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RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH



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

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Cover: "Bhagavan viewing the 'jyoti' lit atop Arunachala hill through binoculars on 'Kartikai Deepam' day".



OBITUARY

Sri S. Guruswamy, president of Ramana Kendra, Madurai merged with the divine on December 19, 2015. He was drawn to the Ramana way in the year 1964 in Delhi, where he worked with the Meteorological Department. This happened when Prof. K. Swaminathan invited him for a *satsang* in Delhi. Beginning 1971, he was a regular visitor to Tiruvannamalai. He was deeply drawn to Bhagavan's devoted follower, Sri Muruganar and derived immense joy in serving him. Sri Guruswamy was a key contributor to the setting up of the premises of the Delhi Ramana Kendra. Subsequently, he set up Ramana Kendra in Madurai in 1987 and post his retirement in 1990 settled there; ceaselessly working for the welfare of the Kendra with deep devotion, until his demise.

The members of Delhi Ramana Kendra recall with fondness his participation and his warm display of joy during the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Delhi Kendra in March 2014.

SUBSCRIPTION/DONATION

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Schedule of Rates

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Satsang Sponsorship: Rs 1000/- per Satsang

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Poor feeding): Rs 5000/-



Noumenon

Vijay Vancheswar

What is Noumenon ? In simple terms Noumenon is the source of phenomenon. Phenomenon is the visible and perceptible aspect of creation. Creation happens when Noumenon from its latent stage expresses itself. Consciousness or Atman is all there is. The play of Consciousness happens within itself. Put differently, Noumenon in action results in Phenomenon. This play creates the illusion of phenomenon which we call creation. Sri Ramana says that in the ultimate analysis there is neither creation, birth, decay nor destruction. This is the ultimate truth. Noumenon or the unmanifest source is all that ever is. However just as in scientific research, various hypotheses are proposed, different views are provided to suit the maturity, temperament and assimilation ability of people. Bhagavan Ramana, the ultimate Jnani, on giving up his mortal frame, merged with the Noumenon- symbolically expressed in phenomenon, as the merging of the comet of light with

the sacred Arunachal hill.

The verse mentioned in the Upanishad likening creation to a spider weaving its gossamer web emanating from its mouth and reabsorbing it is given, to provide a pointer to the Truth. “As the spider moves along the thread it produces, or as from a fire tiny sparks fly in all directions, even so from this Atman, come forth all organs, all worlds, all gods, all beings. Upanishad, the secret doctrine which is believed to have emanated from time immemorial, terms Atman as “the Truth of truth, i.e. the ‘Prana’ (vital breaths) is the truth and their Truth is Atman.” [Brihadaranyak Upanishad]. If we draw a parallel in modern science to the first law of thermodynamics, “Energy can neither be created nor destroyed”, we can appreciate that energy or power always is. When it is at rest it is the Noumenon or as expressed in Hindu mythology, the power of Shiva. Just as latent potential energy when in movement manifests as kinetic energy so also the unmanifest power of Shiva

(Noumenon) manifests within itself as the expressive power of Shakti (Phenomenon). The power of Shakti attaches itself to objects of creation, exhibits and plays itself out, only to be reabsorbed within Noumenon.

Terence James Stannus Gray, better known by the pen name Wei Wu Wei (non-action) was a renowned 20th-century Taoist philosopher. He states *“Noumenon- timeless, spaceless, imperceptible beings is what we are: Phenomena-temporal, finite, sensorially perceptible- are what we appear to be as separate objects, which we are not”*.

The state of ‘I-I’ or the Presence of the Self is the unidentified aspect of Noumenon. Sri Ramana urges us to seek this Presence so that ultimately we merge with the latent unmanifest aspect of the Truth, the Noumenon, which always is.

The Noumenon is beyond creation, evolution and dissolution. It is the Source from which everything emanates. Its manifest aspect the ‘Shakti’, attaches itself to the objects of perception, the body to begin with. From this, starts the birth of the ego or sense of separateness and volition- the primary source of all the problems of phenomenal living. Till such time as we perceive this and make an earnest attempt to go back to our ‘real home’-

our Presence as the ‘I-I’ and further on merge with the Noumenon, so will the cycle of turbulence and upheavals persist.

To be still and perpetually savour our sense of Presence is the mantra and elixir given to us by the sage of Arunachala so that in course of time as the mortal frame leaves us, we merge with Noumenon.

The Noumenon is an event that is known (if at all) without the use of ordinary sense-perception. The term noumenon is generally used in contrast with, or in relation to phenomenon, which refers to anything that can be apprehended by, or is an object of the senses. Much of modern philosophy has generally been skeptical of the possibility of knowledge independent of the senses, and Immanuel Kant gave this point of view its canonical expression: that the noumenal world may exist, but it is completely unknowable through human sensation.

From this philosophical interpretation to the spiritual teachings of advaita as explained in simple yet very clear terms by the great sage of Arunachala. Ramana asks us the query, ‘can you dispute your existence?’ Clearly the answer is ‘No’. We exist across all the three states. ■

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Stitha Pragnya - The Man of Settled Knowledge

P. N. Vijay

The discussion on Stitha Pragnya occurs in the latter part of the Second Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita- the holy book of the Hindus. It starts from Verse 54 and goes on till the end of the Chapter. Most of the verses are well known and often quoted because of their great relevance to modern life.

Arjuna asks Bhagavan Krishna to tell him the nature and qualities of a Stitha Pragnya; and as he graphically puts it- how such a man talks and how he walks! Before we discuss Krishna's answer, let us understand the context in which the question is asked. In the First Chapter and the first portion of the Second Chapter, Arjuna refuses to wage the Kurukshetra battle saying that he just cannot bring himself to kill his near and dear. As Arjuna was clearly suffering from a delusion born out of his wrong understanding of his true nature, Lord Krishna imparts the Knowledge of the Self to his dear friend. Then Arjuna asks Krishna to describe the qualities of a Stitha Pragnya.

Even to ask a question like this one must be advanced in spiritual practices. And without understanding what Arjuna means by referring to a 'Stitha Pragnya', we cannot surely understand the Lord's explanation.

Many of us assume that having purified oneself by performing Karma Yoga and acquiring knowledge as prescribed by our scriptures, one obtains liberation. But that is not so. Not just getting Knowledge but assimilating it into a way of life leads to true wisdom and liberation. After making the mind pure through Karma Yoga, one embarks on Sravana and Manana of the scriptures. Initially through hearing, reading and Sat Sang (Sravana) one acquires book knowledge and then through contemplation (Manana) one removes wrong ideas and inputs and acquires a strong cognitive conviction of the correct path. For instance, many Gurus, in their enthusiasm to spread the knowledge, give their own interpretation of Vedanta and one may get carried

away by their eloquence. But through process of Manana, one can use one's discriminatory faculty to separate the chafe from the grain.

A pragnya is a Man of Knowledge attained through Sravana and Manana. He has not yet used this knowledge to change himself! The cognitive conviction has not become an emotional fulfillment; he still has moments of doubt and is subject to bouts of anger, jealousy, guilt and worry. On the other hand, a 'Stitha Pragnya' is one who has through 'Nidhidhyasana' or steady contemplation assimilated the acquired book knowledge so that this is absorbed into a way of life. In the Ramana way, 'Nididhyasana' could be compared to the process of 'Self Enquiry'.

Getting back to the Gita, Krishna's answer is crisp and pregnant with meaning. He says:

"Oh Partha, when a man completely casts away all the desires of the mind and looks only to his own Inner Self for happiness, he has become a Man of Steady Wisdom". (B.G. II:55)

So according to the Lord the prime requirement to become a 'Stitha Pragnya' is to cast away all the desires. Why do we have desires? We have desires because of the combination of two factors - firstly we have a feeling deep inside that something is lacking in our lives

"Apoornatvam". The second factor is the perception we have that something external in the world- a relationship, a possession, or an event- can remove that inadequacy. This feeling of inadequacy and the delusion that something outside can remove it creates a mental state called 'Desire'.

Krishna goes a bit deeper and explains how a single thought can gradually grow if unchecked and eventually lead to our downfall. These verses are again very often quoted:

"Thinking of objects, attachment to them is formed in a person. From that attachment is born a desire to possess and enjoy that object. When one is unable to succeed in that effort, anger emanates in the person".

"When he is in the grip of anger, he loses his power of discrimination. And when a man loses his discrimination, all the scriptures and values that he has learnt desert him. And when all these desert him, he falls." (BG II: 62, 63)

We see this happening in everyday life and it is also starkly brought out in our Epics in the characters of Ravana and similar others. Even if the desire to possess were to succeed, it can give us only momentary happiness, as it is the nature of the uncontrolled mind to hanker after fulfilling a continuing stream of desires.

This does not mean that a man should not have any desires; far from it. Gita explains in the next Chapter on Karma Yoga that a person has to perform his duties to himself, his family, society and environment and play a due role in the preservation of creation. But those are his obligatory duties and desire to perform them is very legitimate. What Krishna is referring to here, is desire which is not based on values or dharma and is apart from such obligatory duties.

One may then argue that if one gives up all desires for relationships, possessions and events (apart from those arising from one's obligations), how does one find 'Happiness'? And don't all religions agree that Happiness is a goal worth pursuing? To this our Scriptures answer that it is no doubt correct to insist on finding happiness here and now but the mistake we are committing is in thinking that such happiness is available in relationships, possessions or events. This is the second biggest delusion a man suffers from and stems from the first; which is to identify oneself with his ever-changing body and mind which is limited, as his true self. Our Upanishads in fact go to the extent of defining the Supreme Reality as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. By asking "Who Am I?" we are able to progressively understand this true nature of ourselves.

Lord Krishna says that one needs to cast away this delusion totally and understand that the source of all happiness is inside us. Once this realisation gets embedded in us, our knowledge gets settled and unwavering; it starts ruling our personality. This concept is very important in all Oriental philosophies. Lord Buddha also makes this a key element of his teachings.

Krishna continues to describe the Lakshanas or attributes of a 'Stitha Pragnya'. These are:

"He whose mind is not shaken by adversity nor hankers for pleasures, who is free from attachments, anger and fear is a Man of Steady Wisdom.

He who does not go looking for friendships, neither pleased at receiving good nor vexed at receiving evil is a Man of Steady Wisdom". (BG II: 56,57)

Vairagya or detachment is absolutely essential for any form of spiritual progress. Adi Sankara in 'Viveka Chudamani' gives it pride of place. In an earlier verse in this Chapter Krishna calls Yoga itself as nothing but Equanimity. It is obvious that attachments give rise to expectations and these lead to all the distortions in our personality like 'Anger, Jealousy, Greed'. We cannot become 'Anger-free' and 'Expectation-free' overnight but as we move along the path, these occurrences become less frequent

and also last less. As one progresses, the goodness and the values one has imbibed from the scriptures quickly take over and put the individual back on track in the right course. One thereafter benefits from the important self-correcting mechanism that acts as a good guide and mentor.

Another important point here that Krishna makes is that such a man of wisdom does not go looking for company. We tend to pity an introverted person and think that there is something wrong with him if he does not mix around much. Krishna tells us that introversion is a great virtue.

Next point that a person may ask is; in a world, which is so full of distractions of every form how do I maintain my equipoise? I have to after all “deal” with this world; jus cannot afford to retire to the hills. Krishna suggest a technique in the next verse:

“When like a tortoise which draws its limbs completely inside itself, if a man can completely withdraw his senses from the sense objects, then his knowledge becomes steady” (BG II :58)

In English there is an expression “ you put your foot into it” to denote the folly of entering something undesirable. Alexander Pope writes “ Fools rush in where angels fear to tread”. In a similar vein Krishna advises us to avoid or withdraw from situations where the risk

of the sense organs getting attached to sense objects is likely. For example, if a person is trying to give up drinking, he should avoid bars and friends who will insist on his going for a drink with them. This is practical advice to aspirants who have acquired the book knowledge but still do not have the strength of mind to adhere to the knowledge gained intellectually.

I will conclude with a very nice simile which comes at the end of the section on ‘Stitha Pragnya’ and which is again quite famous:

“As into the Ocean the waters enter but the Ocean remains still and filled, so also the ‘Man of Wisdom’ lets all desires enter and submerge into him (but remains unaffected); being so he attains peace”.(BG II 70)

A ‘Stitha Pragnya’ neither resists desires nor battles them. He lets them pass him “like the idle wind” without reacting to them. When thoughts do not feed the mind with this desire, the desire ceases to be of any relevance in his life.

Let us all be guided by these wonderful teachings of the Lord and attain with His grace ‘the Brahma Nirvana’ (Liberation by Merger with the Supreme) that He holds forth to us in the last verse of the Chapter. ■

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Destiny and Doership

D.Samarender Reddy

Consider the following quotes by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, relating to destiny and doership:

“Yes, everything is predetermined.

. . . As for freedom for man, he is always free not to identify himself with the body and not to be affected by the pleasures or pains consequent on the body’s activities.” (*Day by Day with Bhagavan*, 4-1-46 Afternoon)

“The Ordainer [God] controls the fate of souls in accordance with their past deeds – their *prarabdha karma*. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try how hard you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to stop it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is for one to be silent.” (*Self-Realization*, BV Narasimha Swami, 2nd edition, 2007, p. 62)

“Give up the sense of doership. *Karma* will go on automatically. Or *Karma* will drop away from you.

If *Karma* be your lot according to *prarabdha*, it will surely be done whether you will it or not; if *Karma* be not your lot, it will not be done even if you intently engage in it.” (*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, Talk 41*)

“Take for instance, the figure in a *gopuram* (temple tower), where it is made to appear to bear the burden of the tower on its shoulders. Its posture and look are a picture of great strain while bearing the very heavy burden of the tower. But think. The tower is built on the earth and it rests on its foundations. The figure (like Atlas bearing the earth) is a part of the tower, but is made to look as if it bore the tower. Is it not funny? So is the man who takes on himself the sense of doing.” (*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, Talk 63*)

“Why should you bear your load on the head when you are travelling on a train? It carries you and your load whether the load is on your

head or on the floor of the train. You are not lessening the burden of the train by keeping it on your head but only straining yourself unnecessarily. Similar is the sense of doership in the world by the individuals.” (Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, Talk 503)

Bhagavan is unmistakably saying that every event and action in our life is predetermined. He is also saying that it is a mistake to consider oneself to be the doer of one’s actions. These two viewpoints of his uttered at different times and in different contexts are actually interlinked, with one entailing the other. Here is how.

If everything is predetermined, then we have no choice when it comes to action. If we have no choice when it comes to action, then we could not be the doer of those actions because if we were the doers then we would have a choice as to which actions we would perform and which we would not, which would preclude the fact that everything is predetermined. Is the reverse also true, that is, if we are not the doers of our actions, then is everything predetermined? If we are not the doers of our actions, then God is the doer and we are mere tools in His hands. It could be contended that God would then be free to do any action he so pleases

through us, without such actions being predetermined. But as Bhagavan says “the Ordainer [God] controls the fate of souls in accordance with their past deeds” and hence God chooses to do only such actions through us as are consistent with our *prarabdha karma* for this life, and hence if we are not the doers of our actions, then everything is predetermined.

Now, the fact that we are not the doers of our actions may be anathema to some. But upon careful consideration it would not seem so preposterous. Take for instance the simple act of raising one’s hand. The moment we decide to raise our hand the neural and muscular events in the body are set in motion automatically without any effort on our part and we are able to raise the hand. If you say, what about the decision to raise my hand, surely that was my decision. But think. Why did you get that particular thought to raise your hand at that particular time? Wasn’t that thought based on various factors outside your control, including the situation you found yourself in. The thoughts that we seem to think “out of choice” are actually randomly occurring in our minds. Even when we deliberate upon a topic, we are not exactly in control of the sequence of thoughts that issue

forth in such a scenario. Which is why even Einstein is supposed to have said that his formulation of the equation $e = mc^2$ came to him from “outside”.

Looking at it from another angle, we have to admit that any action of ours is determined by our genes and the environment. But, we did not choose to be born to particular parents, so we did not choose our genes. We did not also choose the environment in which we were brought up. Thus, when genes and environment were not of our choosing, then whatever actions that issue forth on account of them cannot be our actions but actions as per God’s will. Hence, we are not the doers of our actions and everything happens as per God’s will.

Some may protest at this point that

if we are not the doers of our actions and everything is predetermined, where is the charm in life. Actually, such a state is liberating. We no longer have to constantly worry as to what we should do and what we should not do because “*karma* will go on automatically”. And what is more, when we do not take on the sense of doership by not identifying with the body, then as Bhagavan assures us we would “not be affected by the pleasures or pains consequent on the body’s activities”. So, in effect, accepting that everything is predetermined and giving up the sense of doership we are setting ourselves free from the burden of *karma* and *samsara*. ■

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Paul Brunton, quoted in his book, Bhagavan's words - "Problems need not be solved, problems have to be dropped. Because, in reality, there are no problems" Only mind conceives problem. The children of the mind is problems. Like the children of the childless mother, problems exist!



Kendra Bulletin

May - June 2016

March and April were again a period of good activity in the Kendra. Swami Prabuddanananda gave talks on Kathopanishad and Shri P.N.Vijay continued his talks on the Bhagavad Gita covering Ch III during this period. Shri Ambarish Dave also continued his lectures on Upadesa Saram.

The room which housed old records was spruced up and converted into a Meditation Room where devotees can meditate in front of a lovely picture of Bhagavan in absolute peace.

The Managing Body of the Kendra met twice and on the last day of the April the Annual General Meeting of Members will be held.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 2016	June 2016
(All Sunday Programs start at 5 PM unless otherwise stated)	
1st May - Talk by Shri Ambarish Dave on Upadesa Saram	5th June - Concluding Talk on Upadesa Saram by Shri Ambarish Dave
4th May - 6 PM to 8 PM- Observance of Nirvana Day of Bhagavan	12th June - To Be Announced
8th May - "Self-Enquiry vs Self-Surrender" - A discussion based on the Teachings of Bhagavan and other Saints	19th June - Talk by Shri P.N.Vijay on Bhagavad Gita Ch III- Karma Yoga
14th & 15th May - 10 AM to 12 Noon - Talk in English on Upadesa Saram by Acharya Swami Ramana Swaroopananda of Arunachala Ramana Atma Vidya Mandir, Tiruvannamalai	26th June - To Be Announced
22nd May - by Shri P.N.Vijay on Bhagavad Gita Ch III- Karma Yoga	
29th May - Talk by Shri Ambarish Dave on Upadesa Saram	



Synopsis of Mundakopnishad

Shiromani Vijay

Mundakopnishad is one of major Upanishads which has been commentated upon by all the three schools of Indian philosophy. It is a part of Athervanaveda consisting of 3 sections called Mundakas and each Mundaka has 2 chapters called as khanda. The topic of this Upanishad, as with all the other Upanishads, is of course, Brahavidya, the knowledge of the Self – giving the definition of Brahman, means of realisation of the Brahman and its benefits.

The first chapter of the Upanishad starts with the glorification of the Guru-Shishyaparampara (Teacher – Disciple lineage) with Lord Brahma being the original teacher. This indicates that the topic discussed is here is most authentic and ancient. It is also indicated in the opening verse that any knowledge is meaningful only when it leads to the knowledge of the Self. The main text is in the form of a question – answer format with Shaunaka who

is a householder after discharging his duties approaches Angiras Rishi with the question — what is that by knowing which everything is known (Mun1.1.3).

शौनको ह वै महाशालोऽङ्गिरसं विधिवदुपसन्नः

पप्रच्छ ।

कस्मिन्नु भगवो विज्ञाते सर्वमिदं विज्ञातं

भवतीति ।।

Angiras rishi then gives a gist of the Mundakopnishad in this section. He points out that there are two types of knowledge – aparavidya (ordinary knowledge like science, maths, languages) and paravidya (true knowledge of the Self). By knowing the original cause of creation (Moolakaaranam), everything in the creation which is an effect (Karyam) can be known. This is because the effect is just the cause in another form. Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi has discussed this topic in the verses 10–13 of Sat Darshanam. Further the original cause is called here as Aksharabrahma

and is defined as that which cannot be seen, heard etc by our sense organs, that which is eternal, omnipresent and omniscient (Mun1.1.6).

यत्तदद्रेश्यमग्राह्यमगोत्रमवर्णमचक्षुः श्रोत्रं
तदपाणिपादं ।

नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं तदव्ययं यद् भूतयोनिं
परिपश्यन्ति धीराः ॥

Then this Brahman is shown to be both the intelligent and material cause by giving the famous example of the spider which is both the material and the intelligent cause of the web (Mun1.1.7).

यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृहणते च
यथा पृथिव्यामोषधयः संभवन्ति ।
यथा सतः पुरुषात्केशलोमानि
तथाक्षरात्संभवतीह विश्वम् ॥

In the second chapter Aparavidya is described. This includes actions (Karma) and meditation (upasana). If Karma and Upasana are done with material desires, it can result in material results. If the same is done without material desires, it will purify the mind. But, these cannot produce knowledge of the Self. However, these are essential steps to prepare one for Self-knowledge. Everyone must pursue rightful material desires. Having gone through the pleasures, one finds that these pleasures are temporary and are always followed by pain. One then

must graduate to actions without material desires for purifying the mind. On realising that these do not lead to Self knowledge, one should take up the study of Vedanta as a disciple of a competent Guru (Mun 1.2.12).

परीक्ष्य लोकान्कर्मचितान्ब्राह्मणो
निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्वकृतः कृतेन ।
तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत्
समित्पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥

Thus in this chapter the shift one should make from aparavidya to paravidya is introduced by highlighting the qualities, short comings and limitations of world created by aparavidya. Similarly, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi in the opening verses of Upadesa Saram brings out that the Karma though inevitable will only purify the mind and not lead to Self-knowledge and hence Gyanamarga is necessary.

The second Mundaka describes the paravidya which is the central topic of this Upanishad. The first chapter begins with the example of how the sparks arising from the fire become one with the fire. In the same way, the universe with various names and forms arising from that Aksharabrahma, when their time ends, they again become one with that Aksharabrahma (Mun2.1.1).

तदेतत्सत्यं यथा सुदीप्तात्पावकाद्विस्फुलिङ्गिः
सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते सरूपाः ।
तदाक्षराद्विविधाः सोम्य भावाः
प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापि यन्ति ॥

Going further, this aksharbrahma is defined as the Purusha who is transcendental, formless, who exists both internally and externally, birthless, without vital force and mind, pure and superior to all else (Mun 2.1.2).

दिव्यो ह्यमूर्तः पुरुषः स बाह्याभ्यन्तरो ह्यजः ।
अप्राणो ह्यमनाः शुभ्रो ह्यक्षरात्परतः परः ॥

This is an oft quoted verse of this Upanishad which is discussed even in the Brahmasutra. Then the cosmology of this universe is described in detail. From that Aksharabrahma, because of ignorance(Avidya), subtle universe consisting of vital force(Prana), mind, sense organs along with elements space, air, fire, water and earth are created. And then both the sentient and the insentient world is created. Further the scriptures and the results of our actions are also created by the Aksharabrahma. Thus Aksharabrahma is the cause and the universe we perceive is the effect. One should keep in mind that the purpose of giving this reasoning of this concept of creation of the universe is only to show that there is nothing other than this entity known as Aksharabrahma or Purusha or Brahman and what we perceive as world is the

same Brahman, in just another form and by knowing this Brahman everything else is known which is referred to as Abhedavaada(Mun2.1.10).

पुरुषः एवेदं विश्वं कर्म तपो ब्रह्म परामृतम् ।
एतद्यो वेद निहितं गुहायां
सोऽविद्याग्रन्थिं विकिरतीह सोम्य ॥

This is really the answer to Shaunaka's question.

The second chapter of this Mundaka deals with how this Brahman can be known. That Brahman is that which exists (Sat principle or Satyam), that which is immortal or eternal and that one indivisible entity found in everything in this universe. Since Brahman is omnipresent, it must present within us also. "I" the conscious principle within us is the perceiver of the universe and hence "I" is the cause and the universe is the effect. The "I" principle, usually referred to as Atman, is very subtle and our mind must be prepared to recognise the Atman. Here the Upanishad guides us with the archery example to prepare our mind. Just like in archery, the goal has to be fixed which is the realisation of Brahman, bow is compared to Upanishads(scriptures) which is the weapon for hitting the goal, the Atman(soul) is the arrow which has to be merged with the goal that is Brahman, the quality of the sharpness of the arrow is compared to focussing

the subtle mind and the straightness of the arrow is compared with the honesty and straight-forwardness in the person achieving the goal, the goal should be hit unerringly is denoting the person who does not yield to worldly pleasures (Mun2.2.4).

प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ।
अप्रमत्तेन वेद्ध्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥

Then the benefits of achieving this goal is given briefly by saying that the knots of the heart is untied, meaning the desires fall off, all doubts are dissipated and one attains the state of Jeevan Mukthi as the results of the actions are dissipated (Mun 2.2.8).

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥

Then the famous verse which is recited during the Aarti which says consciousness illumines everything and nothing has to illumine consciousness (Mun 2.2.10).

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वम
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

The concluding verse of this chapter and this Mundaka again reiterates that there is nothing other than Brahman and that Brahman is the highest (Mun 2.2.11).

ब्रह्मैवेदममृतं पुरस्ताद्ब्रह्म पश्चाद्ब्रह्म

दक्षिणतक्षोत्तरेण ।

अधश्चर्ध्वं च प्रसृतं ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ॥

The third Mundaka highlights once again the supreme reality the Brahman. The preparatory methods or disciplines for achieving the goal and its benefits are given in these two chapters. The first chapter of this Mundaka begins with the famous example of two identical birds sitting on a tree – one jivatma bird which eats the fruits indicating that it is a doer(Karta), enjoyer(Bhokta), and hence subjected to sorrow and the other paramatma bird which is just an onlooker (Mun 3.1.1).

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं
परिषस्वजाते । तयोरन्यः
पिप्लवं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

When Jivatma bird realises the detachment shown by the paramatma bird, it is liberated. Then the moral values that are necessary to attain the highest are highlighted. Truth(Satyam), concentration(Tapas), vision of the goal or knowledge and continence or self-control(Brahmacharya) are prerequisites for the person aiming to achieve the highest goal Brahman. Our national value “SatyamevaJayati” is given here in this Upanishad. Again to remind us as it were, the qualities of the Brahman is given stating that it is great, self-effulgent, unthinkable, subtler than the subtlest, shining, it is farther than

farthest as well as near at hand in this body and is perceived in the cavity of our heart (Mun 3.1.7).

बृहच्च तद्विव्यमचिन्त्यरूपं
सूक्ष्माच्च तत्सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति ।
दूरात्सुदूरे तदिहान्तिके च
पश्यत्स्वहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ॥

The last chapter again highlights the methods of achieving the goal or preparatory disciplines and its benefits. Intense desire for liberation as main discipline for attaining Brahman is highlighted and when this is coupled with other disciplines like strength, learning the scriptures, lack of delusion and intellect, leads to liberation. The first benefit of achieving this is the freedom from the tyranny of one's own mind (jivanmukti) which is what always Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi used to point out in his talks as “manonasha” or destruction of the mind for self-realisation. The second benefit is the liberation from rebirth (videhamukti). This is given by the well-known verse which is recited when a sanyasin is welcomed (Mun3.2.6).

वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः
संन्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।
ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले
परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥

Then comes the famous verse giving the example of rivers flowing into

the sea becoming indistinguishable by giving up their names and forms. Similarly, does a liberated soul having given up the identification with the name and form reaches the highest Purusha (Mun3.2.8).

यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रेऽ
स्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय ।
तथा विद्वान्नामरूपाद्धिमुक्तः
परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥

In the following verse, the important concept that the knower of Brahman indeed becomes Brahman is enunciated (Mun 3.2.9).

स यो ह वै तत्परमं ब्रह्म वेद
ब्रह्मैव भवति नास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति ।
तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो
विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥

It is interesting to note that when we meditate on Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi as the supreme through the verse “Apaara Satchit Sukhavarirasher...”, we are invoking many concepts of Brahman elaborated in this Upanishad.

Thus Munda k o p a n i s h a d comprehensively gives the teaching, disciplines to follow the teaching and benefits accrued through following the teaching with many well-known examples. ■

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Life is Suffering

D.Samarender Reddy

When life is flowing along like a song
With all your wishes coming true
How on top of the world you feel
Only to feel utterly crestfallen
When something goes wrong
Like disease out of the blue
Or old age that dawns inevitably
For which you feel unprepared
Buddha was so right in saying
"Life is suffering"
But this all too obvious fact
Escapes us till we meet with suffering
And then it may be too late
To do something about it
So when we are in our youth
With all our vigour and capacities intact
We should investigate and find the truth
That will set us free from the suffering
By loosening our false identification
With the body and mind.

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A Beacon and a Wake-up Call

Vijay Vancheswar

Bhagavan Ramana merged with the sacred Arunachala hill at 8:47 pm on the 14th of April 1950 when a white comet was seen slowly climbing its way from the southern to the northern tip of the hill, finally merging with it. May 4, '16 happens to be the thithi day as per the Tamil calendar year celebrated as Bhagavan's Aradhana day (66th). One of the accounts about the moment of the great sage's death reads as follows..."There was no struggle or spasm, no other sign of death; only that the next breath did not come. For a few moments, people stood bewildered. The chanting and singing of the garland of hymns, 'Aksharamanamalai' so dear to Sri Ramana continued. Henri-Cartier Bresson (1908-2004), a renowned French press photographer who had been pacing the road outside came quickly into the throng and asked a devotee at what precise moment it had happened. The devotee, taking it to be journalistic callousness, answered brusquely that he did not know, and then, recalling

Bhagavan's unfailing courtesy, gave as precise an answer as he could; and the photographer had thereupon declared that at that very moment an enormous star had passed slowly across the sky! Many had seen it; even as far away as Madras."

Many who were not present felt what it portended and recalled what Sri Ramana often said during his last few days when devotees pleaded with him to preserve his body for their benefit, "This body is our greatest burden. Who would be anxious to keep it on? You attach too much importance to this mortal frame. They say I am going away, but where to?" As a real *Jnani*, Bhagavan regarded the body as an unnecessary appendage, to be discarded. During the intense phase of the sarcoma as it spread virulently, Ramana was asked whether it was very painful. His reply was as always remarkably perceptive, "There is pain, but not suffering". If we reflect on this and his other responses, we will be able to appreciate what demarcates a *Jnani* from an ordinary person. Firstly, a *Jnani* of the

remarkable stature of Bhagavan Ramana reassures lesser mortals struggling with life's seemingly insurmountable problems that it is possible to strive and reach the state of self-realisation. Sri Ramana walked, talked and lived by his teachings, every moment of his mortal existence. Secondly, Ramana continues to oversee and help the spiritual progress of sincere devotees in very many perceptible and imperceptible ways. Thirdly, Sri Ramana through personal example demonstrated how to traverse through the complexities of life and handle its vicissitudes. Like a leaf that is undisturbed as it gets blown in the wind, Sri Ramana was unaffected by praise, criticism, happy or unhappy occurrences. Very many examples demonstrate his utmost concern for everybody, despite his failing and deteriorating health towards the end of his physical presence. He did not refrain the continuing stream of devotees to have his darshan as he lay in the little room nonchalantly battling the cancerous tumor that weaved its way through his left arm and the whole body. His benign and graceful smile continued to fill the hearts of the scores of people who thronged to get a glimpse of him till the very end when the breath left his mortal frame. As reassured by him, the devotion to Bhagavan Ramana only increased with time as more and more people were drawn to the sacred Arunachal hill and to

Tiruvannamalai. This continues to grow day by day.

Muruganar, one of Sri Ramana's foremost devotees has composed very many poems in Tamil in praise and devotion to his guru. 'Guru Vachaka Kovai' (The Collection of Guru's sayings) is one such compendium in the form of over a thousand verses capturing the key teachings of Bhagavan Ramana. Verse 365 relating to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as explained by Sri Ramana, is significant in the context of the body and its death. Says Bhagavan, "*This body is the cross. The ego- the identification 'I am the body' is Jesus. The killing of the ego through self-enquiry is the crucifixion of Jesus. The survival of the Self from the death of the ego and its shining forth is His Resurrection*".

In other words, the Self is timeless and deathless. As we celebrate Bhagavan's Mahanirvana as the Aradhana day, we need to focus on the Real within us- the Self, that is imperishable. It transcends time and experience. It always is. The Aradhana day is a beacon of light that reminds us of the true purpose of existence- to rest and abide in our true state. A state that is divine, ever steady, non-perishable, wholesome, peaceful and in perfect harmony with the cosmic unmanifest energy. ■

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Cow Lakshmi, the devotee par excellence

M R Kodhandram

It is a well-known fact that Bhagavan had great consideration for all beings which included animals and birds. They were also attracted to Bhagavan just as human beings. A peacock was attracted to Bhagavan while he was in Skandasramam. It used to follow him wherever he went. Monkeys were regular visitors to Bhagavan and they considered him as one of their own. He had an equal eye for all which is the hallmark of a Jnani. Cow Lakshmi, Valli the deer, Jackie the dog, a lame monkey, a white peacock, all received special attention from Bhagavan. Among all the animals, cow Lakshmi enjoyed the greatest of solicitude from Bhagavan because of her sincere and deep devotion towards Him.

For cow Lakshmi, it was love at first sight for Bhagavan. Right from the time she was a calf, she displayed a natural and deep affection towards Bhagavan. Every day, she used to

come from Tiruvannamalai town all by herself and stay in the ashram and return in the evening. Bhagavan used to personally feed the calf and treat it with great affection. She used to spend most of her time in the presence of Bhagavan. Subsequently, she became a permanent inmate of the Ashram around the year 1930. As a cow, Lakshmi demonstrated a sharp intellect, something remarkable for a mammal. Time and again Lakshmi brought to fore remarkable perceptiveness in relating to Bhagavan. She seemed to understand everything that Bhagavan conveyed through words and actions. Such was her divine intelligence.

Her devotion to Bhagavan was such that many of her calves were born on Bhagavan's Jayanti day. Indeed there was a special bond between Lakshmi and Bhagavan. When she was young, she used to damage the vegetable garden. When the complaint was brought to Bhagavan, he would not

blame her but only the management for not constructing a fence around the garden.

When the number of cows increased in the Ashram, a large 'Gosala' was built. At that time, everyone wondered why Bhagavan wanted such a big cowshed. But then, Bhagavan could foresee the future turn of events and was planning for it. Today we find that very many cows find shelter in the Gosala and provide the milk required for feeding the ever-increasing number of devotees who throng to the Ashram. When the Gosala was first built, Lakshmi came and cajoled Bhagavan to accompany her and enter the Gosala first. Till such time as Bhagavan did not enter the Gosala, Lakshmi refused to enter the shed! Such was her love for Bhagavan.

Whenever Lakshmi came to the Old Hall, she would walk very fast and those who stood on her way had to move away on their own. When she reached Bhagavan after climbing the steps (Old Hall had steps at the entrance in those days), she would often put her head on His feet. If she came closer, Bhagavan would gently caress her head and neck and pat her. Bhagavan used to feed her with Idlis and plantains. If some special

food was cooked in the Ashram like Vada or Payasam, Bhagavan used to give some of it to Lakshmi in the hall itself or take it to the cowshed and feed her there. Sometimes, she would lie down next to the sofa where he sat and spend some time in the hall. To Lakshmi, Bhagavan was everything. It was quiet clear that she had unconditionally surrendered to Him. Her whole life and thoughts were centred on Him. We learn a vital lesson from this demonstration of Lakshmi: 'What will happen if we were to have Bhagavan always in our mind?' Our mind would automatically get totally purified. So was the case with Lakshmi. As an ardent and true devotee of Bhagavan, she got purified and became eligible to receive and absorb His grace completely.

Bhagavan also had made it a habit to visit the Gosala every morning and spend some time there with the cows. Sometimes, He used to milk Lakshmi, pour a few drops of milk in a tumbler and drink it, to satisfy Lakshmi! While Bhagavan was on the Hill, an old lady whom Bhagavan used to refer as 'Keerai Paati' used to feed him and take care of him with great love. Lakshmi and Keerai Paati hailed from the same place Gudiyattam, a district in Tamil Nadu.

This made many suggest that Keerai Paati was reborn as cow Lakshmi validating Bhagavan's keen concern and kindness towards Lakshmi. When asked, Bhagavan interestingly, neither denied nor confirmed this theory.

Over the years, as Lakshmi advanced in age her visits to the old Hall became infrequent. However Bhagavan always made it a point to go to the Gosala to see Lakshmi every day. On July 17, 1948, Lakshmi fell ill. The next day, it looked as if her end was near. It was a Friday and as usual she was decorated with turmeric paste and kumkum on her forehead with a flower garland around her neck. She was lying down on a bed of straw. Bhagavan's attendant Venkatratnam was sitting beside her and fanning her. Around 9.45 am, Bhagavan came to visit Lakshmi as usual and sat by her side. He found her breathing hard. He lifted her head and gently stroked her neck and started gazing into her eyes. Soon her breathing became steady. Tears began to roll from her eyes and Bhagavan looked at her lovingly with tears in his eyes. He then placed one hand on her head and with the other hand on her heart, stroked her gently. He also put his cheek against her face. After some time, Bhagavan took leave of

her and went back to the Old Hall, leaving appropriate instructions with the attendants.

After the divine touch of Bhagavan, Lakshmi's breath began to subside. The doctor came at 10.30 am and gave an injection. But Lakshmi was calm and unaffected. Around 11.30 am her life had come to an end. She was pure to the core and died with Bhagavan in her mind and thus reached His Lotus Feet! The sacred cow had merged with her beloved Master.

Around 7.00 pm, Lakshmi was interred in the presence of Bhagavan and a huge crowd who chanted "Hara Hara Mahadeva" as her body was lowered into her grave. That night, Bhagavan wrote an epitaph for Lakshmi's Samadhi by composing a Venpa in Tamil. In the verse, Bhagavan had clearly written that Lakshmi had attained Liberation. Bhagavan later told Suri Nagamma that the good karmas of Lakshmi in her previous life and her thirst for liberation had brought her to Him in this birth as cow Lakshmi. It was not an accident but divine will that brought her to Him.

What can we draw from the life of Lakshmi? Earnestness combined

with sincerity can lead us on the path to liberation guided by the satguru's grace. If we strive to practise the teachings of Sri Ramana, diligently, with faith and devotion, we too like Lakshmi can evolve and cross the ocean of samsara. The path to Liberation is not restricted by race, caste or even species. Animals and birds have all benefitted by the

munificence of the Maharishi.

May Cow Lakshmi inspire us to devotedly tread the path prescribed by Bhagavan and attain the Supreme Goal of life! ■

(Cow Lakshmi day commemorating her liberation, falls on June 17)

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Bhagavan on Suffering

Bhagavan's way is quite different from the usual. When an old woman, lamented and cried to Bhagavan about her difficulties, how she is having to suffer, how much burden she is having, etc... for some time, Bhagavan very patiently listened to her and paused for some time and he said to her, all these difficulties, did you have them even in your sleep too? and that lady replied spontaneously, no Bhagavan, during my sleep, nothing was there, I sleep very peacefully. Bhagavan then said to her, While you are sleeping, there are no problems, but all these problems have raised along with your waking, therefore, enquire who this 'I' which has awoken from sleep. Nobody knew, if that lady even understood anything, she sat for some more time silently and prostrated to Bhagavan and left.



The Discourse on Freedom

Geetha Ravichandran

In the recent past the voices of two young men have echoed across the country. One was that of a PhD scholar who while tragically deciding to end his life, wrote with great insight that man is a glorious being made of star dust. Another's mesmeric oratory was on display on our television screens as he called for Azadi- freedom from want, freedom from the shackles of tradition, freedom from hegemony. This discontent and restlessness are signs of our times. Even those who do not subscribe to any particular ideology empathize with the situation of youth who feel marginalized and disadvantaged.

Does the answer to these vexatious questions lie in social reform or in legislation? Such measures would definitely set the ball rolling. But they would not be effective in themselves. If we take note of the progress in society, the changes in attitudes of people and the social structure, it is

evident that many changes can be attributed to advances in knowledge and the use of this knowledge as technology more than any other singular force. Technology which seems unstoppable and is convinced that there is an algorithm for every problem, which confers anonymity, which reduces the human interface and which moves doggedly to dimensions beyond our present understanding is the real game changer. Whether these changes are desired or have unwanted consequences is another issue altogether. The momentum of change by itself tends to efface the past. Is it necessary to disconnect and discard traditions as irrelevant- as a burden of the past to progress faster? Or is it worthwhile to examine what tradition, culture and religion have to offer and assimilate what is relevant, what has stood the test of time. Should all change and progress be measured in terms of external indices? The cause of change is often

an internal process. The effect of change is betterment by implication and is acceptable when it results in greater good for greater numbers. It however takes dedicated efforts of individuals with conviction and commitment to make this happen.

We have also heard another train of thought gaining currency recently- "*Less government, more governance*". This is possible only when citizens assume responsibility, contribute through self regulation, through voluntary compliance and act as facilitators. Emerson in his Essay 'Politics' has expounded this thought "*Hence the less government we have the better –the fewer laws, and the less confided power. The antidote to this abuse of formal government is the influence of private character, the growth of the Individual; the appearance of the principal to supersede the proxy; the appearance of the wise man; of whom the existing government is, it must be owned, but a shabby imitation.*" However, impetuous young men and women do not acknowledge the need for wisdom. Where opinions and emotions reign there is little space for anything else. Wisdom and character are, unfortunately not buzz words that can set the popular imagination on fire. Character takes

some building and wisdom some reflection.

To make a lasting and significant impact in any field, persistent action is required. Mere reaction- which may be displayed by mass outrage or demonstration , may capture public imagination; but cannot bring about change and reform as it tends to fritter out sooner than later. However, when action is based on an appropriate response to a situation it is effective. During the recent Chennai floods groups of anonymous youngsters came together to respond to the calamity showing remarkable awareness that the common human condition unites everyone. This is a positive sign that our society is still steeped in the core values of our tradition of compassion and good will towards all. The religion that underlines a common humanity that upholds the spirit of togetherness and promotes empathy for all is therefore to be nurtured and cherished. Prof K.Swaminathan in his book *Ramana Maharshi* has said "*Ramana Maharshi was more human, more fully and naturally human, than the rest of us and showed that to be thus human is to be truly divine. Through half-a- century of egoless living both as a man among men and as the Person- the Awareness-in all persons,*

the sage proved Tagore's thesis that religion is not the descent of divinity but the fulfillment of humanity."

When Bhagavan Ramana was asked his opinion on social reform he answered saying that self-reform automatically brings about social reform. This addresses what is immediately possible and what is within each individual's reach.

Every individual can take responsibility for creating harmony within himself. Internal harmony is essential for external harmony. It is necessary to realize that to know oneself is the first step forward in tackling the misery of existence syndrome .

It is also necessary to acknowledge that, whether it harnesses technology or human thought, progress will remain a partial and incomplete process when it does not address the puzzling question of human misery. Advances in technology maybe wondrous but they provide few answers. The wisdom of ancient texts offers insights into the human condition. The Svetasvataraopanisad Upanishad says-

*Yada carmavad akasam
vestayisyanti manavah
tada devam avijnaya*

duhkhasyanto bhavisyati (6-20)

- *Only when men shall roll up the sky like a skin, will there be an end to misery for them without realizing God. (The idea is that any effort to be free from misery without realizing God is as futile as the attempt to roll up the sky). The translation is by Swami Tyagisananda of Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore (1971)*

The Taittreya Upanishad affirms the true identity of man-

*Sa yaschayam purushe
Yaschasavaditye sa ekah (2.8.14)*

-*He that is in man is the same as He that is in the sun.*

Human essence thus has at its core a source of light. This real nature of man is seldom acknowledged in any public discussion. In the debate that enters our homes through the ubiquitous television screens we witness people caught up in battling windmills. We do not consider ourselves glorious beings made up of stardust. It took the death of a sensitive young man to bring this into the nation's mindspace . In this context, the discourse has broadened to freedom, to creating opportunities to unlock the immense potential within ourselves. Freedom from fear, freedom from the opinions and

perception of others, freedom from restrictive relationships, freedom in decision making are certainly ideals to strive for. At the same time it maybe necessary to claim freedom for ourselves to stay unaffected amidst the noise, to be joyful and grateful for a myriad blessings. Suffering and bondage are experiences that are as old as the world itself. However, these are also as ephemeral. The freedom to respond appropriately in all situations is available to everyone . In such circumstances, is it necessary to wear a crown of thorns? The words of Swami Shantananda Puri in ‘Sadhanas from Guru Vachaka Kovai’ are relevant in this context-

“Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi has told that while suffering is there, there are no sufferers. It means that suffering is a cap thrown on the road which a person takes and keeps it on his head and complains that it is too narrow and presses on his temples”.-

It is not merely freedom that is within everyman’s reach it is liberation too. What is required is the capacity to discriminate and the courage to understand one’s real nature. That the stuff we are made

of is stardust.

To quote the Ashtavakra Geeta-

Muktabhimani mukto hi baddho baddhabhimanyapi

Kimvadanteeh Satyeyam ya matih sa gatirbhaveth. (1-11)

The one who is convinced in one’s mind ‘I am liberated and free remains liberated. The one who is convinced I am bound will remain bound.’ The old adage “As we think so we become”, is true in this case.

This sense of liberation is required for acquiring right knowledge. As the Buddha said Right Knowledge is the ultimate goal which when attained helps us in the understanding of the nature of the empirical world with a mind free of hindrances, free of dogmatic views and false egoistic ideas . As Sri Ramana said, the mind which is nothing but a bundle of thoughts is the source of our problems. The solution lies to seek within and abide in a quiet mind. A quiet mind which is at equipoise is undoubtedly our most valuable resource. ■

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Mother Azhagammal, Her Final Day

Ninety-four years ago on May 19, 1922, the Mother of the Maharshi breathed



her last with her son sitting by her side. She prayed it would happen like this.

The marvelous story of how the Maharshi guided her soul to the final shore of emancipation during her last moments is related here by, perhaps, the only living survivor who witnessed it (year 1994), Sri Kunju Swami. Also, he goes on to describe in detail how the body was interred near the Pali Tirtham.

ON THAT LAST DAY from 5:00 a. m. there was a premonition that this was Mother's final day. Bhagavan sat by her side and put

one hand on her chest and the other on her head. He was advising everyone to go and eat, because if she died it was considered unclean by orthodox people to eat in a house where a death occurred. Some of the orthodox ones among us went and ate. But others who felt particularly close to Bhagavan didn't think about leaving him to go and eat.

Bhagavan continued to sit by Mother's side and kept his hands on her.

Different expressions of joy and sorrow were passing over her face. Bhagavan was commenting, "Is Mother in this world? No. She is in different worlds going through various births and the consequent experiences."

When her passing seemed imminent, people like Ganapati Muni, T. K. Sundaresa Iyer, and others decided to recite from the Vedas. On the other side, Saranagati

Ramaswami and a Punjabi gentleman started reciting *Rama Japa*. Without any forethought we joined in with the singing of *Aksharamanamalai* and *Arunachala Siva*.

Amidst this loud singing and reciting of various scriptures, Mother left the body. Still Bhagavan continued to keep his hands on her heart and head. We wondered why he was still seated like that. Then he explained: "When Palaniswami was breathing his last, I did the same thing. I thought the soul had subsided in the heart and removed my hands. He opened his eyes and the life force left through the eyes. So this time, to be certain, I am keeping the hands on longer than needed." I learned this important secret from Bhagavan that day.

He then got up and we all ate. After eating we gathered again near the body without any feeling of pollution.

Ganapati Muni had raised the question about the possibility of a woman attaining the state of Realization in *Ramana Gita*. Bhagavan said that the state of Realization does not relate to the form of the gross body. So we all felt satisfied that Mother had attained liberation and we were

happy. Happier, indeed, because we saw that Mother's face and body were now radiating such lustre and light.

Since Bhagavan had given her *mukti*, and her whole body and face were shining, it was decided that the body should be given a ceremonial burial, instead of the customary burning for Brahmin widows.

We then joyfully decorated the body with kumkum, malas and flowers. After deliberation we decided that Mother's body should be buried near the Pali Tirtham. We decided to keep this decision secret because we knew if this news spreads there would be an unimaginable crowd gathered for the samadhi (funeral).

We decided to bring the body down to the hill before 5:00 a.m. In the meantime, Ramakrishna Swami and Perumal Swami went to town and brought to the burial site two or three cart loads of funeral supplies - cement, camphor, vibhuti, etc.

I still remember that the day before Mother's *Mahasamadhi*, Ramakrishna Swami and I had gone up the hill and found many bamboo trees and brought back a good number of bamboo sticks to

Skandasramam. It was these sticks that were tied together and used to carry Mother's body down to Pali Tirtham.

I was instructed to remain at Skandasramam because telegrams had been sent to relatives in Tiruchuzhi and other places and they were expected to arrive at Skandasramam that morning.

The body was kept under the Asavastha tree and Bhagavan, along with other devotees sat near it. By 7:00 or 7:30 a.m. relatives from Tiruchuzhi and other places arrived and I brought them all down to Pali Tirtham. By this time the whole town heard the news and had come there. Many shopkeepers arrived with supplies of bananas, camphor, etc., pundits were reciting scriptures and Bhagavan sat majestically alongside the body. It looked as if we were in a temple.

There was much wild cactus at this site, and while some of us were removing it, Perumal Swami dug the pit and constructed the samadhi inside of it. About 10:30 or 11:00 a.m. everything was ready.

Bhagavan had already marked the passages in *Tirumandiram*, a text written by the great saint Tiruvarul explaining how a *Jnani's* body is to

be interned. Accordingly, Mother's body was carried to the samadhi pit, placed inside, and Bhagavan poured on the body a large amount of vibhuti. Others followed by adding camphor, sandalwood, etc., in full accordance with saint Tiruvarul's injunctions.

The samadhi was then closed, some stones were placed over it, and a small shrine was constructed. It was, indeed, a glorious sight.

After this ceremony we all went to Palakottu where arrangements were made to feed some 200 people. Bhagavan started walking towards Palakottu with the others. Leading the procession was a group of musicians with drums and horns playing the *nadaswaram*. The distance to Palakottu was only one or two hundred yards, but Bhagavan walked so slowly and majestically it took two hours to cover the distance. It was a sight even for celestial beings to see. ■

[Source :Arunachala Ashram, New York, USA, www.arunachala.org May 30, 2016, Maha Puja day. Alagammal - Mother of Bhagavan. Alagammal was born at Pasalai, a village near Manamadurai. She got mukti by the hands of Bhagavan on 19th May, 1922]



Ripeness

Neera Kashyap

The bud said to the flower,
I have the freshness of promise,
dawn in my colors, dew in my folds;
wind, sky, rain as food and play.
I dream of my beauty and fragrance
seeping into the universe
like the love of the wind, sky, rain and sun
like the love of the dew of dawn.
The wild flower blazed redly in the waxing sun,
upright, even as it wilted in the heat
witnessing the sun's waxing and waning,
bearing the slashing whips of cold and rain,
bearing the wayward claps of wind and storm;
Its beauty and fragrance seeping into the universe unnoticed.
It replied: innocence is of no consequence;
Ripeness is.

[e-mail: neerak7@gmail.com]



श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

43

स्वामी माधवतीर्थ (1895-1960) अनेक आध्यात्मिक विषयों के बहुप्रज लेखक थे। वे श्री अरबिंदो के उपदेशों के प्रति आकर्षित हुए, किंतु संतुष्टि न मिलने पर 1944 में रमणाश्रम आए। अपनी गुजराती पुस्तक 'रमण महर्षि परिचय अनेबोध' में उन्होंने लिखा कि इस यात्रा ने उनके जीवन का प्रवाह ही बदल दिया।

महर्षि के समक्ष जो रहज्ञयमय अनुभव हुआ उसका वर्णन एक दृष्टांत के आधार पर करूँगा। भागवत पुराण के अनुसार, जन्म से कुछ समय पूर्व ईश्वरीय शक्ति ने वासुदेव के हृदय में प्रवेश किया जिससे वे सूर्य के समान उद्भासीत हुए। वही ज्योति वासुदेव की एक दृष्टि से देवकी में प्रविष्ट हो गई, जिससे वे चंद्रमा के समान प्रकाशित हो गई। पहले ही दिन जब मैंने श्री महर्षि के दर्शन किए उनके नेत्रों में मुझे सूर्य के समान चकाचौंध कर देनेवाली दीप्ति दिखाई दी। दूसरे दिन भी महर्षि के सम्मुख बैठकर मैंने उनकी दृष्टि में वही दीप्ति देखी। उनकी दृष्टि मेरे अस्तित्व के मर्म तक पहुँच गई, जैसे वासुदेव की दृष्टि से उत्पन्न तेज देवकी में प्रविष्ट हो गया था। कुछ क्षणों के लिए मुझे लगा कि मेरी साँस रूक गई है, और मेरा मन ऐसी आध्यात्मिक ऊँचाई पर आ गया है जहाँ अवर्णीय सुख और शांति थे।

आश्रम आने से पूर्व मैंने अपनी छोटी सी पुस्तिका 'माया' महर्षि को भेजी थी। इसमें जगत की वास्तविकता के विचार को आइंस्टाइन के सापेक्षता सिद्धांत (Theory of relativity) के आधार पर व्याख्यायित किया गया था। महर्षि से मिलने के पश्चात् मुझे अत्यंत आश्चर्य हुआ कि वे ऐसे आधुनिक

सिद्धांतों को भी अपने अनुभव के आधार पर तत्काल समझ सकते हैं।

महर्षि और उनके भक्तों के पारस्परिक संबंध की उपमा ट्रांसमीटर और रिसेीवर से दी जा सकती है। यदि श्रद्धालु, महर्षि की मौन और हितकारी उपस्थिति से विकीर्ण होनेवाली अनुकंपा का पूरा लाभ लेने को आतुर है, तो उसे अपना मन पूर्णतः उन तरंगों से जोड़ना होगा।

महर्षि का मौन अखंड है। वे बाह्य रूप से जगत के प्रति सजग दिखें या नहीं, उस मौन का सौम्य प्रभाव निरंतर बिखरता रहता है। ट्रांसमीटर के रूपक के अनुसार उनके आध्यात्मिक प्रभाव का ट्रांसमिशन अवरत है, किंतु माया—की—आवरण—शक्ति—के—आधीन साधक पर उसका कोई हितकारी प्रभाव नहीं पड़ता।

मेरे प्रश्न के उत्तर में कि, नेत्र बंद करके मुझे कहाँ ध्यान लगाना होगा, उन्होंने कहा, "आँखे खुली रखो या बंद, सब बराबर है। अपने वास्तविक रूप आत्मा पर ध्यान लगाओ, जो तुम्हारे भीतर है।" बैठने के आसन के विषय में महर्षि बोले कि आत्मा में स्थिर रहना ही सच्चा आसन है। एक विशेष आसन में ही स्थिर रहने का नियम मन को विचलित कर सकता है। स्वाध्याय के विषय में उन्होंने कहा, "आत्मा ही सच्ची पुस्तक है। कोई उसे तुमसे नहीं ले सकता। जब भी समय हो अपना ध्यान आत्मा पर लगाओ, उसके बाद जो चाहो पढ़ सकते हो।"

भय और चिंता आदि समस्याओं के विषय में उन्होंने कहा, अपने अंदर खोजो कि समस्याएँ किस को हो रही हैं। समस्याएँ शरीर को होती हैं, आत्मा को नहीं, जो तुम्हारा सच्चा स्वरूप है। इस प्रकार अपने आप से प्रश्न पूछकर विचार करने से समस्याएँ समाप्त हो जायँगी। महर्षि ने बताया कि 'मैं' की भावना सब विचारों का मूल है। यदि हम मूल को काट देंगे, तो डालियाँ और पत्तियाँ सूख जाएँगी। 'मैं कौन हूँ?' यह प्रश्न मन के समक्ष प्रस्तुत करके 'मैं' का मूल ढूँढ़ें, और अन्य विचारों को रोकने का सच्चा और सतत प्रयत्न करो। साथ ही पक्का विश्वास रखें कि सब कठिनाईयों के होते हुए भी सफलता अवश्य प्राप्त होगी।

महर्षि कहते थे कि कपूर के जलने के पश्चात् कुछ शेष नहीं रहता।

इसी प्रकार आत्मा की खोज करते हुए ऐसा प्रयत्न करना चाहिए कि मन प्रभावहीन हो जाए। जब तक संसार की असत्यता आत्मसात् नहीं हो जाती, संसार संबंधी विचार आते रहेंगे। प्रगाढ़ निद्रा की अवस्था में मन नहीं होता, इसलिए हम संसार से बेगाने हो जाते हैं। संसान मन के संदर्भ में है, उसका कोई स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व नहीं है।

एक समय किसी ने पूछा, “ईश्वर इतना अधिक अन्याय क्यों होने देता है ? हममें इतनी अपूर्णताएँ क्यों हैं ?” महर्षि ने कहा, “तुम ईश्वर के पास जाकर क्यों नहीं पूछते ? यदि तुम नहीं जा सकते, जैसा तुम स्वयं कह रहे हो, तो फिर प्रश्न क्यों ? निर्बल व्यक्तियों को मोक्ष प्राप्त नहीं हो सकता।”

एक और प्रश्न के उत्तर में महर्षि ने कहा, “जब तक शरीर है, कुछ न कुछ क्रिया अवश्य होगी; केवल ‘मैं कर्ता हूँ’ इस भावना का त्याग करने की आवश्यकता है। कार्य या क्रियाएँ बंधन नहीं हैं; ‘मैंने किया’ यह भावना बंधनकारी है। जब तक सुख के लिए बाह्य पदार्थ चाहिए, अनूर्णता का भाव बना रहेगा। यह अनुभूति हो जाने के पश्चात् कि केवल मात्र आत्मा ही है, सुख स्थायी हो जाता है”

महर्षि हिंदू विचारधारा किसी पर नहीं लादते थे। यदि ईसाई और मुसलमान परामर्श के लिए आते तो वे उन्हीं के धर्म के मुख्य और गूढ़ उपदेशों के संदर्भ में उन्हें ईश्वर से एक्य स्थापित करने की सलाह देते थे।

महर्षि अपने शरीर की अर्चना को प्रोत्साहित नहीं करते थे और अपने को पुष्प माला पहनाने का पूर्ण विरोध करते थे।

महर्षि अद्वैत सत्य के मूर्तरूप, स्थल और काल की सीमा से परे, एक सार्वभौमिक आत्मा हैं। वे अपने भीतर आध्यात्मिक अध्ययन का संपूर्ण विश्वविद्यालय समेटे हुए हैं।

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टी० पी० रामचंद्र ऐय्यर तिरुवण्णामलै के निवासी थे। वे मद्रास में वकालत करते थे। सन् 1920 में धार्मिक और आध्यात्मिक रूचि के कारण वे महर्षि के दर्शन करने आए। उन्होंने महर्षि के कक्ष में दुभाषिए और परिचारक के

रूप में भी कार्य किया।

मैंने महर्षि के कक्ष में प्रवेश किया, उनकी ओर देखा और साष्टांग प्रणाम किया। मैंने जो अनुभव किया वह संपूर्णतः हिला देनेवाला और विश्वासोत्पादक था। मुझे लगा कि जिस गुरु के लिए मैं वर्षों से ललक रहा था और जिसने मेरे पूरे अस्तित्व को झकझोर दिया था, वह सतगुरु मेरे सम्मुख है। वे कितनी सादगी युक्त, किंतु कितने महान थे। वे मुस्कुराए और मुझे बैठने को कहा। मेरी सभी शंकाएँ और विचार लुप्त हो गए। मुझे लगा कि मुझे अपने जीवन की शरण स्थली और सबसे बड़ी निधि मिल गई।

सन् 1945 में महर्षि ने दलीप कुमार रॉय (सं 8) से कहा कि 'भक्ति' 'ज्ञान' माता है। भक्त की या ज्ञानी की स्थिति में कोई अंतर नहीं होता। विचारकों द्वारा भिन्न-भिन्न शब्दों का प्रयोग किया गया है, इतना ही अंतर है। रॉय के यह पूछने पर कि अहंकार को समाप्त करने का श्रेष्ठ उपाय क्या है ? महर्षि का उत्तर था: अपने मन से यह कहना कि 'मन को मारो', ऐसा ही है जैसे चोर को पुलिस बनाना। वह आपके साथ जाएगा, चोर को पकड़ने का दिखावा करेगा, किंतु हाथ कुछ नहीं आएगा। इसलिए आपको अंतर्मुख होना पड़ेगा और विचार करना होगा कि मन में भाव कहाँ से उत्पन्न होते हैं। इस प्रकार मन धीरे-धीरे नष्ट हो जाएगा।

महर्षि के जीवन के अंतिम दिनों में हम सब उनके स्वास्थ्य के विषय में चिंतित रहते थे। किंतु वे अपने शरीर के रोगों और कष्टों के प्रति सदैव उदासीन रहे। उन्हें यदि कोई चिंता थी तो यह कि उनकी बीमारी के कारण दर्शनार्थियों और भक्तों को कोई असुविधा न हो। ■

क्रमशः

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

यह पुस्तक रमण केन्द्र दिल्ली में उपलब्ध है।

*Translated from Hindi version of book 'Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi
(This book is available at Ramana Kendra, Delhi) .*



श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत

7 जनवरी, 1937

318. एक हिन्दी भाषी सज्जन ने जिज्ञासा की कि मृत्यु के भय से किस प्रकार छुटकारा पायें ?

महर्षि : मृत्यु का विचार आने के पूर्व तुम यह मालूम करो कि क्या तुम्हारा जन्म हुआ था ? जिसका जन्म हुआ है, वही मर सकता है। सुषुप्ति में भी तुम मृतक तुल्य ही हो। मृत्यु का क्या भय ?

भक्त : सुषुप्ति में हम कैसे होते हैं ?

महर्षि : इस प्रश्न को सुषुप्ति में करो। तुम सुषुप्ति का अनुभव तभी करते हो जब जाग्रत होते हो। उस अवस्था का स्मरण तुम यह कहकर करते हो कि "मैं आनन्दपूर्वक सोया"।

भक्त : हम उस अवस्था का अनुभव किस यन्त्र के द्वारा करते हैं ?

महर्षि : हम इसे अन्तःकरण के विपरीत मायाकरण कहते हैं। अन्तःकरण से हम अपनी अन्य अवस्थाओं में परिचित रहते हैं। एक-से ही यन्त्रों को भिन्न अवस्थाओं में भिन्न नाम दिया जाता है। जिस प्रकार कि सुषुप्त अवस्था के 'आनन्दात्मा' को जाग्रत अवस्था का 'विज्ञानात्मा' कहा जाता है।

भक्त : मुझे मायाकरण के द्वारा आनन्द के अनुभव करने का दृष्टान्त देने

की कृपा करें।

महर्षि : यह तुम कैसे कह सकते हो "मैं आनन्दपूर्वक सोया" ? तुम्हारा आनन्द प्रमाणित करने के लिए वहाँ अनुभव है। सुषुप्ति की अवस्था में अनुभव का अभाव हो तो जाग्रत अवस्था में उसकी स्मृति सम्भव नहीं।

भक्त : स्वीकार करता हूँ, किन्तु मुझे एक उदाहरण देने की कृपा करें।

महर्षि : इसका वर्णन कैसे हो ? यदि तुम किसी वस्तु को तलाश करने के लिए जल में डुबकी लगाओ तो तुम उसको प्राप्त करने की बात जल से बाहर आकर ही कह सकते हो। जब तक तुम जल के अन्दर डूबे हो कुछ नहीं कहते।

भक्त : सुषुप्ति में मुझे भय नहीं होता, किन्तु अब होता है।

महर्षि : द्वितीयाद्वै भयं भवति—भय सदैव दूसरे से ही होता है। तुम्हें किसका भय है ?

भक्त : देह, इन्द्रिय, जगत्, ईश्वर, कर्तृत्व, भोग आदि की अनुभूति के कारण।

महर्षि : यदि ये तुमको भयभीत करते हैं तो तुम उनको देखते ही क्यों हो ?

भक्त : चूँकि इनसे बचा नहीं जा सकता।

महर्षि : किन्तु इनको तुम ही देखते। भय किसके लिए है ? क्या यह उनको है ?

भक्त : नहीं, वह मेरे लिए है।

महर्षि : चूँकि तुम उनको देखते हो, तुम उनसे भयभीत होते हो। इन्हें न देखो तो भय न होगा।

भक्त : जब जाग्रत अवस्था में मुझे क्या करना आवश्यक है ?

महर्षि : आत्मा बने रहो; तब कोई भी दूसरी वस्तु तुमको भयभीत करने को नहीं रहेगी।

भक्त : हाँ। अब मैं समझा। यदि मैं निज आत्मा का दर्शन करूँ तो मेरी दृष्टि अनात्मा से हटी रहेगी और आनन्द होगा। तथापि मृत्यु का भय है।

महर्षि : केवल जिसका जन्म हुआ है वही मर सकता है। देखो क्या तुम्हारा जन्म हुआ है जिससे मृत्यु भयभीत करे।

319. गोआ के एक हिन्दू श्री श्रीधर ने प्रश्न किया : “योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्” में कौशल क्या है ? उसे कैसे प्राप्त करें ?

महर्षि : फल की चिन्ता त्यागकर कर्म करो। यह मत सोचो कि तुम कर्ता हो। कार्य को प्रभु को समर्पित कर दो। यही कौशल है और यही उसकी प्राप्ति का मार्ग है।

भक्त : समत्वं योग उच्यते। यह समत्व क्या है ?

महर्षि : यह अनेकत्व में एकत्व है। अब विश्व में नानात्व भासता है। सर्व पदार्थों में विद्यमान ‘सम’ को देखो। जब ऐसा होता है तो द्वन्द्वों में भी स्वभावतः समता ही दीखेगी। तथापि सामान्यतया इसे ही समत्व की संज्ञा दी जाती है।

भक्त : अनेकत्व में सम ही प्रतीति किस प्रकार हो ?

महर्षि : द्रष्टा केवल एक है। बिना द्रष्टाके वे नहीं दीखते। द्रष्टा में कोई परिवर्तन नहीं है, अन्य वस्तुएँ चाहे कितनी ही परिवर्तित हो।

योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् (गीता 2-50) = कर्म की कुशलता ही योग है,

समत्वं योग उच्यते (गीता 2-48) = समत्व ही योग है,

मामेकं शरणं ब्रज (गीता 18-66) = मेरी शरण में आओ,

एकमेवाद्वितीयं = वह एक ही है और दूसरा नहीं है,

कर्म, योग, भक्ति तथा ज्ञान का प्रीतक है तथा इनका भवार्थ एक ही है। केवल एक ही सत्य को विविध ढंग से कहा गया है।

श्री एकनाथ राव : क्या इसके लिए अनुग्रह आवश्यक है ?

महर्षि : हाँ।

भक्त : दैवी अनुग्रह को कैसे प्राप्त करें ?

महर्षि : आत्म-समर्पण द्वारा ।

भक्त : फिर भी मुझे अनुग्रह की प्रतीति नहीं होती है।

महर्षि : सतयनिष्ठा का अभाव है। समर्पण न शाब्दिक हो, न प्रतिबन्धी।

इन वक्तव्यों को स्पष्ट करने के लिए सन्त जुस्तीनियन की पुस्तक में से उद्धाहरण पढ़े गये।

प्रार्थना शाब्दिक नहीं होती। यह हृदय से होती है। हृदय में विलीन होना ही प्रार्थना है। यह अनुग्रह भी है।

अलवार का कथन है, “मैं सदा ही तुझे खोजता रहा। किन्तु आत्मा का साक्षात् करके मैंने जाना कि तुम आत्मा हो। आत्मा मेरा सर्वस्व है, इसलिए तुम मेरे सर्वस्व हो।”

भक्त : परिमितता, अज्ञान एवं कामनाओं की अशुद्धियाँ (आनव, मायिक तथा काम्य) ही ध्यान में बाधा डालती हैं। उन पर कैसे विजय प्राप्त करें ?

महर्षि : उनके वश में नहीं आना चाहिए।

भक्त : अनुग्रह आवश्यक है।

महर्षि : हाँ, आरम्भ भी अनुग्रह है तथा अन्त भी अनुग्रह है। अन्तर्मुखता अनुग्रह के कारण होती है। धैर्य अनुग्रह है तथा साक्षात्कार अनुग्रह है। इसी कारण कहा गया है :

मामेकं शरणं ब्रज । यदि किसी ने अपने आपको पूर्णतया समर्पण कर दिया है तो क्या कोई भाग रह गया है जो अनुग्रह की याचना करेगा । अनुग्रह ने उसे आत्मसात् कर लिया है ।

भक्त : बाधाएँ बलवान है । और ध्यान में बाधा डालती हैं ।

महर्षि : यदि एक उच्चतर शक्ति को जानकर उसके प्रति समर्पण कर दिया है तो वे तुम्हें कैसे बाधा डाल सकेंगी ? यदि तुम कहो कि “वे बलवान हैं”, तो उनके बल के स्रोत को पकड़ लो जिससे कि वे तुम्हें बाधा न पहुँचा सकें ।

320. एक अनौपचारिक वार्ता के मध्य महर्षि ने संकेत किया कि आत्म-साक्षात्कार केवल योग्य पात्र के लिए ही सम्भव है । ज्ञान के उदय होने के पूर्व वासनाओं का निरसन करना आवश्यक है । ज्ञान का उदय होने के लिए जनक तुल्य होना होगा । सत्य के लिए सर्वस्व त्याग करने के लिए तत्पर रहना परमावश्यक है । पूर्ण विरक्ति ही पात्रता की सूचक है । ■

क्रमशः

“श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत” पुस्तक से उद्धारित

यह पुस्तक रमण केन्द्र दिल्ली में उपलब्ध है ।

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I, Mr. Justice K. Ramamoorthy (Retd.), hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

1st March 2016

SD/-

(Signature of the publisher)