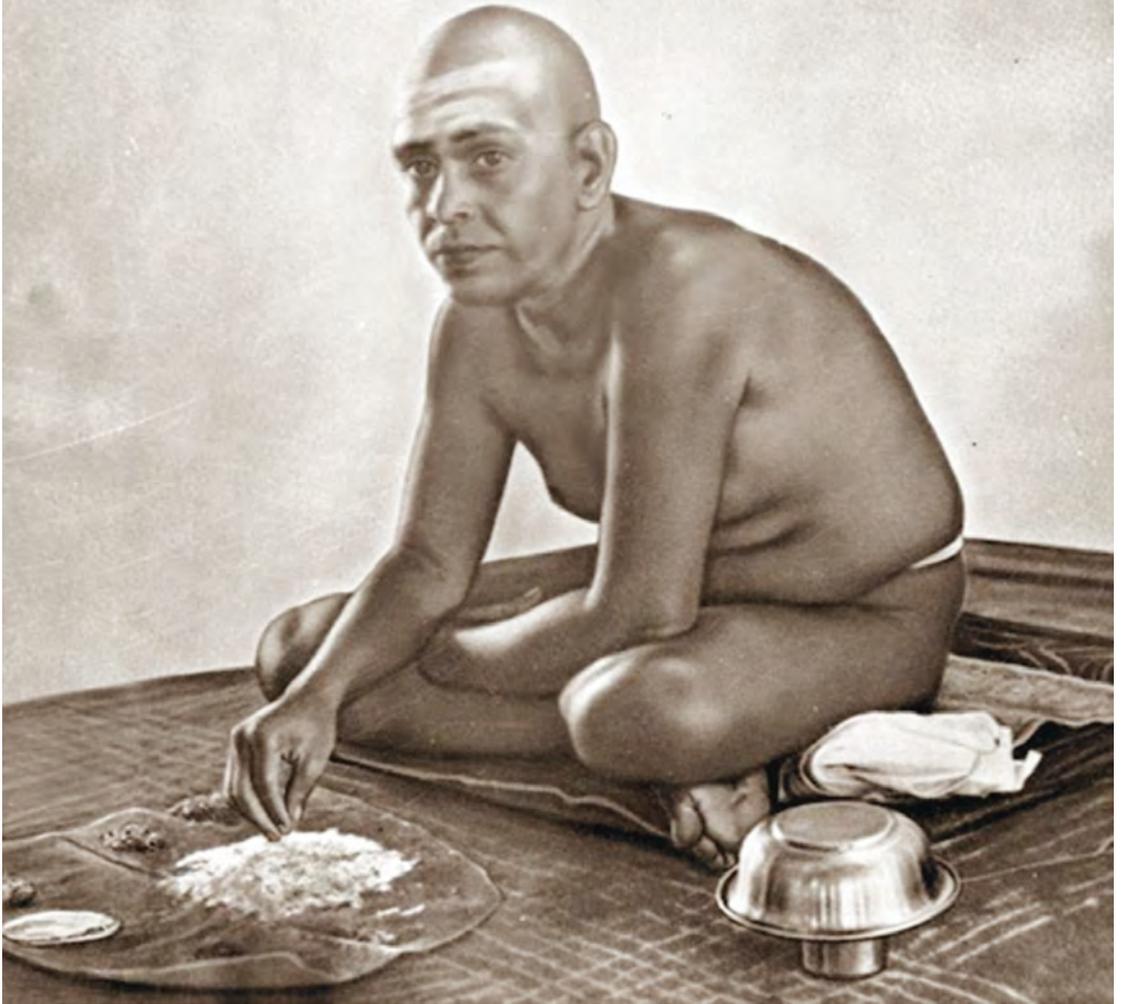




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RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH



VOL. XIX, No. 3

January - February, 2017

Deepam Celebrations at the Kendra





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

RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH

VOLUME XIX ISSUE 3

JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 2017

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Letters to the Editor

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

Direct Path wishes to start a column to answer the queries of the devotees in their spiritual journey.. We plan to get the answers from Swamijis and Ramana scholars. Please send your queries either by email to directpath@rediffmail.com or shiromani.vijay@yahoo.co.in or to regular mail of the Kendra.

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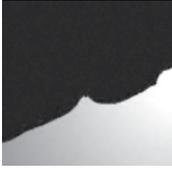
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Sacrifice builds people and nation

Shiromani Vijay

It reminds me of something I was taught in school

“Wealth without work.
Pleasure without conscience.
Knowledge without character.
Commerce without morality.
Science without humanity.
Worship without sacrifice.
Politics without principle.”

are to be despised and avoided. Do these remain just in text books and in school prayers?

In the aftermath of demonetisation which is being compared to seismic events like Tsunamis and military strategies such as surgical strikes, life is projected to be spinning out of control. What is sad is that the anger is seen mostly with the rich and well-healed businessmen and politicians who are suddenly finding that their cosy world, built on black money

fuelling their bribes and illegal activities, is suddenly under serious threat of collapse. In the haves, the instilled values are totally forgotten and wealth at any cost seems to be the only principle what with all the media idolising the rich. They seem to have become slaves to money. Instead of taking this opportunity to rethink and correct their lifestyles, they are inventing new ways to perpetuate the crime.

At the same, it is heartening to see that common man has not yet given up all the values and has an infinite capacity to adjust to circumstances. There is a sense of nationhood that all this is being done for a larger good. They seem to prefer short term pain for the sake of ethics over unethical progress. The reaction of the masses is evident as there seems to be little rancour, no riots, no violence, no buses or ATMs burnt and no vandalism.

Hopefully there are larger life lessons here...More and more people, even those with credit and debit cards should be pleasantly surprised with the realisation that it takes very little money to meet the basic requirements of everyday life. This demonetisation has forced people to examine what it means to live according to one's needs rather than one's wants, an exercise the rich normally would never undertake. The endless desire to possess and accumulate is brought into sharp focus when suddenly the means get curbed.

Demonetisation shows that this wealth is nothing but an illusion based entirely on man-made laws; the money that was hoarded worth not even the paper it was printed on! Yes the endless no holds barred chase of wealth, by selling our souls and lives, is an evil from time immemorial but has grown to gigantic proportions at present. This has to be uprooted to save the humanity. It is a pity that there is so little contentment with what we have, in what is legitimately earned. There seems to be no joy in finding a purpose to serve but only in a lifestyle to live. Realisation must dawn that money earned by the right

means brings peace and tranquillity as felt by many on the right path.

After all, our nation was built on sacrifice. Every step toward the goal of justice required sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; When Mahatma Gandhi gave a clarion call, people voluntarily gave up good jobs, the comfort of their home and hearth and plunged into the unknown. This came about when people recognized that their personal good coincides with the good of everyone. This vectorised force could conquer our invaders. Bravery involves giving up everything you have ever known, or everyone you have ever loved, for the sake of something greater.

In everyday life, people, communities and nations all need to have this genuine feeling for each other to share, sacrifice and thereby achieve happiness. It can be as small as offering a piece of bread to a hungry person but it has to become a part of the culture to replace "the grab, grab what is there in it for me?" attitude. Also one must have faith in a collective system like the government which only can reach the poor in every nook and corner. ■

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Summa Iru (Be Still)

D. Samarender Reddy

Ramana Maharshi says, "Pure Consciousness is the Self. **All that is required to realise the Self is to 'Be Still'.**" (*Talks With Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Talk 379). Nisargadatta Maharaj says, "**My Guru ordered me to attend to the sense 'I am' and to give attention to nothing else.** I just obeyed. I did not follow any particular course of breathing, or meditation, or study of scriptures. Whatever happened, I would turn my attention away from it and remain with the sense 'I am'; it may look too simple, even crude. My only reason for doing it was that my Guru told me so. Yet it worked! ... I simply followed his [Guru's] instruction which was to focus the mind on pure being 'I am', and stay in it. I used to sit for hours together, with nothing but the 'I am' in my mind and soon peace and joy and a deep all-embracing love became my normal state. ... I was a simple man, but I trusted my Guru. What he told me to

do, I did. He told me to concentrate on 'I am' – I did. He told me that I am beyond all perceivables and conceivables – I believed. I gave him my heart and soul, my entire attention and the whole of my spare time (I had to work to keep my family alive). As a result of faith and earnest application, I realized my self (*swarupa*) within three years." (*I Am That*). Ramana Maharshi also says, "The egoless 'I am' is not thought. ... **The experience of 'I am' is to Be Still.**" (Talk 226).

The questions then arise, what does it mean to "Be Still", what is the "I am" and how is the experience of 'I am' to 'Be Still'. Quite simply, to 'Be Still' is to be without thoughts. Of course, even in deep sleep we are without thoughts. So, is the state of deep sleep the one Ramana Maharshi indicating to be the state of stillness. But if so, we should have realized the Self long ago because all that is required to realize the Self is to 'Be Still'. Quite clearly we have not

realized the Self through deep sleep, so deep sleep cannot be the state of stillness that Ramana Maharshi is referring to. What then is it? It must be the thought-free state while awake. What does such a state connote?

As Ramana Maharshi says (in Talk 609), “So stillness is the aim of the seeker. Even a single effort to still at least a single thought even for a trice goes a long way to reach the state of quiescence. Effort is required and it is possible in the waking state only. There is the effort here: there is awareness also; the thoughts are stilled; so there is the peace of sleep gained. That is the state of the *Jnani*. It is neither sleep nor waking but intermediate between the two. There is the awareness of the waking state and the stillness of sleep. It is called *jagrat-sushupti*. Call it wakeful sleep or sleeping wakefulness or sleepless waking or wakeless sleep. It is not the same as sleep or waking separately. It is *atijagrat* (beyond wakefulness) or *atisushupti* (beyond sleep). It is the state of perfect awareness and of perfect stillness combined. It lies between sleep and waking; it is also the interval between two successive thoughts.”

Ordinarily our mind is full of thoughts. And Ramana Maharshi says (*Ulladu Narpadu*, verse 24) that the mind or ego is the knot (*chit-jada*

granthi) between consciousness (*chit*) and the insentient body (*jada*). The ego or the mind is of the form “I am this”, of which the “I am” portion refers to consciousness and the “this” portion refers to the insentient part. So, when thoughts are stilled, mind is stilled, so the knot between consciousness (I am) and insentient portion (this) is severed (at least temporarily), and only the “I am” portion or consciousness (also, Being, since it exists) survives. So, “I am” is nothing but the consciousness felt in between two thoughts or when thoughts are stilled.

Thus, we have seen what it means to ‘Be Still’ and what is the ‘I am’ experience. The relationship between the two is now clear. To ‘Be Still’ is to be without thoughts while staying awake, and when we are in that state we experience the ‘I am’ because ‘I am’ is Being-Consciousness and Being-Consciousness alone prevails when we are without thoughts while staying awake. And, like Nisargadatta Maharaj and Ramana Maharshi advise us, when we stay in that ‘I am’ state free of thoughts, that is, when we are still, we will know the Self because the Self is nothing but Pure Consciousness. May we all realize the Self by being still. ■

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The End as a Beginning

Dr. Tuktuk Ghosh

Death is the end. This is how it is commonly perceived. Hence the dread, the acrid fear and the unremitting angst that is its inseparable double. So much in life is geared towards pushing away what is the only certainty that we are aware of.

Is death really so terrible? Is it confronted only that one time? Yes, if looked at in the conventional matrix. No, if regarded as a culmination of many an end that speckles each unique life. The only difference is that we experience a beginning after each end-point in life. What is beyond our known experience, is only post- death in the physical sense.

This interrogation is not associated with the philosophy that bolsters belief in the endless cycle of birth and rebirth, reincarnation, to be followed with mukti, liberated from the shackles of karma - enforced bondage. Notwithstanding thousands of years of learning and as many recountings of previous lives, the fundamental undergirding of this is sheer faith, a giant act of faith.

To reiterate, the finality of death is not the only end that confronts us. There is the death of every passing moment that we live with. With continuity there is a constant cessation, which we choose to be oblivious of. It is comforting to believe that there is a constant at the core of our being and our personalised universe. With every such death enters a new beginning which is not recognised as such.

Things would indeed appear very different were they to be viewed from this prism. To acknowledge that we are confronted with death in life is neither simple nor palatable. Death remains the terrifying other, not to be taken as life's consort.

In my personal experience I have seen the terrifying other from very close quarters in its most grotesque visage, on more occasions than I think was fair. Admittedly, this is judgemental. Be that as it may, it is incomprehensible that my father, foster parent and sister—all met with extremely violent ends, on

the same day in the same city, 49 years removed and my mother was hounded by unremitting maladies mercilessly before she secured release. There is no denying that they altered my compass irreversibly and left cavernous unhealed wounds, still pulsating and raw.

Poignantly enough , it was my slain sister who led me to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi over 2 decades ago. I recall Bhagavan's serene photo adorning my bookshelf all these years beckoning silently , strongly with its own magnetism. Interestingly, around the time of my introduction- if you may- to Bhagavan, my official work with Government of India in the Ministry of Human Resource Development , took me to Tiruvannamalai . I had an opportunity to visit the Ramanashramam. The calm and simplicity of the sacred space have stayed with me ever since. I also remember a wizened saintly soul in the temple precincts nearby who came up to me , placed his hand lovingly on my head, pointed towards Arunachala and whispered his blessings ever so gently in my ears. I was told by my local companions that this was a most unusual gesture on his part as he hardly ever left his chosen seat. This counts as among my most moving of moments . I do not know why, but it has since been a rather long trek back to Arunachala. The most recent nudge has come courtesy a

valued colleague who was incidentally also close to my sister, though being several cities removed from her . He has had the distinction of being Secretary of the Ramana Kendra , New Delhi, for over a decade. Uncanny to see the dots converging into a pattern, although for me it is still a pilgrimage very much in progress.

To retrace the trail of death, ends and ends as beginnings, as Sankara says, we will all go back to God from whom we have come as sparks from a fire. Bhagavan agrees that we will eventually merge with the source. For him, however, the real nature of the self was formless, immanent consciousness. The removal of ignorance by jnana to arrive at that sublime state demands a dissolution of the unreal sense of individuality or ego. How else to reach that summit but by partnering with constant death?

He who thinks he is the doer is also the sufferer. The credo, to highlight one's true persona, ought to be , as elucidated in Bhagavan's memorable teachings, to live as the instrument of God , working as his channel.

No end will be an end but only the beginning of unceasing , incandescent bliss.

Shiva Arunachalaya, Shiva Arunachalaya, Shiva Arunachalaya. ■
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Tithiksha

Geetha Ravichandran

Aggression is celebrated in the times we live in. It is considered appropriate to react with anger, to be offensive to perceived threats. Media including social media-is for a good measure, kept alive by opinions, allegations, innuendoes and slugfests. Life has acquired an element of theatricality where high decibel retorts are the order of the day and clarity is submerged in chaos. In this context the importance of a studied responserather than an impulsive reaction cannot be overstated. Reaction involves an opportunity cost, which is often not factored in. To find true value in oneself, to make any meaningful contribution in a situation-it is necessary to rise above the sound and fury that conspires to keep us engaged in acrimony and hostilities.

The following conversation is recorded between Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi and a devotee.

D- Non-resistance seems to be the

only remedy for all kinds of evil such as slander.

M-Quite so. If one abuses another or injures him the remedy does not lie in retort or resistance. Simply keep quiet. This quiet will bring peace to the injured but make the offender restless until he is driven to admit his error to the injured party. Talk 517

In the SrimadBhagavatam-skandha 11 – Chapter 23, the dialogue between Krishna and Uddhava begins by recognizing how the mind is agitated by slander and abuse. Krishna narrates the story of the Bhikshu who realized the power of tolerance(titiksha). This passage is also known as Bhikshu Gita – the song of the mendicant.

A Brahmin merchant from Ujjain had a great love of money. He hoarded it denying himself and his family anything but the bare necessities. He turned away from his door anyone in need, with harsh words and rude insults. His conduct obviously did not win him

any friends or bring him any happiness. Soon his fortunes changed, as he lost all his wealth due to theft, accident and other causes. He was reduced to utter penury. He had no option but to wander about with a begging bowl. The sudden change in his circumstances gave him great insight into the nature of life. He realized the absurdity of the pride he had in his possessions, his attitude and the futility of wealth. However the people who had known him in the past were suspicious and scornful. They abused, assaulted and heaped humiliation upon him. They took delight in tormenting him for they remembered his past. They called him a hypocrite. He endured everything with remarkable equanimity.

The Bhikshu says that troubles and sorrows are not due to this body, planetary positions, karma or past actions and time but solely due to the I-sense, the mind's perceptions. He reasons that the position of the stars if inimical to each other should spell trouble for themselves and not for man a great distance away. Neither is Karma the source of sorrow as a man plays out different roles as an actor does in a pre-scripted drama and the Atman remains unaffected by the consequences of the action. Similarly pain or pleasure cannot be attributed to time. Birth and death encapsulated

in the flow of time. The Atman is time and therefore the very substratum of life. It permeates all existence and has therefore no power to confer the dualities of happiness and sorrow just as a part cannot affect the whole. The Bhikshu was firmly convinced that the pain he was subject to, just like the pleasures he had known was only due to his mind and not due to any external source or supernatural cause. The mind which generates the modes and movements of senses is acknowledged as the cause of suffering. He also says that the Atman which is seen to be closely associated with the mind, always remains a witness to the modes of the mind and actions of the senses. To attribute the cause of misery to others is folly. While a body may inflict pain on another it is in reality only an insentient mass. It is like the teeth biting the tongue. Neither can the powers that govern the organs of action be faulted. Even when one limb strikes another, the deity governing the limbs of both persons is the same. The Atman inside one person, being the same as the Atman in another, cannot inflict pain as the one integral whole cannot injure itself.

The problematic mind is therefore to be investigated. The encounter of Sri N. R. Krishnamurthi Iyer with Bhagavan as a young agnostic, throws light on

the substance and nature of the mind which is the root of all troubles . On meeting the Maharshi, he begins a conversation-

"Well sir, you are sitting here like this - I can see your present condition - but what will be your future sthiti?"

The word sthiti in Sanskrit means 'state' or 'condition'. The Maharshi did not answer the question.

"Oho," I thought, "You are taking shelter under the guise of indifferent silence for not answering an inconvenient question!" As soon as I thought this the Maharshi replied and I felt as if a bomb had exploded under my seat.

"Sthiti, what do you mean by the word sthiti!" he exclaimed.

I was not prepared for that question.

"Oho, this man is very dangerous, very dangerously alive. I will have to answer with proper care," I thought. So I said to myself, "If I ask him about the sthiti or 'state' of the body it is useless: the body will be burned or buried. What I should ask him was about the condition of something within the body. Of course, I can recognize a mind inside of me."

Then I was about to answer "By sthiti, I mean mind," when it struck me what if he counter-questions

with "What is mind?" This I am not prepared to answer.

As all this was passing through my mind he was sitting there staring at me with a fierce look. I then questioned within me, "What is mind? Mind is made up of thoughts. Now, what are thoughts?" I landed in a void. No answer. I then realised that I could not present a question about a mind which did not exist! Up to that point, the mind was the greatest thing that existed for me. Now I discovered it did not exist! I was bewildered. I simply sat like a statue.

When the unreality of the mind is understood, its favourable and unfavourable perceptions are no longer of consequence. Non-resistance to provocation is therefore the most appropriate response. This is the reason why endurance or *Tithiksha* is required to be cultivated. When thieves broke into the Ashram and assaulted the Maharshi, when a book was written in which imaginary details of his life were described, he remained unconcerned and exemplified the power of forbearance. The silence that comes from understanding reality- while in the throes of a confrontation- is truly unassailable. ■

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Kendra Bulletin

If the Advent Day was the special feature of the previous two months, it was surely the Kartigai Deepam celebrations that was the star of the two months that passed by.

As the sun set over the western sky on 12th Dec 2016, devotees thronged the Shrine. After the customary recitation of the Ashtotram and Upadesa Saram, priests chanted the Rudra Prasna and the Chamaka Prasna and then followed it with a Deepa Puja. Then the Deepam was taken in procession round the shrine thrice in Parikrama and then much to the delight of the devotees, the flame was hoisted at the top of the shrine. All through this the chanting of Arunachala Siva continued.

Simultaneously some devotees who had brought candles showed their devotion to Lord Arunachala by covering every wall and every parapet with candles. When they were all lit the Kendra was a marvellous sight. The Satsang ended with the devotees enjoying traditional prasadam made for the occasion.

Dr Sarada, President RMCL Bangalore conducted an engaging and interactive satsang on our spiritual journey. Regular Satsangs were conducted by Swami Prabuddhananda on Katopanishad, Swami Durgeshananda on Atma Bodha and by Shri P N Vijay on Ch IV of Bhagavad Gita.

Managing Body meeting and a meeting of the Members were held on 18th December. One of the decisions taken was to celebrate Jayanti on 12th Jan 2017 to coincide with Bhagavan's birth star as was being done in Ramanasramam.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Jan 1 and Feb 26	Atma Bodha by Swami Durgeshananda
Jan 8 and Feb 12	Katopanishad by Swami Prabuddhananda
Jan 12	Bhagavan's Jayanti
Jan 22, Feb 19	Bhagavad Gita Ch 4 By Shri P N Vijay



What's 'New' In The Year?

Dr. Sarada Natarajan

It is new year again. We are happy to call the year 'new'. Yet how can it be new when nothing about us is, when nothing around is? We still hold on to the same old illusory identity, do we not? We haven't even changed our names and forms. Let alone choosing the beautiful option of discarding all attachment to name and form! Yes. The world around us is the same, our habits are the same, especially the primary habit of seeking to confine our true nature within the boundaries of a body. What's new then, about the 'new'? Is anything ever experienced in all its marvelous freshness, unconnected with past prejudice or expectation? If everything is perceived with a pre-coloured mind, which colour can be new? The year is certainly not new to us, nothing, in fact, is. Everything is merely a projection, a continuation of the past, a slight modification or an obvious rehash of the same old

experiences.

There is the other option though. We can seek a 'new' touch. Then not only the year, but every day, every hour, every moment will be new- all that we see, hear, touch, all that we experience. We wish for this option. We would be only too happy to enjoy that wonder. We may even declare that we are prepared to give anything in return for it. But as Major Chadwick succinctly put it we would love to have

Self-knowledge alright, only, without giving up the ego. So we cling to limited identity in many ways.

We go on complaining about non-progress, thus perpetrating the sense of the individual 'I' and 'my' progress! Else we get into an absolute depression on that account. Even a depression keeps us safe. After all the 'I' is not questioned, it

is too busy feeling depressed. If not at this end, we are at the other end of the see-saw, filled with positivity and smugness. Comfortable in the thought that we are travelling the right path, exhorting others to do so, wondering why many are cling to the extraordinary beauty of Self-knowledge. What about us? If we believe we are travelling, if we expend thought on the one who is journeying, are we less blind? Are we really trapped in the lure of Self-knowledge?

If we are, now can self-enquiry slacken? How do we say it is lax? Why, by the presence of thoughts. Is there a single thought that can withstand the fire of self-enquiry? Can there be a single concept that will not wither under its fiery gaze? Yet, we sorrow about the distracted mind. Have we the courage to question, 'For whom is this distraction?' if I am longing to know who I am, if the entire attention is on the 'I', how can a distraction occur. If our bane is not distraction it is lack of time. Yet, what can stop us from pursuing self-enquiry through every spare moment of the day? Indeed, if we are in love, does not the thought of the beloved form an under-current to every

activity? Do we ever regret that we have no time to think of the loved one? If self-enquiry were equally dear to us, it could similarly form an under-current to all our work. It is the same with every excuse we have to offer, every problem that we face. Self-enquiry would simply shatter it.

But our interest lies elsewhere. We are not in love with Self-knowledge. Certainly not so much as to put the ego in danger. Hence even as we awake in the morning we are filled with thoughts of things to do during the day. If we would only pause and wonder, 'Who is in such a hurry? Who is the achiever? Do I really know that one? If I know not who the achiever is, to what purpose are all achievements? Who is to be the beneficiary?' These queries will naturally cry a halt to the stream of thoughts that have us in their grip. Never mind the milk that waits to be boiled, never mind the songs that remain unsung, never mind that a programme must be planned today else the best hall will become unavailable. For, if we let life's hurry take hold of us, it will not be the milk that spoils, but the extraordinary chance that is given to

us. If we value the music more than need for enquiry, the unfathomable silent melody of the Self may ever remain unheard. If we are too busy planning programmes, the day when all our programmes end will remain unplanned for. If we are always preoccupied, forever keeping the company of friends, or of our own thoughts, we will be ill-prepared to face the absolute aloneness of death.

However, many of us are really serious we are earnest about the need to attain Self-knowledge. Though not yearning for it with every breath, we do long for it as a very important goal. Doubtless it is not to us the only goal, still, we give this pursuit much energy. Why then are results not forthcoming? Where does the hitch lie? In the seemingly paradoxical nature of the search itself. It may seem strange, but so long as we seek, we cannot experience Self-knowledge so long as it is perceived as a goal it cannot be attained. Self-knowledge can never come tomorrow or the day after, it cannot be attained in some distant palace at some future time.

Self-knowledge can only be here and now. For, the very relativity of

time, the bondage of past and future is what is veiling Self-awareness. Bhagavan repeatedly states that Self-knowledge cannot be created afresh, for that which come might also go at any time. Neither, then, can it be attained, for then, it could also be lost again. Self-knowledge ever is. Hence its pursuit is equated to the musk-deer's search for the source of its own musk scent. It searches high and low but cannot find it. Why? Because the scent does not lie outside, hence it cannot be found on searching for it.

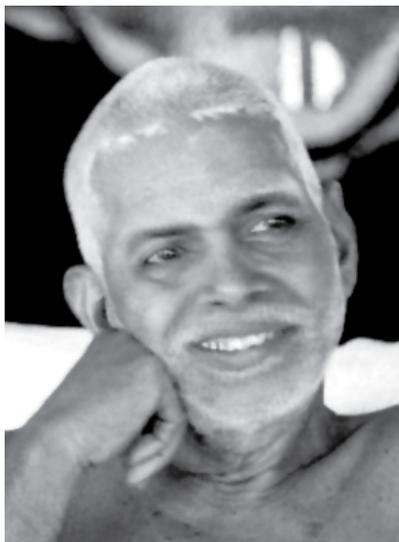
Is the search irrelevant then? Never, its significance lies in creating the right atmosphere, in turning the attention Selfward, in making it of utmost significance to us, to the exclusion of all other goals. After this, even the process of searching must cease, the thought of enquiry too must be dropped. Only attention should remain. Then, the Self would reveal itself, says Bhagavan. Then, all things would be bathed in a glorious freshness. Then it would be 'Happy Now' forever. ■

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Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's Blessings

Place your burden
at the feet of the Lord of the universe
who accomplishes everything.
Remain all the time steadfast
in the heart,
in the Transcendental Absolute.
God knows the past, present and future.
He will determine the future for you and accomplish the work.
What is to be done will be done at the proper time. Don't worry.
Abide in the heart and surrender your acts to the Divine.



*Wish You All a
Happy New Year!*



Jayanti - A Time to Ponder and Reflect

Dr. Vijay Vancheswar

“Of all days on one’s birthday one should mourn one’s fall (into Samsara)! To celebrate it as a festival is like adorning and glorifying a corpse. To seek one’s Self and merge into it is Wisdom”. (From a Verse by Bhagavan Ramana on the celebration of one’s Birthday)”

Bhagavan’s 137th Jayanti falls on Thursday, January 12. The essence of Bhagavan’s verse mentioned above unequivocally provides us with an insight on what birthdays are meant for. This should be a day of inner sojourn and reflection rather than celebration! Why then was the custom of the Jayanti (the day commemorating Bhagavan’s birth in a mortal frame) established? Clearly, Bhagavan was not in favour of celebrating his physical presence every year!

A logical explanation to the query emerges if we analyse its genesis. The difficulty in unconditionally accepting Bhagavan’s views on handling birthdays including his own, demonstrates the deep reluctance we have in accepting and practicing the Truth, even if the message emanates from the mouth of the Master. As victims of deeply entrenched habits, we are so engrossed with the attachment to the body that it becomes next to impossible for us to accept its ephemeral nature. We are unable to accept the truth that we are not the body! We then go on to justify our stance by explaining that we are but mere mortals and cannot think of rising to the elevated state exemplified by Bhagavan! Such is the hold of maya on our minds. Does this demonstrate the difficulty of realising who we are? No wonder

the Katopanishad refers to the path of self-realisation as being tougher than walking on a razor's edge ?! Our experience does seem to validate this. How else can we explain as to why the truth espoused by none other than the supreme Master refuses to penetrate and find a firm footing in our unstable, turbulent and doubting minds! In his characteristic manner demonstrating his infinite mercy, Bhagavan seems to have acceded to the Jayanti being earmarked as a day of remembrance and devotion to the Supreme Self manifesting in a mortal frame for the benefit of humanity. Thus we seek refuge in the view that we need to celebrate Bhagavan's birth and entry into the world on the Jayanti- the day when a great soul appeared on earth to guide lesser mortals caught in the web of 'samsara'.

Be that as it may, most of us also get drawn and engulfed into a celebratory mood on birthdays. Of course this does not imply that we need to become desolate on our birthdays. What would be wise is to at least heed to the words of Sri Ramana and ponder deeply about what he said..' The body is

a waiting corpse... to celebrate and adorn it is not only silly but hilarious and ridiculous!" Rather than celebrating our insignificant, temporary and fast receding presence in the web of samsara, we would do well, if on this occasion, we reflect on deeper questions such as ' Who was born? , Who dies? And to What purpose is this birth meant for?'. No wonder that the Sufis mourn birth as bondage and celebrate death as liberation'. Kabir, the great saint of yore has said, "The baby cries and announces its entry into this maddening world with fingers clutched and leaves it relieved with palms outstretched- bringing nothing at birth and taking nothing away after death"

Interestingly, contrary to the usual norm, one gypsy tribe, the ' Saatiya community' from Rajasthan in the North West part of India, actually rejoices and revels in deaths in their family; counting them as one of the happiest events in their lives, while treating births as occasions of great grief. This tribe comprises about 24 odd gypsy

families scattered across the state. The tribe is nomadic and lives in temporary shelters along roadsides and in empty spaces, relying solely on disposing off the dead bodies of cattle from the roads, as means of livelihood. Paradoxically, while otherwise following a very abnormal and uncivilized way of life, what distinguishes the Satiyaa community from other tribes is that after a death in the community, the funeral and cremation of the deceased becomes an event of celebration! The dead body is taken to the crematorium in a procession of dancing and twisting groups of near and dear onesto the tune of drums. After the funeral pyre is lit, members from the tribe arrange a feast and dance with vigour until the body is completely reduced to ashes.

This practice in a tribe that otherwise is not so 'spiritually evolved' reveals yet another fascinating aspect of the anthropological and cultural complexity and diversity that are

endemic to the Indian society. Suffice to say that we, as devout followers and practioners of Bhagavan's teachings, need to atleast question our approach and attitude towards the day we earmark as our birthdays. To begin with, couldn't we for instance, reduce the celebratory extravaganza we at times get accustomed to and more importantly educate our children and the younger generation on toning down the external pomp and show and instead focus on undertaking worthwhile activities on this day. Feeding orphans, the poor, disadvantaged and challenged and combining these with some sincere introspection on the teachings of Bhagavan could be an agenda we can set forth on this day. A reflective birthday spent on selfless service would help us progress on the spiritual path- Isn't this something that is food for thought and reflection? ■

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Mental Starvation

An undercurrent of thought
Keeps ticking away
At the back of your mind
Throughout the day
Which is what robs you
Of peace of mind.
Being on a diet of thought
Only causes indigestion
And unhappiness
So, starve the mind of thought
Wean it away
From thinking of any kind
And awaken to Truth at long last.

D. Samarender Reddy



It is a Step-by-Step Approach

P.N.Vijay

Our philosophy as laid out in the scriptures is not a miracle cure. It is a pragmatic strategy that is meant to change one's mindset and consequently takes time and effort. For an aspirant while the Goal of Self-Realisation is choiceless, the path is measured. Based on the teachings of our Rishis in the Upanishads and words of Lord Krishna in the Gita, there are four steps which an aspirant needs to climb as he evolves.

The first step is the realisation that one's true nature is not this body-mind complex but the Consciousness that resides within this Complex and enlivens it. From the time of birth we are so identified with this outer "shell" that to change this mindset is extremely tough. Also we find this identification with the external form and mind very "convenient"

in dealing with the world at large. As Bhagavan Ramana points out there are two 'I's that we have. The "Outer" I which is the Ego or the I that identifies with our body-mind and through them with the world of names and forms. The second I is the "Inner" I which is of the nature of Consciousness. It energises the body and mind just as electricity energises an electric bulb. It is awake even in deep sleep keeping our body vitals functioning. This is unchanging, eternal and blissful. By not identifying with his Body-Mind complex, one gains an ability to control ones emotions and desires by being in Sakshi-Bhava or Nature of a Witness. Bhagavan Sri Krishna describes it very beautifully in the Gita-

"This (Soul) is never born nor does it die. It is not that, not having, been, It is not that having been it again ceases to be. It is unborn,

eternal. Changeless, ever-Itself. It is not killed when this body is killed.”- BG 2.20

The second step is to realise that this I- our inner Consciousness is the same as the I inside every form and energises all forms in the way that it does ours. The Upanishads often quote the example of the same water being the essence of all the waves and the clay being the essence of all the pots. Once this attitude settles into us and becomes our way of thinking, it has the ability to create harmony in all relationships. If your hand is painning you do not “hate” that hand since you believe that hand is very much a part of you. When he realises that the Self in him is the Self in all, there arises a great sense of kinship and brotherhood that makes it impossible to harbour a single harsh thought or utter a single negative word against his fellow-beings.

“Beyond me, O Dhananjaya, there is nothing. All this is strung in Me, as a row of jewels on a thread”- BG (7.7)

The third level of comprehension is to realise that this I which is

the same as the I in the next person is no different from the Divine Universal Consciousness which we refer to as Brahman or Paramatma. The Upanishad Mahavakya “**Aham Brahmasmi**”- I am Brahman states this with great brevity. “**Aham Atma Gudakesa**”- I am the Soul in you O Gudakesa (B.G. 10.20) and “**Beejam Maam Sarvaboothanam**”- I am the Eternal Seed in All Beings” – (B.G. 7.10) are unequivocal declarations of the same truth by the Lord.

This feeling of being a part of something big is enormously consoling and comforting. The quality of seeing the Divine in all persons gives one an amazing degree of respect and compassion. When a person sees divinity in all, one naturally starts empathising with every one irrespective of his status in life or relationship and starts associating with broader causes and spends more time and resources on the less fortunate. Seeing the Divine in all beings and thus “divinising” his own life gives him a feeling of Universality whereby he is able to align his strengths with that of the entire world.

The fourth level of learning which is the ultimate is to know that the Cause behind the I-Consciousness and the Body-Mind complex is one and the same. This is the perfect understanding of the nature of the Universal Consciousness. At this level all persons and all objects are of divine creation. This is brought out by Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the Gita :

“Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and egoism- thus is My Prakriti divided eightfold.

This is My lower Prakriti. But different from, know thou Mighty Armed Warrior, My higher Prakriti- the principle of Self-consciousness.

Know that these two Prakritis are the womb of all beings. And I am the origin and dissolution of the whole Universe” - B.G. (7: 4,5 and 6).

At this level of Consciousness, when a man sees divinity in a leaf, a tree or a squirrel, he acquires a respect and compassion to all God’s creations and agitates when the creations are misused like pollution of rivers. A spirit of non-violence takes him to the level of

God himself.

A person will need to go at his pace and climb all these steps; first by reading and listening, then understanding and assimilating and finally internallising. Even as one passes each level the gains as we have seen are enormous. As one grows in spiritual life, the love grows from family, to community, to strangers and finally to the whole environment. One becomes a more refined and sensitive person.

This idea of a Universal Consciousness which manifests itself in and as every entity is poetically brought out in the Bhagavad Gita in the famous verse.

**Brahmarpanam Brahma
havis Brahmanou Brahmana
hutam**

**Brahmaivathenaganthavyam
Brahma karma samadhina**

“The process is Brahman, the ghee is Brahman, offered by Brahman In the fire of Brahman; by seeing Brahman in action, he reaches Brahman alone” ■

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The importance of sattvic food

A set of questions was put to Sri Ramana Maharshi by Sri M. Sivaprakasam Pillai, about the year 1902. As Sri Ramana Maharshi was not talking then, he answered questions put to him by writing. This record was first published by Sri M. Sivaprakasam Pillai in 1923. Sri Ramana Maharshi says that "Of all the restrictive rules, that relating to taking of sattvic food in moderate quantities is the best; by observing this rule, the sattvic quality of mind will increase, and that will be helpful to Self-inquiry. "

In an article titled Yogic Diet Swami Sivananda says that "Diet is of three kinds, viz., Sattvic diet, Rajasic diet and Tamasic diet. Milk, fruits, cereals, butter, tomatoes, cheese, spinach are Sattvic food-stuffs. They render the mind pure. Fish, eggs, meat, etc., are Rajasic food-stuffs. They excite the passionate nature of man. Beef, onions, garlic, etc., are Tamasic food-stuffs. They fill the mind with inertia and anger " . 17th chapter of Bhagavad Gita also extols the effect of consuming Sattvic food.

Modern-day science says that intake of garlic is very good for health as it boost the function of the immune system. So the question arises that, why garlic is not included in the Sattvic diet? In the book titled "Spiritual stories –As told by Ramana Maharshi", Maharshi narrates this story -As is well known, when devas and rakshasas churned the ocean, amrit came out of it. While the amrit was distributed by Vishnu in disguise (Mohini) to devas , one rakshasa was swallowing the amrit. When Vishnu came to know about it, he cut off rakshasa head with his chakra. Now, when the head of the demon was severed, the trunk fell down, and in the process, a few drops of amrit fell on the ground. It is said that those drops became the garlic plant. Therefore, garlic has both amrit quality that is good for health and tamasic quality because of the touch of the demon. ■

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Aksharamanamalai Part 2

TMP Mahadevan's

5

***ippazhi tappunai yen ninaippittai
iniyaar viduvaar Arunachala***

O Arunachala! Save Thyself from this accusation. Why didst Thou make me pine for Thee? Who will, hereafter, leave Thee?

The devotee-soul is zealous of the reputation of the Lord. She would not bear to think that He, the most compassionate one, should be accused of harshness and desertion. Look at her own plight! If she had not been rescued at all, there would be no problem. She would have continued to enjoy the delights of the world, imagining that they constituted happiness. But the Lord has created in her a taste for the Infinite by revealing Himself to her; and she has learnt to pine for Him. Even the soul's ability to pine for Him is the result of His grace. Having now been accepted

by Him, how can the devotee leave Him? As a Vaishnava saint puts it addressing the Lord: "How can the soul that has taken refuge in your lotus feet which yield immortality, desire anything else? When the lotus bloom is there filled with honey, the bee will not cast even as much as a glance at the sugarcane stalk."

6

***Eenridum annayin peridarul
purivoi
iduvo unadarul Arunachala***

O Arunachala! Thou art one who showers grace which is greater than that of one's own mother. Is this, then, Thy grace? (Or, such, indeed, is Thy grace!)

The finest example in the world of a love that is pure and unselfish is that of the mother. She is prepared and always ready and willing to make any sacrifice

for the sake of her child. The child's welfare is her only concern; she is utterly indifferent to and unmindful of what may happen to herself. To the devotee, God is more than a mother. He is all grace and compassion (dayamaya), an ocean of unbargaining love (kripajalanidhi). He showers His grace without let or hindrance. He expects nothing from the devotee-soul, not even her allegiance. He creates the cosmos, protects it and periodically withdraws it in order to enable the soul to progress and eventually gain the greatest possible benefit, that is, Liberation. Adverting to the fear expressed in the previous verse, the devotee-soul now points out to the Lord that if He were to desert her, it would not be in keeping with His loving nature which is even finer than that of a mother. So, the devotee asks: Is this thy grace? Or, the words iduvovunadarul may be taken to mean: Such, indeed, is thy grace, a grace that is greater than that of a mother.

Note: The Lord of the Rock Temple at Tiruchirappalli bears the name Matrubhuteswara, Tayumanavar, the one who came as the mother.

7

*unai yematri odaadu
ulathinmail*

Urudiyaay iruppai Arunachala

O Arunachala! Be Thou firmly seated in my heart, so that it may not run away, duping Thee.

The pranks that the mind plays and the ways that it adopts for deceiving itself are well known. Ordinarily, the mind moves out through the sense channels and gets distracted and dissipated. It is centrifugal in its tendency, and allows itself to be dragged in different directions at the same time. The taming of the mind is a hard task. The disciplines that are prescribed in the sacred texts are designed to subdue the mind and make it one-pointed. It is easy to perform miracles such as walking on water or sitting on fire, says a Tamil saint. It is easy to accomplish such difficult feats as making the elephant and the tiger do one's bidding; but that skill is hard whereby one controls one's mind and sits still. In the Bhagavad Gita, Arjuna complains to Sri Krishna, "Unsteady, verily, is the mind, turbulent, tenacious and strong; to control it is as difficult,

I think, as it is to curb the wind.” Sri Krishna agrees with Arjuna and says, “Without doubt, the mind is difficult to subdue and unsteady; but it can be controlled through practice and dispassion.”

In the Sivananda Lahari, Sri Sankara likens the mind to the monkey that jumps from one branch of desire to another, goes from one hill of passion to another, roams about in the forest of delusion, and is extremely active and mischievous. Addressing Siva as the prince of beggars, Kapalin, he says, “Take this monkey as my alms-gift to you, after tying it firmly with the rope of bhakti.” The purpose of devotion is to sublimate the mind and make it one-pointed. Prahlada prays to Narasimha, “The love that the ignorant bear for the objects of sense — may that love (that flows towards you) as I contemplate you remain constant without leaving my heart!” In the present verse the Lord is implored to sit tight in the heart so that the heart may not go astray. Even the Lord has to be vigilant and keep constant watch over the doings of the heart. The heart may run away if the hold on it is slackened even a little. It is deceitful and may want to deceive

even God (unaiÉmÅtri, deceiving you). If the words are split as unaiyÉmÅtri, the phrase would mean: changing or transforming even you.

8

*Oorsutru ulamvidaadu
unaikanduadangida*

Unnazhagaikaattu Arunachala

O Arunachala! Reveal Thy beauty so that the mind, which is by nature roving, may get quiescent seeing Thee uninterruptedly.

Arunachala Aksharamanamalai
15 The mind runs without rest. It revolves round the objects of sense, imagining that its happiness lies there. As desires arise, it seeks to fulfil them, hoping to derive satisfaction that way. But the more it gets, the less contented it becomes. The faster it runs, the more restless it finds itself. All this mad rush for sense objects is born out of a false view which presents those objects in an attractive way. It is the bliss that is the Self (atmananda) that is reflected in the objects (vishayananda); and it is this reflection that fascinates the mind. The shadow is mistaken for the substance, the dry bones for the juicy flesh. The mind gets

disappointed each time it gains its wish. Yet the lesson is repeatedly forgotten, and the same story of striving, gaining and losing goes on. In order that the mind may be weaned from sense objects, God is implored to reveal His beauty. In truth, there is no beauty other than God. The so called beautiful objects of the world are but pale reflections of the splendour that is God, broken arcs of the perfect orb. God is bhuvanaSundara, the beauty that can ravish the entire world. He is rasa, the sweetness that surpasses every taste; brahmananda, the bliss that is without limit; niratisayasukha, happiness that is never excelled. The saints who have seen God have described Him as manmatha-manmatha, the Cupid of Cupid, and madana-mohana, the Beauty of beauty. For the sake of saving souls by enticing them, God is born in the world as avatara. The names of such avataras as Rama and Krishna, indicate their purpose also, which is to bring delight into the hearts of beings. Siva as Sundaresa, the lord of

beauty, is said to have performed his sports in

Arunachala Siva¹⁶ Madurai, the city of sweetness, so that all might be happy. Sometimes God takes an awful form in order to show that there is beauty even in ugliness. Looking at the Narasimha (man-lion) form of the Lord, Lakshmi began to shudder and was afraid to approach it. But the boy Prahlada danced with joy, ran to the Lord and sat on His lap. Sri Krishna revealed to Arjuna His cosmic form (visvarupa), after granting him the divine eye (divyachaksush). Arjuna could not stand the sight of the ghorarupa (frightful form) for long and prayed to Sri Krishna to resume His normal and usual form. In order to captivate even the ordinary mind, God has to take a comely form. It is then that the mind is likely to leave its vain pursuit of the fleeting pleasures of the world, and lie quietly, contemplating the beauty that is God. ■

Extracted from TMP Mahadevan's Book



श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

48

नटेश ऐय्यर, चिदम्बरम् से तिरुवण्णामलै आए और रमणाश्रम के रसोई घर में काम पर लग गए। इन्होंने अपने अनुभवों का कोई विवरण नहीं छोड़ा किंतु डेविड गॉडमेन (तिरुवण्णामलै स्थित श्री रमण के महान भक्त) ने उन्हें भली प्रकार जानने वाले भक्तों से विश्वसनीय जानकारी एकत्र की हैं।

जब नटेश ऐय्यर को संसार—त्याग की इच्छा हुई तब वे अपनी पत्नी और पुत्री को छोड़कर तिरुवण्णामलै आ गए और श्री रमण भगवान के आकर्षण में बँध गए। उन्हें आश्रम की रसोई में काम दिया गया। उस समय वहाँ अधिकतर कार्य ब्राह्मण विधवाओं द्वारा किया जाता था जो उनसे बहुत काम करवाती थी। एक बार वे हँसते हुए बोले, “मैंने एक रौब जमाने वाली से पीछा छोड़ा तो पाँच के चंगुल में फस गया।” जब वे इस व्यवहार से बहुत त्रस्त हो गए तो बिना किसी को बताए, आश्रम छोड़कर अपने गाँव की ओर निकल पड़े।

रास्ते में काफी दूर चलकर वे एक स्थान पर रुके, स्नान किया और नेत्र बंद करके जब उन्होंने महर्षि की स्तुति प्रारंभ की तो उन्हें महर्षि स्वयं सामने खड़े दिखाई दिए। उन्होंने आश्चर्य से पूछा, “आप यहाँ कैसे आ गए?” महर्षि मुस्कुराए और बोले, “तुम मुझसे कितनी दूर आ गए हो।” ऐय्यर रो पड़े और आँसुओं के बीच कुछ उत्तर नहीं दे पाए।

महर्षि की वह आकृति तिरुवण्णामलै की ओर चलने लगी और ऐय्यर बिना हिचक उसके पीछे चले। आकृति दिखाई देनी बंद होने पर भी उनको लगा कि महर्षि उनके आगे चल रहे हैं, और वे आश्रम पहुँच गए। जैसे ही उन्होंने महर्षि के कक्ष में प्रवेश किया, महर्षि ने कहा, “तुम मुझसे कितनी दूर चले गए।” ऐय्यर रो पड़े और रसोईघर में जाकर अपना काम करने लगे।

इस घटना ने ऐय्यर के मन में शरणागत होने की प्रक्रिया की नींव डाल दी। अब उन्हें स्पष्ट हो गया कि श्री रमण भगवान वह शरीर नहीं हैं जिसे सब लोग आश्रम में चलता-फिरता देखते हैं। उन्होंने एक बार कहा, “महर्षि कोई व्यक्ति या वस्तु नहीं जिसकी थाह मिल सके। उनके विषय में हमें अपना अज्ञान स्वीकार कर लेना चाहिए। हममें उनके विषय में कुछ भी कहने की योग्यता नहीं है।”

जब वे महर्षि के परिचारक थे तब महर्षि के कैंसर का ऑपरेशन हुआ था। उसके विषय में बताना उन्हें अच्छा लगता था। उनके शब्दों में, “ऑपरेशन के समय महर्षि के व्यवहार से यह स्पष्ट था कि उन्हें शरीर का कोई आभास नहीं था। मांस काटा जा रहा था, खून बह रहा था और रेडियम की सूईयाँ कैंसर के आस-पास लगाई जा रही थी। महर्षि पूरे होश में थे किंतु वे पूरी प्रक्रिया से एकदम अप्रभावित थे। हम सब उनकी मौन की शक्ति में डूब गए। ऑपरेशन की समाप्ति पर डॉक्टरों ने अनायास ही उनको प्रणाम किया। उनमें से एक ने कहा, “मैंने बहुत ऑपरेशन किए हैं, किंतु यह मेरे लिए एक महान अनुभव था। कमरे में ऐसी शांति थी जिसका मैं वर्णन नहीं कर सकती; केवल इतना कह सकती हूँ कि यह अनुभव ऐसा था जैसा पहले कभी भी, कहीं भी, नहीं हुआ।”

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संपूर्णम्मा (1899-1993), एक ब्राह्मण विधवा, ने अनेक वर्षों तक

आश्रम की रसोई में काम किया।

एक बार किसी ने ढेर सारे बेंगन आश्रम को भेंट किए। हम कुछ दिनों तक बेंगन ही खाते रहे। बेंगन के डंठलों का एक बड़ा ढेर एक कोने में जमा हो गया। महर्षि ने हमसे कहा कि हम उनका साग बना लें। मैं तो स्तब्ध रह गई, क्योंकि ऐसे डेठल तो पशु भी नहीं खाएँगे। जब महर्षि ने जोर देकर कहा कि डंठल खाने योग्य हैं, हमने उन्हें एक बड़े पात्र में सूखी मटर के साथ उबलने के लिए रख दिया। घंटों उबलने के बाद भी वे उतने ही सख्त थे। हमें समझ नहीं आ रहा था कि क्या करें, परंतु महर्षि के पास जाने की हिम्मत नहीं थी।

महर्षि को सदैव पता होता था कि रसोईघर में कब उनकी आवश्यकता होगी और वे अपने कक्ष में चर्चा को छोड़कर हमारे पास आ जाते। इसका यह अर्थ नहीं कि उनका ध्यान भोजन पकाने पर रहता था। सत्य तो यह है कि उनका ध्यान भोजन पकाने वालों की समस्याओं पर लगा होता था। हमारी परेशानी का समाधान करने के लिए वे इस बार भी रसोईघर में आ गए और पूछा कि बेंगन के साग की क्या स्थिति है। मैंने हँसते हुए उत्तर दिया, “यह साग है क्या ? हम तो कीलें उबाल रहे हैं।” महर्षि ने साग के पात्र की बड़ी कड़की को दो-चार बार चलाया और बिना कुछ बोले अपने कक्ष में चले गए। थोड़ी देर बाद हमने देखा कि डंठल एक दम नरम हो गए थे। साग बहुत स्वादिष्ट बना था। परोसने पर कुछ लोग दूसरी बार भी माँग रहे थे।

महर्षि किसी वस्तु को व्यर्थ नहीं जाने देते थे। चावल या राई का एक दाना भी जमीन से उठाकर, पोंछकर, उसके स्थान पर पहुँचा देते थे। जब मैंने पूछा कि एक दाने के लिए इतना कष्ट क्यों ? उनका उत्तर था, “हाँ, यह मेरी रीत है, सब कुछ मेरे संरक्षण में है, मैं कुछ भी व्यर्थ नहीं होने दूँगा; इस विषय में मैं बहुत कठोर हूँ।”

स्त्रियों को अपने मासिक दिनों में आश्रम में नहीं आने दिया जाता था,

और उन्हें आश्रम का भोजन भी नहीं परोसा जाता था। एक बार जब महर्षि को बताया गया कि मैं तीन दिन तक नहीं आऊँगी और आश्रम के द्वार के सामने वाले मंडप में बैठी हूँ, उन्होंने आदेश दिया कि मुझे तुरंत आश्रम के अंदर लाया जाए और सबके साथ आश्रम का भोजन दिया जाए। सब चौक गए—स्तंभित हो गए, क्योंकि यह तो परंपरा से चले आए नियम के विरुद्ध था। रमण भगवान ने एक कुप्रथा को तोड़ा और उसे दोष—मुक्त कर दिया।

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शांतम्मल रमणाश्रम की पाकशाला में खाना बनानेवालों की प्रमुख थी। वे तमिलनाडु में रामानाथपुरम की रहने वाली थी।

जब मैं रसोई घर में नई—नई थी, एक दिन मैंने महर्षि को औरों की अपेक्षा आलू का साग अधिक परोस दिया। प्रतिदिन रात्रि के समय काम समाप्त होने पर रसोई घर की स्त्रियाँ महर्षि से वापस जाने की अनुमति माँगती थीं। {उन दिनों रात्रि के समय स्त्रियों के आश्रम में ठहरने की व्यवस्था नहीं थी।} सामान्यतः वे हमसे पूछते कि हमारे साथ कौन जा रहा है ? हमारे पास लालटेन है ना ? आदि। उस दिन उन्होंने मुझे पास बुलाया और कहा, “आज तुमने मुझे अधिक साग परोस दिया। मुझे औरों से अधिक खाते हुए बहुत लज्जा आई। तुम्हें मुझे हमेशा औरों से कम परोसना चाहिए। तुम जितना अधिक मेरे प्रियजनों को प्रेम करोगी, उतना ही मुझे अधिक प्रेम करोगी।” उस दिन मैंने एक अच्छा पाठ पढ़ लिया, जो मैं कभी नहीं भूली।

एक बार मैसूर के महाराजा महर्षि के दर्शनार्थ आश्रम आए। भेंट में प्रस्तुत मिठाइयों व फलों की थालियाँ तथा अन्य वस्तुएँ महर्षि के चरणों में रखी गईं। महाराजा लगभग दस मिनट तक महर्षि के सम्मुख चुपचाप खड़े उन्हें देखते रहे। उनके नेत्रों से अश्रुधारा बह रही थी। विदा लेने से पूर्व

वे बोले, “भगवान, उन्होंने मुझे राजा बनाकर सिंहासन से बाँध दिया है। राजा का जन्म लेने के पाप के कारण मैंने आपके चरणों में बैठकर आपकी महिमा—मंडित उपस्थिति में रहने का और आपकी सेवा करने का अवसर खो दिया है। मैं पुनः यहाँ आ पाऊँगा ऐसी आशा नहीं है, ये कुछ क्षण ही मेरे हैं। मैं आपसे कृपा प्राप्ति की प्रार्थना करता हूँ।”

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सुंदरम् (साधु त्रिवेणी गिरी) आध्यात्मिक रूचि के व्यक्ति थे। वे सन् 1933 में आश्रम आए और कई वर्षों तक आश्रम की रसोई में काम किया।

मैं कई वर्षों से दमे के कष्टदायी रोग से पीड़ित था। किंतु मैंने महर्षि को यह बात नहीं बताई। एक दिन उन्होंने अपने हाथ से बनाई थोड़ी सी चटनी मुझे दी और कहा, “यह तुम्हारे लिए औषधि है।” मैंने उसे खा लिया; मेरा दमे का रोग सदा के लिए लुप्त हो गया।

एक बार मैंने प्रेम वश महर्षि को कुछ अधिक भोजन परोस दिया। वे नाराज हो गए और बोले, “तुमने भेदभाव करने का साहस कैसे किया?” आस-पास बैठे व्यक्तियों ने मेरे बचाव में कहा, “भगवान, सुंदरम ने आपको अधिक नहीं परोसा है, आप देखिए, हमारी पत्तलों पर भी उतना ही है।” महर्षि इतनी आसानी से मानने वाले नहीं थे। वे बोले, “तुम नहीं जानते, इसका अहंकार प्रबल है। मुझे वरीयता देना इसके अहंकार का परिणाम है।”

एक बार मैं महर्षि के सामने बैठकर ध्यान लगा रहा था। बहुत प्रयास के बाद जब मुझे सफलता नहीं मिली, मैंने ध्यान लगाना छोड़ दिया और आँखे खोल ली। महर्षि ने तुरंत मेरे से कहा, “ओह! तुमने यह सोचकर ध्यान लगाना छोड़ दिया कि तुम्हारा मन नियंत्रण में नहीं आ रहा; जो मन का स्वभाव है। जिस वस्तु का अभ्यास करोगे, वही स्वभाव बन जाएगा।”

मेरे लिए यह महान उपदेश और आदेश था ।

दक्षिण भारत की सवर्ण जातियों में पिछले दिन का बासी भोजन न खाने की दृढ़ मान्यता है । महर्षि का आग्रह था कि अपव्यय न होने देने का नियम सर्वोपरि है । बचा हुआ भोजन भिखारियों को दिया जाए यह भी संभव नहीं था, क्योंकि महर्षि का आग्रह था कि उन्हें भी वही दिया जाए जो सबको दिया जा रहा है । यहाँ तक कि कुत्तों को भी सामान्य भोजन में से ही दिया जाता था । महर्षि बहुत सवेरे रसोईघर में आ जाते, पिछले दिन का क्या-क्या बचा है, देखते, उसे गर्म करते और उसे स्वादिष्ट बनाने के लिए उसमें मसाले इत्यादि मिलाकर, बासी भोजन का सदुपयोग कर लेते थे । ■

क्रमशः

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

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

Translated from Hindi version of book

'Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi'



श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत

10 जनवरी, 1937

कुछ संस्मरण

324. (1) स्कन्दाश्रम में निवास करते समय श्री भगवान् ने अपने से लगभग दस फुट दूर एक लघु किन्तु लम्बे आकार का सफेद टिडड़ा देखा। श्री भगवान् उसकी ओर निहारते रहे तथा वह उनकी ओर। अचानक उसने लम्बी छलॉंग लगायी तथा निश्चित रूप से श्री भगवान् की एक आँख पर बैठ गया। श्री भगवान् ने तुरन्त आँख बन्द कर ली जिससे उसे चोट नहीं पहुँची।

(2) दो मोर पंखे के समान पंख फैलाकर नाचा करते थे। एक काला सर्प भी इस खेल में भाग लिया करता था तथा अपना फन ऊँचा कर उनके इधर—उधर घूमता रहता था।

(3) श्री भगवान् का कथन है कि मोर जैसे ही एक हरे गिरगिट को देखता है, सीधा उसके पास जाकर विनम्र भाव से गिरगिट के समक्ष अपनी ग्रीवा रख देता है, गिरगिट इसे काट लेता है तथा मयूर को मार देता है।

(4) एक बार रंगास्वामी आयंगर पर्वत पर घूम रहे थे। समीप ही एक तेंदुआ था। उन्होंने एक पत्थर फेंका। तेंदुआ घूमकर उनकी ओर आया। वे अपनी जान बचाने को भागे। श्री भगवान् उन्हें मार्ग में मिले तथा उनसे कारण पूछा। आयंगर दौड़ते हुए केवल 'तेंदुआ' ही कह पाये। जहाँ पशु था उस स्थान पर श्री भगवान् गये तो वह शीघ्र ही दूर चला गया। यह प्लेग के समय की घटना है। मन्दिर के आसपास तेंदुए स्वच्छन्दता से घूमा करते थे, कभी—कभी दो एवं तीन की संख्या में।

(5) श्री भगवान् ने कहा, "प्रायः मेंढक की योगी से तुलना की जाती है। काफी समय तक वह शान्त रहता है। मेंढक की गर्दन के नीचे की त्वचा में जब कम्पन होता है तभी वह जीवित प्रतीत होता है।

"मेंढक असाधारण लम्बे समय तक अपनी जीवन्तता को स्थगित रख सकता है। ऐसा कहा जाता है कि वे अपनी जिह्वा को निगल जाना एक यौगिक अभ्यास है। इससे सजीवता स्थगित हो जाती है। योगी का शरीर शान्त नहीं होता किन्तु जीवन-क्रिया को फिर से प्रारम्भ करने के पहले किसी अन्य व्यक्ति को योगी की जिह्वा बाहर निकालनी होगी। यह एक आश्चर्य है कि मेंढक निगली हुई जिह्वा को किस प्रकार बाहर निकालकर फिर से गतिशील हो जाता है।"

11 जनवरी, 1937

(6) सरल मलयालम गद्य में रचित रामायण-‘रघुवीरन’ पढ़ने समय एक प्रसंग आया कि हनूमानजी शारीरिक रूप से लंका पहुँचने से पूर्व मानसिक रूप से वहाँ पहले ही पहुँच गये। श्री भगवान् ने इस बात पर बल दिया कि शारीरिक क्रिया से मानसिक प्रयास शीघ्र कार्य करता है।

(7) श्री भगवान् ने निम्न अद्भुत घटना सुनायी : ऐजूथाचन नामक एक महान मलयाली सन्त तथा लेखक ने जब मन्दिर में प्रवेश किया तब उनके पास कुछ मछलियाँ छिपी हुई रखी थीं। किसी शत्रु ने मन्दिर में पूजा अर्चना करने वाले भक्तों को इसकी सूचना दे दी। सन्त की तलाशी ली गयी और उसे राजा के समक्ष प्रस्तुत किया गया। राजा ने प्रश्न किया: "तुम मन्दिर में मछली क्यों ले गये" ? उसने उत्तर दिया : "इसमें मेरा दोष नहीं है। मैंने इन्हें वस्त्रों में छिपा रखा था। दूसरों ने मछली को मन्दिर में प्रकट किया। दोष प्रकट करने में है।" देह के अन्तर्गत मल को अपवित्र नहीं माना जाता; किन्तु मलोत्सर्ग कर देने पर, उसे अपवित्र माना जाता है। इसी प्रकार यह भी है।

12 जनवरी, 1937

325. गुंतूर जिले के श्रीराम शास्त्री ने श्री भगवान् पर आठ श्लोक रचे

और उनको हार्दिक भाव से पढ़कर सुनाया। तदुपरान्त शास्त्री ने मार्गदर्शन के लिए प्रार्थना की।

“मैं संसारी हूँ अतएव ज्ञान—मार्ग का अधिकारी नहीं हूँ। संसार के कार्यकलाप मुझे विचलित कर रहे हैं। कृपया मेरा मार्गदर्शन करें, मैं क्या करूँ।”

महर्षि : भगवान् का चिन्तन करो। संसार के कार्यकलाप उसे किस प्रकार विचलित करेंगे ? तुम तथा वे उसी के अन्तर्गत हैं।

भक्त : क्या मैं नाम स्मरण करूँ ? मैं किस नाम का जप करूँ ?

महर्षि : तुम राम शास्त्री हो। इसी नाम को सार्थक करो। राम के साथ एकरूप हो जाओ।

13 जनवरी, 1937

326. दीर्घ काल से रहते एक परिचारक के प्रश्न के उत्तर में श्री भगवान् ने कहा : “प्रत्येक व्यक्ति मन की चंचलता की शिकायत करता है। मन की खोज कर लेने पर ही उन्हें मालूम होगा। यह सत्य है कि जब व्यक्ति ध्यान करने के लिए बैठता है तब अनेक संकल्प आकस्मिक आक्रमण करते हैं। मन केवल संकल्पों का समूह है। संकल्पों की श्रृंखला में से निकलने का प्रयास असफल होता है। यदि व्यक्ति किसी भाँति आत्मा में स्थिर रह सके तो उत्तम है। जो ऐसा करने में समर्थ नहीं हैं उनके लिए जप अथवा ध्यान निर्धारित किया जाता है। यह हाथी को अपनी सूँड़ में पकड़ रखने को जंजीर का एक टुकड़ा देने जैसा है। हाथी की सूँड़ सामान्यतया चंचल होती है। नगर की सड़कों पर ले जाते समय वह उसे प्रत्येक दिशा में घुमाता है। यदि एक जंजीर दे दी जाय तो चंचलता नियन्त्रित हो जाती है। चंचल मन की भी यही स्थिति है। यदि उसे जप अथवा ध्यान में संलग्न रखा जाय तो दूसरे विचार नहीं रहते तथा मन एक ही विचार पर एकाग्र हो जाता है। इस प्रकार यह शान्त हो जाता है। इसका अर्थ यह नहीं है कि लम्बे अभ्यास के बिना शान्ति प्राप्त हो जाती है। अन्य संकल्पों से भी संघर्ष करना होगा।

एक अन्य उदाहरण है। मान लो एक गाय आवारा होकर भटककर पड़ोसी

के खेतों में चरने चली जाती है। गाय अपनी चोरी की आदत सहज नहीं छोड़ती। उसे पशु-शाला में रखना कैसे सम्भव हो, यह सोचो। यदि उसे पशु-शाला में बलपूर्वक रस्सी से बाँध दिया जाय तो वह भाग जाने के लिए उत्तम अवसर की प्रतीक्षा करेगी। यदि पशु-शाला में उसे उत्तम घास से लुभाया जाता है तो वह पहले दिन एक बार खाकर फिर भागने के अवसर की प्रतीक्षा करती है। अगले दिन वह दो बार खाती है तथा इस प्रकार प्रतिदिन अधिक-अधिक सेवन करती जाती है जब तक कि उसे उसके दुष्ट संस्कारों से पूर्णतया छुटकारा नहीं मिल जाता। विकारों से पूरी मुक्त होने पर उसे निश्चिन्ततापूर्वक स्वतन्त्र छोड़ा जा सकता है और तब वह पड़ोसियों के चरागाहों में नहीं भटकेगी। बाद में वह पशु-शाला में पीटे जाने पर भी पशु-शाला नहीं छोड़ेगी। मन की भी यही दशा है।

गुप्त वासनाओं के बल से जो संकल्पों के रूप में उदय होती हैं मन बाहर भटकने का आदी हो गया है। जब तक अन्दर वासनाएँ होंगी, वे बाहर प्रकट होकर ही समाप्त होंगी। संकल्प ही मन है। मन की खोज करने से कि यह क्या है संकल्प पीछे चले जायेंगे तथा साधक जान लेगा कि वे आत्मा से उदय होते हैं। इन्हीं संकल्पों के समूह को हम 'मन' कहते हैं। यदि व्यक्ति को यह अनुभूति हो जाय कि संकल्प आत्मा से उदय होते हैं और अपने मूल स्रोत में रहते हैं तो मन लुप्त हो जायेगा। जब मन का अस्तित्व समाप्त हो जाता है और शान्ति के आनन्द की अनुभूति हो जाती है तब व्यक्ति का एक संकल्प करना उतना ही कठिन हो जाता है जितना कि उसे इस समय समस्त संकल्पों का रोकना कठिन प्रतीत होता है। यहाँ मन उस गाय के समान है जो आवारा होकर भटक रही है : संकल्प पड़ोसियों के चरागाह के समान हैं; संकल्पों से शून्य अवस्था उसकी अपनी सहज अवस्था है जो पशु-शाला के समान है।

शान्ति का परमानन्द इतना श्रेष्ठ है कि उसमें बाधा कदापि नहीं पड़नी चाहिए। गहरी नींद में सोये हुए व्यक्ति को जगाकर उसके काम में लगाना उसको बहुत बुरा प्रतीत होता है।

गहन निद्रा का आनन्द इतना अधिक आकर्षक है कि उसे

संकल्पों से उत्पन्न कार्यो को करने के लिए बलिदान नहीं किया जा सकता। संकल्प-शून्य अवस्था जीव की सहज अवस्था है जो आनन्दमय है। क्या ऐसी अवस्था को त्यागकर संकल्पों से परिपूर्ण एवं दुखी अवस्था को ग्रहण करना दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण नहीं ?

यदि व्यक्ति संकल्पशून्य अवस्था में रहना चाहता है, तो संघर्ष अनिवार्य है। जीव को मूल, सहज अवस्था की पुनः प्राप्ति के लिए अपना मार्ग खोजना ही होगा। यदि व्यक्ति अपनी साधना में सफल होता है और उसे लक्ष्य की प्राप्ति हो गयी, तो शत्रु, अर्थात् समस्त संकल्प आत्मा में शान्त होकर पूर्णतया लुप्त हो जायेंगे। संकल्प ही शत्रु हैं। ये ही एक प्रकार से जगत् की सृष्टि करते हैं। उनके अभाव में न जगत् है, न सृष्टिकर्ता ईश्वर। केवल आत्मानन्द है।

जब प्रह्लाद समाधिस्थ था, विष्णु भगवान् ने स्वयं अपने आप विचार किया : "इस असुर के समाधिस्थ होने से समस्त असुर शान्ति में हैं। न युद्ध है, न शक्ति-परीक्षा, न सत्ता की पिपासा, न सत्ता-प्राप्ति के साधन। सत्ता की प्राप्ति के इन साधनों के अभाव में - योग, यज्ञादि अर्थात् देवता समृद्ध नहीं हो रहे हैं; न नवीन सृष्टि है; न किसी स्थिति का औचित्य ही है। इसलिए मैं उसको जाग्रत कर दूँगा तब असुर उठ खड़े होंगे; उनके मूल स्वरूप की अभिव्यक्ति होगी, देवता उन्हें चुनौती देंगे। तभी असुरादि शक्ति अर्जित करेंगे तथा उसको प्राप्त करने का साधन अपनायेंगे।

तदुपरान्त यज्ञादि की उन्नति होगी; देवताओं का उत्कर्ष होगा; उत्तरोत्तर सृष्टि होगी, युद्ध होगा तथा मेरे पास करने को पर्याप्त कार्य होगा।

इस हेतु विष्णु ने प्रह्लाद को जाग्रत कर उसे शाश्वतता एवं जीवन-मुक्ति का वर दिया।

देवासुर संग्राम पुनः प्रारम्भ हो गया तथा प्राचीन व्यवस्था पुनः स्थापित हो गयी और इस प्रकार जगत् अपने नित्य स्वरूप में चला आ रहा है।

भक्त : स्वयं ईश्वर असुर तत्त्व को जाग्रत कर कैसे सतत युद्ध करा सकते थे ? क्या उत्तमता ही ईश्वर का स्वभाव नहीं है ?

महर्षि : उत्तमता केवल सापेक्ष है। उत्तम में निकृष्ट भी रहता है। वे सदैव

साथ-साथ रहते हैं। वे दोनों एक दूसरे के विरोधी हैं।

327. कक्ष में श्रोता अत्यन्त एकाग्रता से सुन रहे थे। उनमें से श्री भगवान् का एक वास्तविक भक्त इतना प्रभावित हुआ कि वह तुरन्त स्तब्ध हो गया। बाद में उसने अपने अनुभव का निम्न प्रकार से वर्णन किया :

“मैं बहुत समय से आश्चर्य कर रहा था कि ‘धारा’ कहाँ से आरम्भ होती है, देह से अथवा अन्य स्थान से। अचानक मेरी देह सूक्ष्म होते-होते लुप्त हो गयी। ‘मैं कौन हूँ’ की खोज अत्यन्त स्पष्ट एवं प्रबल वेग से चलती रही। केवल ‘मैं’ की ध्वनि होती रही। केवल एक अपरिमित विस्तार, और कुछ नहीं।

कक्ष की घटनाओं का मुझे धुँधला आभास था। मैं जानता था कि वैदिक गान के बाद लोग प्रणाम करने के लिए खड़े थे। मैं खड़ा होना चाहता था, किन्तु यह संकल्प शीघ्र ही विलीन हो गया। मैं फिर उस पूर्णता में खो गया। यह अनुभव बराबर बना रहा जब तक कि मुझे श्री भगवान् की वाणी न सुनायी दी। उससे मैं होश में आ गया। तब मैं खड़ा हुआ और मैंने प्रणाम किया। आधे घण्टे से अधिक समय तक एक आश्चर्यजनक भावना बनी रही। मैं इसे भूल नहीं सकता। अब भी यह मेरे ऊपर छाया हुई है।

श्री भगवान् उसके शब्द सुनकर कुछ समय तक चुप रहे। तत्पश्चात् उनके अधरों से कुछ विचार निकले :

कोई देह से बाहर निकलता प्रतीत होता हो। किन्तु स्वयं देह भी हमारे संकल्प मात्र से अधिक कुछ भी नहीं है।

संकल्प के अभाव में कोई देह सम्भव नहीं; तथा देह के अभाव में कोई अन्दर आना या बाहर जाना सम्भव नहीं। तथापि, स्वभाव के कारण बाहर जाने की भावना उदय होती है।

वर्षा में ओले के कण समुद्र के तल पर गिरने पर पिघलकर जल, लहर, झाग आदि में परिवर्तित हो जाते हैं। इसी प्रकार सूक्ष्म बुद्धि, लघु बिन्दु (अहंकार) के रूप में हृदय से उदय होकर विस्तार या पुनः हृदय में प्रवेश कर उसके साथ एकरूप हो जाती है। यद्यपि जिस प्रकार समुद्र व्यापक है,

उसी प्रकार दूध भी व्यापक है, पर क्या तुम उसको समुद्र के आकार के बराबर मुख से पी सकते हो ? उसको पीने के लिए सूक्ष्म केशिका (शिराएँ) का उपयोग आवश्यक है।

वैष्णव सन्त नम्मलवर का कथन है : “तुम केवल मेरी आत्मा हो,” इसका क्या भाव है ? “अपनी आत्मा की अनुभूति के पूर्व मैं आपकी खोज में घूमता—फिरता था; अब अपनी आत्मा की अनुभूति कर मैंने जाना कि तुम ही मेरी आत्मा हो।”

यह विशिष्टाद्वैत में किस प्रकार ठीक बैठेगा ? इसको इस प्रकार समझना आवश्यक है : मेरी आत्मा में व्यक्त होकर तुम अन्तर्यामी रहते हो। इस प्रकार मैं तुम्हारे शरीर का अंश हूँ तथा तुम इस शरीर के स्वामी (शरीरी) हो।

अपनी स्वयं की देह को निज आत्मा न समझकर इसका त्याग कर देने के बाद कोई भी किसी दूसरे की (ईश्वर) देह क्यों बनेगा ? यदि एक देह आत्मा नहीं है तो अन्य देह भी अनात्मा होगी। विशिष्टाद्वैतवादियों का मत है कि आनन्द का अनुभव प्राप्त करने के लिए व्यक्तित्व का होना आवश्यक है। व्यक्तित्व अर्थात् ‘अहम् भाव’ को नष्ट नहीं करना चाहिए। विचित्र ! आत्मा देह नहीं है किन्तु तुम्हारी आत्मा ईश्वर की देह हो जाती है। क्या यह हास्यास्पद नहीं है ? अथवा यदि तुम अपने आप को भगवान् को समर्पण कर देते हो तो तुमने अपने आपको उनके सुपुर्द कर दिया है, अब तुम उनके हो, अब अपने नहीं हो। यदि भगवान् को देह की आवश्यकता है तो उसे अपने आपके लिए स्वयं ही उसका प्रबन्ध करने दो। तुमको यह नहीं कहना है कि भगवान् शरीर का स्वामी है। ■

क्रमशः

“श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत” पुस्तक से उद्धृत

(संग्रहकर्ता - श्री मुनगल एस. वेंकटरामैया

अनुवादक - श्री दिनेशचन्द्र शर्मा)

Translated from 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi'

**“Even if a trace of ego is left in the mind, it will
rapidly increase and ruin you spiritually”**

- Ramana Maharishi



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- Tenure of Investment – 15 years
- Minimum Inv. Amt – Rs.500/- - Max. Amt – Rs.70,000/- p.a
- Start for Children to build capital

LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA (LIC)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children Plans • Pension Plans • Retirement Plan • ULIPs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endowment Plans • Money Back Plans • Health Plans • Career Plans |
|---|---|

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION CORPORATION LTD. (REC)

- 54 EC Capital Gain Bonds
- 6% Interest Payable Annually for 3 years.
- Save Long Term Capital Gain upto Rs.50 lacs in a F.Y in single name.

FIXED DEPOSITS SCHEMES (F D)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • HDFC Ltd. @ 10.00% p.a | • PNB HFL @ 9.75% p.a |
| • Canfin Homes @ 9.75% p.a | • J.P. Associates @ 11.50% p.a |
| • Ansal Housing @ 11.50% p.a | • Unitech @ 12.00% p.a |

FINANCIAL PLANNING

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| • INVESTMENT PLANNING | • TAX PLANNING | • SHORT TERM CASH FLOW PLANNING |
| • INSURANCE PLANNING | • PLANNING | • PORTFOLIO STRUCTURING |
| • RETIREMENT PLANNING | • PENSION PLANS | • CHILDREN FUTURE |

POST OFFICE SCHEMES

I.P.O / NCD / BONDS

G.O.I. 8% SAVING BONDS

- Commission Rebate is Paid on Spot if Investment routed through us on our Broker Stamp.
- Interest rates are subject to change, please contact us for latest Interest rates before investing, Senior Citizens will get additional rates above the FD rates given.

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TEL: 2692 0530, 2632 2545, 2684 3545
E – Mail – raviykap@airtelmail.in

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

Ramana Maharshi {Upadesa Saram (2)}

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**“When the mind turns away from the objects, it beholds
its source, consciousness. This is Self-abidance.”**

Ramana Maharshi (Upadesa Saram-16)

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