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RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH

VOL. XXI, No. 2

November - December, 2018



13. Om Sonacala maholina manasaya namah

ॐ शोणाचलमहोलीनमानसाय नमः ।

One whose mind was merged in the effulgence of Arunachala

Even from his childhood, Ramana was fascinated by the name of Arunachala and thought it surpassed all grandeur.

14. Om svarnahastakaya namah

ॐ स्वर्णहस्तकाय नमः ।

Golden-handed.

As a young boy, Ramana was very dextrous and used to win all the games. Ramana was lucky in all the tasks he undertook and he turned whatever he touched into gold of awareness and bliss.

***15. Om Srimad dvadasanta mahasthale labdha
vidyodayaya namah***

ॐ श्रीमद्वादशान्तमहास्थले लब्धविद्योदयाय नमः ।

One who gained enlightenment in the most holy city of
Madurai - Dvādaśānta mahāsthala

The city of Madurai is known as Dvādaśānta mahāsthala.
The pinnacle of the cosmic order of six yogic centres and
the six subtler chakras is said to be the holy city of Madurai.
Here Siva as Sundereswara and Shakti as Meenakshi played
their divine games. It is at this divine playground of Siva
and Shakti that Ramana got his enlightenment.

16. Om mahasakti nipatena prabuddhaya namah

ॐ महाशक्तिनिपातेनप्रबुद्धाय नमः ।

One whose awakening was perfect and permanent owing
to the descent of the supreme power.

It is the divine Mahashakti who descended to grant
knowledge on Ramana who was in human form. Ramana
became a channel of her grace. The Upanishad says “He
whom the Atman chooses, he alone attains the Atman”.



BALCO - Country's Pride, Chhattisgarh's Treasure

The journey of 50 years completed by Balco is not just a story of an industry's inception, building momentum and then its expansion, but it's a story about the diehard determination and dedication of all the stake holders which has strengthened over the years. This unwavering determination and unflinching dedication seen over the years has culminated into making the Country self-sufficient in aluminium. This indomitable will has been the sole force behind Balco's spree of achievements which were envisioned by our founders.

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Best wishes for the prosperous and glorious 50 years and many more to come!

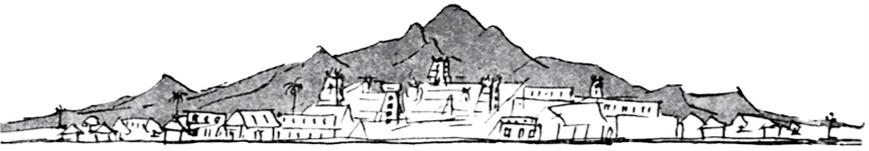


Ramesh Nair
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Printed and Published by Mr. Justice K. Ramamoorthy (Rtd.) for and on behalf of
Ramana Kendra, (Regd.) 8, Institutional Area, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003, Ph: 24626997
at Calcutta Giris Half-tone Co., D-20, South Extn.-I, New Delhi-110049. Ph: 24616829



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

RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH

VOLUME XXI ISSUE 2

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 2018

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Dear Readers

It is the joyous season of festivals. Everyone would have observed the Navaratri vratas and getting ready to celebrate Deepavali.

Now that the devotees are learning to recite 'Akshramanamalai', the serialisation of this text with meaning and explanation in this magazine will come in handy. The detailed write-ups on the programs in the Kendra Bulletin, should encourage devotees to attend the programs live.

Happy Deepavali!

Ed.

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**

SUBSCRIPTION/DONATION

Ramana Kendra, 8 Institutional Area, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003

Bank Details

"Ramana Kendra"

A/c No 149801000026733

Indian Overseas Bank, Lok Kala Manch Branch, New Delhi

IFS Code: IOBA0001498

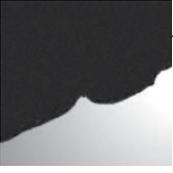
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Ideal Ramana

Shiromani Vijay

While studying Srimad Bhagavatam verse by verse, I was very much taken up by the following verses (2nd canto, 2nd adhyaya verses 3-6). It is as though Bhagavatam is describing Ramana's way of life.

सत्यां क्षितौ किं कशिपोः प्रयासै—
र्बाहौ स्वसिद्धे ह्युपबर्हणैः किम् ।
सत्यज्जलौ किं पुरुधान्नपात्र्या
दिग्बल्कलादौ सति किं दुकूलैः ॥

चीराणि किं पथि न सन्ति दिशन्ति
भिक्षां
नैवाङ्घ्रिपाः परभृतःसरितोऽप्यशुष्यन् ।
रुद्धा गुहाः किजितोऽवति नोपसन्नान्
कस्माद् भजन्ति कवयो
धनदुर्मदान्धान् ॥

एवं स्वचिते स्वत एवं सिद्ध
आत्मा प्रियोऽर्थो भगवाननन्तः ।
तं निवृतो नियतार्थो भजेत

संसारहेतूपरमच्छ यत्र ॥

“When you can sleep on the ground, why do you need a cot. When you have shoulders, why do you need a pillow. Why do you need a vessel, when you have palms. When you have bark of a tree, why do you need cloth.

Isn't there lint available to wear, fruits on the trees to eat, water to drink in the streams and cave to live? Then why should intelligent people fawn over arrogant rich people to get these.

Thus, if one becomes dispassionate, then he will be able to meditate on the ever present, effulgent paramatman in his heart. This will relieve him from the cycle of birth and death and give liberation.”

For Ramana, the outward aversion towards worldly objects was not to prove any point but was his second nature. His simplicity and true humility disarmed all the visitors. Ramana

used to take the lead part in every chore of the Ashram. Ramana was an egalitarian when it came to food. He rebelled at any special treatment given to him would go on strikes if each and everyone in the dining hall was not served with all the items served to him. Ramana was always consistent in his teachings and lived his life accordingly. He always asked people to question themselves with the question “who am I?” and rarely gave any do’s and don’ts.

Do we see such saints like Ramana or Ramakrishna or Kanchi Periyavar

these days? All the so-called Gurus nowadays, live extravagant lives. Perhaps we are ourselves to blame. When we have problems, we tend to part with some our riches, hoping in exchange, our problems will be resolved with their grace.

By studying the lives and teachings of Saints like Ramana, we must learn to observe our mind and try to tread only on the path our conscience allows. We must not get deterred by the high standards set by Ramana. ■

[e-mail: shiromani.vijay@yahoo.co.in]

*We wish all our readers a very
Happy Diwali !!!*



Upanishads - Uncommon Wisdom

Swami Chidananda
(as transcribed by Shiromani Vijay)

Swami Chidananda gave a talk on the above topic in a workshop in Bangalore. Here is an excerpt from the talk bringing out 10 aspects of Upanishads which makes Upanishads or Vedanta ever-relevant ultimate vision known to man. Each point is aptly corroborated with a quote from the Upanishads.

What is Uncommon about Upanishadic wisdom?

Ending of sorrow

The wisdom that all the happiness in the transactional world is temporary and is invariably followed by unhappiness, puts an end our sorrow. The very purpose of Vedānta study is: “ātyantika-duhkha-nivritti, paramānanda-prāpti” – to end sorrow and attain permanent bliss.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE TAKES ONE BEYOND SORROW.

“तरति शोकमात्मविदिति”

Nārada in Chāndogya Upanishad (7.1)

Ending of Search

However much we try to know about something, we realise there is lots yet to be known. It does not eliminate the sense of incompleteness. But the wisdom of the ever-free ‘self’ makes this insecurity disappear.

KNOWING WHAT, DOES EVERYTHING BECOME KNOWN?

कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं
विज्ञातं भवतीति

Shaunaka in Mundaka Upanishad (1.1.3)

Ending of Division

Our common understanding is that the world is divided in numerous ways -Nationality, race, religion, language, Wealth, power, position, privileges. Through Upanishads we

discover the absolute oneness of all existence.

SEE YOURSELF IN ALL; SEE EVERYONE IN YOURSELF.

यस्तु सर्वानि
भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ।

Ishavasya Upanishad (mantra 6)

Intelligence beyond mind

Though “thought and intelligence” are powerful, they are bound by space, time and causation. Upanishads point to the deepest DIMENSION of our existence. The Pure Self (ātmā) can see beyond the mind.

NOT GRASPED BY MIND, IT DRIVES THE MIND!

यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥

Kena Upanishad (mantra 1.6)

Seeing beyond right and wrong

Virtue and vice (*punya* and *pāpa*), good and bad, etc. are polarities in which our mind is caught. Compassion rooted in Self-realization rises above judgmentalism. Just as the sun knows not ‘night and day’, pure love

embraces saints and sinners alike.

INSTRUCT ME ON THAT WHICH IS BEYOND DHARMA AND ADHARMA.

अन्यत्र धर्मादन्यत्राधर्माद् ।
अन्यत्रास्मात्कृताकृतात् ।
अन्यत्र भूताच्च भव्याच्च यत्तत्पश्यसि तद्वद् ॥

Katha Upanishad (mantra 1.2.14)

Highlights Consciousness

Much of our life revolves around sense gratification, emotional satisfaction and intellectual indulgence. Pure Consciousness (*prajñānam*) remains behind the curtain! If we know our true nature to be CONSCIOUSNESS, we conquer disease, old age and death.

CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE SUPREME TRUTH.

“प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म”

Aitareya Upanishad (mantra 3.3)

Ending of Fear and insecurity

Thought creates the ideas of “others” and “us”. Self-knowledge erases this division of “he, she, you, me”. Whom do we fear when there is no ‘other’? We do not fear our own shadow.

HE GETS ESTABLISHED IN
FEARLESSNESS.

यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्नदृश्येऽनात्म्येऽ
निरुक्तेऽनिलयनेऽभयं
प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते । अथ सोऽभयं गतो
भवति ।

Taittiriya Upanishad (mantra 2.7)

**Going to the basis of all
experiences**

- This universe is just one third of what we experience.
- The dream world is another vast domain.
- Deep sleep – without dreams – is the third field.
- The Upanishads point to the FOURTH (*turiya*), the essence of the waker, the dreamer and the deep-sleeper.

THE WHOLE WORLD
DISSOLVES INTO THE FOURTH.

अमात्रश्चतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः
शिवोऽद्वैत
एवमोङ्कार आत्मैव
संविशत्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानं य एवं वेद ।।

Māndukya Upanishad (mantra
12)

**Instruction on the mystic sound
Om**

The mystic sound Om is the means to climb up – towards excellence in the relative world (*apara brahma*) and – beyond towards the transcendental truth (*para brahma*).

OM IS EVERYTHING –
THE ABSOLUTE AND THE
RELATIVE.

एतद्वैसत्यकाम परं चापरं च ब्रह्म
यदोङ्कारः ।
तस्माद्विद्वानेतेनैवायतनेनैक
तरमन्वेति ।।

Prashna Upanishad (mantra 5.2)

Power of Negation

In the relative world, we “conceive” and then “achieve”. In the realm of the absolute, we drop concepts. The supreme truth shines forth when all ideas fall just as the sun is evident when clouds move away.

THE WAY TO REALIZATION
IS – NOT THIS, NOT THIS.

“नेति नेति”

Brihadāranyaka Upanishad
(mantra 4.2.4) ■

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Kendra Bulletin

Advent day was celebrated with a talk by Swami Prakarshananda, Head, Chinmaya mission, Delhi on Bhagavan's poem, 'Upadesa Saram'. The talk has been transcribed in this issue.

The talk was followed by a Bharatanatyam recital by ardent devotee and Joint Secretary of the Managing body, Marie Elangovan. She had choreographed the pieces on Bhagavan's life herself, with some of the songs composed by her renowned singer husband, Shri Elangovan Govindarajan. The musical ensemble comprised vocal renditions by Shri Govindarajan on the *nattuvangam* and his disciple, Shri Prakash Iyer. The ensemble also comprised Shri Jayant Das on the *mridangam* and Shri Chembai R. Srinivasan on the violin.

In every session Swami Prabuddhanandaji expresses Truth, regardless of which scripture he is explaining. This evening he opened with, "There is no wave other than the water, that is all I have to say." Meticulously over the next hour he continued exposition of *adhyaya 1* of Kathopanishad describing the common destination (Fullness or Happiness, transcending time and space) and the factors needed to get there.

Sri S. Shankar Narayan continued with his talks on Saddarshanam with the tenth sloka. The route map to Self-realization lay in overcoming the three obstacles of *mala* (impurity), *vikshepa* (distraction) and *ajnana* (ignorance). The methods to overcome these lay in *chitta shuddhi* (purification), *ekagrata* (concentration), *ashtamurti upasana* (worshipping God in the whole Cosmos) and *aham graha upasana* (transcending the worshipper-worshipped relationship). Through worship of *sadvastu*, we abide as *sadvastu*..

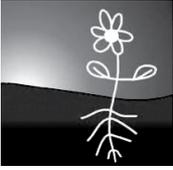
Smt Jayanthi Aiyer presented her third session on Aksharamanamalai. After giving a brief introduction on the circumstances that incited Bhagavan Ramana to write the 108 verses of Aksharamanamalai, she explained the significance of the verses, 31 to 50 along with recitation.

Swami Durgeshanandji continued with his talks on Vivek Chudamani, literally translated as ‘The Crest Jewel of Discrimination’. He elaborated on the subject, *Sadhan Chatushtaya*, the four practices a sadhaka on the path of Self-realization must accomplish in order to achieve the Supreme goal. These are-*Viveka*-- wisdom to discriminate real Vs unreal, *Vairagya*-- renunciation of all transitional enjoyments, *Shat Sampatti*-- mental discipline, self-control, withdrawal, forbearance, faith and focus, *Mumukshutva*-- yearning to free oneself from all bondages.

In a 2-part talk series on the ‘Elements of sadhana’, Shri Ambarish Dave spoke of the real goal of life being Self-realization. He explained *sadhana chatushtaya*. The insights from the talk: *vairagya* has meaning only if it comes from *viveka*; the Grace of God/Guru/shruti is essential for Self-realization; the only way for the limited mind (no matter how refined) to realise the Self is to merge in It. Further for the mind to grasp that 'I am that Self', it needs training and purification achieved by doing *Sadhana*. Explaining the relationship between Karma, Bhakti and Gyana, he said that if you conceive the world as God, then without attachment, serve it. This is Karma yoga. Always being absorbed in thoughts of the Lord is Bhakti Yoga. By doing the two simultaneously, the intellect merges with Him and the ultimate truth dawns – 'I am that Self' or 'Aham Brahmasmi'. A beginning can be made with regular prayer, chanting, fasting, meditation, charity and good conduct.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Nov 4 th & Dec 2 nd	Swami Durgeshananda Ji	Vivekachudamani
Nov 11 th & Dec 9 th	Swami Prabhuddhananda Ji	Katho Upanishad
Nov 18 th & Dec 16 th	Shri Shankar Narayan Ji	Saddarshanam
Nov 22 nd	Deepam Celebrations	
Dec 23 rd	Cultural Program Eve of Bhagavan’s Jayanti	
Dec 24 th	Bhagavan’s Jayanti	



Significance of Navratri

Navratri - Each day has its own significance
The Goddess is venerated during these days
She embodies the power of creation, preservation and destruction
Worshipping Her bestows wealth, knowledge and prosperity.

The first three days, the Goddess is venerated as Durga, who destroys evil
The next three days, She is worshipped as Lakshmi, who grants wealth
and prosperity.

The last three days, as Saraswati, the Goddess of wisdom,
The tenth day is referred to as Dussehra or Vijayadashmi.

This major festival is celebrated across
In East West North and South India,
The whole nation dresses up in vibrant colours
As each day represents a color signifying the deity.

In East, huge pandals are decorated for Goddess' to perform puja,
In West majorly Gujarat, 'Garba' a folk dance is performed during these
nine nights,
North celebrates uniquely organizing jagaran and bhandaara
South people display Golu at their homes, Many even observe fast.

The tenth day marks Dussehra, meaning 'remover of bad fate'
The day marks the victory of Goddess Durga over the demon Mahishasur,
This day also marks the triumph of Lord Rama over Demon king Ravana,
Effigies of Ravana are created and burnt on this day followed
by Ram Leela.

By Kavya (taken from internet)



The essence of Upadesa Saram

Swami Prakarshananda

(Documented by Neera Kashyap)

On Advent Day, it is good to recall that Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi remained in one place for 54 years without moving anywhere. This signifies absolute steadiness and one-pointedness. This life was both human and divine. When we encounter doubts, we consult our scriptures. But Maharshi's total life was influenced by Knowledge Absolute. We can all dive deep into ourselves, but very few of us really do, our compulsions impeding us. In the Bhagavad Gita (Ch. 3.36), Arjuna asks Krishna:

*athakenaprayukto 'yam
pâpamcaratipûrushah
anicchannapivârshneya
balâdivaniyojitah*

(Meaning: But by what is a man impelled to commit sin, as if by force, even against his will, O Varshneya?)

Sri Bhagavan replies (Ch. 3.37):

kâmaeshakrodhaesha

*rajo-guna-samudbhavah
mahâ-s'anomahâ-pâpmâ
viddhyenamihavairinam*

(Meaning: This is craving, this is wrath, born of the mode of passion, all devouring and most sinful. Know this to be the enemy here.)

The enemy to equipoise is *rajoguna* which has two main rajasic tendencies – *kama* and *krodha*. Both are dangerous to the seeker – compelling him to do what he should not do. Ramana Maharshi was completely established in *sattva guna*. To help us move to this state, we take into account three aspects of sadhana:

a. To monitor our *aharor* intake. This certainly covers our diet but it also extends to what we take in through our eyes, ears and all our senses. *Sarve Bhadrani Pashyantu* - let all see or witness only good things, connect only to the auspicious. Why is this important? Because as a seeker on this journey, there is great possibility

of distraction so we have to be careful of our *ahar*:

b. To monitor our *vihara* or recreation/pleasure-seeking. All our associations – whether these are with our near and dear ones, in the world or at work – leave impressions on our minds. We need to monitor these for our own mental well-being.

c. Both *aharand vihara* influence our *vicharaor* thinking. Ratnakar was a dacoit but when he came into contact with Dev Rishi Narada, his heart was transformed, and through sadhana, he evolved to become Sage Valmiki. Swami Chinmayananda, earlier had a very different personality, but after his close contact with Swami Sivananda and Tapovan Maharaj, he was spiritually transformed.

In Adi Shankara's BhajaGovindam, there are the lines:

*Satsangatve nissangatvam
nissangatve nirmohatvam,*

*nirmohatve niscalatattvam
niscalatattve jivanmuktiH.*

(Meaning: through the company of the wise or the good, there arises non-attachment; from non-attachment comes freedom from delusion; where there is freedom from delusion, there is abundance in self-knowledge, which leads to freedom while alive.)

The first few verses of Upadesa Saram focus on karma which is *jada* or insentient. The question that rises is: how can the insentient take us to sentience? Karma is for purification, not for liberation. While maintaining our families, our actions should be ethical as we simultaneously seek to raise our minds through spiritual practise. Ethics provides a boost to our spiritual search. If we are neither attached to our actions nor to their results, the mind will become purified. This is emphasised in the Bhagavad Gita which also teaches us, through Bhakti Yoga, to regard *jagat* as a form of the Lord. Since every action is performed before the five elements – forms of the Lord – every action is worship of the Lord. This *bhakti bhava* reduces our likes and dislikes which, otherwise, make us see the world through coloured glasses, impelling us to act as we want to, not as we should.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi gives us methods for reducing our compulsions: loud *japa*, *manda japa* (chanting under our breath) and deeply remembering the Lord through the highest level – *dhyana awastha*. Pranayama is also advocated. Since the *pranas* and the mind are intimately connected, by controlling the *pranas*,

we control the mind. These methods aid us in reaching up to the mango on a tree, by gently pulling the branch down. But the branch will swing back just as the mind will swing back in the absence of these practises.

So the most effective and abiding path is the path of knowledge. Ask yourself, what is the Mind? You will note that it is just a lot of thoughts. Can you see the thoughts? Seeing your thoughts is knowing your thoughts, your emotions. When you see the emotion, can you be the emotion? If I see the thought, am I not different from the thought? If I can see the thought, I cannot be the thought. So the seer is witness to the seen.

Another thing you will note is that thoughts are not permanent, they appear for a short time and then leave or give way to other thoughts. Even anger comes and goes. That which appears for a short time and with no independent existence of its own is *mithya* – like mirage water. The shastras say: that which comes and goes is *asat*. *Asat* has no existence at all. It is like the sky flower or the horns of a rabbit. Then there is *Sat trikalaya* which is the unchanged. There is something in between – there but not there. It is like a dream – there but not there. Just like the mind.

If we take the example of Love, we see it has two categories: a transactional love that is *asat* and a divine love which is *sat* in which there is no duality, only oneness and mergence. When we are one with the divine in us, we become one with the whole stream of life. Says the Bhagavad Gita (Ch. 6.30):

*yo mam pasyati sarvatra
sarvam ca mayi pasyati
tasyaham na pranasyami
sa ca me na pranasyati*

(Meaning: For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me.)

When we are disturbed by our emotions, we must transcend these by seeing them as *mithya* – changing and with no independent existence.

How do we destroy the mind? Mind in its *ahankara rupa* experiences the pair of opposites and gives importance to it. These cause disturbance to our body-mind-intellect complex. *Ahankara* is the sense of doership. Ask yourself: who is the instrument performing the action? What is the power supporting the instrument performing the action? The instrument changes: from child to boy to man and with this, our identifications. But

something remains constant, despite the changes in the instrument, seeing/ witnessing all the changes. Are you the changing instrument or the changeless source? In getting to the source of the mind, one concludes: I am not the instrument. Then who am I? I am that consciousness that supports the instrument to work. So change your orientation from the body-mind-intellect to the power source.

The power source is like the sun. It is because of the sun's energy that the plants produce food. Yet the sun is not physically connected to the plants. The mind-body-intellect complex gets its energy from the power source of the Self. Since the mind is part of the instrument, we must learn to enquire and see its nature – impermanent,

changing and with no independent existence. So it is *mithya*, and one will have nothing to do with *mithya*. Through this enquiry, one can negate the mind constantly, and so destroy it.

Destruction does not mean no mind but seeing and understanding it as an instrument. It is like learning how to drive a car. Once you have mastered driving, you will have no difficulty controlling the car, so with the mind. The point is not to connect the mind with me, but to see it as a mere instrument. Through right enquiry, destroy your wrong notion that I am the mind. Reach the premise: mind is *mithya*. ■

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The false belief that this hell-like house called body is me, is Naraka himself. To destroy that false belief and let the self shine as Self, is Deepavali.

Ramana Maharshi



Contemporaneity And Durga Puja

Tuktuk Ghosh

Durga Puja is amongst the most grand of Indian festivals, providing a living link with our rich cultural heritage. It has at its deep core the worship of the Mother Goddess, the feminine “shakti”, one of the oldest surviving Hindu traditions.

Durga, the demon - slaying goddess, is believed to come on a visit from Mount Kailash every year for four days to fill our homes with joy and abundance. She is accompanied by her divine children- daughters Lakshmi and Saraswati and sons, Kartik and Ganesh. A consort of Lord Shiva, she finds mention in the Vedas, the Puranas, the Epics and a variety of other religious texts. Across the subcontinent she is worshipped in different forms and under various appellations. Though archaeological evidence of Durga worship dates to early times, Durga Puja, in its present form in Bengal and large parts of Eastern India, is said to have started in the Mughal era in the 16th/17th

century. These remained largely the preserve of the rich and privileged till 1790 when 12 Brahmin friends in Guptipara, about 80 kms from Kolkata , decided to institute a public celebration, called “Barowaree”. This, it is said, marked the beginning of the true democratization of Durga Puja. “Sarbojanin Durgotsab” (everyone’s Durga festival), as is most popular today, started in Kolkata around 1910. During the freedom struggle, Durga Puja became a rallying point, brimming with patriotic fervor, epitomizing “Bharat Mata”. Novelist, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, who gave the emerging nation its inspirational invocation of “Vande Mataram”, gave the religion of patriotism a deity to invoke and worship.

In the decades since Independence, it is interesting to note how the Durga Puja celebrations have evolved to keep in perfect step with the changing socio- political and economic dynamics. While the basic rituals

and observances have not altered, community participation and its nature have altered in an astounding manner. There is something different to look forward to every year in the Durga Puja, in particular in Kolkata. In fact, organisers of community pujas - who are in thousands in the metropolis itself- pride themselves on zeroing in on the most appealing and topical theme for the décor of the “pandal”, the temporary structure that is set up with much lavish attention for hosting the Durga Puja and the crafting of the “Pratima” (image) itself. New ideas and experimentation have drawn big crowds of curious “pandal - hoppers”, an abiding image of the Durga Puja celebrations. Technology has played a major part in changing the texture of the festival in myriad ways. It would not be incorrect to claim that there is an outburst of amazing creativity all around. When there are sponsorships to be availed of and coveted awards to compete for, the incentive to exceed expectations of the community is almost infinite. The State Government, under Mamata Banerjee, has decided to give, for the first time, financial grants, to community organisers of Durga Puja, this year. She has also agreed to pen songs aimed at bringing back the spirit of “agomoni”

- traditional Bengali songs in praise of the Goddess Durga.

Durga Puja has also, unsurprisingly, become the biggest business event on the calendar in Bengal. People save up throughout the year to indulge themselves during this period. A totally new genre of products spawns - Puja specials- to the delight of consumers. Theatres and films debut to draw in the celebratory crowds. It is not only consumerism on display. Puja Literature remains high on popularity stakes. Puja- special magazines are integral to the festivities, ever since Anandabazaar Patrika brought out a separate magazine, priced at 2 annas in 1926! Travel is another sector that receives a festive boost. The family reunion that Durga Puja enjoins, generates a huge travelling traffic. Others prefer vacations to exotic locales. The influx of Durga Puja tourists to Kolkata is a recent phenomenon. Government and private players have ensured that the well curated tours are memorable experiences.

From this it is a reasonable conclusion that the focus of Durga Puja has markedly shifted from its roots of spiritualism and religiosity.■
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Anxiety and Atma Vichara

Micheal Highburger

We live in an age of fear and trembling and the collective discourse increasingly echoes themes of peril. Refrains of the great challenges facing the planet populate scholarly publications, raising the level of alert. A few years back, Nick Boström, founder of the Future of Humanity Institute, Oxford, told of a recent conference at the University of Oxford where experts on existential risk convened and, among other things, took a poll on the probability of global catastrophe between now and the end of the 21st century. The criterion for determining global catastrophe was mass human death, minimally of 200 million people all the way up to complete extinction of the species. Nineteen percent of experts polled agreed that humanity would face such a catastrophe before the year 2100¹.

These are not doomsayers prognosticating about meteor impacts,

supernovae or some other statistically improbable astronomical event. Paleobiologists the world over tell us we are already in the midst of a mass extinction larger than any in probably 65 million years, losing about three species per hour in a human-caused die-off that will likely cost us about half of the earth's species of plant and animal life. Whether humans will be among the species that vanish is an open question.

Among the imminent dangers facing us is anthropogenic climate change which is reaching a tipping point with the melting of the planet's glaciers and rising sea temperatures. With only a few critical degrees, carbon and methane long frozen in sea-beds and permafrost will be released into the atmosphere. Such an event, the geophysicist David Archer says, would be "comparable to the destructive potential from nuclear winter or from a comet or asteroid

impact²⁷.

Fifteen years back, biologist Eugene Stoermer and the Nobel-winning chemist Paul Crutzen suggested that we have entered a new era in the earth's geological history and they dubbed the present geological epoch, 'the Anthropocene', because it is "characterised by the advent of the human species as a geological force"²⁸.

Naming is significant and can help us gain perspective. And while the moniker 'Anthropocene' is meant to designate a new *geological* epoch, it also points up a new human historical time period. Indeed, the trials of the Anthropocene are not limited to environmental dangers. Threats born of the advent of the technological age loom. The spectre of synthetic pandemics from bio-weapons or a high-tech third world war worry experts. AI specialists argue that HLMI (human-level machine intelligence) will be upon us within twenty years after which machine super-intelligence will rapidly ensue, raising concerns about the parity of geopolitical power and tipping the scales towards those with the largest, fastest computers. Already we are seeing efforts by vested interests to shape public opinion through technologically-generated

truth regimes, weaponised information and data mining, sleeper bots, etc., and manipulating social media for political, strategic and economic advantage. Already we are seeing an intensification across multiple domains, political destabilisation engendered by decentralised high-speed communication, and a breakdown in public discourse, raising questions as to whether democracy can survive the digital information revolution.

Part of the panic regarding the state of the planet lies in not having an ethical framework within which to make sense of the enormity of change and the pace of transition. The unprecedented tempo has created an ethics lag and an information-overwhelm that seems to preclude proper assimilation. It may be a time for panning back from the realm of science and history to include philosophical, ethical, theological and humanitarian considerations to better make sense of the massive revolution that is upon us. Consulting psychology and medical science might help us evaluate the extent to which we are experiencing widespread grief and anxiety born of life in this fraught age. In other words, to what extent is the collective psyche in a state of

distress? In the West, anxiety disorders are currently an epidemic, the US reporting about 18% of the population being treated for chronic anxiety.

We might also ask to what extent the apocalyptic tone of the Anthropocene, i.e. talk of the end of civilisation as we know it—even planetary death—is related to modern culture’s exiling of death and dying and outright neglect of traditional religious wisdom concerning the impermanent nature of human life. For many, the advent of the Anthropocene is the right time to ask such questions, for it poses not merely scientific challenges. The Anthropocene compels us to invoke the wisdom of earlier civilisations in their moments of crisis, to draw upon larger frameworks of meaning-making and a panoramic vision that has been the subject of religious inquiry for millennia, in short, to draw on the vertical dimension that brings into play the understanding that all we see and know as world or cosmos may not be all there is. The shadow of our age is not just the harsh realities confronting a common humanity—as enumerated above—but also our failure to appreciate the value of inquiry into the nature of life and death and to consider the possibility of something beyond life in this world.

What would that be? And what would be the means of exploring it? In short, how can we reframe the scientific problem posed by the Anthropocene and its consequent anxiety, and treat it rather as a moral problem, addressing it through the perennial wisdom as passed down to us through the many religious traditions?

* * *

One of the challenges in the Anthropocene is to moderate the dogmatic positivism that has pervaded recent centuries. Sri Ramana Maharshi’s *atma vichara* is a simple and concise method for initiating inquiry into the nature of things beyond the empirical realm to include human experience and human consciousness. To practice *vichara*, one might start with a healthy scepticism about the possibility of knowing anything independent of the mind. Inquiries in ancient times, for example, in the Upanishads of classical India, raised questions about the existence of the visible world. When looking out and beholding a world, the ancients observed that we have no way of verifying its actual existence since all we know of it comes to us mediated by the (fallible) senses. They saw that all that appears to us is merely phenomena—perceptions and appearances on the screen of mind.

There may in fact be a world out there corresponding to our perception of it but it is only a belief as we have no way of validating our perceptions.

If we trace the origins of Western science back to Aristotle, we don't find the same infatuation with the material world as the science of recent centuries. Aristotle's designation of *natural philosophy* as investigation into the observable world was intended as a methodological demarcation to distinguish it from other modes of inquiry such as ethics, philosophy and metaphysics. Later it took the name 'science' but by the 17th century, the method had become an ontology, a sort of religious view that claimed to know the ultimate status of the world which said, in short, *if it cannot be observed, then it does not exist*. Called 'positivism', this metaphysical view began to colour science of recent centuries which has generally been divorced, at least formally, from anything that looks like subjective experience. But it is inarguable that all the known, including every scientific hypothesis, has its origin in human consciousness. Consciousness thus has an epistemological primacy: the positivist may doubt the existence of God or the Self but ultimately cannot deny the existence of his own knowing

faculty, namely consciousness, which governs, among other things, the very conceiving of his scientific truths.

New methodologies such as the science of mind and neurophenomenology study consciousness as a phenomenon of nature by and through its (subjective) content. While having been around for thousands of years in the East and in the world's contemplative traditions, these disciplines are only now making their appearance in the Western academy and may offer a long-sought bridge between science and religion⁴. But what does this have to do with anxiety in the Anthropocene?

We have come to accept that the external physical world is all there is. But if the external world is all there is, what is it that is knowing this? What is the knower of such speculation?

This is part of what Bhagavan Sri Ramana meant by the practice of 'Who am I?', which points beyond the observable world to the observer itself. It is the simple method of witnessing experience and probing its nature. For every mental phenomenon, even a simple thought, one may ask, 'To whom has this thought arisen?' The same applies to other activities. "So long as you think 'I am walking,' 'I am writing,' inquire who it is that

is doing it.⁵” The intention is not to find additional names and labels for oneself or one’s mental processes but to probe the hidden dimensions of the phenomenon we call self.

Variations on Bhagavan’s *vichara* are questions like ‘who or what is seeing and hearing?’, or ‘where is seeing and hearing taking place?’ These are not anatomical questions but compel the practitioner to hone his or her search to direct experience. Received knowledge has a place but is not one’s own. Like the accountant tallying up the wealth of his well-to-do employer, though the sum be great, the funds do not belong to him. Similarly, much of what passes for knowledge in common parlance is just having names and labels for things without necessarily knowing them in any intimate way. Received knowledge is really just information, is decontextualized and lacks the quality of intimate relationship with the knower. ‘Who am I?’ by contrast is investigating first-hand and does not assume that the name our parents gave us or the legal descriptors the state assigned to us is of any relevance. When we search for the seer, we cannot see it; when we look *with or through* the seer, the whole universe appears. What is this seer?

As for anxiety, neurological studies reveal it to be an attentional disorder caused by rapidly shifting attention, a condition aggravated in the Anthropocene by high-speed digital technology. Research shows that one of the most effective treatments for chronic anxiety is training and stabilising attention⁶. Inquiry works splendidly in this regard as intense questioning helps cultivate steady attention and cut through the habit forces that propel us toward unceasing rumination, the root and source of anxiety.

While *vichara* may seem awkward at first, the momentum to inquire grows with practice. ‘Who am I?’ is designed to stimulate bewilderment and the *not-knowing-mind* which is the beginning of intuition. Why is that good? Because content knowledge is often abstracted and context-deficient. The perplexity born of not-knowing, by contrast, is processual and fosters listening, seeking, searching, and observing without judging, concluding or closing off inquiry through the illusion of knowledge. Not-knowing is thereby related to humility.

Vichara helps free up the congestion of the densely compacted mind with all its various images, thought-streams, repressed emotions, and undigested

material of memory, jammed and impacted in the mind, layer upon layer. Inquiry's healing comes by the power of attention. When we begin to see the egoic identity as a tightly bound bundle of thoughts, we can begin to discern the hidden intentions behind them. Simply identifying the hidden content of the mind has the effect of aiding us in processing and assimilating it.

Through such practices, compulsive thinking reveals itself to be addictive in nature. What is driving the addiction? It is aversion to unpleasant mental states, thoughts, feelings, sensations, memories or self-judgments. The compulsion to think is always a form of escape from some deeper, less conscious negative thought, memory or feeling state. If we can slow the thought process down through *vichara*, we are in a position to glimpse directly the mechanism at work and thus reduce the compulsion. Hence, dismantling compulsive thinking and with it, anxiety, is arrived at through a sort of *micro-vichara*, probing into each element of the thought-stream to uncover its inner workings.

The bad news, of course, is that as we use *vichara* to probe the inner workings of the mind, we discover that much, if not most, of the motivations

underlying our thoughts are narcissistic ones. The good news, on the other hand, is that when we probe into our narcissism and conceit, we find that at its root, it is fleeting and unsubstantial. When the story of self is dropped, when the mind is made utterly empty and spacious such as in the intensive contemplative retreat setting, conceit falls away, if only for the duration of the mind's stabilised attention. This is a useful experience as it shows undeniably that narcissism is bound up with and inseparable from the compulsive thought stream. What *vichara* and the experience of pure empty awareness reveals is that there is no primordial entity within us that can be called conceit. Rather conceit and the egoic mechanism appear to be made up of stories and images which are in themselves absent of any enduring substance and can be rendered powerless under the scrutiny of *vichara's* penetrating awareness.

Of course this raises the question as to the cause of the narcissistic compulsion in the first place. Freud's answer was that it is a defense mechanism. Inquiring into the origins of the egoic process through *vichara* helps us to uncover the psyche's maladaptive coping which is directed toward managing and containing,

among other things, the perpetual fear of death. By constructing a self and propping it up on every side, we would seek to insulate ourselves from the ever-present, though mostly unconscious fears we have about our inevitable demise. The narcissistic identity shields us from the parallel fear that *who we think we are may not in actuality exist*. The two fears are related and ironically, when through inquiry we glimpse the truth of the latter, we are freed from the menacing effects of the former. Probing what Bhagavan Ramana calls the ‘void nature of the Self’ reveals that what dies, i.e. the egoic personality, is not real anyway. Letting go of our narcissism which is bound up with compulsive thinking has the effect of simultaneously relieving us of the fear of death because that which dies is not who we really are, and that which is truly real is beyond birth and death. This is real medicine for anxiety, and too, for the existential despair plaguing the Anthropocene.

* * *

So how does all this relate to the logistical challenges of the Anthropocene? In answer, it should be said that it is not through *vichara* that we would solve the logistical problems of the Anthropocene. But

logistics is just one piece in the puzzle. The lion’s share of danger facing us in the Anthropocene is skewed perception born of a lack of wisdom. What we are suffering from is a deficit in clear understanding of the world, our place in it and the nature of life and death. It’s not that *vichara* would cause us to abdicate our responsibilities to the earth, nor that we should make light of the perils facing humanity. Rather, we should wholeheartedly advocate for positive change, for cooperative intervention between nations on things like carbon emissions. At the same time, we will want to recall the prayerful line from Elliot: *Teach us to care and not to care*⁷. In other words, teach us to have heart, to be compassionate and to do the right thing. Teach us to take steps to assure that our children and grandchildren will have a safe and vital planet to inhabit. But let us also remember that even if all goes well and the challenges of global warming, mass extinction and antipathy between nations are miraculously overcome, still we will perish, this present world order, this historical time-period and this civilisation will disappear, as will our planet-home. In short, let us recall what great luminaries have perennially repeated—*all created things pass*

away.

Such stoic recognition should not be taken as resignation but as a sober assessment that grants authenticity to our understanding and our actions. What we do matters but when we perform remedial actions from a frank assessment as to how things really stand, our actions gain power. In seeing truly, our hearts are made to open and we begin to demonstrate our deepest, truest nature which is compassion and through it, hope is born into the world.

The lament of the Anthropocene is losing sight of our call as human beings. *Vichara* helps us get our bearings amid the confusion and

pain, find beauty and purpose in our lives and keep ever-present in our vision the poetic, mythic and dharmic dimensions essential for a full and meaningful life.

The reader may recall the quote attributed to Martin Luther who, when asked what he would do if he knew the world was to end tomorrow, is reported to have said, “If I knew the world was to end tomorrow, I would plant an apple tree today”. In other words, I will live in hope to the very end no matter what, for it is in hope that I will be of any use to this world, in meeting its challenges and in serving life. ■

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¹ University of Oxford podcasts: <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk>: “The Future of Humanity”, Nick Bostrom, 25 Oct 2010.

² Roy Scranton, Learning to Die in the Anthropocene, Introduction.

³ Ibid.

⁴ See the work of Francisco Varela and Richie Davidson. Evan Thompson points to Husserl’s *The Crisis of European Sciences* as a key theoretical source for this work.

⁵ Ramana Maharshi, *Who Am I?*, §11, §15, and Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi §596.

⁶ See the work of neuro-psychologist George Bonanos.

⁷ From T. S. Eliot’s ‘Ash-Wednesday’.



Aksharamanamalai Part 11

84

Mai/maya/nū/tarul

Mai/yinā/luna/dun

Mai/vasa/māk/kinai

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Removing the darkness of delusion through applying the unguent of Thy grace, Thou hast truly made me Thine.

The delusion born of avidya is the blindness of the soul. It is the darkness that veils the truth. The remedy that will remove the blindness is the unguent of the Lord's grace. When the Lord applies this magic ointment, the scales covering the soul's vision fall, and the soul is enabled to see the truth. Under the spell of delusion the soul had imagined that she belonged to the not-self, the anti-God. Now that the delusion has been destroyed through divine grace, she knows the truth that she inalienably belongs to God.

85

Mot/taiya/dit/tenai

Vet/tave/ liyi/nī

Nat/tamā/dinai/yen

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Shaving my head clean, Thou didst dance in the open space (of my Heart). What a wonder!

Shaving the head signifies renunciation of the ego. Shorn of the ego, the heart becomes a fit place for the Lord's manifestation.

His dance is the expression of the unexcellable bliss that constitutes His nature. In the *chidakasa* (*chidambara*) Nataraja performs the dance of joy. One beholds it when one loses oneself.

The variant reading *mottaiyazhittu* has also the same meaning: destroying the ego. So long as the ego lasts, there cannot be real happiness. It is when the ego is destroyed that the non-dual

bliss is realized.

86

Mō/han/tavirt/tun

Mō/hamā/vait/tumen

Mō/handī/rā/yen

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Removing my deluded attachment (to sense objects), Thou hast made me attached to Thee. Yet, why hast Thou not removed this attachment ?

It is by a sort of homoeopathic treatment that the world-disease of the soul is to be remedied. The root of the soul's disease is attachment to sense objects. Attachment to the finite, and the fleeting cannot yield real happiness. Under the spell of delusion the soul imagines that the objects are the sources of its joy and gets attached to them. In order that the soul may be saved from sorrow, it must be detached from the objects. This may be done in several ways. But the surest and safest way is to make the soul attached to God. God-love is the potent remedy for curing the malady of lust for objects. For cultivating the love of God, God's grace is absolutely necessary. It is by His grace that He has to be worshipped. The soul's journey to

its goal, however, should not stop with the establishment of worshipper-worshipped relation with God. While the relation with the divine serves to remove the relation with the undivine, it itself cannot be left unsublated. The worshipper-worshipped relation sublimates all other relations.

And, that itself gets transcended in *Advaita* experience. It is for this state of transcendence that the devotee-soul prays in the present verse.

87

Mau/niyāy/kar/pōl

Mala/rā/dirun/dāl

Mau/namil/dā/mō

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! If one be silent without speech, like a stone, would this be silence?

If external silence were the *sine qua non* of wisdom, the dumb ones would be the most wise. Nay, the state of perfection would have to be compared to that of a stone. Conscious control of speech is no doubt a valuable discipline. But one should not mistake speechlessness for enlightenment. True silence is stillness of the mind. Here mental stillness means rendering the mind calm and unperturbed. In fact, genuine silence

is the plenary experience called *upasanta*, the supreme quietude. This is *mauna* in the proper sense of the term.

88

Yava/nen/vā/yil

Man/ninai/yat/ti

En/bizhaip/pozhit/ta

d' Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Who was it that threw mud into my mouth and robbed me of my living?

This is *nindastuti*, praise in the guise of blame. The transmigrating soul feasts on the objects of sense; it derives its sustenance from nescience. It imagines poison to be food and seems to thrive on it. God reclaims the soul by turning it away from sense objects and by destroying nescience. The devotee-soul praises the saving grace of the Lord. 'Throwing mud into the mouth' means denying food; and 'robbing one of one's living' means taking away the means of sustenance. The Lord's grace makes ruinous life and false existence impossible.

89

Yā/ruma/riyā/den

Mati/yinai/marut/ti

Evar/kolai/kon/da

d' Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Stupefying my mind without any one knowing it, who was it that ravished me?

The Lord is the arch-thief of the devotee's heart. He comes without being seen by any. Is He not the invisible Indweller of all beings? He knows all; and no one can know Him. He is the knower of all knowing, seer of all seeing. In the state of bondage the soul is under the spell of the world of plurality. This false charm is overpowered by the superior charm of the Lord's grace. He comes, comes, ever comes, silently and stealthily, in order to redeem the soul and grant it the joy of divine union. The devotee-soul marvels at the limitless mercy of the Lord, His unbounded solicitude for the soul.

90

Rama/nanem/drurait/tēn

Rō/shango/lā/denai

Ramit/tida/cheya/vā

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! As Thou art my ravishing Lord, I said all this. Without taking any offence, do Thou come and make me happy!

The devotee-soul has been taking liberties with the Lord. She has been

cutting jokes, mocking at Him, and even scolding Him. She now reflects on her conduct and fears that she might have exceeded her limits. She pleads with the Lord not to get offended and displeased with her behaviour. All her extravagance was prompted by love and love alone. She has no grouse against the Lord whose grace is spontaneous. So, she entreats Him to come and bless her. If she has used any harsh words, it is to make Him come, and not to drive Him away. In fact, how can He be driven away, since He is the inner immortal ruler.

91

Rāp/paha/lil/lā

Veru/veli/vīt/til

Ramit/tidu/vōm/vā

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Come, we shall enjoy one another in the House of Pure Space (i.e. Heartether) where

there is neither night nor day.

Here, in this verse, the devotee-soul invites the Lord to come into the house of her heart which is the fittest place for her to enjoy the bliss of non-duality with Him. The heartether is pure and unsullied, unlike the mind-ether and the element-ether. The latter two are manifestations of prakṛti, maya. The heart-ether is Pure Consciousness. In it there is neither the mind, nor are there ether and other elements. The Tamil vidu means ‘house’ and also ‘the state of renunciation’ or ‘liberation’. The ‘heart’ is the reality where one has been liberated from egoity, etc. It is the state of quiescence, where there is no duality. It is the timeless experience where there is no day or night. The devotee-soul longs for this experience where she will be one with her Lord. ■

Source TMP Mahadevan’s Book Arunachala Siva Aksharamanamalai



श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

77

पद्मा सीतापति, तंजोर (तमिलनाडु) की जानकी माता की पुत्री थीं। जानकी माता परम रमण-भक्त और प्रसिद्ध रहस्यवादी थीं।

मेरी माता जी ने मेरे मन में महर्षि के प्रति बहुत श्रद्धा और प्रेम स्थापित कर दिया था। मैंने बचपन से ही अनगिनत बार महर्षि के दर्शन किए थे।

मेरे तीन वर्ष के पुत्र जानकीरमण की तीव्र ज्वर के कारण दृष्टि चली गई इस पीड़ा को हम झेल नहीं पा रहे थे। एक दिन मेरी माता जी मेरे घर आईं और बोलीं, “घबराओ मत, हमारे परिवार का रक्षक, देवाधिदेव रमण, बच्चे की दृष्टि लौटाएगा।” ये सांत्वना के शब्द मेरे भीतर नहीं उतरे। फिर भी अपनी माता के आदरवश मैंने महर्षि को एक पत्र लिखा, जिसमें अपनी दुर्दशा बताते हुए उनके हस्तक्षेप की प्रार्थना की। आश्रम से प्राप्त पत्र में मुझे कहा गया, “श्री भगवान की कृपा से तुम्हारे पुत्र की दृष्टि वापस आ जाएगी।” (महर्षि ने कभी कोई पत्र नहीं लिखा। कभी अपने हस्ताक्षर नहीं किए। आश्रम अधिकारी उनके आदेशानुसार पत्रों के उत्तर देते थे।)

मेरे पिता डॉ. गणपति ऐय्यर हमारे साथ ही थे। वे मेरे पुत्र का इलाज कर रहे थे। जैसे-जैसे महीने बीतते गए हमारी श्रद्धा सच्चाई के सामने डगमगाने लगी, किंतु माता जी की श्रद्धा, जो हमें अंध श्रद्धा लग रही थी, अटल थी।

कार्तिक दीपम् (परिशिष्ट 2) का अवसर था। माता जी ने विधिवत पूजा की। जब वे पूजा के कमरे से बाहर आईं तो बोलीं, “पद्मा हमारे श्री रमण

ने तुमहारे बेटे को दृष्टि प्रदान कर दी है। उसे आज शाम शिव मंदिर ले जाना।” हमें यकीन नहीं आया। हम अनमने से मंदिर गए। वहाँ पहुँचकर बच्चे ने कहा, “अम्मा मुझे शिवजी दिख रहे हैं, मैं देख सकता हूँ।” मेरे विस्मय और हर्ष की सीमा नहीं रही; हर्षाश्रु मेरे गालों पर बह निकले।

मेरी माता जी ने हमे रमणाश्रम जाकर महर्षि के समक्ष कृतज्ञता ज्ञापन का आदेश दिया। जब हमने महर्षि के कक्ष में प्रवेश किया वे अपने सोफे पर बैठे थे। उन्होंने पूरी कथा ऐसे सुनी जैसे दृष्टि लौटाने में उनकी कोई भूमिका नहीं थी। यह उनकी शैली थी; वे अपने चमत्कार के लिए कभी भी श्रेय नहीं लेते थे।

संध्या समय मैं पुनः कक्ष में गई और महर्षि के निकट बैठी। जब अंधेरा हुआ तो मेरा पुत्र बोला, अम्मा मुझे महर्षि का शरीर दिखता है, पर उनका मुँह नहीं। महर्षि ने यह सुना और मुझसे पूछा। मुझे कहना पड़ा कि मेरा बेटा दिन में तो ठीक देख सकता है, किंतु उसे आंशिक रतौंधी है। महर्षि ने मेरे बेटे की ओर देखा और कहा, “जानकीरमण, ध्यान से देखो, तुम्हें मेरा सिर भी दिखाई देगा।” इस प्रकार उन्होंने अपने चमत्कार की पूर्ति कर दी। मेरे पुत्र को महर्षि के दर्शन स्पष्ट और सामान्य रूप से हो गए; उसकी रतौंधी भी समाप्त हो गई।

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टी. आर. राजगोपाल, विजयवाडा (आंध्र प्रदेश) से थे।

सन् 1947 में व्यवसाय में हानि के कारण मेरी आर्थिक स्थिति बहुत बिगड़ गई। मित्रों और संबंधियों के साथ-साथ मेरी पत्नी भी मुझसे आँख चुराने लगी। मुझे भान हुआ कि अंत में व्यक्ति जीवन में अकेला ही होता है।

विपत्ति के इस काल में जुलाई 1947 में मुझे स्वप्न दिखा कि दिव्य आभा वाले एक ऋषि मुझे अपने संरक्षण का आश्वासन दे रहे हैं। स्वप्न बहुत स्पष्ट था और मैं पहचान गया कि वे ऋषि रमण भगवान थे, क्योंकि मैंने उनका

फोटो **Sunday Times** में देखा था। मुझे स्वप्न पर विश्वास नहीं हुआ, क्योंकि मैंने तो कभी उनके दर्शन भी नहीं किए थे। वे मेरी, मुझे जैसे अजनबी की चिंता क्यों करेंगे ? यह राजगोपाल उनके लिए क्या है ? मैं उनके दर्शनों की आकांक्षा को टेलता रहा और उन दीप्त नेत्रों के आकर्षण को नकारता रहा; पर अंत में वे जीत गए।

नवंबर 1947 में मैं रमणाश्रम के लिए निकल पड़ा। मेरे पास एक पैसा भी नहीं था। जैसे-तैसे मैं वहाँ पहुँच गया। महर्षि के दर्शन करते ही मेरा मन हर्ष-विभोर हो गया। उन्होंने जब मुझे भेदक दृष्टि से देखा, मुझे अपनी आँखें बंद करनी पड़ी, क्योंकि मैं उनके नेत्रों की शक्ति सहने में असमर्थ था। मैंने अपने को पूर्णतः उनकी शरण में रख दिया। मुझमें एक नया आत्मविश्वास जगा और मुझे निश्चय हो गया कि महर्षि मेरी रक्षा करेंगे।

आश्रम से लौटने के पश्चात् मैंने नौकरी पाने के लिए बड़े उत्साह से प्रयत्न प्रारंभ कर दिया। कुछ ही समय बाद मुझे अचानक मेरा एक पुराना मित्र पार्थसारथी मिला। वह आंध्र प्रदेश बिजली विभाग में चीफ अकाउंटेंट था। उसने बड़े प्रेम से मेरा हाल-चाल पूछा और मुझे सिरपुर पेपर मिल्स, कागज़ नगर, आंध्र प्रदेश, में 500 रु प्रति माह की नौकरी दिलवा दी।

श्री महर्षि के संरक्षण का क्या रहस्य है, इसकी व्याख्या करना संभव नहीं है वे मेरे जीवन के एकाकी क्षण में आए और उसे अतुलनीय रूप से सुंदर बना दिया।

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प्रोफेसर सिस्टा सुब्बाराव (1909 - 1980), मछलीपट्टनम (आंध्र प्रदेश) के हिंदू कॉलेज में अंग्रेजी के प्राध्यापक थे। उन्होंने महर्षि संबंधित अपने संस्मरण तेलुगु और अंग्रेजी में लिखे हैं।

महर्षि के विषय में मुझे सर्वप्रथम जानकारी मई 1936 में अपने आध्यात्मिक गुरु रामाराव पंतुलु से प्राप्त हुई। उन्होंने रमणाश्रम का एक प्रसंग सुनाया,

जिससे मुझे महर्षि की रहस्यमयी शक्ति का विश्वास हो गया। उन्होंने बताया कि कैसे एक दिन महर्षि के कक्ष में एक बड़ा साँप आ गया। बहुत से लोग एकत्र होकर उसे भगाने का प्रयत्न कर रहे थे। उस समय महर्षि वहाँ आ गए। उन्होंने साँप को संबोधित करते हुए कहा, “तुम्हारे आने से ये सब भयभीत हो गए हैं, कृपया यहाँ से चले जाओ।” सर्प उसी समय स्वयं बाहर चला गया। पुतुलु ने मुझसे कहा कि यदि मैं महर्षि का आशीर्वाद प्राप्त कर लूँ तो मेरी देखने की शक्ति, जो क्षीण हो गई थी, वापस आ सकती है।

जून 1936 में आश्रम पहुँचकर मैंने महर्षि को प्रणाम किया और अपनी परिस्थिति का विवरण दिया। उन्होंने कहा कि यदि मेरी आंतर दृष्टि सुधर जाए तो बाह्य दृष्टि की कमी अनुभव नहीं होगी। जब मैंने उनसे स्पष्टीकरण की प्रार्थना की तो उनका उत्तर था, “बाह्य दृष्टि का न होना अर्थात् आंतर दृष्टि का होना।” जब उन्होंने मुझे आंतर दृष्टि के विकास के विषय में समझाया, तब मेरे जीवन में नया मोड़ आया। उस समय तक मेरी घटती हुई दृष्टि ही मुझ पर सनक की तरह सवार थी। महर्षि के उपदेश से मेरे दृष्टिकोण में बदलाव आ गया। उस समय से अपनी कम होती दिखने की शक्ति का प्रश्न गौण हो गया। मैंने पूरी गंभीरता से अपनी आंतरिक आँख को खोलने की साधना आरंभ कर दी।

एक आगंतुक ने महर्षि से कहा कि मैंने पारिवारिक समस्याएँ बहुत झेल ली हैं, अब मेरे पास संन्यासी होना ही एक मात्र मार्ग है। महर्षि बोले, “अभी तुम घरेलु चिंताओं से परेशान हो, तब तुम्हें संन्यासी की समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ेगा। केवल कपड़े बदलने से कुछ नहीं होगा; अपने अंदर उसे ढूँढ़ निकालो, जिसे ये समस्याएँ और चिंताएँ व्याप्त हो रही हैं।”

एक बार मैंने महर्षि से कृपा की भिक्षा माँगी, क्योंकि मेरे मन के उद्गम स्थान (अर्थात् हृदय) पर ध्यान लगाने के सारे प्रयत्न निष्फल हो रहे थे। महर्षि ने पूछा, “बाधा क्या है ?” मैंने कहा, “मेरी पुरानी वासनाएँ। मुझे आपकी कृपा चाहिए।” महर्षि का उत्तर था, “तुम्हारा बार-बार का अभ्यास

ही उसे समाप्त कर देगा। सारी साधना का उद्देश्य यही होता है।” उन्होंने आगे कहा, “अपने अभ्यास की निरंतरता और निष्कपटता में कमी मत आने दो। ईश्वर को उसका कर्तव्य याद दिलाने की आवश्यकता नहीं। वह सदैव साधक के कल्याण पर नज़र रखता है। साधक की भूल यह है कि वह अपना अभ्यास यह समझकर छोड़ देता है कि भगवान की कृपा उस पर नहीं हो रही है, इस कारण उसे सफलता नहीं मिल रही है। यह मान्यता ग़लत है। साधक को अभ्यास में ढील नहीं लानी चाहिए, क्योंकि प्रभु का अनुभव उसे उचित समय पर ही होगा।”

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कुंडलमल महतानी, कराची (पाकिस्तान) के रहने वाले थे। वे पहली बार 1944 में रमणाश्रम आए। देवराज मुदलियार लिखित पुस्तक Day by Day with Bhagavan में इनके द्वारा महर्षि से पूछे गए प्रश्नों का उल्लेख है।

सन् 1942 में एक मित्र ने मुझे ब्रंटन (सं.1) की पुस्तक A Search in Secret India दी। उसमें महर्षि के विषय में पढ़कर मैं अत्यंत प्रभावित हुआ। मैंने रमणाश्रम पत्र लिखकर महर्षि संबंधित सब पुस्तकें मँगवाईं। पुस्तकें पढ़कर मेरे मन में जो शंकाएँ उठती, मैं आश्रम को पत्र लिखकर उनका समाधान प्राप्त कर लेता था। महर्षि के दर्शन की तीव्र लालसा जो मेरे मन में जगी उसे मैं जनवरी 1944 में पूरी कर पाया। आश्रम पहुँचकर मैं इतना प्रभावित हुआ कि मैंने पूरे ग्यारह महीने निरंतर रमण भगवान की सन्निधि का आनंद उठाया। उसके पश्चात् मैं हर शीत ऋतु में आश्रम जाता और तीन-चार महीने रूकता। ऐसा मैं महर्षि ने महानिर्वाण (1950) तक करता रहा।

जब महर्षि बीमार थे, देखनेवालों को लग सकता था कि वे पीड़ित हैं। बहुत से भक्तों ने उनकी व्याधि पर शोक प्रकट किया। वे हँसे और बोले, “वे अभी भी नहीं समझ रहे कि मैं शरीर नहीं हूँ, और मैं कहीं जा नहीं रहा हूँ।”

मेरे लिए भगवान रमण, अब तक पृथ्वी पर अवतरित सभी देवों और अवतारों—जैसे, राम, कृष्ण, बुद्ध, जीसस, मुहम्मद, नानक, से कहीं अधिक हैं। इन सबके विषय में मैंने पढ़ा और सुना है। इनका ठीक-ठाक अनुमान मुझे नहीं हो सकता। इनके अगणित चित्र भी काल्पनिक और भिन्न-भिन्न हैं। दूसरी और भगवान श्री रमण को मैंने देख है। इसलिए मेरे पास उस आदर्श की एक स्पष्ट धारणा है, जिसपर मैं ध्यान लगा सकता हूँ।

मेरी विनम्र राय में, महर्षि एक जीवन-मुक्त थे। जीवन मुक्त की दशा के विषय में बहुतों ने पढ़ा और सुना होगा, किंतु देह-भाव से दूर व्यक्ति की स्थिति का सच्चा उदाहरण रमण भगवान में देखा जा सकता था। उनके महानिर्वाण के पश्चात् भी मैं उनकी उपस्थिति को पहले के समान अनुभव करता हूँ। जब मैं उनके कक्ष में उनका बड़ा सा चित्र सोफे पर देखता हूँ तो लगता है कि वे सदा की तरह वहाँ बैठे हैं। वही मुस्कुराता हुआ मुख और करुणाकारी दृष्टि। बस एक ही अंतर है—अब वे बात नहीं करते हैं, मौन में हैं। ■

क्रमशः

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

(संपादक - प्रो. लक्ष्मी नारायण)

अनुवादक - डॉ. छाया तिवारी)

Translated from Hindi version of book

'Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi'



श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत

20 फरवरी, 1937

363. मद्रास सरकार के वित्त उपसचिव यूरोप-निवासी सिविलियन श्री डोडवैल एक बजे दोपहर से पूर्व सपत्नीक आकर साढ़े तीन बजे तक कक्ष में रहे।

महिला ने जिज्ञासा की : पश्चिम के आध्यात्मिक पथ-प्रदर्शकों के अनुसार आध्यात्मिक केन्द्र भारत में है। क्या भारत में आध्यात्मिक पथ-प्रदर्शकों में आपस में कोई सम्पर्क है ? अथवा क्या पश्चिम एवं पूर्व के पथ-प्रदर्शकों में सम्पर्क सम्भव है ?

महर्षि : आध्यात्मिक केन्द्र से तुम्हारा क्या अभिप्राय है ?

भक्त : आध्यात्मिक केन्द्र आध्यात्मिक पथ-प्रदर्शकों का स्थान है।

महर्षि : 'आध्यात्मिक पथ-प्रदर्शकों' से तुम क्या समझती हो ?

भक्त : पश्चिम में एक संकट है। वैज्ञानिक ज्ञान बहुत अधिक प्रगति कर चुका है। ऐसे ज्ञान का उपयोग विनाशकारी शक्तियों के उत्पदान हेतु किया जा रहा है। उनको रचनात्मक बनाने के लिए एक आन्दोलन चल रहा है। जब इस प्राकर मोड़ होगा तब यह जगत् के हित के लिए होगा। इस आन्दोलन के नेता उद्धार करने वाले हैं।

महर्षि : 'आध्यात्मिक' से हमारा तात्पर्य उनसे है जो 'आध्यात्मिक' हैं, 'भौतिक' नहीं। आत्मा असीमित तथा निराकार है। आध्यात्मिक केन्द्र भी इसी

प्रकार है। इस प्रकार का एक ही केन्द्र है। चाहे पश्चिम में हो अथवा पूर्व में, केन्द्र में भेद नहीं हो सकता; न उसका कोई स्थान ही है। असीमित होने के कारण इसमें पथ—प्रदर्शक, मनुष्य, जगत्, ध्वंसात्मक तथा रचनात्मक शक्तियाँ सभी सम्मिलित हैं। वहाँ कोई भेदभाव नहीं है। तुम सम्पर्क की बात इसलिए कर रही हो क्योंकि तुम शरीर—धारी मनुष्यों को आध्यात्मिक पथ—प्रदर्शक मान रही हो। आध्यात्मिक मनुष्य दे नहीं है, उन्हें अपनी देह का भान नहीं है। वे केवल आत्मा हैं, असीमित तथा निराकार। उनमें तथा और सब में सदैव एकता है; यही नहीं, उनमें सभी सम्मिलित हैं।

स्वयं आत्मा ही है। यदि आत्म—साक्षात्कार हो जाय तो ये संशय कभी उत्पन्न नहीं हो सकते।

अडयार की श्रीमती जिनराजदास : आत्म—साक्षात्कार सुनने में इतना सरल प्रतीत होता है, किन्तु फिर भी व्यवहार में कितना कठिन है।

महर्षि : इससे सरल क्या हो सकता है ? आत्मा किसी भी अन्य वस्तु से अधिक निकट है। यदि इसका साक्षात् न हो सके, तो क्या सुदूर तथा पृथक का साक्षात् करना सरल होगा ?

भक्त : आत्म—साक्षात्कार कितना भ्रामक है ? यह स्थायी किस प्रकार बनाया जा सकता है ?

महर्षि : आत्मा कभी भ्रामक नहीं हो सकता। केवल यही सत्य है। जो प्रकट होता है, वह लुप्त भी होगा और इसलिए अस्थायी है। आत्मा का न उदय होता है न विलय, अतः स्थायी है।

भक्त : हाँ—सत्य है। आप जानते हैं कि थियोसोफिकल समाज में, मार्गदर्शन हेतु गुरुओं की खोज के लिए ध्यान किया जाता है।

महर्षि : गुरु अन्दर है। ध्यान का उद्देश्य अज्ञान तथा उनको बाहर समझने की मिथ्या धारणा का निवारण करना है। यदि वह अपरिचित है जिसके आगमन की तुम्हें प्रतीक्षा है तो वह अवश्य अदृश्य भी होगा। उसके जैसे अस्थायी व्यक्ति से क्या लाभ ?

तथापि जब तक तुम स्वयं को एक व्यक्ति अथवा देह मानते हो, तब तक गुरु की भी आवश्यकता है और वह सशरीर उपस्थित होगा। जब इस मिथ्या तादात्म्य का निवारण हो जायगा, तब आत्मा गुरु में प्रकट होगा।

कैवल्य में एक छन्द है :

“मेरे प्रभों ! आत्मा के रूप में आपने अन्तस्थ रहकर समस्त पूर्व जन्मों में मेरी रक्षा की है। अब आपने अनुग्रह कर अपने आपको गुरु रूप में अभिव्यक्त किया है तथा स्वयं को आत्मा के रूप में प्रकट किया है।”

तनिक देखो सुषुप्ति में क्या होता है ? वहाँ न अहंकार है, न भारत है, न साधक हैं, न गुरु आदि हैं; तथापि तुम हो तथा सुखी भी हो।

अहंकार, भारत, साधक, आदि अभी दीखते हैं; किन्तु वे न तो तुमसे पृथक हैं और न स्वतन्त्र !

मतदान की छुट्टियों के कारण बड़ी संख्या में दर्शक आये थे और उनमें से कुछ विचार-विमर्श में भी सम्मिलित हो गये।

एक ने पुनर्जन्म के सम्बन्ध में जिज्ञासा की।

महर्षि : जब तक अज्ञान है केवल तभी तक पुनर्जन्म हो सकता है। न अब जन्म हुआ है, न पहले था, न भविष्य में होगा। यही सत्य है।

भक्त : अशुद्ध-आत्मा क्या है ?

महर्षि : अशुद्ध-आत्मा का उदय एवं विलय होता रहता है। तथा यह अस्थायी है, जबकि शुद्ध आत्मा सदैव स्थायी रहता है। यद्यपि तुम स्वयं वास्तविक आत्मा हो तथापि तुम शुद्ध आत्मा का अशुद्ध-आत्मा से मिथ्या तादात्म्य कर लेते हो।

भक्त : यह भूल कैसे होती है ?

महर्षि : विचार करो, क्या यह भूल हुई है ?

भक्त : अशुद्ध-आत्मा को वास्तविक आत्मा में निर्मल करना होगा।

महर्षि : अशुद्ध—आत्मा का कोई भी अस्तित्व नहीं है।

भक्त : यह हमें कष्ट क्यों देता है ?

महर्षि : कष्ट किसको है ? कष्ट भी कल्पित है। दुःख तथा सुख केवल अहंकार को हैं।

भक्त : जगत् अज्ञान से इतना आवृत क्यों है ?

महर्षि : स्वयं की चिन्ता करो। संसार को अपनी सँभाल स्वयं करने दो। निज आत्मा को देखो। यदि तुम देह हो तो स्थूल जगत् का अस्तित्व भी है। यदि तुम आत्मा हो तो सब केवल आत्मा है।

भक्त : व्यक्ति के लिए यह उत्तम होगा, किन्तु बाकी सबके लिए क्या ?

महर्षि : पहले इसे करो और तब देखो; क्या बाद में संशय रहता है ?

भक्त : क्या अविद्या है ?

महर्षि : वह किसके लिए है ?

भक्त : अशुद्ध आत्मा के लिए।

महर्षि : हाँ, अहंकार के लिए। अहंकार का निवारण करो; अविद्या गया। उसे खोजोगे तो अहंकार नष्ट हो जायगा। केवल शुद्ध आत्मा रहता है। अविद्या को मानने वाला अहंकार नहीं दीखेगा। वास्तव में अविद्या का कोई अस्तित्व नहीं है। समस्त शास्त्रों का अभिप्राय अविद्या के अस्तित्व का प्रतिवाद करना है।

भक्त : अहंकार का उदय कैसे हुआ ?

महर्षि : अहंकार नहीं है। अन्यथा क्या तुम दो आत्माएँ स्वीकार करते हो? अहंकार के अभाव में, अविद्या का होना कैसे सम्भव है ? यदि तुम खोज करोगे, तो ज्ञात होगा कि जिस अविद्या का अस्तित्व ही नहीं है वह नहीं मिलेगी अथवा तुम कहोगे कि वह लुप्त हो गयी।

अविद्या अहम्—भाव के अन्तर्गत है। तुम अहंकार का क्यों विचार करते हो

और दुखी भी होते हो ? फिर अविद्या क्या है ? यह वह है जिसका अस्तित्व नहीं है। तथापि सांसारिक जीवन अविद्या की कल्पना चाहता है। अविद्या केवल हमारा अज्ञान है, और अधिक कुछ नहीं। यह आत्मा का अज्ञान अथवा उसकी विस्मृति है। क्या सूर्य के समक्ष अन्धकार सम्भव है ? क्या इसी प्रकार प्रत्यक्ष एवं स्व-प्रकाशित आत्मा के समक्ष अज्ञान सम्भव है ? यदि तुम आत्मा को जान लोगे तो न अन्धकार होगा, न अज्ञान होगा, और न दुख होगा।

कष्ट, दुख आदि का अनुभव मन करता है। अन्धकार न आता है, न जाता है। सूर्य को देखो और कोई अन्धकार नहीं है। इसी प्रकार, आत्मा को देखो एवं जानोगे कि अविद्या का अस्तित्व ही नहीं है।

भक्त : श्री रामकृष्ण एवं दूसरों ने एकाग्रता का अभ्यास किया था।

महर्षि : एकाग्रता तथा अन्य समस्त अभ्यासों का उद्देश्य है, अज्ञान के अभाव का अनुभव करना। स्वयं की सत्ता को कोई भी अस्वीकार नहीं कर सकता। अस्तित्व ज्ञान है अर्थात् जागरूकता। उस जागरूकता का अभिप्राय है अज्ञान का अभाव। इस कारण प्रत्येक व्यक्ति स्वभावतया अज्ञान के अस्तित्व के न होने को स्वीकार करता है। और फिर भी वह कष्ट क्यों उठाता है ? चूँकि वह यह समझता है कि वह यह है अथवा वह है। यही भूल है। केवल “मैं अस्तित्व हूँ” न कि “मैं ऐसा हूँ और ऐसा” अथवा “मैं वैसा हूँ और वैसा।” जब अस्तित्व पूर्ण है वह सत् है; जब इसका विशेष रूप से वर्णन किया जाता है, तब असत् है। यही सम्पूर्ण सत्य है।

देखो, प्रत्येक व्यक्ति अपने अस्तित्व को किस प्रकार स्वीकार करता है। क्या वह अपने अस्तित्व को जानने के लिए किसी दर्पण में देखता है ? उसका बोध उससे अपने अस्तित्व को स्वीकार कराता है। किन्तु वह उसको देह, आदि से मिला देता है। वह ऐसा क्यों करता है ? क्या सुषुप्ति में उसे अपनी देह का बोध रहता है ? नहीं; तथापि सुषुप्ति में उसके अस्तित्व का अभाव नहीं हो जाता। वहाँ वह बिना देह के भी होता है। उसे यह बोध किस प्रकार होता है कि वह सुषुप्ति में रहता है ? अभी क्या उसे अपना अस्तित्व प्रकट करने को दर्पण की आवश्यकता है ? केवल जागरूक रहो,

और तुम्हारी जागरूकता में तुम्हारा अस्तित्व स्पष्ट है।

भक्त : व्यक्ति आत्मा को कैसे जानें ?

महर्षि : “आत्मा को जानने” से तात्पर्य है “आत्मा होना।” क्या तुम कह सकते हो कि तुम आत्मा को नहीं जानते ? यद्यपि तुम स्वयं अपने नेत्रों को नहीं देख सकते और यद्यपि देखने को तुम्हारे पास दर्पण नहीं है, क्या तुम अपने नेत्रों के अस्तित्व से इन्कार करते हो ? इसी प्रकार, यद्यपि आत्मा बाहरी वस्तु नहीं है तथापि तुम आत्मा से अवगत हो। अथवा क्या तुम अपने आत्मा के अस्तित्व से इन्कार करते हो क्योंकि वह बाहरी दृश्य नहीं है ? जब तुम कहते हो “मैं आत्मा को नहीं जान सकता” इसका अर्थ है सापेक्ष ज्ञान के सन्दर्भ में अभाव, चूँकि तुम सापेक्ष ज्ञान के इतने अभ्यस्त हो गये हो कि तुम स्वयं को उससे मिला लेते हो। इस प्रकार का मिथ्या तादात्म्य स्पष्ट आत्मा को जानने में कठिनाई पैदा करता है, चूँकि वह बाहरी दृश्य-पदार्थ नहीं हो सकता; और तुम जिज्ञासा करते हो, “व्यक्ति आत्मा को किस प्रकार जानें ?” तुम्हारी कठिनाई “किस प्रकार ?” में केन्द्रित हो जाती है। आत्मा को कौन जानेगा ? क्या देह उसे जान सकती है ?

देह को उत्तर देने दो। यह कौन कहता है कि इस समय देह की अनुभूति हो रही है ?

इस प्रकार के अज्ञान का सामना करने के लिए शास्त्रों ने परमात्मा की लीला अथवा क्रीड़ा के सिद्धान्त की रचना की है। ऐसा कहते हैं कि ईश्वर मन, इन्द्रिय तथा देह रूप में प्रकट होकर लीला करता है। तुम यह कहने वाले कौन हो कि यह लीला तुमको कष्ट देती है ? ईश्वर की लीला पर आपत्ति करने वाले तुम कौन हो ?

तुम्हारा कर्तव्य है ‘होना’ : न कि यह अथवा वह होना “अस्तित्व ही मैं हूँ” सम्पूर्ण सत्य का सार है। संक्षेप में इसकी पद्धति है—“शान्त हो जाओ।” शान्ति का क्या अर्थ है ? इसका आशय है अपने आप (अर्थात् देह-भाव) को नष्ट कर दो। क्योंकि जो भी आकार या रूप है, कष्ट का कारण है। यह धारणा त्याग दो कि “मैं ऐसा हूँ और ऐसा”। हमारे शास्त्र कहते हैं; “अहमिति

स्फुरति” (यह ‘मैं’ के रूप में प्रकाशित होता है)।

भक्त : स्फुरण क्या है ?

महर्षि ‘मैं’ आत्मा है; ‘मैं यह हूँ’ अथवा ‘मैं और यह’ अहंकार है। स्फुरण नित्य है। अहंकार अनित्य है : जब ‘मैं’ को केवल ‘मैं’ माना जाता है, यह आत्मा है; जब यह अपने निज स्वरूप से भटक जाता है और अपने को ‘यह’ कहता है यह अहंकार है।

भक्त : क्या परमात्मा आत्मा से पृथक है ?

महर्षि : आत्मा परमात्मा है। “मैं अस्तित्व हूँ” परमात्मा है। हे अर्जुन ! मैं आत्मा हूँ। (अहमात्मा गुडाकेश गीता 10-20)

चूँकि तुम अशुद्ध आत्मा पर टिके हुए हो, इसलिए यह प्रश्न उदय होता है। यदि तुम वास्तविक आत्मा पर टिकोगे तो यह उदय नहीं होगा। क्योंकि शुद्ध आत्मा न कोई प्रश्न करेगा न कर सकता है। यदि परमात्मा आत्मा से भिन्न हो तो वह परमात्मा अनात्मा होगा, जो हास्यास्पद है।

भक्त : नमस्कार क्या है ?

महर्षि : नमस्कार का अभिप्राय है। “अहंकार का शमन।” ‘शमन’ क्या है? अपने उद्गम के मूल में विलीन होना। परमात्मा को ऊपरी ढंग, जैसे घुटने टेककर उपासना करने, प्रणाम तथा साष्टांग दण्डवत से धोखा नहीं दिया जा सकता। वह देखता है कि वहाँ व्यक्तित्व है अथवा नहीं।

श्री शमन्ना : क्या “मैं अस्तित्व हूँ” की अनुभूति किसी छठी इन्द्रिय से होती है ?

महर्षि : क्या वह सुषुप्ति में होती है ? केवल एक ही सत्ता पाँचों इन्द्रियों में कार्य कर रही है। अथवा क्या तुम्हारा यह आशय है कि प्रत्येक इन्द्रिय आत्मा से स्वतन्त्र है तथा पाँच आत्माएँ हैं जो अपने नियन्त्रण के लिए छठी आत्मा के अस्तित्व को स्वीकार करती हैं ? एक शक्ति है जो पाँचों इन्द्रियों के माध्यम से कार्य कर रही है। तुम ऐसी शक्ति के अस्तित्व को कैसे

अस्वीकार कर सकते हो ? क्या तुम स्वयं के अस्तित्व को नहीं मानते ? क्या तुम सुषुप्ति में भी नहीं रहते, जहाँ देह की अनुभूति नहीं होती ? वही 'मैं' अब भी विद्यमान है। इस प्रकार हम अपने अस्तित्व को स्वीकार करते हैं, चाहे देह हो अथवा नहीं। इन्द्रियाँ नियत समय पर कार्य करती हैं। उनका कार्य आरम्भ होता है तथा समाप्त होता है। ऐसे आधार का होना परम आवश्यक है जिस पर उनका कार्य निर्भर करे। वे कहाँ उदय तथा विलीन होती हैं ? केवल एक ही आधार होगा। यदि तुम यह कहो कि उस अद्वितीय सद्वस्तु की प्रतीति नहीं होती तो तुम उस एक अस्तित्व का होना स्वीकार कर रहे हो; चूँकि तुम कहते हो कि उसे जानने के लिए कोई दूसरा नहीं है।

यहसारे वाद-विवाद केवल अज्ञान के उन्मूलन के लिए हैं। इसके हो जाने पर प्रत्येक वस्तु स्पष्ट हो जायगी। यह विषय योग्यता अथवा परिपक्वता का है।

भक्त : क्या अनुग्रह साधक में ऐसी योग्यता शीघ्रता से नहीं ला सकता?

महर्षि : यह उस पर छोड़ दो। सम्पूर्ण समर्पण करो। दो में से एक करना आवश्यक है या तो इसलिए समर्पण करो कि तुम स्वयं की अयोग्यता स्वीकार करते हो तथा एक उच्चतर शक्ति की सहायता चाहते हो; अथवा दुख के कारण को खोजो और स्रोत में जाकर आत्मा में विलीन हो जाओ। किसी भी मार्ग से तुम दुख से मुक्त हो जाओगे। जिसने समर्पण कर दिया है परमात्मा उसे कभी नहीं त्यागते। मामेकं शरणं ब्रज (गीता 18-66)।

भक्त : समर्पण के पश्चात् मन का प्रवाह कैसे होता है ?

महर्षि : क्या यह प्रश्न समर्पित मन कर रहा है (हँसी)। ■

क्रमशः

“श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत” पुस्तक से उद्धृत
(संग्रहकर्ता - श्री मुनगल एस. वैकटरामैया
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