RAMANA GYAN
DIRECT PATH

Ramana Kendra, Delhi VOL. XVII ISSUE NO. 6, July - August, 2015 ₹. 10

"Mind is consciousness, which has limitations. We are originally unlimited and perfect. Later on we take on limitations and become the mind"

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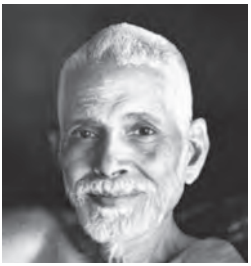
VOLUME XVII ISSUE 6 JULY - AUGUST, 2015



CONTENTS

Editorial		
Pain	Dr. Vijay Vancheswar	3
Mudaliar Paati	V. Ganesan	5
Time for the Timeless	Dr Sarada	7
Glimpses of Self from Adhyatma Ramayana – Part 61	G. Kameshwar	11
Bhagavan as Ativarnashrami	Swami Atmananda Giri	19
Upadesa Saram	K.K. Nambiar	21
Poem ["I Am" / "The Witness"]	D. Samarender Reddy	24
Dreams, Death and Moksha	Kushal Shah	25
Know Yourself and Excel Yourself	P.N.Vijay	27
A Garland That Ensnares	Neera Kashyap	30
Hindi Section	श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण	31
	श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत	39

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We are pleased to inform our readers that Shri P.N.Vijay who was serving as a Vice President for several years has been appointed as Secretary. He succeeds Shi Krishnan who served meritoriously as Secretary for …12.. years. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Shi Krishnan and wish Shri Vijay the very best in his endeavours. **Editor**

Pain

Dr. Vijay Vancheswar
[Editor-Direct Path]

Thomas Hardy the well known English novelist writing on happiness and about life in his classical novel, The Mayor of Casterbridge says, *"Happiness is nothing but an occasional episode in the general drama of pain"*. On the face of it, this quote seems to take a cynical and pessimistic view of life. However, as we delve deeply and thoughtfully on the subject this statement collaborates with the utterances of most sages as regards the phenomenal world and the travails of living in it. Bhagavan Ramana also states unequivocally that by its very design and nature, the world will never be bereft of problems and sufferings. Inequalities, injustice, pain and suffering are interwoven into the fabric of phenomenal life. According to Sri Ramana, the only way out is to divert our attention from the external to the internal. In answer to the chicken and egg puzzle of whether it is free will or fate that prevails, Sri Ramana gives his classical response… "Fate governs only the body…you are not that. You are ever free and beyond the duality of phenomenal existence. Identify and merge with who you are to be ever free and go beyond fate and destiny". In other words as long as we live under the power of illusion which binds us with the world and its phenomena, we suffer. Respite comes when we let go and focus within, either through unconditional surrender or investigate as to who we are and abide in our true state. This then is our perpetual challenge..!

Many a time, devotees had asked Bhagavan as to why there is so much suffering in the world? Is God just in allowing innocents to be murdered? Why should good individuals experience tragedies and suffering? His reply to these queries was always clear and explicit. 'By its very nature there will never be a time in the world when all are happy or equal; financially, psychologically, physically or mentally... this is the law of creation.' Suffering occurs to make

us realise the futility of immersing ourselves in the phenomenal existence. Occasional happiness and pleasure will as a rule be followed by a series of painful experiences and suffering, till we reverse our attention from the outer to the inner. If there were no suffering we would all be perpetually living in a world of illusory delight founded on weak and uncertain roots. This is bound to crumble and cannot last. This alas is the truth of phenomenal existence. Redemption comes when we abide in the Self, not in the apparent pleasures experienced by the individual self.

Sri Ramana is also quite candid about the fact that the body has to go through its chartered course of prarabdha as per divine dispensation. Thus, when we take a myopic view of life and look around us, we find an apparent injustice in terms of what is gained or lost - be it relating to status, power, wealth, health or family circumstances. All these are governed by the prarabdha of an individual or that of a country in a wider context. An analysis of events in the drama of life will reveal that it is not necessarily the most talented or industrious who always succeed. Quite a few get more than what they seem to deserve! In this context, Bhagavan says, "We are quick to complain when we face pain and suffering, however when we succeed or accomplish what we desire, do we ask, why me?! As explained succinctly in the very first verse of Bhagavan's composition *Upadesa Saram*, 'It is divine will that determines results and the fruits of action and not the individual entity'. Our sense of pride and egoism drives us to take the credit of our achievements and successes and disclaim ownership of failures by ascribing it to bad luck or foul play. Nothing happens without a purpose. The purpose is to make us understand the futility of the endless loop of pain and suffering that multiply as we immerse ourselves into the temptations and trappings of the world. This is the core message explained in different ways in various scriptures and sacred texts. Sri Krishna conveys this through various contexts and situations of the Mahabharata war in the Bhagavad Gita. Bhagavan Ramana captures the essence of this in his compositions be it the 'Five Hymns in praise of Lord Arunachala' or *"Saddarśana"* (Vision of Truth).

In the words of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, other than the path of enquiry, the only way to overcome pain is to realise one's individual helplessness and consciously imbibe that, "Not I but Thou, O Lord, and give up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' by leaving it to the Lord to do what he likes with us" ■

Mudaliar Paati

V. Ganesan

There was another beautiful lady named Mudaliar Paati (Paati means grandmother). She lived in a village with her son and daughter-in-law and was serving a *sadhu* there. When he was about to die, she asked him what they should do now. He told her, "Go to Arunachala, there is a saint there. Serve him. Your life's purpose will be fulfilled." Mudaliar Paati was very old even when she came to Bhagavan. She saw Bhagavan at Virupaksha cave in 1910. The very first glimpse of Bhagavan gave her an exhilarating spiritual experience. On the spot she took a vow, "I will serve food to Bhagavan until my last day." Whenever she was able to, she would get money or provisions from the village. She gradually sold all her property so that she could serve Bhagavan. When she had nothing left, she bought sesame seeds from the market, which she crushed into oil and sold in the market. Whatever little profit she made, was spent on provisions to make food for Bhagavan.

Bhagavan once said, "I'm afraid of two people - Ramanatha Brahmachari and Mudaliar Paati." What is this fear? It is not really fear; Bhagavan was a slave to selfless service, total surrender and unlimited devotion. These two people came under that category. There are many instances in Mudaliar Paati's life that display her deep devotion. Even after Bhagavan came down to the present Ramanasramam, she insisted on serving food to Bhagavan with her own hand. She had become half blind due to old age. One day, when serving Bhagavan's food, she stepped on the leaf on which his food was served. An attendant standing close by scolded her, "Hey! You have such poor eyesight, why do you come? When you cannot see Bhagavan, why do you come and disturb everyone?" Mudaliar Paati replied, "How does it matter if I can't see him? Bhagavan sees me; his grace is on me, that is enough."

When she heard that Bhagavan's health was deteriorating after his first

surgery, she wanted to see him. She had gone totally blind by now but still insisted on seeing Bhagavan. When she was brought to the hall, she strained her eyes to see. Bhagavan consoled her, "Paati, I'm all right, my body is all right." She was not fully satisfied. She stepped outside and stood by the entrance of the hall. When Bhagavan came out, she said, "Bhagavan, stop!" She then ran her hands over Bhagavan's body from head to foot. She is the only lady whom Bhagavan allowed to do so. After she had 'seen' Bhagavan to her heart's content, he asked her, "Are you satisfied now?"

This remarkable lady spent the last days of her life in Ramana Nagar - a little away from Ramanasramam. Kunju Swami, Viswanatha Swami and Suri Nagamma were sent by Bhagavan to look after Paati and her health. They built a hut for her in Ramana Nagar. Bhagavan enquired about her daily. By 1949, Mudaliar Paati had grown very old, gone blind and had lost her daughter-in-law. She had practically lost, everything. Yet, she continued cooking for Bhagavan. Even on her last day, she cooked a meal and made sure that it was taken to Bhagavan. She insisted on being informed when Bhagavan had finished eating her food. When that was reported to her, she blissfully closed her eyes and dropped her body. Bhagavan gave instructions to Kunju Swami and others that she should be buried like a realized being (just as he had done earlier in the case of Seshadri Swami and Mother Azhagammal). On a previous occasion - the day when Echammal passed away - Bhagavan had remarked, "Still, Mudaliar Paati is alive." When Mudaliar Paati passed away, Bhagavan declared, "A big responsibility has been taken off my shoulders."

The Universal Mother took the form of mother Azhagammal and gave Bhagavan his body. In the forms of Ratnammal, Meenakshiammal, Desurammal, Echammal and Mudaliar Paati, the Universal Mother fed and nurtured Bhagavan's body. Bhagavan too expressed his gratitude towards them by granting them realization. Soon after Mudaliar Paati dropped her body, Bhagavan's health deteriorated further. Within a few months, he too dropped his body. ■ **[Source: Ramana Periya Puranam]**

If you believe that God will do all the things that you want Him to do, then surrender yourself to Him. Otherwise let God alone, and know yourself. Sri Bhagavan (from Maharshi's Gospel) ■

Time for the Timeless

Dr. Sarada

Is effort necessary? Especially when the aim is effortless. Does it not seem paradoxical that one has to make an effort to remain without effort? Seen as a mere statement – yes - it does seem paradoxical. But in practice, it is not so. When we are running, does it not take an effort to stop? And it takes a while before we catch our breath and rest the body.

Why should it be different for the mind? Does it not require effort to still a mind that is constantly on the move? When one turns off a light switch, the light immediately goes off. On the other hand, a fan continues to rotate for a while after the electricity has been cut. This is because of its momentum. Similarly, when one cuts off attention upon thought and focuses it inward, thoughts may continue to arise for a while, depending on their momentum.

When one's attention is turned inward with self-enquiry the mind grows calmer. However, before there is complete silence, if one begins to think of something else, the thought process continues. Again, it has to be tackled with self-enquiry, with the question *"Who am I?"*. which applies the brakes to the movement of thought. Once again, if one presses the accelerator of outward attention, thoughts arise. Therefore, the effort to turn attention inward is not only necessary but must also be continuous.

A doubt: How can one perform self-enquiry continuously? What about one's allotted work? Is it not important to do it with full attention? If one is bitten by the self-enquiry bug, then this problem does not arise at all, for the attitude becomes natural to us.

When we are learning to walk, we cannot imagine walking and talking, or walking and eating at the same time. Once walking has become natural to us, we can carry on with other activities along with it. We can even run, play football or hockey, and so on. The fundamental acquired

ability becomes natural to us, forming the undercurrent of more complex action.

Initially, however, we need supports for walking. We also need to give it our sole attention.

So also with self-enquiry. It is important to set apart a dedicated time - for it. One must give time to the timeless. This does not mean that one should not practice it at other times. One should certainly try to devote all one's spare time to self-enquiry – the time that one would normally idle away. Gradually, one can practice self-enquiry even while working.

What does this imply? What exactly is the attitude of self-enquiry? It is an intense attitude of doubt about one's own nature. It means one has already recognized that one is not limited to the identity which at present one seems to be. One is striving to realize one's true nature.

What is the influence of such an attitude on one's work? It fosters detachment. When one works for oneself there is attachment. When one is not identified with the person who works, could there be attachment?

When one is questioning the very basis of the "I", is there room for attachment? The work goes on in a detached manner. This is the real influence of the attitude of self-enquiry on one's work.

The effort is to remain with the attitude, to remain with the question "who am I?" and not to slip into the habitual thought., "I am so-and-so".

Another doubt: How can effort, made by the illusory mind, help us overcome the illusion? Remember the old saying that it takes a thorn to remove a thorn. It is only a dream lion that awakens us from the dream by frightening us out of it.

If we labour under the illusion of bondage, we have to strive for freedom, and that striving naturally takes place on that same illusory plane. Since the effort is to remind ourselves that this is an illusion, it helps to turn the attention away from it.

It is, in fact, very simple. The effort is merely to break a wrong habit and not, as Bhagavan Ramana repeatedly points out, to create a new experience.

While it is said that effort is necessary, this in itself should not be turned into an excuse for postponing self-enquiry. This effort is meaningful only here and now."Since I must make effort, let me do it tomorrow." Such an attitude is fallacious. The Self doesn't

belong to the future. There is, indeed, no tomorrow. The effort is to be aware now. Every moment is now. Every moment must be given to self-enquiry. At least, that is the endeavour.

Yes, now is the moment of self-abidance. Effort must be now, always. ■

[Extracts from "The Mountain Path" June, 1991]

Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya, the principal of a college, was a remarkable person. Spiritual seekers are greatly indebted to him, because he extracted from Sri Bhagavan an assurance that HE will protect and emancipate all of us. Sri Bhagavan dropped His body on the fourteenth of April, 1950. Around April seventh or eighth, Professor Subbaramayya and Sub-Registrar Narayana Iyer, went to see Sri Bhagavan inside the room where He was lying down [which we call now, as *"Nirvana Room"*]. They wept inconsolably. Sri Bhagavan asked Subbaramayya,"What do you want ?" Subbaramayya replied, *"Abhayam Yivalla"*, meaning "Give me protection". Sri Bhagavan looked at him and said, *"Ichchaanu"*, meaning, "It is given". By this, He meant not only protection, but also "Liberation". Sub-Registrar Narayana Iyer who was also weeping, questioned, " Bhagavan ! Is it only for Subbaramayya ?" Sri Bhagavan turned to him and replied, "For everyone !" ■

A Kumar Raja

Bhagavan and Manavasi Ramaswami Iyer

One night in Virupaksha cave, Bhagavan focussed his attention on Manavasi Ramaswami Iyer for almost half an hour and he experienced a burning current entering him. His mind turned inwards and got merged in the Heart. For the first time, he understood that Bhagavan was not just an ascetic swami but a spiritual dynamo. This spiritual experience gave him greater faith in Bhagavan. Iyer was dyspeptic and had very poor digestion.

When he told Bhagavan about this, Bhagavan again focused his eyes on him. Iyer immediately felt his brain cooling down. Within a few days, in celebration of some festival, Echammal brought many varieties of rich food and sweets made of ghee and sugar for Bhagavan. Bhagavan, who always shared his food with anyone around, told Echammal to call Iyer. Apprehensive because of his dyspepsia, Iyer declined and told Echammal, "Please ask Bhagavan to forgive me. I cannot eat such rich food." But Bhagavan insisted, saying, "Come, share it with me." Obeying Bhagavan, he ate the food without any further thought. After this, his dyspepsia disappeared completely. His gratitude to Bhagavan for curing him came out in the form of his second song, "How do I express my gratitude for the cure graciously bestowed on me?" His family who stayed in the town and objected to Iyer spending every night with Bhagavan, heard about this miracle and started getting faith in Bhagavan. ■

Source: Ramana Periya Puranam

Glimpses of Self from Adhyatma Ramayana – Part 61

G Kameshwar

INTRODUCTION

All glory to the name and lore of Rama! The holy Adhyatma Ramayana is being narrated by Lord Siva to Parvati!

Siva continues the narration of Ravana's story, as told by Agastya to Rama.

After hearing of the glory of Narayana from Sanatkumara, Ravana is convinced that he should court death at the hands of Narayana alone. Sanatkumara had told him that Narayana would manifest himself as Rama, the son of Dasharatha.

Agastya tells Rama – "Ravana then thought deeply and decided that he would court enmity with you. Being exceedingly intelligent, he decided to achieve this by kidnapping Sita. He knew that by doing this, he would be inviting death at your hands, which was his aim".

Agastya further reveals – "Whoever listens to this story of Sanatkumara and Ravana, or reads it, or narrates it to those who are keen to hear it – all such persons will live a long life, of good health and endless comfort, and attain great gains, undiminishing riches!"

After his meeting with Sanatkumara, Ravana chanced to meet Narada, and sought to know from him the whereabouts of any people who were worthy of having a battle with. Narada advised him to go to Shveta Dveepa (white island), where live the greatest devotees of Narayana, especially those who have attained death in His hands. Ravana started forthwith on his Pushpaka Vimana for Shveta Dveepa. When his aircraft came near the island, it suddenly froze and could move no further. Ravana left the aircraft and came by himself to the island. No sooner had he come there, a girl caught hold of him, and questioned him about his identity. The woman was so

strong that Ravana could not escape from her grasp. Soon, a group of girls gathered and they too interrogated him, laughing at him all the time. With great difficulty Ravana managed to escape from their clutches. Ravana was now totally convinced about the power of Narayana. He decided that the surest way to attain the eternal abidance of Narayana, was by being killed by Rama.

Agastya tells Rama that it was for this reason that Ravana kidnapped Sita. However, he treated her with all respect, like a mother. His sole aim for kidnapping Sita was that Rama should come to rescue her, fight with him, and kill him.

Agastya tells Rama – "Rama! You are Lord Almighty! Your vision is experience of Reality! You are all-knowing – you know all that has happened in the past, and all that will happen in the future! You are the witness of the triple-time, and there is no duality whatsoever in you!

You, O Lord, who are worshipped by one and all, have taken a human form, and are seen to be obedient to the words of sages! It is for the sake of devotees that you are carrying out all works – so that they may see and follow your way!."

After offering worship to Rama, and after receiving Rama's worship, Agastya takes leave of Rama and returns to his Ashrama.

Siva tells Parvati - Lord Rama, along with his brothers and Sita, lived the role of a human being, and ruled Ayodhya for many years. While he did partake of sense pleasures, these objects held no attraction in his heart.

During his rule, auspiciousness prevailed everywhere. Grains grew in abundance. Fruits were in plenty. All the citizens adhered to their respective Dharma. No parent had to face the plight of a child's death. No inauspicious, untoward incidents happened.

The pushpaka vimAna that Rama had returned to Kubera, was always available to him, and would come to him on his mere thought. He visited many holy places along with his brothers and Sita, in the pushpaka vimAna. He installed hundreds of thousands of Siva-Linga idols everywhere. He ensured that Sita was given all joys, natural and supernatural. He ruled Ayodhya in accordance with Dharma, and his deeds were such that people were purified by merely speaking of and listening about them.

In this manner, assuming a human form by Maya, Rama ruled Ayodhya.

When he had completed ten thousand years of rule –

One day, Sita speaks to Rama in private.

She tells him that all Deva-s (celestial deities) had come in a group to her, with a prayer. They had told her that Vaikunta, the abidance of Narayana, was awaiting the return of the Lord. They requested that Sita should convey to Rama that he should now return from earth, along with Sita, and to give solace to them who were feeling orphaned by the absence of the Divine Parents.

Rama contemplates in silence and then tells her the approach to be adopted for this great departure. He tells her that he would, taking the excuse of slander, have her abandoned in the forest near the Ashrama of Valmiki. He tells her that her pregnancy was now showing, and that she would give birth to twin sons in Valmiki's Ashrama. Later, she should come and taking some oath, she should give up her mortal life and enter the earth. And after that, Rama would follow her soon.

Everything goes according to plan, and on Rama's order, Lakshmana takes Sita and abandons her in the forest, somewhere in the vicinity of Valmiki's Ashrama. Valmiki comes to know of her presence and goes to fetch her. By his Divine vision, he knows all past, present and future. Knowing that Sita is pure, and the course of events to come, he hands Sita over to the care of the wives of the Rshi-s in the Ashrama. Knowing from Valmiki that Sita is none other than Goddess Mahalakshmi in human form, the Rshi consorts served Sita with reverence and joy.

Rama, the first among Gods, the one substance, the Supreme-Self of all, who was now deprived of Sita's company, decided to lead a life of austerity. Renouncing all sense pleasures, he, whose holy feet are worshipped by ascetics, took to the vows of living as an ascetic himself.

In order to bestow auspiciousness to one and all, Rama gave to the world the great epic of Ramayana. On his part, he took to conducting his life along the ways of Sage-Kings (Rajarshi-s) of his lineage.

One day, finding Rama to be in solitude, Lakshmana approaches him.

Bowing to Rama, Lakshmana, with a pure heart, in all humility, speaks to Rama, seeking his guidance.

Lakshmana to Rama:

(Lord!)

You are
Knowledge pure!

You are the Self
Of all the embodied forms,
And are their substratum and sovereign!

Yet,
You are yourself
Formless!

They
Who have been associated
With your devotees
Who, like bees,
Come in throngs
To your lotus-feet –
They (alone)
By means of divine vision
Are able to realize who you are,
O Lord
Of great intellect!

At your Lotus-Feet
O Lord
Which are contemplated by Yogi-s,
And which eradicate birth-death transmigration
I have taken refuge!

Pray
Instruct me
(the way)
So that I may cross quickly
With ease
The boundless ocean of ajnAna[1]!■

**** To be continued ****

[1] ajnAna: nescience; erroneous knowledge that believes in the reality of world phenomena

“Some people come here a quarter mad and go back half mad; some come half mad and go back fully mad and others come here fully mad and go back fully sane!”

Ramana Maharshi

One day, when Bhagavan was coming down the hill along with Nayana, Sundaresa Iyer and other devotees, he suddenly stopped and said, "Nayana, look at me right now! The sun, moon, stars and planets are revolving around my waist." The onlookers could not see the spectacle but they did see Bhagavan's body glowing with a brilliance. Overawed, the devotees prostrated in front of the master and chanted the sacred *Purusha Suktham*, a chant sung by ancient sages praising the Lord of the Universe where the sun and the moon are described as the two eyes of the Lord.

Bhagavan vouchsafed that after the *kundalini* and *Tiruvottiyur* experiences, an electric current had begun to pass through Kavyakantha's body. Consequently, he could not walk barefoot on the earth without getting an electric shock. He began to wear wooden slippers but would reverently take them off in his master's presence. Bhagavan would compassionately say, "Nayana is coming. He cannot walk barefoot. Place a non-conductor, a wooden plank, for him to sit on. Give him also a woollen blanket that he can walk on." ■

Source: Ramana Periya Puranam

Bhagavan and his Mother

In 1914, while still in the clutches of family entanglements, Mother Azhagammal came to visit Bhagavan at Virupaksha cave. She came down with a raging fever. It was diagnosed as typhoid. Bhagavan pleaded with Arunachala, "Oh Arunachala, fire of wisdom, enfold my mother in your light and make her one with you!" Needless to say, his mother was saved. This plea of Bhagavan is not for his mother alone but for each one of us. When we take to Self Enquiry we too will be engulfed in the fire of wisdom of Arunachala.

In 1916, the younger daughter-in-law passed away, leaving her child Venkataraman, my father, to be looked after by Bhagavan's sister. Bhagavan's mother, now fed up with the world, returned to Bhagavan to stay with him for good. It took eight years for Bhagavan to make her spiritually mature; there are beautiful stories on how he did this. For instance, being a Brahmin, she was steeped in orthodoxy and Bhagavan had to release her from her prejudices. According to Brahmin orthodoxy, a Brahmin's clothes, kitchen, food and personal items could only be washed or touched by Brahmins. Else, they were considered impure. If touched by a dog or a person from a "lower caste", an orthodox Brahmin had to have a purifying bath. Dogs

touched Mother Azhagammal all the time because there were many at Skandashram and Virupaksha cave. Consequently, she sometimes ended up bathing ten times a day! Taking pity on her, a scholarly devotee Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni told her, "According to the Hindu scriptures, if you touch a *jnani,* a realized soul, all pollution and sins drop from the body - you need not bathe then." From then on, whenever Bhagavan saw his mother approaching he would know why she was coming to him. After she touched him and went away, he would give a mischievous smile and say, "Some dog must have touched her." Brahmins would not even eat onions or garlic. One day, Bhagavan brought a small onion to his mother and gently teased her saying, "Be careful, this will be standing there at the gates of heaven to push you out." With comments like these, he slowly freed her from the grip of her prejudices.

Her attachment to relatives had gone but her maternal attachment to Bhagavan remained. She knew Bhagavan liked *appalam* (a thin wafer like crisp, only much bigger) and she would ask people to bring the ingredients to make it. One day, when she was trying to make *appalams*, she called out to Bhagavan, "Why don't you come and help me? I am going to make *appalams*!" Blinded by her attachment to him, she wanted to satisfy his childhood desires. Understanding

this, Bhagavan replied, "You make your *appalams* inside the cave and I will make my *appalams* outside." This is how the *Appalam Song* came about. "In it, the process of making *appalams* is a metaphor for the process of attaining liberation". Bhagavan interpreted the song in the light of every ingredient used, *"Let the ego be crushed in the quern of Self Enquiry, seasoned with satsang, good company, softened and flattened, fried in the ghee of Brahman and then eaten by the Self."* The song asks, "How should one's soul be ripened? How should one's ego be pounded, like the flour is pounded?" The answer is, with the enquiry, 'Who am I?*' This song touched the depth of his mother's soul and transformed her.*

She was very possessive about her meagre belongings. Bhagavan transformed this quality in a beautiful way. One day, a pious renunciate and resident of Skandashram called Sabapati was wearing a torn cloth that did not cover much. Mother asked him, "Sabapati, why are you wearing this torn cloth?" He playfully replied, "You are wearing a long sari. It is nine yards long, why don't you give me some of it?" She immediately tore two yards from her sari and gave it to Sabapati. Her detachment from her few possessions had begun. ■

Source: Ramana Periya Puranam

Bhagavan as Ativarnashrami

Swami Atmananda Giri

The unique incident in Sri Ramana's life on or about 16th July,1896, a vivid vision of the death of His body and the awareness of the Self or Spirit apart from the gross body, was a turning point in His life. He had lost His personal ego or I-ness and on 1st September,1896 He arrived at His journey's end or destination at Arunachala. Immediately an uninvited barber gave Him a shave, He abandoned all He had. Nature gave Him a bath. *Jabala* Upanishad says: *"yada hareva Virajeth, Tadahareva pravrajeth".* (The moment dispassion possesses you, set out as an ascetic or sannyasi.) Sri Ramana was possessed by dispassion and some power moved Him to take that step. The four *Asramas* of Hinduism are *Brahmacharya*, stage of study, *Grihasta* or married and family state, *Vanaprastha* or retirement and aloofness from family, and *Sannyasa* or asceticism. *Sannyas* is also of four types. *Kutichaka, Bahudaka, Hamsa* and Paramahamsa. *Kashaya, Danda,Kamandalu* and rituals are prescribed for the *Asrama sannyasa*. Prof.Swaminathan writes: "The realization, was, in fact, final and once for all complete and permanent – with the single vision of death and the plenary experience of the Self in July, 1896" (Ramana Maharshi p.21) Further he states: "Though the Maharshi had renounced the ego and had thus become a true *sannyasi,* he declined to undergo formal initiation into any order of *sannyas"* (p.26). But it may be noticed that Bhagavan stated that he was an *atiasrami (his asceticism was beyond the* Asramas) and his conduct was not regulated by rules or codes.(p.237,254 *Talks with Ramana Maharshi*). The asceticism of *Atiasrami* is also covered by the scriptures, Sannyasa Upanishads. It is supreme *sannyas* or asceticism.

Ativarnasrami is defined in the *Avadhuta Upanishad*: "He who rises above *Asrama* (the four *Asramas* of *Brahmachari, Grihasta, Vanaprastha* and *Sannyasa*) and the four *Varnas*

(castes) and abides for ever in the Atma or Self is called *Ativarnashrami, yogi, Avadhuta*". Bhagavan Ramana remained almost nude, wore only a cod-piece or a small cloth called *Kaupina*.

Bhagavan Ramana had stated: "I do not consider anyone to be my disciple, I have never sought *upadesa* from anyone nor do I give ceremonial *upadesa*. I do not call myself a disciple or a guru". (p.238 Talks). One of the well known scriptures, *Suta Samhita, Muktikhanda* III Part, 5th chapter, refers to *Ativarnnashrami* in about 34 Verses (p.291-296) Bala Manorama Press). All these verses are reproduced by Vidyaranya Swami in *Jivan Mukti Viveka* (p. 31 Sanskrit and its translation in English p.46-48 T.P.H. Publication).Siva speaks to Vishnu, "like Me, he (the *Ativarnasrami*) should never become the pupil of anyone. Such a one is verily the Guru's Guru. There is really none in this world equal or superior to him. He belongs to the order beyond *varna* and *asrama*. He has realized the Supreme Truth, which transcends the body and the senses, which is the witness of all, the Absolute intelligence, all bliss and self-effulgent. He knows his Self as God" (p.46). "He (the *ativarnashrami*) is no doubt removed beyond *varna* and *ashrama*, who stands centered in the Self (p.47)." *Turiyatita Avadhuta Upanishad* says that the *Avaduta* is 'ever Holy', 'embodiment of dispassion', and 'He is Jnana itself, 'Veda itself' and such a person is rare indeed. Another Upanishad says *Ativarnasrami* has the indications of Godhead (*Varaha Upanishad* 2nd Part). In the *Suta Samhita*, Siva tells Vishnu that He (Siva) was an *Ativarnasrami* and indicates the characteristics of such a one.

An *ativarnasrami* is Guru's guru and as such He alone is *Jagad* Guru. Bhagavan Ramana's teaching is free from theology and dogmatism. The Ramana Way of Knowing the Truth is the philosophy of Self-Experience, applicable to each and every man and woman in the Universe. May *Jagadguru Ramana* in His Grace lead us all to Truth! ■

{Extracts from "The Mountain Path" July,1984]

Pure Consciousness is the Self. All that is required to realise the Self is to "Be Still." ■

Sri Ramana Maharshi

Upadesa Saram
(Direct Translation from Malayalam Version)

K.K. Nambiar

1. Since Karma yields results as ordained by the creator, how can Karma be God? It is insentient.

2. The results of Karma are impermanent, and yet leave seeds in the form of Vasanas (tendencies) in the mind which will only repeatedly plunge the doer in the ocean of Karma. Karma never leads one to salvation.

3. Perform disinterested Karma purely in the service of God, without any desire for its fruit. Such actions purify the mind and lead one on the way to moksha.

4. Actions are of three kinds, those performed by body, by speech and by mind. These are pooja (worship), japa (incantations) and dhyana (meditation), and are in ascending order to merit.

5. Keeping in view that this entire eightfold universe is the visible manifestation of God, worship Him accordingly. This is the best form of worship.

6. Repetition of mantras of God's names is better than the best forms of praise (stotras). Mantra repeated in faint murmur is superior to loud chanting. Mental repetition is the best of the three. Meditation is not different from this.

7. Meditation carried out without a break like the steady flow of oil or of a perennial stream is better than intermittent meditation. Incessant meditation without a single break is the best and most powerful.

8. The attitude "He is I" or "I am not separate from God" is far superior to the attitude that I am separate from Him.

9. Abidance in the Real Being transcending all thoughts is the purest form of devotion. Supreme devotion leads to moksha.

10. Having reached the secret core of one's existence, abiding therein without any mental distraction is the essence of all four paths, Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana.

11. By breath – control the fleeting mind is kept under restraint like a bird trapped in the net. Thus breath control is a device for absorption of the mind.

12. Mind has the power of apprehension, while prana has the power of activity only. Mind and prana are both branches springing from the same source of power.

13. Laya and Nasha are two forms of restraint. Laya being absorption for a time, that which is so absorbed is bound to revive. But that which is dead or permanently absorbed will never rise again.

14. Where the mind gets absorbed by breath restraint, it will die if made to follow a single current of thought.

15. For the great yogi whose mind is extinguished, though he yet looks like an ordinary man, there is no need for any action, as he has attained his true nature.

16. When the mind is withdrawn from external objects and is turned inwards to behold its own form of pure Awareness, that is True knowledge.

17. Where the mind, turned inward, unceasingly investigates its own form it will be found that there is no such thing as the mind. This is the straight path for all.

18. Apart from thoughts there is no mind. The thoughts themselves are said to be the mind. The root of all thoughts is the 'I'- thought. 'I' is the mind.

19. If diving within one seeks to find out whence the 'I'-thought rises, the 'I' will topple down. This is the pursuit of wisdom.

20. Where the 'I' perishes, there arises spontaneously in its own place in the Heart the Real 'I'-'I', which is infinite.

21. This is the true import of the term 'I', for nobody doubt's one's own existence, when the 'I' is absorbed daily during sleep.

22. Body, senses, prana, intellect, ignorance and the visible world, all being illusory, non-existent and insentient, are not I; I am the Eternal Reality.

23. There is no consciousness apart from 'I' to be aware of "That which is". "That which is" is Absolute Consciousness. Am 'I' not also that Consciousness?

24. The creator and creature are

both in substance "One in Being". No distinction should be made between them as the differences are only in their attributes and knowledge.

25. Where the creature sees and knows himself without the various attributes, that is verily seeing God himself. The Creator is no other than the Self.

26. What is spoken of is only 'abiding as the Self'. The Self is ever one alone, never two. Know this as 'Tanmayanishta'.

27. That knowledge is "True knowledge" which transcends both knowledge and ignorance . What more is to be known? There is nothing other than True Knowledge".

28. Searching for one's own form, if one realises one's true nature, than it is Being without beginning and end; it is unbroken Awareness-Bliss.

29. Who can describe that supreme bliss of Brahman, beyond all thoughts of bondage and release? Those abiding ever in that state are steadfast in the service of the Supreme.

30. Realising That which is when all trace of 'I' is gone and abiding as That is good tapas. So says Ramana, the Self of all. ■

[Extracts from "The Mountain Path April, 1984]

One day, when Bhagavan was chopping vegetables in the ashram kitchen, Krishna Bhikshu asked his permission to help. He took up the knife thrice, but each time Bhagavan insisted that he put it down. When Krishna Bhikshu protested, Bhagavan asked him, "Do you cut vegetables at home?" "No, I do not need to do it at home," he replied. Bhagavan smiled and shot back, "Well, are you not at home here?" This simply meant that, while doing arduous sadhana, one should give up the idea of doership in every activity and abide as the Self. Then you are always at home, in the Heart, in the state of "I AM". ■

Source: Ramana Periya Puranam

Poem

D Samarender Reddy

"I Am"

O, say not
"I am this" or "I am that"
The "this" and "that" belong
Only to your intoxicated mind
Which goes a-missing
When to sleep you take
So, dear, the "this" and "that"
Cannot be real
And only the "I am"
Or pure consciousness
Or Self if you will
Which subsists
In all the three states
Of waking, dream and sleep
Is the real deal.

The Witness

This body and mind
Were given me
They are not of my making
Though words and actions
Issue forth from them
I claim them not as my own
I am a process in motion
Directed by the powers that be
A mere puppet
Prancing around
All I can do
Is watch the show unfold
For even thoughts
Seem not in my control.

Dreams, Death and Moksha

Kushal Shah

Mandukya Upanishad describes consciousness as having four possible states : waking, dreaming, deep sleep and turiya (state of realization). But these states seem to be describing only the state of an ordinary living person and that of a realized soul. What about the state of death? Does not consciousness exist when a person dies?

Usually we say that, after death, the soul goes to heaven or hell depending on its karma. Are heaven and hell some specific locations in space-time where the soul goes to? It is usually believed that the mind is not a spatially localized object, only the physical body is. If this is true, then heaven/hell cannot be physical locations but only states of the mind. Wait! If heaven and hell are only states of the mind, they must pertain to one of the states of consciousness described in the Mandukya. It is usually said that when a soul is in heaven/hell, it enjoys/suffers the fruits of its karma. Among the four states described above, enjoyment/suffering is possible only in two : waking and dreaming. Now obviously heaven/hell cannot correspond to the waking state since it involves the presence of a physical body. So, the only possibility is that heaven/hell are states of dreaming. Sounds very interesting!

What happens when an ordinary person dies is that the mind goes into a prolonged dreaming state which can be pleasurable or painful depending on the person's karma. When the mind wakes up from this dream, it is born again in another body to further work out its karma. A person who has done lot of spiritual sadhana while in the physical body need not go into this dream state after death, but may instead go into a state similar to that of deep sleep. This state is beyond pleasure and pain. And such a person may be born again in a physical form in order to further do sadhana. This implies that the two states of

consciousness (dreaming and deep sleep) apply to both life and death.

Why does the mind need to be born in a physical body at all? Why can't it achieve realization in its subtle form itself? The answer to this question lies in the fact that in order to evolve, the mind needs to generate new thoughts. And for new thoughts to be generated, the mind needs sensory input through a physical form in the waking state. Its of course not clear why this should be so! Usually the thoughts in our mind are just memories of the past. But in due course of evolution, through interaction with the physical world, new thoughts start getting generated which eventually lead to a complete expression of the divine being in this physical form. From this point of view, realization is not about an individual turning its gaze inside but the infinite Self trying to manifest itself through a gross body! As Ramana Maharshi once said, "Creation is the mirror for the eye to see itself". ■

The Bliss of the Self is always with you, and you will find it for yourself, if you would seek it earnestly. The cause of your misery is not in the life without; it is in you as the ego. You impose limitations on yourself and then make a vain struggle to transcend them. All unhappiness is due to the ego; with it comes all your trouble. What does it avail you to attribute to the happenings in life the cause of misery which is really within you? What happiness can you get from things extraneous to yourself? When you get it, how long will it last?

If you would deny the ego and scorch it by ignoring it, you would be free. If you accept it, it will impose limitations on you and throw you into a vain struggle to transcend them.

To BE the Self that you really are is the only means to realize the Bliss that is ever yours. ■

Sri Bhagavan in Maharshi's Gospel

Know Yourself and Excel Yourself

P.N.Vijay

We are the fortunate inheritors of a profound tradition that is based on the eternal tenets and values of the faith that is best called *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal Values and Practices). From this fountainhead have sprung myriads of Auxiliary Disciplines. These branches include *Ayurveda* (Medicine), *Yoga* (all forms of physical austerity including Asana, Pranayama, Dhyana), *Natya Sastra* (Classical Dance), *Sangeeta* (Classical Music), *Jyotisa* (Astronomy), *Silpa Sastra* (Architectuure of which Vaastu is one segment), *Ganita, Boudika and Rasaayana Shastras* (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry) and so on. It will be no exaggeration that this tradition encompassed every aspect of life known to man. No wonder Hinduism is often called "A Way of Life".

Bhagavan Shri Krishna at the request of his friend and disciple Arjuna put out his *Vibhutis* (or glories) in the Tenth Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. He says "Of all the Knowledges I am the Knowledge of the Self" (Ch 10:32). In other words Self Knowledge is the basis of knowledge of all other Auxiliary disciplines.

Unfortunately this Knowledge which God extols is often forgotten in the present time as we learn and perform the Auxiliary Disciplines. We do not realize that without the roots, the branches and leaves wither away. And without Self-Knowledge there is also the fear that classical forms become commercial and then banal.

I will spell out what this Sanatana Dharma is in its most basic aspects. By knowing and appreciating this, practitioners of all Auxiliary disciplines can approach their tasks with greater understanding, excel in their activities and most importantly get more out of what they do.

First and foremost a Hindu believes he is divine. This divinity within him is variously referred to as Atman,

Heart or the Soul.

This Soul has due to *Avidya* (or Ignorance or Ego) identified itself with the Body, Mind and Intellect it has acquired and is now resident in.

Without this Avidya, this Soul is nothing but a part of the *Brahman* or Supreme Soul. This key principle is emphasisied ever so often with pronouncements such as Thou art That (Ch.Up), I am the Eternal Seed in all Beings (Krishna in BG), I am the Atma in BG)

The nature of this Brahman is *Satchitananda*; which can be split as is *Sat* (Existence), *Chit* (Consciousness) and *Ananda* (Bliss).

At the time of Creation the Supreme Soul creates elements and these modify as living beings. Then these living beings are subject to the Law of *Karma* (Action and Reaction). The Supreme Soul is the conscious and material cause of creation.

At the time of Dissolution It takes back these elements back to Itself and then commences another *Yuga* (or Age).

Due to past *Karmas* (or Actions), the Individual Soul acquires another body and this is called Reincarnation. The Soul also takes along with it the tendencies and nature of the previous life called *Vasanas*. This action is very beautifully described by Bhagavan Shri Krishna when He says "When the Lord leaves a body or acquires a new one, He takes the Senses and Manas like the wind that takes the scent from their seats".

Through *Jnana* (or Knowledge) or *Bhakti* (or Devotion) a person can transcend this vicious cycle of birth and death and stop identifying himself with his body and mind. He then realizes he is nothing but the Divine. In other words he realizes his true nature. This Self-Realisation is called *Moksha* or *Nirvana* (Self-realisation or Liberation). He gets release from the cycle of birth and death.

For the protection of the Good and the Destruction of the Evil, the Brahman takes an *Avatar* or a Human or Animal form and comes to the world. Rama and Krishna are two such Avatars.

By doing *Nishkama Karma* (or Desireless action) a man acquires purity of mind which is the best preparatory step to Jnana and Bhakti.

This set of tenets are the core of Hinduism are sacrosanct.

You may ask " Are there no other philosophies in Hinduism?", There are several and we know of 23 schools

of Philosophy including Logicians, *Mimamsikas*, Sunya Vaadins (akin to Buddhism) but through discussions and debates Vedanta has emerged as the Sanatana Dharma. Within Vedanta there are nuances like *Advaita* (Monism), *Visishtadvaita* (Modified Monism) and *Dwaita* (Duality) but all these agree on the basic tenets I have set out above.

So every Hindu should understand his religion clearly even as he or she practises the Auxiliary disciplines. Some time ago a Yoga Teacher who told me he didn't believe in Iswara, Brahman, Reincarnation etc. I asked him if he agreed that Paranjali's Yoga Sutras are the basis of all Asanas and Pranayama and he agreed. Then I pointed out one of the *Niyamas* (Preparatory disciplines) mandated by Patanjali before commencement of Asanas and Pranayama is *Iswara Pranidhana* which is the dedication, devotion, and surrender of the fruits of one's practice to Iswara or God. So I told this Yoga Trainer if he didn't believe in God, he can be a good PT Master or Aerobics Trainer but not a Yoga Trainer.

On another occasion a Critic asked me whether Bharata Natya had any dance that did not have the Divine as the Subject. I said that is not possible as Bharata Natya in its classical form is an Auxiliary Discipline of Sanatana Dharma. Many emotions like Love, Fear, Courage are expressed through Divine episodes; in this aspects of Nature like Ganga or Earth are divinised.

I would encourage readers to get the true delight and benefit of whatever Auxiliary discipline they may undertake to take the trouble to understand the Fountainhead. You will thereby spiritualise every activity. When performed with that understanding it becomes itself a form of Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. ■

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The cause of your misery is not in the life without; it is in you as the ego….Pains are dependent on the ego; they cannot be without the 'I', but 'I' can remain without them. ■ **Sri Ramana Maharshi**

A Garland That Ensnares

Neera Kashyap

Aksharamanamalai:

Your union of letters to garland the Lord;
a union of the heart and your teaching to us
intertwined.
Your letters create a deep longing in the heart:
a surging restlessness of waves,
ebbing and flowing
in an endless pattern:
flowing with hope, ebbing in despair.

Something draws me away from the waves,
sometimes
as if to witness the waves that hope and despair.
The pain returns but so does the witness
in an endless pattern
of hoping, despairing, witnessing.
The garland murmurs in the heart,
a union of letters conveying your love for us:
Turn your gaze inwards to the Heart;

Dive.

Dive beyond the waves?
Beyond the wave that witnesses?
The wake follows the waves – suffering, witnessing, diving;
In an endless pattern
ofwave and wake; suffering, witnessing, diving.
Something is holding me captive; not wave, not wake;
not suffering, not witnessing, not diving.
It is a garland – a union of letters that ensnares the heart, throbbing. ■

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The following is from the edited Hindi version of the book ***"Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi".*** *Both the Hindi and English versions of the book are available at the Delhi Kendra book store.*

श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

37

मेजर ओ. डब्ल्यु. चाड्विक, O.B.E. (1890-1962), ब्रिटिश फौज में थे। ब्रंटन (सं. 1) की पुस्तक A Search in Secret India पढ़कर ऐसे अभिभूत हुए कि नौकरी त्याग कर 1935 में रमणाश्रम आगए और फिर वहीं के हो गए। बाद में संन्यास लिया और साधु अरुणाचल हो गए। उनके संस्मरण A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Sri Ramana Maharshi नामक पुस्तक में हैं।

जब मैं पहले पहल महर्षि के कक्ष में प्रविष्ट हुआ उन्होंने मनोहारी मुस्कान से मेरा स्वागत किया और पूछा कि क्या मैंने नाश्ता कर लिया है? उन्होंने मेरे जीवन के विषय में कई प्रश्न पूछे। सब बड़ा स्वाभाविक लगा। उनकी उपस्थिति में मुझे गहन शांति की अनुभूति हुई। ऐसा लगा कि मैं उन्हें सदा से जानता हूँ, न कि पहली बार मिल रहा हूँ। भारत की रीतियों से पूर्णत: अनभिज्ञ होने पर भी आश्रम निवास के प्रारंभिक दिनों में मुझे कुछ भी अनोखा या विचित्र नहीं लगा।

महर्षि, जिन्हें सब 'भगवान' कहकर संबोधित करते थे, के सामने लोग जब अपनी पारिवारिक गाथा कहते, वे प्रसन्न लोगों के साथ हँसते और शोकाग्रस्त के साथ आँसू बहाते। वे कभी ऊँचें स्वर में नहीं बोलते थे। पैसों को उन्होंने कभी हाथ नहीं लगाया, इसकी आवश्यकता भी नहीं थी और न ही उन्हें इसकी रुचि थी। उन्हें हर प्रकार की सादगी प्रिय थी। वे भूमि पर बैठना पसंद करते थे, किंतु एक भक्त ने बहुत आग्रह करके एक सोफा उन पर थोप दिया, जो चैबीसों घंटे उनका घर बन गया था। यदि उन्हें किसी के प्रति कोई आसक्ति थी तो वह था अरुणाचल पर्वत, जिसे वे साक्षात शिव मानते थे।

वे सभी प्राणियों के प्रति सदैव दयावान थे। साँप और बिच्छू को भी मारा नहीं जाता था। कुत्तों के प्रति उनका हृदय दयाग्र था। एक छोटा सा पिल्ला सदा आश्रम ऑफ़िस के पास ही गंदा करता था। सर्वाधिकारी ने क्रोधित होकर उसे बाहर निकालने का आदेश दिया। महर्षि ने उसके बचाव में कहा कि यदि घर का कोई बच्चा गंदगी करे तो क्या हम उसे निकाल देंगे। उन्हें बंदरों पर विशेष अनुराग था। वे कहते थे कि बहुत सी बातों में वे मनुष्य से श्रेष्ठ हैं। बंदरों को उनके पास आने की खुली छुट्टी थी। आश्रमवासियों को बंदरों के उपद्रव के कारण चिढ़ होती, किंतु महर्षि उनके प्रति दयालु थे।

महर्षि व्यक्तिगत रूप से सुंदर दिखते थे। उनके चारों ओर एक दीप्तिमान आभा दिखाई देती थी। उनके हाथ कोमल और सुंदर थे, जो उनकी अभिव्यक्ति में सहायक थे। उनके नेत्रों का आकर्षण प्रसिद्ध था। उनके माथे का उभार असामान्य था। उनका व्यक्तित्व ऐसा प्रखर था कि देह मध्यम कद की होने पर भी उसका प्रभाव ऊँचे व्यक्ति जैसा प्रतीत होता था। स्वच्छता के विषय में वे बहुत सावधान थे। यद्यपि उन्होंने कभी सुगंधित साबुन का प्रयोग नहीं किया, उनकी देह से एक हल्की सी सुगंध आती थी।

महर्षि से सदैव एक विस्मयकारी शांति विकीर्ण होती थी। जयंती और दीपम् जैसे उत्सवों पर, जब आश्रम में एक बड़ा जन समूह एकत्र होता था, इसकी गहनता बढ़ जाती थी, जैसे कि वे शांति को किसी छिपे भंडार से

निकाल कर जन कल्याण के लिए प्रसारित कर रहे हो। ऐसे समय में उनके समक्ष बैठना एक विशेष अनुभव था।

महर्षि की विनोद-वृत्ति विशिष्ट थी। उनके पास व्यंग विनोद का भंडार था। जो भी कथा सुनाते एक उत्तम अभिनेता की भांति, नायक की प्रस्तुति नाटकीय ढंग से करते। यदि कथा करुण होती तो इतने भावुक हो जाते कि गला रुंध जाता और वे बोल नहीं पाते।

आत्म बोध के विषय में उन्होंने बताया कि प्रारंभ में नियमित ध्यान लगाने वाले की ध्यान अवस्था तीस मिनट तक चल सकती है। यदि अभ्यास गहराई और सच्चाई से होता रहे तो समाधि की अवस्था बार-बार आ सकती है। ऐसा भी संभव है कि साधक का दैनिक व्यवहार चलता रहे और वह अपने आप को उससे न जोड़े, अर्थात् उसमें कर्त्ता भाव के स्थान पर द्रष्टा भाव आ जाएँ, जैसे स्वप्न में व्यक्ति स्वयं होते हुए भी स्वप्न का द्रष्टा भी होता है।

महर्षि कहते थे कि मन बंदर के समान है—निरंतर अस्थिर। इसे शांत करने के लिए कोई उपयोगी काम देना आवश्यक है, और वह यह है कि बार-बार अपने आप से पूछा जाए कि ''मैं कौन हूँ?'' यदि मन इस पर एकाग्र हो जाए तो फिर उसे अन्य विचारों के लिए अवकाश नहीं रहेगा।

बहुत से लोग महर्षि को गुरु दक्षिणामूर्ति (परिशिष्ट 5) मानते थे, जिन्होंने चार कुमारों को मौन रहकर ज्ञान दिया था। जो वाणी से परे है उसे वाणी द्वारा अभिव्यक्त नहीं किया जा सकता और जो मन से परे है उसे मन पकड़ नहीं सकता। मौन कितना अर्थपूर्ण हो सकता है, इसे निम्न प्रसंग द्वारा समझा जा सकता है।

एक कशमीरी सज्जन अपने सहायक के साथ आश्रम आए। सहायक कशमीरी भाषा के अतिरिक्त कुछ नहीं समझ सकता था। एक रात वह महर्षि के कक्ष में, जहाँ केवल एक धुंधली लालटेन का प्रकाश था, आया। श्रद्धा से हाथ जोड़कर खड़ा हुआ और अपनी भाषा में तेजी से कुछ बोलने लगा। सोफे पर लेटे हुए महर्षि बिल्कुल मौन रहे, केवल उसकी ओर देखते रहे। कुछ देर बाद वह साष्टांग प्रणाम करके चला गया। दूसरे दिन सुबह उसके मालिक ने

महर्षि से शिकायत के स्वर में कहा, ''भगवान, आपने मुझे नहीं बताया कि आप कशमीरी जानते हैं। कल रात मेरा सहायक आपके पास आया था। उसने मुझे बताया कि उसने आप से बहुत कुछ पूछा, जिसका उत्तर उसे उसकी भाषा में मिल गया।'' महर्षि ने कहा, ''किन्तु मैंने तो मुँह भी नहीं खोला।''

एक अमरीकी दम्पति आश्रम आए। वे दोनों महर्षि से बहुत घुल-मिल गए। एक दिन पत्नी कक्ष में अचानक बोली, ''भगवान! आत्म साक्षात्कार चाहिए।'' महर्षि ने कहा, ''प्रतीक्षा करो, अनुकूल समय पर हो जाएगा।'' वे बोलीं, ''नहीं, मुझे तो अभी चाहिए, और यहीं।'' महर्षि ने यह कहकर समझाने का प्रयत्न किया कि जब परिपक्वता होगी, सब कुछ स्वयं हो जाएगा। किंतु वे निरंतर अपनी इस जिद पर अड़ी रहीं कि उन्हें साक्षात्कार चाहिए और महर्षि चाहें तो उन्हें प्रदान कर सकते हैं। महर्षि मौन रहे और उसकी आँखों में कुछ क्षणों तक अपनी दृष्टि स्थिर कर दी। अचानक श्रीमती के नेत्रों से आँसू बहने लगे और वे रोती हुई कक्ष के बाहर दौड़ गईं। पूछने पर कभी किसी को नहीं बताया कि क्या हुआ था।

महर्षि के अनुसार, साधना के मुख्य अंग—सात्विक भोजन और सत्संग हैं। इनके अतिरिक्त उन्होंने कोई अन्य नियम नहीं बताए। उनका कहना था कि हमारा मन भोजन से बनता है। [जैसा अन्न, वैसा मन, यह पुरानी कहावत है।]

महर्षि ने कभी नैतिकता की शिक्षा नहीं दी। सेक्स से उन्हें कोई घृणा नहीं थी। एक बार यौन-विचार से पीड़ित साधक से मैंने उन्हें कहते सुना, ''उसके विषय में सदैव सोचते रहने से उसे कर डालना अच्छा है।''

एक दिन महर्षि ने कहा, ''तुम ऐसा क्यों सोचते हो कि तुम कर्ता हो? यह असंगत बात है, क्योंकि 'मैं' कुछ नहीं करता। 'मैं' सदा साक्षी होता है। तुम साक्षी हो, इस बात पर ध्यान एकाग्र करो और घटनाओं को अपने नियत क्रम से घटते रहने दो। वे घटित होंगी ही, तुम उन्हें नहीं रोक सकते।''

महर्षि साधन अथवा माध्यम को अधिक महत्त्व देते थे। वे कहते थे कि हमें परिणाम की ओर ध्यान नहीं देना चाहिए। दूसरे लोग क्या कह रहे हैं, क्या कर रहे हैं, इसकी चिंता मत करो। आपके पास अपने विषय में सोचने का

पर्याप्त कार्य है। पहले अपने आप को सुधारो, उसके बाद ही आपको जगत के विषय में सोचना है। अपनी सहायता करने से पहले आप जगत की सहायता कैसे कर सकते हैं? पहले अपनी स्थिति सुधारिए, फिर जगत की सोचिए।

यदि महर्षि से भविष्य के विषय में पूछा जाता तो उनका एक ही उत्तर होता, ''भविष्य में क्या होगा, इसकी चिंता क्यों करते हो? 'अभी' और 'यहाँ' अधिक महत्त्वपूर्ण हैं।''

महर्षि के तत्वज्ञान का सारांश है कि, 'सब कुछ माया है, भ्रम है, कुछ नहीं है।' पैसों के पीछे, और अच्छे से अच्छा जीने के लिए मनुष्य की पागल दौड़, आधार रहित कल्पना है। सब कुछ चाँदनी रात में भूमि पर दिखाई देनेवाले पत्तों की स्पर्शागम्य व अवास्तविक परछाईं है।

यदि आप पलटकर पूछें 'ऐसी नकारात्मक स्थिति कौन चाहेगा?' तो मेरा उत्तर होगा कि 'यह तो आपकी रुचि की बात है'। [रुचि के विषय में कवि कहता है—'जो विषया संतन तजी, मूढ़ ताहीं लपटाय। नर करता जिस वमन को, श्वान स्वाद सो खाय।' अर्थात, जो विषय-भोग संत महात्माओं ने छोड़ दिए हैं, मनुष्य उन्हें बड़ी रुचि से अपनाता है, जैसे मनुष्य की उलटी को कुत्ता बड़े स्वाद से चाटता है।] आप यह भी पूछ सकते हैं कि यदि संसार कुछ नहीं है, तो कोई ऐसी स्थिति भी होगी—जो कुछ है। वह स्थिति है आत्म बोध या आत्म साक्षात्कार—जो सब कुछ है।

एक आस्ट्रेलियन पत्रकार जो आश्रम देखने आया था, मेरे कमरे में आया। उसकी समझ में नहीं आ रहा था कि एक यूरोपियन दुनिया से अलग-थलग ऐसे स्थान पर कैसे रह रहा है। कई प्रश्न पूछने पर भी जब उसे संतोष नहीं हुआ तो उसने सीधा पूछा, ''आखिर आप यहाँ कर क्या रहे हैं?'' मेरा उत्तर कि मुझे यहाँ मन की शांति मिलती है, उसे यथेष्ट नहीं लगा। कुछ छणों तक मेरी ओर देखता रहा और फिर तरस खाते स्वर में बोला, ''मुझे तो इस तरह की कोई आवश्यकता कभी अनुभव नहीं हुई।'' इस प्रकार उसकी इस धारणा को पुष्टि मिली कि मैं पागल था। वास्तव में, आज भी मैं इस प्रश्न का संतोषजनक उत्तर नहीं दे सकता। मैं यहाँ आया क्योंकि मुझे आने की

प्रेरणा हुई। महर्षि मेरे लिए चुंबक थे और उनकी चुंबकीय शक्ति का प्रभाव जरा भी कम नहीं हुआ है—मैं उससे बँधा हूँ।

महर्षि अपने कक्ष में विराजमान हैं—सब प्रकार की घटनाओं से सर्वथा अलिप्त और अप्रभावित। सुंदरतम, मृदुतम मुस्कान से मंडित उनका मुख, और उस पर ऐसी शोभा और सुचिता, जिसका शब्दों में वर्णन असंभव है। वास्तव में उन्हें बिना देखे यह विश्वास नहीं हो सकता है कि वे कितने प्रभाव युक्त हैं। कितने भी पुराने ग्रंथ और ऋषियों की कथाएँ महर्षि के समान प्रभावकारी संदेश नहीं दे सकते। महर्षि के समीप हम परिवर्तनशील और अनिश्चित जगत में एक निश्चित विश्वास की चट्टान पर खड़े होने का अनुभव कर सकते हैं। हम कितने अधिक भाग्यशाली हैं कि महर्षि हमारे बीच हैं। जो वस्तु हमें सहज सुलभ होती है, हम उसकी उपेक्षा करने की ग़लती कर देते हैं। महर्षि वास्तव में अद्‌भुत और अद्वितीय हैं।

चाड्विक की कविताओं का एक अंश
महर्षि के प्रति

क्या जाने न दोगे तुम मुझे?
अबुध हूँ मैं—भागना जो चाहता हूँ।
शांति जो पाई यहाँ, न कहीं मिलेगी जानता हूँ।
यदि क्षणिक भी बिछुड़ना होगा आपसे,
यह नराधम मन भगेगा हाथ से।
दास न मैं मन का बनुगाँ कभी,
मैं नहीं जाना चाहता कभी।। ■

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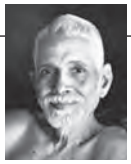
क्रमशः

'TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI' was published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamlai, in January 1955. These TALKS cover a period of four years, 1935-1939 and were all recorded by Sri Munagala S. Venkataramiah (later known as Swami Ramananda Saraswati), a very old disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The four years that are covered here, were the days when the Ashramam reached the summit of its glory. Maharshi's health was on the whole good and the Hall where he sat was open day and night to welcome one and all. Visitors flocked there from every nook and corner of the world. There was hardly a country that was not represented at one time or the other. But war naturally interfered with this influx, though the number of Indian visitors steadily increased as time went on. But it was these conversations, mainly with Westerners, that were especially interesting; the modern tendency towards materialism and self aggrandisement, on which the West often prides itself, met its match here. Sri Bhagavan glowed like a sun, and even those who did not know him or agreed with his words, were fascinated and could not help but be elevated by his presence.

This publication has been received so well by the devotees and readers that as many as 14 reprints have been brought out so far. M/s. Shivlal Agarwal & Co. have recently brought out a Hindi version of this book. With the permission of the publisher and Sri Ramanasramam, we are serialising the same in our bi-monthly magazine DIRECT PATH-RAMANA GYAN. We hope our Hindi readers will benefit from this and find it interesting and helpful in their spiritual quest." - Editor

The Annual General Meeting of Ramana Kendra,Delhi was held on the 26th April,2015. The AGM also unanimously resolved that the Managing Body for 2015-17 will now comprise of the following:

1. Mr. Justice K. Ramamoorthy (Rtd)	President
2. Shri A.S. Rajaram	Vice President
3. Shri N.V. Krishnan	Vice President
4. Shri P. N. Vijay	Secretary
5. Smt. Neera Kashyap	Joint Secretary
6. Dr. Bobby Dewan	Joint Secretary
7. Shri Adarsh Kumar Bhatiani	Treasurer
8. Shri R. Gopalan	Joint Treasurer
9. Shri V. Mahalingam	Member
10. Dr. Vijay Vancheswar	Member
11. Shri R. Ramanathan	Member
12. Shri R. Seetharaman	Member
13. Smt. Uma Seetharaman	Member
14. Dr. Sangit Kumar	Member
15. Smt. Rita Sangit Kumar	Member
16. Smt. Lekha Bhatiani	Member
17. Mrs. Shiromani Vijay	Member
18. Shri A.G. Subramanian	Member
19. Shri K.V.S. Rao	Member



श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत

भक्त : ऋभु गीता के अनुसार सारे दृश्य पदार्थ मिथ्या हैं, किन्तु अन्त में बताया जाता है कि वे सब ब्रह्म हैं, और इस प्रकार सत्य हैं।

महर्षि : हाँ, जब तुम उन्हें अनेक रूपों में देखते हो तो वे असत् हैं। किन्तु जब तुम उन्हें ब्रह्म रूप में देखते हो तो वो सत् हैं; वे अपनी वास्तविकता अपने आधार, ब्रह्म से प्राप्त करते हैं।

भक्त : तब फिर 'उपदेश सार' में देहादि को जड़ क्यों कहा गया है ?

महर्षि : क्योंकि तुम उन्हें आत्मा से प्रथक देहादि कहते हो। परन्तु जब आत्मा की अनुभूति हो जाती है तो देहादि भी उसी के अन्तर्गत मालूम होते हैं। तदुपरान्त न कोई प्रश्न पूछेगा न कोई कहेगा के वे जड़ हैं।

भक्त : आत्मा–अनात्मा के भेद को जानना विवेक कहा गया है। अनात्मा क्या है ?

महर्षि : वास्तव में अनात्मा कुछ नहीं है। अनात्मा भी आत्मा के अन्तर्गत है। आत्मा ही अनातमा की बात करता है चूँकि वह स्वयं को भूल चुका है। अपने आपकी पकड़ छूट जाने के कारण वह किसी वस्तु की अनात्मा के रूप में धारण करता है, जो वस्तुतः स्वयं के अतिरिक्त कुछ भी नहीं है।

तदुपरान्त भिन्न–भिन्न सिद्धान्तों के समर्थकों के मध्य उष्ण वाद–विवाद होने लगा।

2 **जनवरी,** *1937*

311. जिस 'मैं' का उदय होता है उसका अस्त भी अनिवार्य है। वह व्यक्तिगत 'मैं' अथवा 'मैं' की धारणा है। जिसका उदय नहीं उसका अस्त भी नहीं। वह है और सदैव रहेगा। यही वास्तविक 'मैं' है, पूर्ण 'मैं' अथवा आत्मा का साक्षात्कार है।

सन्ध्या साढ़े पाँच बजे स्विस महिला ने श्री भगवान् से निवेदन किया कि यदि ध्यान का समय कुछ बढ़ा दिया जाता है तो उसके सिर में दर्द होने लगता है।

महर्षि : यदि ध्यान करने वाले को और ध्यान को एक जान लोगी तो न सिर में दर्द होगा और न इस प्रकार का अन्य कोई कष्ट होगा।

भक्त : किन्तु वे तो भिन्न हैं। हम उनको एक ही कैसे मानें ?

महर्षि : यह तुम्हारे दृष्टिकोण के कारण है। केवल एक अस्तित्व है और कोई भेद नहीं है। ध्यान से सापेक्ष ज्ञान नष्ट हो जाता है। यह नष्ट होना नहीं है; चूँकि शुद्ध चैतन्य उदय होता है। स्वयं बाइबिल कहती है, "स्वर्ग का साम्राज्य तुम्हारे अन्दर है।" यदि तुम स्वयं को देह समझोगे तो इस कथन का अभिप्राय समझने में कुछ कठिनाई होगी। इसके विपरीत, यदि तुम यह जान लोगे कि वास्तव में तुम कौन हो, तो स्वर्ग का साम्राज्य एवं और सब तुम्हारी वास्तविक आत्मा के अन्तर्गत हैं। ये सब अहंकार के उदय होने के बाद उत्पन्न होने वाली धारणाएँ हैं। "दृष्टि ज्ञानमयी कृत्वा पश्येत् ब्रह्ममयं जगत्" (अपनी दृष्टि को अन्तर्मुख करो और उसे पूर्ण बना लो)। उस पूर्ण चैतन्य की अनुभूति के पश्चात् बाहर देखने पर तुम्हें जगत् साक्षात् किये हुए परब्रह्म से पृथक दृष्टिगोचर नहीं होगा।

चूँकि तुम्हारा दृष्टिकोण बहिर्मुखी है, तुम बाहर की चर्चा करते हो। उस अवस्था में तुम्हें अन्तर्मुख होने का निर्देश दिया जाता है। यह अन्दर उस बाह्य की तुलना में है, जिसकी तुम खोज कर रहे हो। वस्तुतः आत्मा न बाहर है न अन्दर।

स्वर्ग की चर्चा करते समय ऊपर या नीचे, अन्दर या बाहर का भाव आता है, चूँकि हम तुलनात्मक ज्ञान के अभ्यस्त हो गये हैं। मनुष्य केवल दृश्य पदार्थों का ज्ञान प्राप्त करना चाहता है और तभी इस प्रकार के भाव उत्पन्न होते हैं।

वास्तव में न ऊपर है न नीचे, न बाहर है न अन्दर। यदि वे सत्य होते

हैं तो स्वप्न–रहित सुषुप्ति में भी रहते। क्योंकि जो सत्य है वह अवश्य ही अखण्ड एवं स्थायी होगा। क्या तुम्हें सुषुप्ति में 'अन्दर' या 'बाहर' का भान था ? निश्चय ही नहीं था।

भक्त : मुझे स्मरण नहीं ?

महर्षि : यदि उस समय कुछ होता तो स्मरण रहता। परन्तु तुम उस समय अपने अस्तित्व को स्वीकार करते हो। वही आत्मा अब बोल रहा है। जो आत्मा सुषुप्ति में भेदरहित था अब इस अवस्था में भेद सहित है और नानात्व देख रहा है। वास्तविक सत्ता केवल एक है जिसमें दृश्य पदार्थों का ज्ञान नहीं है। वही शुद्ध चैतन्य है। यही आनन्द की अवस्था है जिसे हम सब स्वीकार करते हैं। यही अवस्था इसे जाग्रत अवस्था में भी लाना परम आवश्यक है। इसे जाग्रत सुषुप्ति कहते हैं। यही मुक्ति है।

भक्त : जिसका पुनर्जन्म होता है वह अहंकार है।

महर्षि : हाँ। परन्तु पुनर्जन्म क्या है ? अहंकार वही रहता है। नवीन देह उत्पन्न हो इसे धारण करती है। अहंकार में परिवर्तन नहीं होता। यह एक देह त्यागकर दूसरी देह खोजने तथा प्राप्त करने नहीं जाता। तनिक देखो तुम्हारे स्थूल शरीर का क्या होता है। मान लो कि तुम लन्दन जाओ। यह तुम कैसे करते हो ? तुम एक वाहन लेकर बन्दरगाह तक जाते हो, तथा स्टीमर पर सवार हो कुछ दिनों में लन्दन पहुँच जाते हो। क्या हुआ है ? वाहन चलता गया, किन्तु तुम्हारा शरीर नहीं। तथापि तुम कहते हो कि तुम भू–मण्डल के एक भाग से दूसरे भाग तक यात्रा कर आये। वाहनों का चलन तुम्हारे शरीर पर अध्यारोपित कर दिया गया। तुम्हारे अहंकार के साथ भी ऐसा ही है। पुनर्जन्म अध्यारोपण है। उदाहरणार्थ, स्वप्न में क्या होता है ? क्या तुम स्वप्न जगत् में जाते हो अथवा वही तुम्हारे अन्दर घटित होता है ? बाद की स्थिति ही सही है। पुनर्जन्म के साथ भी ऐसा ही है। अहंकार बिना परिवर्तन के सदैव रहता है।

फिर तुम्हारी सुषुप्ति में देश एवं काल नहीं रहता। ये धारणाएँ हैं जो अहम्

वृत्ति के उदय होने के बाद उदय होती हैं। अहम् वृत्ति के उदय से पूर्व धारणाओं का अभाव था। अतः तुम देश व काल से परे हो। अहम् वृत्ति सी. मित 'मैं' है। वास्तविक 'मैं' असीमित, सर्वत्र व्याप्त एवं देश व काल से परे है। सुषुप्ति में इनका अभाव है। सुषुप्ति से जागने के बाद तथा दृश्य जगत् को देखने से पूर्व जो एक जागृति की स्थिति है वह तुम्हारा निज स्वरूप है। यह जानना आवश्यक है।

भक्त : किन्तु मैं इसका अनुभव नहीं करती।

महर्षि : यह इन्द्रियों द्वारा अनुभूति का विषय नहीं है। तुम वही हो। किसका अनुभव करेगा ?

312. पूना के श्री वी० के० चोलकर : कहा जाता है, ''अपने को जानो'' अथवा यह देखो कि तुम में 'मैं' कौन है। इसको करने का क्या साधन है ? क्या यह केवल निरन्तर यन्त्रवत मन्त्र का जप है अथवा प्रतिक्षण यह भी ध्यान रहे कि तुम मन्त्र का जप क्यों कर रहे हो और मन्त्र का जप भी करते रहो।

महर्षि : तुम स्वतः सदैव ही मन्त्र का जप कर रहे हो। यदि तुम्हें नित्य ही होने वाले अजपा जप का बोध न हो तो तुम्हें जप करने की आवश्यकता है। जप प्रयास से होता है। यह प्रयास अन्य संकल्पों के निवारण हेतु है। तब जप मानसिक तथा आन्तरिक बन जाता है। अन्ततः उसके अजपा तथा नित्य स्वभाव की अनुभूति हो जायगी। चूँकि तुम्हें यह मालूम हो जायगा कि जप तुम्हारे प्रयास के बिना भी हो रहा है। यह सहज स्थिति ही साक्षात्कार की अवस्था है।

श्री चोलकर ने व्यावहारिक दृष्टि से अर्थात् जो भी निर्देश उनके लिए उपयुक्त हों, देने के लिए श्री भगवान् से प्रार्थना की। ■

क्रमशः

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