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RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH

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9. Om Parasarakulottamsaya Namah

ॐ पराशरकुलोत्तंसाय नमः ।

Crown-jewel of Parasara lineage

Parasara Maharshi, in whose lineage Ramana took birth, worshipped the supreme as Agni. So also, Bhagavan single-mindedly saw in Arunachala, the frozen column of fire, the symbol of the supreme.

10. Om Sundararyatapaphalaya Namah

ॐ सुन्दरार्यतपःफलाय नमः ।

Fruit of Sundara Iyer's penance

Ramana was born to Sundaram and Azhagammal, a pious couple known for their hospitality. They must have accumulated so much merit to have such a child as Ramana.

11. Om Kamaniyasucharitraya Namah

ॐ कमनीयसुचारित्राय नमः ।

Charming person of excellent behaviour

As a child, comely to behold, bright-eyed, sweet of speech and ever-smiling, Bhagavan was a favourite of his whole neighbourhood.

12. Om Sahayambasahayavate Namah

ॐ सहायाम्बासहायवते नमः ।

One who enjoyed the help of Sahayamba, the Goddess of Tiruchuzhi

Once as a child Bhagavan left his house in a huff and ran off to the temple in front of his house. There he sat in front of Sahayamba, the divine mother. In a moment he was not only calm but also felt a thrill of joy profound.



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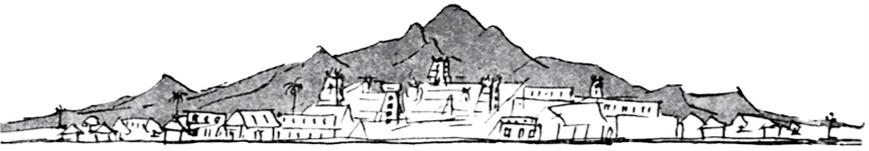


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Original ink sketch of Arunachala by Sri Ramana Maharshi from Kunju Swami's notebook

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Dear Readers

There was a slip up in the article “Healing Blame and Aversion”. The footnotes were not included. We are putting the revised article with footnotes on our website.

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

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



Detachment and Realisation

Shiromani Vijay

In the journey of self-realisation, perhaps the most important notion is detachment or absence of attachment. As long as we are attached to the objects of the world, to events and to relationships, there is bondage. Detachment means not having any physical or mental connection with the things of the world or with your own mind and body or with your achievements, qualities, fame, name, status, etc. The more our attachment decreases, the more we feel liberation or freedom. A simple anecdote about the way you catch a monkey teaches a lot. You drop a handful of nuts into a jar with a small opening. The monkey puts his hand into the jar, grabs the nuts, and then finds that he can't get his fist out through the opening. If the monkey would just let go of the nuts, he could escape. But he won't – because of attachment to the nuts, monkey suffers.

When things are going well for us, when we feel strong and positive, when

we're healthy and full of inspiration, when we're in love, we wonder why there is so much talk about detachment and spirituality. However, when we're faced with loss, grief, or failure, our practice in detachment becomes a lifeline that can move us out of acute suffering into something close to peace. This type of detachment arising out of pain and fear is involuntary and one slowly gets backs into the old attachments as and when the situation improves and the time passes.

What are the other ways of getting detachment? By thinking and using our discrimination capacity which enables us to distinguish between good and bad, temporary and permanent we can start to choose the right action and detach ourselves from the temporary. This voluntary thought process will lead us to contemplate on the purpose of our life. This being voluntary and not imposed on us process will have a long lasting effect. This thought process will drive us towards spiritual

practices. These practices will make our mind steady and makes the freedom enjoyed through detachment permanent. Spiritual practices consist of selfless service and charity there is naturally no attachment. Japa and Satsang makes one attached to God and naturally get detached from worldly objects. Even our scriptures especially the Bhagavad Gita talks about the Karma yoga, Upasana or Bhakti yoga and Jnana yoga for self realisation. Karma Yoga cleanses our mind by removing the dirt created through our attachment to the senses, Upasana yoga gives us steady mind and we will be in a state to the remove our ignorance through Jnana yoga.

This is not to say that we can use detachment as an excuse not to deal with fundamental issues such as livelihood, power, self-esteem, and relationships with other people. Nor can we make detachment a synonym for indifference, or carelessness, or passivity. Instead, we can practice detachment as a skill—perhaps the essential skill for infusing our lives with integrity and grace. Bhagavad Gita which is surely the basic text on the practice of detachment, is wonderfully explicit on this point. Krishna tells Arjuna that acting with detachment means doing the right thing for its own sake, because it needs to be done, without worrying

about the results such as success or failure.

It is a paradox that man is curious to know about everything in the world but rarely pauses to enquire "Who am I?". It is an exceptional person who directs his query inward and persists till he discovers the Self (his true nature). Ramana Maharshi realised God by following the path of Self-enquiry following the "I" consciousness closely. By mere thought process Ramana could unravel that real "self" during his death experience. To get rooted in this, he detached himself from everything and moved to Tiruvannamalai in search of Arunachaleswara. After being in deep meditation for a few years, the freedom and self-awareness attained through detachment, was not arid. The attachment was to the Divine and he was full of love and compassion to all the fellow beings. He uplifted everyone who came into contact with him. Even today, his life which is itself his teaching, is drawing everyone who follow the path of self-enquiry by thought process and contemplation.

On September 1 st we celebrate Ramana's advent into Tirannamalai leaving all his past and lived till he left his mortal coil. ■

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Home Coming

Vijay Vancheswar

In the spiritual context, across diverse faiths, we observe that the essential truth is often found within layers of what is on the face of it apparent. Much like the kernel of a coconut which is obtained after a deliberate removal of the fluff that covers it or of the seed that sprouts as a banyan tree, what is of import is not deciphered at the first instance. It therefore rests with us to dig deep and go to the core so that we can digest what is essential and discard the rest.

The Advent Day, September 1, 1896, was the day when Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi set foot in the holy town of Arunachala, Tiruvannamalai. He stayed put for 54 years in and around the holy hill, until his Mahasamadhi in 1950. We normally tend to celebrate the days associated with Ramana, be it the birth(Jayanthi), release from mortal frame(Aradhana) or the Advent Day without pondering

deeply enough on what these days indicate and how they can guide us on our journey to understand our identity. It is important to do this for two reasons: a) so that we wake up and reflect on what is important and b) course correct our direction so that we focus on what really is essential for our spiritual progress.

Any understanding calls for reflection- ‘manana’ in Sanskrit. This requires us to quietly ponder on the core message that emanates from the teachings of Masters. This will help us glide and circumvent what is apparent and grasp the core of what really is essential. Understanding the real leads us to the Truth. The Truth is often concealed within appealing anecdotes, allegories or metaphors.

What then is the ‘Truth’ that emerges from Bhagavan’s advent into the holy town of Tiruvannamalai? As the title suggests it was a ‘Home Coming’. A home coming

with a difference. One which was irreversible, from which

there was no return. Why so? Because, since his advent to Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramana demonstrated a 'State of Presence'. A state which was absolutely still. A state of unwavering 'Being'. He became one with Arunachala. Arunachala comprises of two syllables- 'Aruna' and 'Achala'. 'Aruna' denotes 'Being-ness' or an ever-present state which is perennial like the calm beneath the frolicking waves in the sea or the screen that displays the action ridden events in the movie or drama that life is; into which we get mistakenly drawn and involved. 'Achala' signifies stillness. A calm that defies expression. Sri Ramana exuded this in every moment of his mortal existence. This was because he fully and totally connected with the 'Source' or 'Self'. Again, the stillness or 'achala' referred to here is the stillness of the mind. As Ramana mentions, "Silence is of four kinds: silence of the eyes, silence of the ears, silence of the mouth and silence of the mind. Of these the last, silence or stillness of the mind is pure silence, the most important. Bhagavan mentions, "The mind is like a monkey, never still for even a

second. Since it is almost a hopeless task to try and quieten it; the best thing to do is to give it a productive employment, and not allow it to fritter itself away, by building endless pictures. Let it focus on "Who am I?" [A Sadhu's reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi by Sadhu Arunachala (Major Chandwick)]

Bhagavan has also given us the gist of his teachings in the very first verse of 'Upadesa Saram' (the essence of spiritual instructions): this highlights the infructuous nature of our illusory sense of volition or doership. In fact, time and again, Sri Ramana has pointed out that the essential task for aspirants is to give up the notion of egoism or individuality; the thorn and culprit which entangles us into what is irrelevant and makes us disregard the most crucial aspect of our life. "kartur ājñyayā prāpyate phalam, karma kim param karma tajjadam"- meaning actions yield result only by the will of the Lord; by itself action or 'karma' is inanimate or insentient. The only Will that prevails is the Supreme Will. Individual will is illusory; appears to exist like a mirage, but, does not.

What then is the core of the teaching that we should imbibe from Bhagavan's advent to Tiruvannamalai and his resonance with the Holy hill

of Arunachala?

We need to reflect and delve into the **three important A's**- not once, but every day of our life : **Attention, Awareness and Abidance**. These three A's will lead us ultimately to a 'State of Presence'. By attention is meant 'vigilance'. The sadhana if any, should make us vigilant by observing what our monkey mind is up to and taking care not to fall into the trap it sets through the enticing entanglements of the phenomenal life. The next step of awareness will emerge when we pursue the inner journey and focus on the core of our being the 'Self' rather than the play; be it celebrations, grievances or the mundane happenings that take place around us, Subsequently, the third stage of abidance or the state of 'beingness' is the sense of calmness that defies words. Sri Ramana epitomized this and perpetually demonstrated this state. The greatness of any master is evident through his or her life; the way they conduct themselves and respond to all phenomenal events. Sri Ramana always 'lived by his words'. Hence the true metaphor for us to absorb is 'Living by the words of Bhagavan'.

The Advent Day should propel us to assimilate the essence of Bhagavan's

teachings by reflecting on:

a) How Bhagavan lived by his words throughout his physical life span at the abode of Arunachala

b) The 'one message' that he persistently highlighted: give up the sense of individuality and doership, be aware that it is only "His Will" that prevails (Thy Will Be Done) Above all,

c) The challenge: graduating from an intellectual grasp of the true state to a sustained experience of it.

This demands a consistent vigilance on the way the mind plays tricks upon us.

Bhagavan's two-fold recipe of self-enquiry or unconditional surrender (finding out who is it that seeks and what is this I? or 'saranagati' acknowledging, "not-me but Thou, the Lord") is the solution to address our dilemma.

Yet another practical and useful tip comes from the great Master Nisargadatta Maharaj, whose teachings relate closely with that of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. Maharaj advocated the following:

(i) Whenever we hear, see, sense or feel anything; be it an experience, an event or an incident, we should

reiterate mentally, ‘this is heard, this is being experienced, this is seen or there is a sense of joy, anguish or regret as the case may be, instead of the normal response, ‘I see, I hear, I experience or I feel.

(ii) Secondly, every day before retiring to bed, we should consciously remind ourselves for about 10 minutes that our true Self is not what we think or even believe it to be: we are not entities bound and subject to the vagaries of the body and mind; we are the underlying Consciousness

on which the play of life is enacted, appearing and disappearing, much like the waves that traverse the still base of the ocean, seemingly active but in reality movements, that try to trap and mislead us.

Sri Ramana demonstrated this Truth in ample measure under the foothills of the holy hill, from the day he set foot in Tiruvannamalai till his merger with the sacred Arunachala. ■

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When the spiritual consciousness grows,
his consciousness shows many things
in his life to be Illusory or impure.

His renunciation and detachment,
Purification and its trials,
all form the part of his intense
Aspiration to reach God.

Guru Nanak's teachings



Janaka's Dream

Geeta Ravichandran

We know of dreams as a phenomenon that occurs in the recesses of our mind. Dreams are random, unpredictable occurrences. They simmer below the surface of thought and in them, we perceive the limitless possibilities of the human condition. Dreams have been known to foretell future events, hold the key to subconscious memories and are considered a bridge to unseen worlds. From the 19th century onwards, analysts who dissected and interpreted dreams began to have a profound influence on western civilization. Whether such analysis has provided any solutions or has only served to confound the problem is a matter of debate.

Centuries before, King Janaka was troubled by a dream. As Janaka was a wise and learned king, he understood that the dream posed a broader question, on the nature of reality. He therefore sought answers

from all the scholars of his times on the significance of the dream and waking states. It was finally the self-realised sage Ashtavakra, who could explain to him the conundrum of reality in the context of existence.

While relaxing in his palace in the company of his queen, Janaka fell asleep. Suddenly he heard a commotion outside. His minister rushed in and urged him to escape, as an enemy king had occupied the palace. However, by then the soldiers of the enemy had surrounded the king. They took Janaka as a prisoner and produced him before the enemy king. The conqueror said, that since Janaka had a reputation of being a just and noble king, his life was being spared. However, he imposed a condition that Janaka should not be seen anywhere within the boundary of the kingdom by midnight. He further ordered Janaka, not to meet or talk to any body or ask for food or water or seek any help. The

enemy king threatened to kill Janaka, if he violated these orders.

Janaka fled the kingdom, which he had ruled, with only one thought that of crossing the border to save himself. He was running, panting and shivering with fear. Utterly exhausted and ravaged by thirst and hunger, he finally crossed the border. Suddenly he spotted a charitable house – a Dharamsala. He saw a man resting there. The king begged the stranger for some food and water. The man expressed his helplessness. However, he informed the king that there were some leftover remains from a feast, from which he could probably scrape together a mouthful of food. Janaka found the discarded utensils and managed to get a handful of food. Just as he was about to put it into his mouth, two dogs jumped on him and the food fell from his hands. Janaka began to weep bitterly.

As suddenly as it began, the dream ended. Janaka found himself in his palace surrounded by regal splendor, with his queen for company. As the terrifying dream that he had experienced, just a few minutes ago was so vivid, Janaka began to ponder on which state was real- the fright and desperation of the recent dream or the comfort and luxury he

was surrounded with, in the present moment. He summoned all the wise men in his kingdom and announced a reward for the one who would give a satisfactory answer to his question- *'Is this true or is that true?'* None of the wise men were able to answer the king's question satisfactorily. Finally it was the sage Ashtavakra who could clarify the doubts the king raised. Ashtavakra proclaimed with authority, - *'Neither that is true nor this is true.'* This was due to the fact that Janaka's vision of begging for food did not persist in the present state when he possessed wealth and abundance. Similarly, in the dream state -all the riches and plenty he enjoyed in the present -vanished and he experienced a great deal of suffering. Ashtavakra explained that which appears and disappears, which fluctuates and changes, is not of the nature of truth. Truth remains constant in the past, present and future. *"Trikaleshu abaaditam vastu"*.

The dream world offers an insight into the nature of existence. Swami Shantananda Puri of Vasishta Guha used to explain this by saying that in the dream state, the dreamer himself becomes the objects created in the dream. There is no separate existence of the dream, outside the dreamer. It

is the thought energy of the dreamer that becomes the dream creation – the characters of the dream, the clothes worn by them, the scene where the dream takes place—rivers, mountains, houses and trains. In fact, every little detail that manifests in the dream is the thought energy of the person who is dreaming. The moment the dreamer wakes up, the dream ceases to exist.

This offers a clue about the actual nature of our existence. Just as a person creates a dream world, populates it with various forms and watches the entire show; so also the Cosmic Force that is responsible for creating this wondrous world becomes the substratum, pervades the entire creation and remains the Seer or the Self. Every object of creation invariably contains the living energy of the creator.

As Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita-

Ishware Sarvabhutanam hriddeshe arjuna tishtathi. (18-61)

-The Supreme Lord resides in the heart of every living being.

There is commonality that runs through the waking and dream states. Both are impermanent and transient. The dream world and the waking world as we know it, resemble each

other in more ways than we care to acknowledge. Shakespeare has said- *“We are such stuff as dreams are made on and our little life is rounded with a sleep.”* The grand and magnificent objects of the world perceived through the senses, are nothing but a mere illusion. The underlying energy that animates both the states, belongs to the one inexhaustible source of the Creator.

Sri Ramana Maharishi has affirmed this truth- *“One experiences a dream and knows it to be unreal on waking. Waking experience is unreal in other states. So each state contradicts the others. They are therefore mere changes taking place in the seer, or phenomena appearing in the Self and remains unaffected by them.”* (Talks 399)

It is the Self that subsists as a steady stream of awareness, unaffected by the changes of the waking and dream states. To quote Sri Ramana, *“It is one continuous whole over which the three states of waking, dream and sleep pass. Be that awareness even now. That is the Self-that is Realisation -there is peace-there is happiness.”* (Talks 490) ■

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Kendra Bulletin

At Ramana Kendra Delhi – July and August continued to draw devotees each Sunday to attend Talks by Shri Shankar Narayan Ji on Sad Darshanam, Swami Prabhudananda Ji on Katho Upanishad, Swami Durgeshananda Ji on Vivekachudamani and Recitation and Explanation of Aksharamanamalai by Smt Jayanthy Aiyer Ji.

The highlight for the month of July was the Talk by Swami Chidananda Ji (FOWAI) on Glimpses of Shri Ramana Gita. Swami Ji spoke about the book which was written by the Sanskrit Scholar Ganapati Muni. Swami Ji briefly explained the similarities between Bhagavad Gita and Ramana Gita. After which he spoke and elaborated on the questions that were put to Bhagavan Ramana by his devotees and how Bhagavan answered them in simple language . Swami Ji shared some interesting anecdotes with the devotees and thus making the satsang a very knowledgeable and interesting.

Shri Shankar Narayan Ji – in Sad Darshanam explained how the existence of the world is entirely mental and experienced through the indriyas. So if the world is the mind and the mind is in the heart, Bhagavan's answer is to remain in the Ananya - the Heart.

Swami Prabhudananda Ji – Katho Upanishad - Verse 1.3.1 – The two , who enjoy the fruits of their good deeds, being lodged in the cavity of the seat of the supreme, the knowers of Brahman call shadow and light, as also those who maintain five fires and have thrice propitiated the Nachiketa fire.

Verse 1.3.2 – May we master that Nachiketa vidya (editation); which is bridge for those who sacrifice, and which is the highest imperishable Brahman for those who wish to cross over (samsara) to the far fearless shore.

Verse 1.3.3- Know the atman as the lord of the chariot, the body as the chariot, intelligence as the driver and mind as the reins of the chariot.

contd. on pg 20



The Anchor of Rituals

Tuktuk Ghosh

It is difficult to imagine our lives bereft of rituals. Ever since we can remember, rituals have been inseparable facets of our experiences. They are daily experiences and ones experienced on grand scales during festivals and special occasions. Even today when the pace of living has become frenzied and hectic, rituals have remained steadfastly embedded in our schedules and while they may have been adapted and contemporized, their hold remains undiminished. Very few of us will hazard a prediction about the fading away of rituals, however dizzyingly unpredictable turns our collective lifestyles may take.

The reasons for this remarkably Indian trait are not too far to seek. Especially amongst Hindus, rituals have been part and parcel of their religious practice from time immemorial. Entire religious texts have been devoted to detailing the subtle nuanced points of ritualistic observances as well as their correct performance. Amongst the

earliest texts, dating back thousands of years, the Yajurveda comes to mind, followed by the Shastras. It may be recalled by those familiar with ancient Indian History that Buddhism, Jainism and many other sects that dotted the spiritual landscape way back in the sixth century B C, had much to do with a considered reaction to what was perceived by some as an overemphasis on the ritualistic form and observances - and the concomitant predominance of the priesthood, the Brahmin varna- rather than on the core of spirituality which religions were meant to uphold. It is interesting that these offshoots of Hinduism, which categorise themselves as autonomous religions, are now equally enmeshed in rituals of various descriptions and cannot do without them. The significant conclusion to be drawn is that rituals are an anchor and there is a deep need which they have fulfilled and will continue to do so. Their hold on us would not have been as complete

had this not been the case. Within this framework of understanding their role, it is important to be clear that the anchor ought not to be taken as the end point of spiritual aspirations and endeavours. Very often this happens and lifetimes go by in apparent exercise of religious piety without having advanced to attain sublime goals.

In this context, it is useful to call to mind the sublime teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Verses 4 through to 8 of the Upadesa Saram bringing out the importance of puja- ritual worship, japa- vocal repetition of mantras or name of God and Dhyana- meditation which have their respective purificatory roles for devotees. Each succeeding one is superior or more efficacious than the preceding one. However, they must not descend to the sludge of mechanical routine, nor must they be imbued with the avid desire for fulfilment of desires or cravings. If this is lost sight of, the correct path to liberation will continue to be stubbornly elusive. Rituals must at all times uphold the belief of the oneness of God and look upon objects of worship as manifestations of this ultimate reality. Unless this is accepted, the host of myriad actions which construe rituals will remain at the very superficial level and will not serve any

significant spiritual purpose.

This is what can be aptly described as the touchstone for a serious spiritual seeker. It must be tracked and calibrated according to where one finds oneself positioned. In today's context where every task of our daily schedule is amenable to being tracked and calibrated, it should be fairly simple to move in that direction with spiritual aspirations. The exercise would involve putting somewhat tough questions to oneself and not hesitating to acknowledge and accept the honest, sometimes disappointing and unpalatable responses. While we may be regularly allocating time and energy to rituals, they may be quite devoid of the quality that we intended them to carry and may not, in fact, be taking us in the desired spiritual direction. There may be valid grounds to relook at our ritualistic practices and bring about much needed modifications, with or without the help of spiritual preceptors, guides and religious texts. That is an individual decision. However, if we fail to do so we will end up passing on much that is ineffectual, something which we, as inheritors of immensely rich spiritual heritage, can ill afford to do.

Shiva Arunachalaya! ■

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The Jatakas: making of a true leader

Neera Kashyap

The Jatakas are the 550 symbolic birth stories of the Buddha in Pali, which reveal some event in the long series of his previous existences as a *bodhisatta*. While the Theravada ideal was of the arhat or perfected being who achieves nirvana through his own effort and for his own liberation, the later Mahayana Buddhists believed in the venerated figures of the *bodhisattas*, who while destined to become Buddhas, defer their own enlightenment to help others evolve similarly, by bringing the message of deliverance to the many.

While the Jataka tales provide many examples of leadership, this article will focus on how unenlightened rulers take on the mantle of true leadership in different ways as each arrives at the truth through a series of culminating events. These moments include proof provided by a sage who loves all beings; a flash

of sudden recognition; a path of slow maturing –strewn with fear, doubts and mistakes.

The *Kukkura Jataka* tells us the story of a king who possesses a set of royal dogs –a source of pride. One day, the king's chariot in the royal courtyard gets wet in the rain, and the royal dogs gnaw its leather works and straps under cover of night. Blaming this act on stray dogs, the enraged king orders the wholesale massacre of all dogs, except his royal ones. Outside the town, a Bodhisatta who cares for several hundred stray dogs in a cemetery feels convinced that no outside dog could have entered a guarded palace, so the culprits would be the royal thoroughbreds themselves. Guided by thoughts of love, he enters the city alone, knowing his loving thoughts would protect him. In the palace, he pronounces to the king that the royal dogs were being unfairly spared, the

king being prejudiced by his own dislike, ignorance and fear – his decision not being the impartial doom of all dogs but the slaughter only of the strays. The king asks the Bodhisatta if he knows the culprits. The Bodhisatta nods and pronounces the thoroughbreds guilty. When asked to prove it, he asks that grass be mashed with butter milk and fed to the royal dogs. On ingestion, the dogs vomit, their vomit revealing pieces of leather. The Bodhisatta's conviction and proof impacts the king so greatly that he provides for the consistent welfare of all creatures and the proper sustenance of all strays.

The Bodhisatta's knowledge that he was protected by his own thoughts of love gave him the courage to intuit and speak the truth, as also to prove it. He would have profoundly identified with and integrated into his daily life the *dhamma* of the Buddhist 8-fold path, especially the ethics of right action, right speech and right living. It is this – the Bodhisattva's profound love and ethics - that ignites the change in the king, not the proof of the royal dogs' guilt. To become a humane leader, the king had to be sufficiently open and willing to get to the source of the problem and be inspired by the undaunted

courage and forthrightness of the Bodhisatta.

In a long tale called the *Mahabodhi Jataka*, we see how a king ripens to maturity. Here, the Bodhisatta is a renunciate from a rich Brahmin family who lives as an ascetic in the Himalayas. When he comes to Benares to beg for alms, the King sights him, is delighted with his calm demeanour, builds a hut of leaves for him and feeds him from the royal couch for twelve years. Meanwhile five of the king's councillors proceed with unchecked corruption, passing false judgments through bribes resulting in hurting the rightful. A man aggrieved shares his grievance with the sage, begs to know why he remained indifferent to others' suffering while partaking of the largesse of royalty. Out of compassion, the sage goes to court and through the right judgment, reinstates the aggrieved man. The king then asks the Bodhisatta to sit in judgment on a regular basis to which the sage agrees after much importunity. As corruption decreases, the five affected councillors plot to slander and kill the sage. As the sage's popularity increases, even while he is unaware of this, the councillors tutor the king to see this popularity

as a personal threat to himself. First, the sage's honour is systematically reduced. When he does not leave as a consequence of this, this too is shown to the king as a bid for sovereignty. The king approves the councillors' plan to kill the Bodhisatta the very next day, but reveals the plan to his queen in their private chambers, out of a nagging sense of fear and sorrow. The royal hound overhears the plan and warns off the sage who prepares to leave. The king asks to be forgiven and begs that he return someday. The sage cryptically suggests they may see each other yet.

With the sage's departure, corruption reigns again. Threatened that the king may ask the sage to return, the councillors poison the king's mind with the suggestion that the sage's return would be motivated by an 'object of attachment' – the queen, so she should die. Without investigating the matter, the king orders the queen to be killed, cut up and thrown on the dunghill. The deed done, the king's four sons rise in revolt.

The sage hears of the events and knows only he can pacify the princes. He returns to Benares but stays away from the palace. By keeping this distance, he is able to speak

to the king of the treachery of the councillors, their counsel bound to lead to great sorrow. The sons are also summoned and asked to cease their enmity and seek their fathers' pardon. The Bodhisatta uses the symbol of the skin of a dead monkey which he carries on his shoulder to suggest that, like this monkey's death, death is useful only when a creature's time has come or, if as karmic debt, it would be more useful dead than alive. So for the princes to kill their father would be wrong, for the fruit on the tree is sweetest when fully ripened. Like the dead skin of the monkey, all the king's impurities that had to die have perished – making him now most serviceable to his people. The king's compassion comes into play early. He serves to pare down the punishment of the corrupt councillors from sure death to stripping them of property and driving them out - fettered and chained and smeared with cow dung.

Throughout the tale, there is a sense of waiting for the right moment to occur. The sage has to wait for the right hour to dispense justice, to leave the kingdom and to return to it. He may have had to be pushed to act in the interests of justice or to leave when he learns that his life is

under threat. But when he returns, it is with the maturity of knowledge that his return will help restore peace and order in a kingdom bedevilled by corruption, machination and revolt. The king matures slowly though imperceptibly, as he goes through his own fear and sorrow at the departure of the sage and, possibly guilty, at ordering his own wife's death. It is only the Bodhisatta who knows when the king's impurities perish so imminent bloodshed can be quelled and peace restored under his calm and objective intervention.

The symbol of the monkey's dead skin could have gone either way: as death to the king for his 'karmic debt', him serving better dead than alive or as a sign of the death of his impurities so that the Bodhisatta's grace could work and order be restored. Not hurrying things is part of Buddhist practise as Buddha's sadhana through different schools taught him to work with human nature, not fight it – amplifying states of mind conducive to enlightenment through a 'middle way' that shunned physical and emotional self-indulgence on the one hand and extreme asceticism on the other.

In *Putta Bhatta Jataka*, the king is transformed through a recognition

that comes to him in a flash. The story is of King Brahmadata's son whom the king sends away as he is afraid that there is something about this son that could harm him. The son's wife accompanies him and lives with him in hardship. A time comes when the son learns of his father's death by observing the stars, so returns to claim the throne as his birth right. En route he is given food by people who see how famished he is, bidding him share it with his wife. However, he eats the food alone, without sharing any. The wife realizes him to be cruel. She is sore at heart, for she has shared years of his tribulations with him.

Crowned king, he gives her the minimum, showing her no special consideration or honour. Old King Brahmadata's young courtier observes this, asks the queen for alms, forcing her to confess that she could give nothing, as she received nothing from the king. The courtier asks if she could articulate this in the king's presence. She agrees.

The scene is played out in the king's presence. The queen is emboldened to say, "What boots the place of a queen consort, when no respect is paid? What will the king give me now? When he received a dish of rice on the road, he gave me none, but ate it

all himself.” The courtier urges the queen to leave the king, “Honour for honour, love for love is due: Do good to him who does the same to you.” The king recognises in a flash his wife’s virtues, confesses to them and proceeds to give his queen all honour, both henceforth dwelling in friendship and harmony.

This tale gives us a glimpse of classical Buddhist psychology. King Brahmadata had suspected his son of having the potential to hurt him and hence had exiled him. Even the father did not know what really lay below his son’s surface personality. The fault seemed to lie in a hard heartedness and cruelty, an inability to recognize love and honour, even when received, triggering an inability to return it. He endured his exile; perhaps his weakness lay in that he could not accept that his father had exiled him for this hidden fault, so could not face and purge himself of this weakness that his father had feared. So if he blamed his father for not loving him, he could not love his spouse for he could not recognize her love and sacrifice in choosing to live with him in anonymity and penury.

The queen could not disclose her sorrow to anyone till the courtier intervenes and decides to make the

king honour her by reviving memory of her virtues. The queen’s courage to speak publicly of her sorrow is crucial to her husband’s conversion, and the courtier’s advice that she refuse a loveless union (when the conditions for fostering love were now abundant) triggers recognition in the king. It is this recognition that he has not honoured her virtues of endurance and of giving deeply and selflessly that brings forth a transformation – his hard heartedness converted to honour, friendship and harmony that would probably bring long-lasting benefits to many.

Writes Karen Armstrong in her book, ‘Buddha’: “It is always tempting to try to shut out the suffering that is an inescapable part of the human condition, but once it has broken through the cautionary barricades we have erected against it, we can never see the world in the same way again. Gautama had permitted the spectacle of *dukkha* to invade his life and to tear his world apart. He had smashed the hard carapace in which so many of us encase ourselves in order to keep sorrow at a distance. But once he had let suffering in, his quest could begin.....” ■

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contd. from pg 12

Swami Durgeshananda Ji - Vivekachudamani Shloka 13-21 - Swami Ji explained to the devotees that to find Truth one need not bathe in the holy rivers, or donate and do Pranayama, all that is required is to seek council of wise, sit by the feet of his Guru and practice self-realisation. For a qualified aspirant his efforts towards his goal play an important role - however place, time and other such means may assist him in the path. Disciple who is a rightful owner of this knowledge is one who is intelligent, learned and logical. He has eagerness to learn about Brahm gyana, he can differentiate between the real and the unreal. With his knowledge and practice he has come to the realization that Brahman is the only truth, the universe is unreal.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sept 1st	Advent Day Celebrations	Swami Prakarshananda Chief Guest
Sept 9th & Oct 14th	Swami Prabuddhananda Ji	Katho Upanishad
Sept 16th & Oct 7th	Shri Shankar Narayan Ji	Sad Darshanam
Sept 23rd	Smt Jayanthi Aiyer Ji	Aksharamanamallai
Sept 30th & Oct 21st	Swami Durgeshananda Ji	Vivekachudamani



Aksharamanamalai Part 10

75

Bau/dika/ma/mudal

Pat/ratru/na/lumun

Bavi/sukkan/dura/varul

Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! Rid of the attachment to the body made of the elements, let me ever behold Thy splendour and be united with it through Thy grace!

What conditions the soul and makes it limited is its attachment to the body. The body and the mind are products of the elements which constitute the not-self. On account of nescience the soul thinks, 'I am the body; the body is mine'. It is this false identification that involves the soul in transmigration. When this false identification is removed, the soul realizes its true being in the non-dual Reality, *Brahman*. *Brahman* is *sat*, *chit*, *ananda*, the supreme splendour. The soul is the same

splendour apparently imprisoned. When this imprisonment is removed through grace which is the same as knowledge, the soul realizes the truth of non-duality.

76

Malai/marun/dida/nī

Malait/tida/vō/varul

Malai/marun/dā/yolir

Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! When Thou dost administer medicine for delusion, why should I (continue to) be deluded? Be Thou resplendent as the Gracious Hill of Medicine!

Delusion, ignorance, is the cause of bondage. That is the basic malady from which the soul suffers. God administers the cure for this malady. He is Himself the physician (*bhishak*) and the medicine (*bheshajam*). That being so, why should the soul despair? The ultimate Reality in

the form of the Aruna Hill is the supreme medicine for the soul's illness. The mere thought of it will cure the root disease of bondage. Alternative meaning of the words: *malaimarun didani malaittidavo*: Thou who hast the Daughter of the Mountain (Parvati) on Thy left side! Why shouldst Thou shrink from administering the medicine that will cure the disease of delusion?

77

Mā/nangon/duru/pavar

Mā/natai/yazhit/tabhi

Mā/namil/lā/dolir

Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! Having destroyed the conceit of those who are conceited Thou shinest without conceit!

The soul's conceit in the body and the world makes for its bondage. It is the conceit of 'I and mine' placed in the body and the world that constricts the soul and throws it into the tract of transmigration. The way to save the soul is to rid it of its conceit. This is accomplished through God's grace. Freedom from conceit is the mark of limitlessness. God who is the non-dual Reality has no conceit. It is by realizing the grand identity that one becomes free from conceit.

78

Min/jidil/ken/jidum

Kon/java/riva/niyān

Van/jiyā/daru/lennai

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! As I am parviscient, I cringe only when overpowered; without deceiving, bestow Thy grace on me!

Self-conceit is a consequence of parviscience. The ego gets puffed up and overestimates its importance. Not knowing its impotence, it imagines that it is all-powerful. When hard experience knocks on its head and humiliates it, the ego cringes and craves for the sake of self-preservation. Realizing the worthlessness of the ego, the devotee-soul prays to God for the bestowal of His grace so that she may be saved from the guiles of the ego.

79

Mihā/ma/ni'/lāmal

Mā/kāt/ralai/kalam

Ā hā/mal/kāt/tarul

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Protect me so that I may not flounder like a storm-tossed pilotless vessel.

The soul is like a vessel on a troubled sea caught in a fierce storm.

On the uncharted sea of *samsara*, the soul drifts without any sense of direction or purpose. The winds of desire carry it whithersoever they blow. The vessel of the soul is without a pilot. In such a condition, it is doomed to destruction. What will save the soul from its doom is God's grace. When God becomes the pilot and His grace the rudder, the soul will not suffer shipwreck, however fierce the storm may be and however agitated the sea.

80

Mudi/yadi/kā/nā

Mudi/vidut/tanai/nēr

Mudi/vidak/kada/nilai

y' Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! The knot of ignorance whose eginning or end cannot be traced, Thou hast to untie, like a mother. I cannot untie it by myself.

The knot of ignorance is the cause of bondage. It is called knot because it mixes the true with the untrue, and mistakes the one for the other. It is beginning-less and endless in the sense that the soul that is bound by it cannot understand its limits or ends. So, how can it untie the knot unaided? It is only the Lord that can undo this

knot. As a mother hastens to the succour of her child, so let the Lord through His infinite grace liberate the soul from the coils of ignorance.

81

Mūk/kilan/mun/gāttum

Muku/ramā/hā/denait

Tūk/kiya/nain/darul

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Without being as a mirror held before a nose-less person, lift me up and embrace me.

The devotee-soul knows full well her own deficiencies. Let not the Lord humiliate her by showing these up. A face without a nose will be awful to look at. There could be no greater insult to a nose-less man than to make him look at the reflection of his own face in a mirror. The Lord cannot behave like a finite individual, and distinguish between the beautiful and the ugly, the blemish-less and the defective. It is His duty to remove the defects of the soul. There is nothing which His grace cannot accomplish. The devotee-soul prays to God that He should embrace and save her.

82

Mey/yahat/tin/mana

Men/mana/ranai/yilnām

Mey/kalan/dida/varul

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Do bestow Thy grace so that we may lie in union on the bed of tender flowers, the mind, in the inner sanctuary of the body.

This is the language of bridal mysticism. The devotee soul pines for union with the Lord. The location where the union is realized is the heart. The heart should first be made a fit place for receiving the Lord. It is no use inviting Him to a location that is rough and hard. Let the heart be rendered soft and fragrant. Then, let the soul entreat the Lord to come in and embrace her. Expressed in the language of *Advaita*, when nescience, the root obstacle, is removed, when the knot of the heart is cut, the grand identity is realized.

83

Mēn/mēl/tāzhn/didum

Mel/liyar/chērn/dunī

Mēn/maiyut/ranai/yen

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! How is it that by uniting with the meek who belittle themselves all the more, Thou hast risen high?

True devotees are extremely humble. There is not the least trace of pride in them. The deeper their devotion, the greater becomes their humility. The Lord rushes to the succour of the devotees. He is prepared to go to any lengths for sustaining and saving them. Thereby is His greatness exhibited. It may be truly said that He is subservient to the devotee (*bhakta-paradhina*). His splendour lies in descending from His exalted place and lifting the soul from the slough of sordidness and sorrow. The deeper He descends, the greater is the manifestation of His splendour. In the language of bridal mysticism, the verse could also be taken to mean: Thou hast liaison with so many women, and yet Thou remainest pure. ■

Source TMP Mahadevan's Book Arunachala Siva Aksharamanamalai



The re-issue of **Boundless Ocean of Grace**

Parimala Moodley

Captain Narayan was an extremely devout, and very popular member of the Ashram community. His generosity was legendary, but he was also a strict disciplinarian. Captain Narayan had a vision.

He had determined to bring together the various biographies on Bhagavan, His teachings and articles written about Bhagavan in a single publication. He had a clear view of how this should be presented. Over the years he acquired a prodigious knowledge of all ashram publications and with that he set about the task almost single-handedly. He became seriously ill partway through the project but nevertheless saw it through to the end. The result was the publication of the eight volumes of *Boundless Ocean of Grace* in 2007.

Knowing that his health was deteriorating he tried to hasten the

project and of course there were inevitably shortcomings. In any case it was unavoidable in a publication of such magnitude, undertaken by a single editor. But, what an achievement!

When the publication went out of print and consideration was being given to a second edition, several eminent writers were approached. There was great reluctance to be involved in a project of this enormity. The general consensus was that it is easier to write something afresh than it is to re-write.

Finally one brave person decided to take on the challenge. There was considerable resistance from various quarters. Some felt that Captains' work should not be touched, that it could not be improved upon, and that it should not even be attempted. Others felt that there was so much wrong with it that could not be rectified, that it should never

even be attempted. And many others simply said, “Why bother?”

But the new chief editor was remarkable in his tenacity and persistence.

The project began with a new vision of bringing together material from the original eight-volume publication, updating it and presenting it in a different format. The new format would set the biography, teachings, reminiscences, dialogues with Bhagavan and articles by devotees separately. A whole team of people came together to look at the content of the eight volumes of *Boundless Ocean of Grace*, deconstruct it, seek new material, check archived material for authenticity, and to put it together as a comprehensive whole. On board also were the team of proofreaders and technical staff without which no publication would see the light of day. So was born the seven volumes of *Eternal Ocean of Grace*.

This Herculean task has been managed purely by the blessing of Bhagavan.

What a blessing to be involved in the project!

What have we done to merit the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the writings of Bhagavan and in the writings of others on Bhagavan. To trace the biography through many different eyes, to relive the pain of those last days leading to the *Mahanirvana* and to revel in the writings of the devotees who saw Bhagavan from so many different perspectives. The superbly cut perfect diamond that is Bhagavan shines so brilliantly through all the different facets. To be in a position at close quarters to catch even a glimpse of this makes one feel truly Blessed.

As we come to the home stretch on this project we can truly say that this has never been work but a blessing bestowed by the Grace of the Master.

Whatever the final product turns out to be, we know that we have merely been the instruments as per the Divine plan. ■

Aum Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

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श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

74

टी. आर. कनकम्माल के चाचा रामकृष्ण ऐय्यर तिरुवण्णामलै में मुंसिफ थे। उनकी इच्छा के विरुद्ध विवाह कर दिया गया। उन्होंने कभी गृहस्थ जीवन में प्रवेश नहीं किया। उनकी पुस्तक Cherished Memories है। Guru Ramana नामक वीडियो में उनके संस्मरण उपलब्ध हैं।

मैं नियमित रूप से अपने भगवान श्री रमण महर्षि के आश्रम जाती थी, किंतु स्थायी निवास 1946 के बाद ही हुआ। मैंने आश्रम के पास एक कमरा ले लिया, जहाँ मैं खाना बनाती और सब घरेलू कार्य करती। इन सब में कितनी ही कठिनाईयाँ आतीं और निराश भी होती। किंतु प्रातः उठते ही भगवान के साथ दिन बिताने के विचार से मेरा मन नाँच उठता। आश्रम में प्रवेश करते ही मुझे अपने में रूपांतर अनुभव होता था। किसी अदृश्य शक्ति के बल से मेरी छोटी-छोटी चिंताएँ लुप्त हो जाती। हृदय की चंचल वृत्तियाँ शिथिल पड़ जाती। इस स्थिति का वर्णन कठिन है। कभी-कभी ऐसा अनुभव होता कि मैं अपने शरीर से एकदम अलग हूँ, मैं आनंदातिरेक की स्थिति में चली जाती।

महर्षि के कक्ष में जब उनकी दृष्टि मेरी ओर लग जाती, उसकी तीव्रता को सहन करना कभी-कभी असंभव हो जाता। मेरा मन बिना किसी प्रयत्न के पूर्णतः अंतर्मुखी हो जाता। उस आनंद का अनुभव कक्ष से आने के बहुत देर बाद तक बना रहता।

एक दिन मैं महर्षि को प्रणाम करके कक्ष में बैठ गई। कुछ समय पश्चात्

उनकी कृपा दृष्टि मुझ पर टिक गई। उनकी दृष्टि के सामने आँखे खुली रखना असंभव हो जाता था। उनकी दृष्टि की तीव्रता को सह पाना सामान्य जन के लिए बहुत कठिन था। ऐसा प्रतीत होता था कि किसी अदृश्य शक्ति ने आपके भीतर प्रवेश कर लिया है और आपके अस्तित्व के मर्म तक पहुँच गई है। ऐसी अवस्था में और कुछ नहीं केवल आत्मा की आनंददायी चेतना ही शेष रहती थी।

एक दिन एक सम्य व शिक्षित दिखने वाला युवक कक्ष में आया और महर्षि को प्रणाम करके बैठ गया। कुछ समय बाद महर्षि को संबोधित करके बोला, “रामकृष्ण परमहंस ने एक स्पर्शमात्र से विवेकानंद को निर्विकल्प समाधि में स्थापित कर दिया था। क्या आप मेरे लिए ऐसा कर सकते हैं ?” महर्षि मौन रहे। यह स्पष्ट दिख रहा था कि वह युवक अधीरतापूर्वक उनके उत्तर की प्रतीक्षा में था। कुछ मिनटों के मौन के पश्चात् महर्षि ने उस युवक की ओर देखा और कोमल स्वर में पूछा, “क्या मैं मान लूँ कि तुम दूसरे विवेकानंद हो?” युवक सकपका गया। उसके पास उत्तर नहीं था। बहुत लज्जित अनुभव कर, दबे पाँव कक्ष से उठकर चला गया।

तब महर्षि ने हमसे कहा, आत्म-विश्लेषण और आत्म-निरीक्षण कितना आवश्यक है, यह बात समझ पाना बहुत कठिन है। अपने को सर्वगुण समपन्न समझने की प्रवृत्ति प्रायः देखी जाती है। यह युवक देखना चाहता था कि मुझमें परमहंस की शक्ति है कि नहीं, किंतु इसकी उसे कोई चिंता नहीं थी। वह स्वयं विवेकानंद की तुलना में कितना ठहरता है। परमहंस ने वह दुर्लभ अवस्था मात्र विवेकानंद को प्रदान की, क्योंकि वे विरल अध्यात्मिक गुण-संपन्न व्यक्ति थे।

महर्षि की पुरानी भक्त और आश्रम में भोजन बनानेवाली सुब्बालक्ष्मी अम्मल (सं. 52) एक फूलदार झाड़ी से अंधाधुंध फूल तोड़े जा रही थी। फूल एकत्र करने के लिए उसने जमीन पर कपड़ा बिछा रखा था। महर्षि के पूछने पर कि तुम्हारे पास काफी मात्रा में फूल हैं, और क्यों तोड़े जा रही हो ? उसने सरल भाव से कहा कि इस पौधे पर इतने फूल लदे हैं, मैंने सोचा, बेकार जाने से अच्छा, मैं सारे ही बटोर लूँ। महर्षि ने कहा, तुमने तो सुंदर फूलों

से लदी झाड़ी का सौंदर्य देख लिया, अब तुम्हें इससे कोई सरोकार नहीं है कि यह मनोहारी दृश्य कोई भी देख सकता है। क्या तुम्हारा इस झाड़ी पर कोई विशेष अधिकार है, कि तुमने इसे लगाया था, सींचा था और अब यह तुम्हारी निजी संपत्ति बन गई ?

सुब्बालक्ष्मी ने हमें बताया कि इस घटना के पश्चात् जब भी वह किसी फूलों से भरी झाड़ी या पौधे को देखती। उसे महर्षि की वह बात याद आ जाती।

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श्रीकृष्णप्रेम, वैष्णव संन्यासी बनने से पूर्व बनारस व लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालयों में अंग्रेजी साहित्य के अध्यापक रह चुके थे। इंग्लैंड निवासी श्री कृष्णाप्रेम का पूर्व नाम रोनाल्ड निक्सन था। वे अल्मोडा में अपनी गुरु 'यशोदा माँ' के आश्रम में रहते थे। 1948 में उनकी तिरुवण्णामलै यात्रा की कथा उनके मित्र दिलीप कुमार रॉय (सं.8) द्वारा कही गई है।

महर्षि के कक्ष में प्रवेश करके वे भक्तों के मध्य ध्यान में बैठ गए। बैठते ही उन्हें बार-बार एक स्वर सुनाई देने लगा, 'तुम कौन हो? तुम कौन हो? तुम कौन हो?' पहले तो उन्होंने इस पर ध्यान नहीं दिया, फिर उत्तर दिया, 'मैं कृष्ण का सेवक हूँ।' उस स्वर ने पूछा, 'कौन कृष्ण?' उन्होंने कहा, 'नंद का बेटा। वह एक अवतार है। वह सबके हृदय में रहने वाला, सबमें है।'

दूसरे दिन प्रातः जब श्रीकृष्णप्रेम दूसरे भक्तों के साथ कक्ष में बैठे, तब महर्षि ने उनको एक तीक्ष्ण दृष्टि से देखा और मुस्कराए। श्रीकृष्णप्रेम ने अपनी आँखें बंद कर ली और चुपचाप अंतः प्रेरणा से वशीभूत महर्षि से पूछा 'आप कौन हैं?' फिर अचानक जब उनकी आँख खुली तो देखा कि महर्षि का सोफा खाली है। उन्होंने फिर आँख बंद कर ली, किंतु एक क्षण में फिर खोली तो महर्षि को सोफे पर पाया। महर्षि ने क्षणिक मुस्कान से उन पर एक अर्थपूर्ण दृष्टि डाली।

श्रीकृष्णप्रेम के कंधे पर सदा एक झोला रहता था जिसमें एक ढक्कन वाले

छोटे बक्से में राधा—कृष्ण की मूर्तियाँ रहती थीं। यह झोला वे सोने के समय ही कंधे से उतारते थे। वे पक्के वैष्णव थे। उन्होंने एक बार महर्षि से पूछा, 'सर्वम् वासुदेवमयम् जगत्', क्या यह सर्वश्रेष्ठ आदर्श नहीं है ?

महर्षि ने स्वीकृति में अपना सिर हिलाकर कहा: 'हाँ', 'हाँ', यह एक उन्नत चेतना की स्थिति है। किंतु वह कौन है जो यह विचार करता है। कि जो कुछ दिखता है वह वासुदेव है? जब तुम पृथ्वी, पेड़—पौधे, पशु—पक्षी सबको वासुदेव के रूप में देखना चाहते हो तो अपने को भी वासुदेव समझो। यदि तुम स्वयं को भी वासुदेव समझना सीख लोगे तो स्वयं ही वासुदेव हो जाओगे। जब वह जो 'देखता' है वही वासुदेव में रूपांतरित हो जाए तो जो 'दिखता' है वह भी स्वतः वासुदेव बन जाएगा। शंकराचार्य की उक्ति—'दृष्टि ज्ञानमयी कृत्वा, पश्येत ज्ञानमयं जगत्', का यही अर्थ है।

एक दिन संध्या समय श्रीकृष्णप्रेम से भजन सुनाने को कहा गया। महर्षि के सम्मुख उन्हें गाता हुए सुनने के लिए लगभग 75 भक्त एकत्रित थे। उन्होंने सच्चे और गहन भक्तिभाव से भजन सुनाए। शब्दों का उच्चारण भी शुद्ध भारतीय था। उनके गायन ने सबका हृदय छू लिया। बाद में महर्षि ने कहा, "एक पाश्चात्य देशवासी ने सच्चे भारतीय भक्त की गहन भक्ति को मूर्त रूप दे दिया।"

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रोडा मेकाईवर, बंबई के एक संपन्न पारसी परिवार से थीं।

महर्षि के विषय में मैंने सबसे पहले सन् 1940 में एक पारसी महिला फिरेजा तलियारखान (सं. 104) से सुना। उन्होंने मुझे महर्षि संबंधित कुछ पुस्तकें व फोटोग्राफ मर्मस्पर्शी थे। मुझे महर्षि से मिलने की तीव्र इच्छा हुई, जो समय बीतने के साथ प्रबल होती गई। इस इच्छा का कोई विशेष कारण नहीं था। बंबई में मेरी आर्थिक स्थिति अच्छी थी और पर्याप्त समाजिक प्रतिष्ठा भी थी। किंतु किसी अज्ञात कारणवश मैं अपने नित्यप्रति के जीवन से असंतुष्ट थी और उससे भाग निकलना चाहती थी, जो मैंने 1942 में किया।

मैं तिरुवण्णामलै पहुँच गई। आश्रम जाकर पता चला कि महर्षि पहाड़ी पर घूमने गए हैं। मुझसे पगडंडी पर प्रतीक्षा करने को कहा गया। मैं सोच रही थी कि एक व्यक्ति पहाड़ी पर से उतरते हुए दिखाई देगा। किंतु जब महर्षि दिखाई दिए, तब मुझे विश्वास नहीं हुआ कि मैं एक सुंदर सूर्योदय को देख रही थी। दूर से आती उजाले की झलक, जैसे-जैसे समीप आती गई, वैसे-वैसे उसकी दमक बढ़ती गई और वह दीप्ति इतनी बढ़ी कि मुझे लगा कि दहकता हुआ सूर्य स्वयं मेरे समीप है। भव्यता और उज्ज्वलता के इस परम दृश्य को देखकर मैं विस्मयाकुल थी, नतमस्तक थी।

उस दीप्तात्मा के समीप खड़े-खड़े मेरे भीतर एक नई चेतना का अनुभव हुआ, जैसा पहले कभी नहीं हुआ था। मैं महर्षि के प्रेम में बंध गई और मेरी आत्मा उनकी हो गई। अगले दो वर्षों तक मैं नियमित रूप से आश्रम जाती रही। सन् 1944 में एक दिन जब मैं महर्षि के कक्ष में गई तब वे कुछ कागज पढ़ रहे थे। मैं नीचे बैठ गई और उनकी ओर देखा। अचानक उन्होंने कागज नीचे रख दिए और अपने प्रदीप्त नेत्रों से मुझे देखने लगे। मैं उस दृष्टि को सहन नहीं कर पाई। मैंने आँखें बंद कर ली। मेरे नेत्रों से झर-झर आँसू बहने लगे। जब मैंने नेत्र खोले, तब भी उनकी निगाह मुझ पर टिकी थी। मेरा हृदय आनंद और आंतरिक शांति से सराबोर हो गया।

एक महीने आश्रम रूकने के पश्चात् जब मैं बंबई आई तो मेरे जीवन के मूल्य पूर्णतः बदल गए थे। भौतिक सुखों में मुझे कोई आकर्षण नहीं रहा था, और मैं जितना हो सके अकेले रहना चाहती थी। मैंने बंबई छोड़कर तिरुवण्णामलै में ही बस जाने का निर्णय ले लिया। किंतु मैं नहीं जानती थी कि मैं कहाँ जाकर रहूँगी। मुझे पता था कि मेरे भगवान श्री महर्षि मेरा मार्ग दर्शन कर रहे हैं, इसलिए मैं अधिक चिंतित नहीं थी। बंबई छोड़ने से दो दिन पूर्व मैं संयोग से डेविड मेकाईवर से मिली, जो तिरुवण्णामलै के निवासी थी। उन्होंने मुझे अपने यहाँ ठहरने का निमंत्रण दिया, जो मैंने स्वीकार कर लिया। कुछ समय पश्चात् महर्षि की कृपा से मेरा उनसे विवाह हो गया।

एक बार दो व्यक्ति कक्ष में आए। एक ने महर्षि को संबोधित करके कहा, “मेरे इस मित्र ने एक ग़लत व्यक्ति को अपना गुरु बना लिया है, मैं इसे

यहाँ दिखाने लाया हूँ कि सद्गुरु कैसा होता है।” महर्षि ने कठोरता से कहा, “उसके लिए कौन सा गुरु योग्य है, यह बताने वाले तुम कौन हो ? तुम्हारे पास क्या शक्ति है जिससे तुम जान पाओ कि कोई व्यक्ति वास्तव में कैसा है ? असल में गुरु इतना महत्त्वपूर्ण नहीं है, जितना शिष्य। यदि कोई परम श्रद्धा से भक्ति करे तो पत्थर भी परमेश्वर बन जाता है।”

महर्षि के पास एक पुराना टीन का डिब्बा था जिसमें वे पक्षियों व गिलहरियों के लिए कुछ सूखे खाद्य पदार्थ रखते थे। मेरे मन में विचार आया कि मैं महर्षि को एक चांदी का डिब्बा भेंट करूँ। तभी एक भक्त चांदी का डिब्बा लेकर आया। महर्षि ने जोर से कहा, “ना, ना, मुझे चांदी के डिब्बे का क्या करना है; इसे वापस ले जाओ।” ऐसा कहते हुए उन्होंने मेरी ओर देखा, जैसे कि कह रहे हो, कि तुम्हारे चांदी के डिब्बे का भी यही होता।

महर्षि का परिचारक कक्ष में आकर उधम मचाने वाले बंदरों को मारता था। महर्षि ने उससे कहा, “यह तुम्हारी मार बंदरों पर नहीं, मुझे पड़ती है। कष्ट मुझे होता है।” जब कुछ भक्तों ने बंदरों की शिकायत महर्षि से की तो वे बोले, “यह सारा भूभाग जंगल था, जहाँ वे आजादी से घूमते थे। सदियों से यह उनका प्राकृतिक निवास था। हम धुसपैठिये हैं। क्या हमें शिकायत करना उचित है, थोड़ी सी असुविधा क्यों न झेल लें ?” ■

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

12 फरवरी, 1937

358. कक्ष का एक दृश्य : रात्रि के आठ बजकर बीस मिनट हुए हैं। श्री भगवान् सायंकाल का भोजन करके पधारे हैं तथा सोफे पर लेटे हैं। प्रकाश मन्द है; भूमि पर तीन व्यक्ति आसीन हैं; एक किसी पत्रिका में से कुछ प्रतिलिपि करने में व्यस्त है; दूसरा ध्यानस्थ है; तीसरा बिना किसी कार्य के वैसे ही चारो ओर देख रहा है। कक्ष में शान्ति है, सिवाय इसके कि यदाकदा श्री भगवान् गले को साफ करते हैं।

भक्त परिचारक, माधवस्वामी, शान्ति से पानों का बण्डल हाथ में लिये प्रवेश करता है। वह मेज के समीप आता है। श्री भगवान् जो सोफे पर लेटे हैं, उसे देख लेते हैं तथा सौम्यता से उसे पुकारते हैं, “श, श; तुम क्या कर रहे हो ?”

परिचारक कोमल एवं मन्द स्वर से कहता है “कुछ नहीं”, पान वही छोड़कर घबराहट के साथ असमंजस में पड़ जाता है।

महर्षि : “मुझे इसकी कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है।” (परिचारक धीरे से भूमि पर बैठ जाता है) श्री भगवान् : “कस्तूरी बटी—एक के बाद दूसरी प्रतिदिन। शीशी खाली हो जायगी—फिर और खरीद ली जायगी। मुझे इसकी आवश्यकता नहीं है।”

भक्त : बड़ी कुशलता से दिन के भोजन में ‘ओला पोडरिडा’ (मद्रासी

भोजन) को श्री भगवान् की अस्वस्थता के लिए दोषी ठहराता है।

महर्षि : “नहीं—नहीं— वह अच्छा बना था। वह उत्तम था।” खँखार और डकार या फिर खामोशी। कुछ क्षणों के बाद परिचारक चुपचाप चला जाता है तथा हाथ में एक शीशी लेकर वापस आता है, श्री भगवान् के समीप जाता है और एक गोली बाहर निकालते हुए कहता है : “जीरे के बीज की गोली”। श्री भगवान् कोमल एवं मन्द स्वर से कहते हैं “इसमें नीबू का रस है। नीबू का रस इसके लिए लाभदायक नहीं है।” एक भक्त रंगास्वामी आयंगर इस बीच ध्यान से जाग्रत हो चुके हैं तथा देखते हैं। परिचारक ने गोली के साथ अपना हाथ अभी भी बढ़ा रखा है। श्री भगवान् कहते हैं: इसे चबायेगा कौन ?”

रंगास्वामी आयंगर, “इसे चबाना आवश्यक नहीं। इसे मुँह में रखकर चूसना पर्याप्त है।” परिचारक तुरन्त अनुमोदन करता है, “हाँ—हाँ इसे केवल चूसना है।”

महर्षि : रंगास्वामी आयंगर की ओर संकेत करते हुए, “यह उनको दे दो।” “वे इसे चबाये या चूसें। मुझे इसकी आवश्यकता नहीं।”

परिचारक निराश हो वापस जाता है तथा भूमि पर बैठ जाता है; फिर खड़ा हो जाता है।

महर्षि : “अरे !—अरे ! तुम क्या करते हो ? मुझे आवश्यकता नहीं।”

परिचारक औषधि—पेटिका के समीप जाता है, मन्द स्वर में कहता है : “कस्तूरी बटी—यह लाभ करेगी।”

श्री भगवान् : “मैं इसके बिना भी शीघ्र स्वस्थ हो जाऊँगा। उसे बाहर मत निकालो। अरे !—अरे !— उसे वहीं रखो—मैं उसे नहीं लूँगा—तुम्हें जो अच्छा लगे करो।” परिचारक पुनः बैठ जाता है और शयन हेतु जाने से पूर्व सब शान्त रहते हैं।

13 फरवरी, 1937

359. लगभग 7.30 प्रातःकाल जलपान के पश्चात् श्री भगवान् पर्वत पर चढ़ रहे थे। पादनन्द ने जाकर साष्टांग प्रणाम किया, खड़े होकर कहा “अच्छा, मुझे दर्शन हो गये.....मैं जाऊँगा।”

श्री भगवान् ने मुस्कराते हुए कहा “किसका दर्शन ? तुम यह क्यों नहीं कहते कि तुमने मुझे दर्शन दिया ?”

लगभग 9 बजे प्रातःकाल पूना के एक भक्त (श्री पारखी) ने प्रणाम किया और अपना अष्टक पढ़ा जिसमें श्री भगवान् से अनुग्रह की याचना की थी। पद्य के अन्त में शीघ्र मुक्ति की प्रार्थना है एवं भक्त ने उस पर विशेष बल दिया।

महर्षि : मुक्ति भविष्य में प्राप्त नहीं होनी है। वह सदा के लिए है, यहीं और अभी।

भक्त : मैं सहमत हूँ, किन्तु मैं इसका अनुभव नहीं करता।

महर्षि : अनुभव यहीं है और अभी है। कोई अपने अस्तित्व से इनकार नहीं कर सकता।

भक्त : इसका तात्पर्य है अस्तित्व, पर आनन्द नहीं।

महर्षि : अस्तित्व = आनन्द = सद्बस्तु। मुक्ति शब्द कितना उत्तेजक है ? कोई उसकी इच्छा क्यों करता है ? उसका विश्वास है कि बन्धन है और इसलिए वह मुक्ति की इच्छा करता है। परन्तु वास्तविकता यह है कि कोई बन्धन नहीं है किन्तु केवल मुक्ति है। उसको एक नाम से संकेत कर उसकी इच्छा क्यों करते हो ?

भक्त : सत्य—किन्तु हम अज्ञानी हैं।

महर्षि : केवल अज्ञान का निवारण करो। बस यही करना है।

14 फरवरी, 1937

360. लखनऊ के विशिष्ट सज्जन ने श्री पाल ब्रण्टन को पत्र लिखा है कि उनकी धर्मपत्नी ने श्री भगवान् के दर्शनों से जो मन की शान्ति प्राप्त की थी, वह अब लुप्त हो गयी है। उनकी इच्छा है कि श्री भगवान् कृपा कर उसी शान्ति का पुनःस्थापन करें।

प्रार्थना किये जाने पर, श्री भगवान् ने कहा, “यह मन की दुर्बलता के कारण है कि एक बार प्राप्त की हुई शान्ति बाद में लुप्त हो गयी।”

361. जो महिला श्री भगवान् के लिए प्रतिदिन भिक्षा लाती है उसके पुत्र मुदालियर स्वामी ने निम्न रोचक घटना सुनायी :

जब श्री भगवान् विरूपाक्ष गुफा में निवास करते थे, श्री भगवान् तथा मुदालियर स्वामी एक साथ स्कन्दाश्रम के निर्माण-स्थल के पीछे भ्रमण कर रहे थे। वहाँ लगभग 15 फुट ऊँची बड़ी चट्टान थी, वह एक दरार थी, एक बालिका (एक गड़ेरनी) वहाँ खड़ी रो रही थी। श्री भगवान् ने उसके दुःख का कारण पूछा। उसने उत्तर दिया “मेरी एक भेड़ इस दरार में गिर पड़ी है; इसलिए मैं रो रही हूँ।” श्री भगवान् दरार में उतर पड़े, उन्होंने भेड़ को कन्धों पर उठा लिया, सतह पर ऊपर आकर उसे भेड़ सौंप दी। मुदालियर स्वामी का कथन है कि यह साहसिक कार्य किसी व्यक्ति के लिए अत्यन्त असाधारण था।

362. नैलोर में कालेज के एक प्रोफेसर श्री सुब्बुरामैया ने, ‘मुक्ति’ के सम्बन्ध में प्रश्न किया।

महर्षि : मुक्ति के सम्बन्ध में पूछे गये समस्त प्रश्न असंगत हैं; चूँकि मुक्ति का तात्पर्य है बन्धन से मुक्त होना, जिसका अर्थ है कि अब बन्धन है। बन्धन नहीं है और इसलिए मुक्ति भी नहीं है।

भक्त : शास्त्र मुक्ति का तथा उसकी श्रेणियों का वर्णन करते हैं।

महर्षि : शास्त्र ज्ञानियों के लिए नहीं हैं क्योंकि उन्हें शास्त्र की आवश्यकता नहीं है, अज्ञानियों को उनकी इच्छा नहीं है। केवल मुमुक्षुओं को शास्त्रों की आवश्यकता है। इसका अर्थ है कि शास्त्रों का उपयोग न ज्ञान के लिए है, न अज्ञान के लिए।

भक्त : वशिष्ठ को जीवनमुक्त कहा है जबकि जनक विदेहमुक्त थे।

महर्षि : वशिष्ठ अथवा जनक की बात क्यों करते हो ? स्वयं के बारे में क्या है ? उस दिन बहुत-से नये दर्शक थे। उनमें से दो श्री भगवान् के समक्ष गणपति मुनि की चर्चा कर रहे थे। उनकी वार्ता के मध्य श्री भगवान् ने कुछ शब्द कहे :

(1) कुछ कहते हैं कि ज्ञान तथा उपासना दो पंख हैं जिनसे मुक्ति तक उड़ते हैं। ज्ञान क्या है ? उपासना क्या है ? ज्ञान नित्य-सिद्ध है। वही अन्तिम लक्ष्य भी है। जब प्रयास किया जाता है तो उस प्रयास को उपासना कहते हैं; जब यह सहज है तब इसे ज्ञान कहते हैं; जो मुक्ति के तुल्य है।

(2) आपस में कुछ विचार-विमर्श के पश्चात्, एक दर्शक ने कहा : किसी उत्कृष्ट शक्ति का बाहरी दृश्यों को अनुकूल बनाने में हमारी सहायता करना नितान्त आवश्यक है।

श्री भगवान् ने कहा : बाहरी दृश्यों को कौन देखता है ? अथवा क्या वे कहते हैं कि वे विद्यमान हैं ? यदि ऐसा है तो जगत् को कहने दो कि वह विद्यमान है।

फिर, यदि जगत् अन्दर का उभरा है तो यह स्वीकार करना ही होगा कि यह 'अहम् वृत्ति' के साथ ही उभरा है।

किसी भी प्रकार मानो 'मैं' मूल आधार है, जिसे जानने से सब कुछ जान

लिया जाता है।

(3) एक अन्य व्यक्ति ने कहा कि गणपति मुनि कहा करते थे कि वे इन्द्रलोक भी जा सकते थे और बता सकते थे कि इन्द्र क्या कर रहा है, किन्तु वे अन्तर्मुख हो 'मैं' की खोज नहीं कर सकते थे।

श्री भगवान् ने कहा : गणपति मुनि कहा करते थे कि आगे जाना सरल है किन्तु पीछे जाना असम्भव है।

तदुपरान्त श्री भगवान् ने कहा : कोई कितना ही आगे चला जाय, वह वहीं है। पीछे कहाँ जाना है ? 'ईशोपनिषद्' मन्त्र में भी इसी सत्य का वर्णन है।

(4) गणपति मुनि आशु कवि कैसे बने, इस जिज्ञासा के उत्तर में श्री भगवान् ने कहा : ऐसा कहते हैं कि जब गणपति मुनि तपस्या कर रहे थे तब शिव प्रकट हुए तथा उन्होंने उनको सेवन करने के लिए मधु अथवा दूध दिया, जिसके पश्चात् वे आशु कवि हो गये। ■

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'



How can I feel right
about a god who eats up lacquer and melts,
who wilts when he sees fire?

How can I feel right
about gods you sell in your need,
and gods you bury for fear of thieves?

The lord of the meeting rivers,
self-born, one with himself,
he alone is the true god.

Basavanna 558

*Rich build temples for Shiva
What can I, a poor man, do?
My legs are pillars
My body is the temple
My head makes the golden cupola
Oh, Lord of the meeting rivers,
The standing will perish
The moving will stay on.*

—Basavanna 820

Translated by Ramanujan

Basavanna was a 12 th century Kannada poet philosopher and social reformer



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into an ocean of Karma.
Karma yields no salvation*

Ramana Maharshi {Upadesa Saram (2)}

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Ramana Maharshi (Upadesa Saram-16)

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“The greatest error of a man is to think that he is weak by nature, evil by nature. Every man is divine and strong in his real nature. What are weak and evil are his habits, his desires and thoughts, but not himself.”

Ramana Maharshi



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