भासित होता जल पूर्णतया भ्रामक है क्योंकि उस जल को किसी भी काम में नहीं लिया जा सकता। जबकि जगत् का दृश्य भिन्न प्रकार का है, चूँकि यह उपयोगी है। इस प्रकार

बाद का उदाहरण पहले उदाहरण की समानता में कैसे उहर सकता है ?

कोई दृश्य केवल इसलिए सत्य नहीं हो जाता कि वह एक तथा अनेक उपयोग का है। स्वप्न का उदाहरण लें। स्वप्न की सृष्टियों का उपयोग है; वे स्वप्न के उद्देश्य की पूर्ति करती हैं। स्वप्न का जल स्वप्न की तृष्णा का शमन करता है। तथापि जाग्रत अवस्था में स्वप्न-सृष्टि का निषेध होता है। जाग्रत सृष्टि का अन्य दो अवस्थाओं में निषेध होता है। जो निरन्तर नहीं है वह सत्य नहीं हो सकता। यदि सत्य है तो वह वस्तु सदैव ही सत्य होगी – ऐसा नहीं कि थोड़े समय के लिए सत्य तथा दूसरे समय के लिए असत्य हो। यही बात जादू की सृष्टि की है, वे सत्य भासित होती हैं। तथापि भ्रामक हैं।

इसी प्रकार जगत् स्वतः सत्य नहीं हो सकता—अर्थात् अधःस्थ सत्यता से पृथक सत्य नहीं हो सकता।

316. सिनेमा के चित्र में परदे पर अग्नि है। क्या वह परदे को जलाती है ? वहाँ जल-प्रपात दीखता है। क्या वह परदे को गीला करता है ? वहाँ यन्त्रादि हैं। क्या वे परदे को हानि पहुँचाते हैं ?

इसीलिए कहा गया है अच्छेद्योडयम् अदाह्ययोडयम् अक्लेद्योडयम् आदि। ब्रह्म (अर्थात् आत्मा) के परदे पर अग्नि, जल आदि दृश्य हैं जो उसको प्रभावित नहीं करते। ■

क्रमशः

“श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत” किताब से निष्कर्ष

(संग्रहकर्ता - श्री मुनगल एस. वेंकटरामैया
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Karma yields no salvation*

Ramana Maharshi {Upadesa Saram (2)}

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