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20. Om indu-maulina pitrmate namah

ॐ इन्दुमौलिनापितृमते नमः ।

Son of the crescent-crowned God.

Indumauli means the one who has Moon on his crown - that is Shiva. Ramana considered Arunachala who is Shiva as his Father.

21. Om pituradesatah sona sailam praptaya namah

ॐ पितुरादेशतः शोणशैलम्प्राप्ताय नमः ।

One who reached Arunachala in obedience to his father's command.

Ramana's letter before leaving his home in Madurai clearly states that in obedience to his father's command he left Madurai and reached Arunachala (Shonachala). The act was because of divine compulsion.

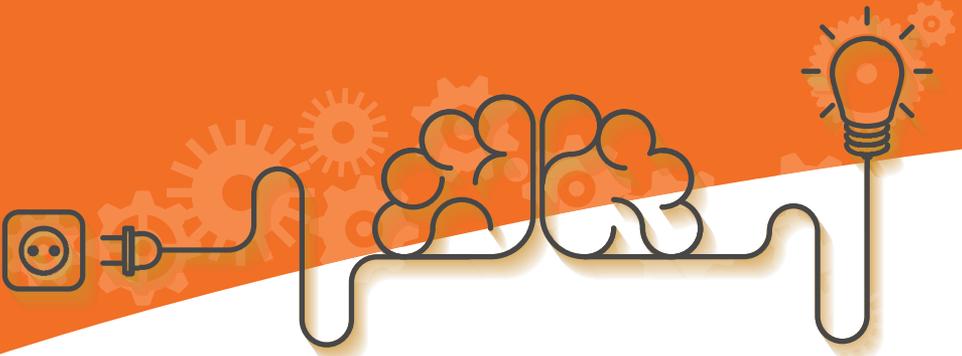
22. Om tapomayaya namah

ॐ तपोमयाय नमः ।

One who was full of "Tapas" – in a state beyond body and mind.

Ramana when he reached Arunachala was unaware of his body or mind and was in a state of pure bliss.

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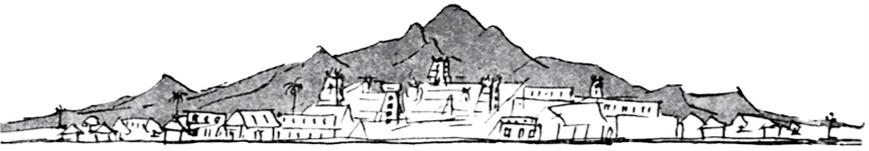
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Original ink sketch of Arunachala by Sri Ramana Maharshi from Kunju Swami's notebook

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Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

I have moved to Bangalore and I feel the editor of this Delhi-based magazine should be from the Delhi area who will attend the satsangs, interact with devotees and get the pulse of the kendra. Hence I am happy to announce that Shri Swagath Patnaik will take over the reins of Direct Path from the next issue. I wish him success and ask you to give all support.

I thank the managing committee of Ramana Kendra to have given me the opportunity to edit the magazine in spite of my little or no experience in this field. It made me learn a lot especially about Ramana philosophy. I am grateful to all the contributors and readers making my stint very pleasant.

Please send your articles for consideration to directpath@rediffmail.com

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

Shiromani Vijay - Editor

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Conflicts in Vedantic Injunctions

Shiromani Vijay

Many devotees of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi used to wonder how Ramana used to give different answers to seemingly similar questions. Many a times the answers would appear to be conflicting! A true spiritual master responds to the question of the seeker based on the state of mind that led to the question. This relevant answer helps the seeker to make spiritual progress. Does this mean there are inconsistencies in our master's teachings which are based on our Vedas and scriptures?

Vedas were given by Ishwara when this universe was created. So it serves as an operating manual for this Universe! Universe consists of all us at various stages of spiritual evolution and obviously the paths we must tread to make progress will be different even though for all of us final goal is "self-realisation". Vedas has all the injunctions and we have to choose the ones based on our level. However, it is

most difficult to know where we are in our spiritual journey. Here comes the role of the realised spiritual master who can gauge our mental anguish and guide us through the path that is most suitable for us.

Let us take a simple rather trivial example of two persons – one obese and one underweight - going to the doctor and asking the same question "how to lead a healthy life?". To the first person doctor says to eat very little fat-free food even to the point of being hungry and to the second says to eat well consisting of food including fat. These are opposite answers to the same question and if the patients interchange the prescriptions, it will lead to disastrous results for both. Also we see the importance of the need of the doctor who assesses the condition of the patient gives appropriate advice. In this light, let us look at a few famous statements from scriptures which are seem conflicting.

The very first verse of "Ishavasya

Upanishad”, stating the highest truth states – “The lord pervades in and through this universe and is not remote and is within us. To realise this one has to renounce the apparent universe without coveting anything that does not truly belong to us.” Obviously this verse is addressed to the highest level of seeker who has already realised the futility of chasing all the ordinary pleasures of life. The very next verse extolling action states – “Do ‘karma’ as enjoined in the shastras and enjoy the fruits of actions with an aim to live a full life (100 years). If actions are done with a sense of devotion, it will not be binding.” This injunction is aimed at a common householder who is still at the stage of cleansing his mind through proper action before learning about the highest truth as opposed to the first verse aimed at the Sanyasin. Further in the fifth verse, contradictory qualities are given to describe the self – “That atman moves yet it moves not. It is very far yet very near, it is within this and yet outside this”. Such verses are deliberate and quite common in Vedanta. It is only when the mind is compelled by such contradictions, it will abandon chasing wrong means to understand the Self.

In the opening verses of the third

chapter of Bhagavad Gita, no less an intelligent person like Arjuna is confused and has this doubt “If, O Janardana, according to Thee, knowledge is superior to action, why then, dost Thou engage me in this terrible action? With these seemingly conflicting words, Thou art, as it were, bewildering my understanding; tell me that one thing for certain, by which I can attain to the highest.” Then Bhagavan explains in detail the various paths which are in reality successive paths, to realise the highest truth.

In this day and age, our knowledge is sourced through various channels. With our limited intelligence, we tend to pick holes and often decry the scriptures for the contradictions. However, we should consider Vedas as authoritative and reconcile the conflicts. Of course, this needs a very sharp intellect. Fortunately for us, Jagadgurus have written Bhashyas on the scriptures. We need to search for a well-versed spiritual master who can guide through relevant portions of the vedas pertaining to our state of mind and spiritual level. May Bhagavan Ramana lead us into the right path through his realised devotees. ■

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



The Origins of Pradakshina-II

Micheal Highburger

Part II

The First Pradakshinas of Arunachala

After the pillar of fire cooled into a simple mountain, Brahma and Vishnu covered their bodies in holy ash and performed the first pradakshina of Arunachala. Ashamed of their former pride, but now in a spirit of humility, they took up endless circumambulations, lasting, according to the Purana, fourteen thousand years.¹

Parvati came to do penance by going in pradakshina. Upon its completion, she merged into Lord Arunachala, becoming his left half (the western side of the Mountain beginning at Adiannamalai). In time, Indra and the thirty-three crore devas appeared and commenced their pradakshinas. Siddhas and saints in subtle form came and began perpetual circumambulations. It is said that for the benefit of humanity, even Lord

Siva began regular pradakshinas around the Holy Hill.

Establishing the Pradakshina Path

Kalpas passed until one day, in the time of the Pandya dynasty, there lived a just ruler named King Vajrangada. Once while hunting in his dominions, he happened upon a musk civet-cat in a forest at the foot of Arunachala. When the cat fled around the Hill, the king mounted his steed and gave chase. He rode all the way around the Hill and just when he had made a complete circuit, he found himself thrown from the saddle. His horse, however, carried on the pursuit. Suddenly, the king beheld a great light in the sky, and below it, two animals leaving their earthly bodies and rising heavenward. From above, two celestial beings called down to the king: "O Sovereign, do not grieve the loss of your horse and civet-cat. Know that we have been

transformed by the grace of Lord Arunachala.”

“Who are you?” the king asked. One of them said, “O King, in our previous lives we were vidyadharas known as Kaladhara and Kantisali but because of a curse, we were born on earth in animal form.

“It happened long ago when in a forest on Mount Meru, we inadvertently incurred the wrath of Durvasa by carelessly trampling his grounds and picking flowers from his garden. He put a curse on us, we two unwitting intruders. Immediately we both fell at his feet and begged, ‘O Sage! Kindly forgive us for trespassing your lands and plucking flowers. Please do not curse us!’

“Hearing our plea, the Sage took pity upon us but said with genuine regret that he had no power to remove the curse. He said the spell was fixed but he told us how it could be lifted. He told us that Lord Siva had once declared that the one who circumambulates Sona Hill would become like Him, Lord of the entire universe. The Sage added that only by circumambulation of Arunachala Hill could the spell be broken.

“Indeed, the curse took effect as promised and Kantisali, who had

heedlessly trampled Durvasa’s plants was born a horse in Kambhoja and became your mount. I, Kaladhara, captivated by the fragrance of the Sage’s flowers, became a musk civet-cat² inhabiting the environs of the Mountain. However, once in our new incarnation, neither of us were able to recall the Sage’s exhortation. Today, however, by your desire to come here and hunt, we have unwittingly followed the Sage’s advice and the curse has been lifted.

“You are a noble soul but you were not blessed today because you only circumambulated the Holy Hill upon a conveyance, that is, mounted on your horse, whereas we went by our own power on foot.

“We truly thank you for your assistance. But now, as we are eager to return to our former home, we bid thee farewell, good king! May Arunachala bless you!”

The king folded his hands and made obeisance to the two celestials but then added: “Kaladhara and Kantisali, you have both been released from your curse. But what about those of us still wandering aimlessly in this earthly exile? Is that not also a curse?”

The two replied, “Good king,

listen carefully to what we have to say. Make your mind pure. Control it and surrender it to Lord Siva. Circumambulate Holy Aruna Hill on foot and worship Him. Utilise your treasury to increase Arunachaleswar Temple, construct towers for it and make level the path around the Hill as a service to the Lord's devotees. If you do this, your desire will be fulfilled." After uttering these words the two departed.

Thereupon, King Vajrangada made up his mind not to return to his kingdom. Instead, he erected a humble dwelling near Gautama's ashram at the foot of the Hill. This simple abode was visited by advisers, ministers and the commander-in-chief of the army consisting of elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry as well as friends, relatives and servants, all who came to plead the beneficent king's return. But the latter was firm in his resolve and surrendered his office. He crowned his son, Ratnangada, as king of the realm. He renounced his wealth, utilising it to dig holy tanks around the Hill, build the temple gopurams and lay the foundations for the eight-mile giripradakshina path. He cleared brush, briars and thorns, removed

sharp stones, leveled the ground and, with stone markers, formally established the way following the course trod by countless gods, saints and siddhas. His work was so perfect that devotees could even perform anga-pradakshina unimpeded. He made use of the newly cleared footway himself, going round the Hill twice daily, repeating the Lord's name as he went. Little by little he became immersed in the Ocean of Lord Siva's Bliss until, one day, Mahadeva Himself appeared before him. Vajrangada fell at His feet and the Lord spoke:

"Fear not, child! You are blessed. You may not remember it but in your previous birth, you were Indra. Yet as lord over devaloka, you fell victim to the temptation of pride and forgot Me. I thus bid you be born on earth as Vajrangada to gain humility and obtain my grace. Therefore you took birth in this most sacred of holy places. By that grace your delusion has now disappeared. You will hereafter investigate the truth and by so doing, will never be separated from Me again but like waves of the ocean, you will become my very Self.³

Part III

With Vajrangada's labours of love at Arunachala, temples and lingas sprang up around the Holy Hill, marking each step of the way along the circuit. With new gopurams, Annamalai and Adiannamalai Temples, said to be connected by hidden underground tunnels, shone in full splendour like two glowing magnets at each end of the East-West axis running through the centre of the Hill. The astha lingas were established by the guardian deities (*dikpalakas*) of the four cardinal and four minor directions, drawing the attention of the entire universe towards its inner core. In making their circuits, once reaching one of the eight lingas, devotees would prostrate to the Hill and then do prostration before the Lord of the direction⁴. On their morning pilgrimages, Arunachala's devotees instinctively kept to the left, making way for gods and siddhas in subtle form as the pre-dawn air wafted with the scent of *siddha* herbs and the fragrance of frangipani blossoms. The dust below their feet ever imbued with the holy power of countless crores of gods, sages and saints who had gone in pradakshina before them, they understood implicitly why the puranas declare that each stone on

Arunachala is itself a lingam, each tree dotting Its landscape, the wish-fulfilling tree of devaloka. A mere step taken on the footway at Arunachala, the scripture tells, confers the benefit of a *yaga* and two steps, the fruit of *rajasuuya yaga*. As they made their way round, pilgrims noticed the ever-changing facets of Arunachala's stone-form and yet, with each step, they became increasingly aware of the changeless stillness that pervaded His subtle-form. As their *girivalam* progressed, a deep silence welled up within them and grew in intensity so that once having completed the circuit and returned to the morning bustle of the town, it remained undisturbed.

Though they learned by rote the sacred writ pertaining to Arunachala, they knew from their own direct experience the benefits of pradakshina and never missed going in *girivalam* on Sivaratri Day or New Year's Day (14th April) or the first day of the Tamil months. They knew that the punya of Arunachala *girivalam* was magnified in untold measure when performed on solstice days, solar eclipse days, full-moon days or on Kartigai Deepam Day. They also knew that going in the early morning hours before sunrise (*brahma muhurtam*) was the most auspicious time of all.

As the Holy Hill was not merely a linga but the ‘source of all lingas’, and as the path around its base was the sacred *yoni* enshrining and conjoining It, devotees performed the circumambulation in great awe, trepidation and humility, knowing It to be Lord Siva Himself. They went on foot, unaided by any conveyance, moving slowly like ‘a queen in her ninth month’, keeping silence within and without, compelling their attention be directed to Him alone, repeating His name, offering prayers of supplication or reciting hymns in His praise.

Golden Age of Arunachala Pradakshina

As the centuries passed, the numbers increased. Pilgrims came from distant places in order to perform the sacred rite. They revered the shrines and temples that punctuated the auspicious pathway facing the Lord and purified themselves by bathing in its tirthams.

In time the number of temples equaled the number of days of the year. Spending but one day in meditation at each shrine meant that a full year would be required just to complete a single circuit of the Hill.

Thus the golden age of Arunachala

pradakshina had arrived. It was a time when devotees knew the Lord’s Greatness. And they knew His true name—*giripradakshinapriya* (‘the Lord who loves giripradakshina’)⁵. It was an age when the great Tamil saints, with kings in their wake, came to do the circumambulation and be blessed by Holy Annamalai.

Jnanasambandar, led by the ‘old Brahmin’ (who turned out to be Lord Arunachala in disguise), came after being despoiled of his possessions, left with nothing but his hymns in praise of the Hill.

Appar visited and eulogized Arunachala as did Manickavachakar who sang *Ammanai* and his world-renowned *Tiruvembavai* while on the pradakshina path near Adi Annamalai Temple⁶.

The Age of Forgetfulness

But this propitious age was not to endure and in spite of the great devotion and sacrifices made by King Vajrangada and the countless thousands and millions of devotees over vast stretches of time before him and those who came after him, the light of a gilded era, alas, slowly faded as succeeding generations slipped into the shadows of ignorance, losing sight altogether of the wisdom and devotion

of their forbears. To be sure, some of the citizens of Tiruvannamalai and its immediate environs remained true to the Lord's exhortation to go regularly in pradakshina and were keen to honour Him at Kartigai Deepam. But for the majority, forgetfulness like a deep slumber or a slow-acting narcotic crept up and quietly overtook them, dimming their sight.

By the late 19th century with the advent of the modern era, the world had fallen fast asleep while the Lord of Fire, the Unmoving Seat of Awareness sat alone in His consummate stillness, unremembered, even unknown, to a drowsy, ailing humanity. ■

To be continued...

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1 *Arunachala Purana* §164-5. pradakshinas. Siddhas and saints in subtle form came and began perpetual circumambulations. It is said that for the benefit of humanity, even Lord Siva began regular pradakshinas around the Holy Hill.

2 While civet-cats are related to the skunk, some species are known to emit sweet scents.

3 For the full account of Vajrangada, see *Glory of Arunachala*, pp. 146-153.

4 1 The gods of the directions are: Indra (the East), Yama (the South), Varuna (the West), Kubera (the North), Easanyam (the north-east), Agni (the South-east), Nirruti (the South-west) and Vayu (the North-west).

5 One of the names given to Arunachala by Adi Sankara.

6 See Halasya Mahatmyam. See also Letters (20th September, 1947). A small temple on the pradakshina road in Adiannamalai marks the spot where the two poems were first recorded.



Thiruchuzhi - Sthala Mahima

P.N.Vijay

Bhagavan Ramana was born in the small town of Thiruchuzhi about 40 kms south of the Temple town of Madurai. However, not many of us know of the story and glory of this fabled Shiva Sthala.

Skanda Purana has described in detail Thiruchuzhi. Once Holy Brahmanas approached Suta Maharshi and asked him: “Oh Great Soul of unparalleled knowledge please be kind enough to tell us of *that holy place* in this holy Bharata Varsha which is auspicious, removes all sins, gives untold benefits and where the God and Goddess are blessing devotees always”. And the great Maharishi replied: “Oh learned Brahmanas of Naimisaranya, there is nothing you do not know. But out of respect for me you are asking me this question and with same respect I give you the answer. In the kingdom of the Pandyas to the south of the holy city of Madurai there is a place called

Thiruchuzhi. In the past it has also been known as Punnaivana, Avartapuram, Trishulapuram, Bhuvaneswaram, Kaleswaram. This Thiruchuzhi is indeed the holiest of the holy places. He who goes there and worships Lord Shiva and his Consort Parvati is absolved of all sins, gets innumerable benefits. Lord Shiva here has been called as Pralayarudra in Kruta Yuga, Bhoominatha in Threta Yuga, Kalyanasundara in Dwapara Yuga and now in Kali Yuga as Thirumeninathar. If one worships the Lord there at the time of Pradosha, he attains to Jeevan Mukti. Such is the glory of this Shiva Sthala”. Further, he recounted the glory of Shiva linga of Thiruchuzhi in each of these Yugas and blessed the Brahmanas and they departed.

The river Gundaru (River Koundinya in Sanskrit) flows on the western periphery of the town and a big lake Trishula Tirtham is situated at the eastern side. Nestling between

them is the impressive temple. The temple faces the east and is surrounded by four car streets. After worshipping Lord Vinayaka, we enter the shrine of the Goddess. Other side of the entrance is Lord Skanda. A few yards away to the shrine of the Goddess is the main shrine dedicated to Lord Thirumeninathar -Bhoominatha swamy. In Ramanaashtottara one of the names is “Bhoominathasthalothitha”. The linga is more than 2000 years old and has appeared as a swayambhu. Adjacent to the Lord in linga form, is a sanctum for Lord Nataraja in a dancing pose. In the Prakara are temples for the Sun God and Lord Kalabhairava. The big temple complex has several smaller alcoves for various Gods.

Throughout history, Thiruchizhi has found an important place in Puranas and Thevarams. It has attracted to devotion of Sambandar and Thirunavukkarasar who have sung Thevarams on the God. Sekkhizhar talks of the glory of this Sthala in periapuranam. Swami Vivekananda stayed in this town for three days.

Normal maintenance is done by the family of erstwhile Raja of Ramanathapuram. In 2011, under the supervision of Sri Anjaneyalu, Ashram carried out the re-tiling of the 22,000 sq. ft. mantapam roof and general renovation which culminated in the performance of Mahakumbhabhishekam in the presence of the Rani of Ramanatapuram and hundreds of pilgrims and devotees, on Bhagavan’s Advent Day, September 1 st 2013. It coincided with Punarvasu nakshatra. With copious rains, Trisula Tirtham filled to capacity and all were happy at the good augury.

The home where Bhagavan was born is immaculately maintained by the Ashram. Sitting in meditation in front of Bhagavan’s picture is an experience not to be missed by anyone. May Bhagavan give us all an opportunity to visit this holy Sthala.

The Sthala Puranam of Thiruchuzhi has been very well depicted in the dance drama – Balakandam of Ramana. This is produced by RMCL Bangalore. ■

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The Sanctity of Three

Vijay Vancheswar

Three has a special significance not just in spirituality but in other spheres too as for instance in the judiciary. Besides the three main aspects of life signified through the creation of Brahma, preservation of Vishnu and destructive energy of Rudra or Shiva, we refer to the three states of consciousness namely, waking, dream and deep sleep of human life. Transcending these three states is the 'turiya' state of pure consciousness, the underlying state of "I-am ness", the substratum of existence which is ever present.

"The Tripura Rahasya (Tripurā Rahasya) meaning 'The Mystery beyond the Trinity', is an ancient literary work venerated by Bhagavan Ramana. This text in Sanskrit is believed to have been narrated by Dattatreya to Parashurama. It is an ancient prime text which is one of the treatises on Advaita school of classical Indian Metaphysics.

*'Tripura' means three cities or the trinity. 'Rahasya' means secret or mystery. In a sense, there is no secret to be revealed. It is only due to lack of wisdom that humans do not experience their true nature. Therefore, mystery would be a more appropriate translation. Thus, Tripura Rahasya means the 'Mystery beyond the Trinity'. As mentioned earlier, we have the three states of consciousness: waking (Jagrut), dreaming (Svapna) and deep sleep (Shushupti). The underlying consciousness in them all is called Sri Tripura, the Mother Goddess Chandika. The 'Tripura Rahasya' expounds the teachings of the supreme spiritual truth. The highest truth was first taught by Lord Shiva to Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu incarnated on earth as Sri Dattatreya, Lord of the Avadhutas, who taught this to Parasurama, who later taught it to Haritayana".**

Again, there are three types of

karma referred to as prarabhdha, that part of karma which must be worked out in the present life, agami karma, the part which remains to sprout or be experienced and sanchita karma, referring to the part which gets added to the bank of karma which gets accumulated during one's present lifetime. The peace or 'shanti mantra' is repeated thrice. This is so, because of 'trivaram satyam'; meaning that what is said thrice comes true. We chant shanti thrice to emphasize our intense desire for peace. In the court of law also, one who takes the witness stand says, 'I shall speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth'. It is said that all obstacles, problems and sorrows originate from three sources: a) Aadhidhaivika-the unseen divine forces over which we have little or no control like earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions etc. due to 'force majeure', referred to as acts of God, b) Aadhibhautika-the known factors around us like accidents, human contacts, pollution, crime etc. and c) Aadhyaatmika-problems of our bodies and minds like disease, anger, frustration etc. We sincerely pray to the Lord that at least while we undertake special tasks or even in our daily lives, there are no problems or that, problems are minimized from these three sources.

Sri Ramana advocates moderation in three activities of our life-eating, speaking and sleeping. It is also commonly indicated that one should follow the three dictums to lead a life of purity: 'see no evil', 'speak no evil' and 'hear no evil'. In our phenomenal life, we often refer to the three reference points of the past, present and the future. The use ranges from comparisons made in the history and economy of a country to the state of concerns that confront humanity be it on issues of environment, natural resources, wildlife or the population of humankind.

"Three also has a sacred implication in what is termed as 'Tripundra' (referring to the three horizontal marks applied on the forehead; a Saivite tilaka, with origins in South India. The three horizontal lines with sacred ash or 'vibhuti', usually with a dot made from sacred ash in the middle has a spiritual meaning in Shiva tradition in Hinduism. (A Vishnu tradition of three vertical marks is called 'Urdhava Pundra'. This symbolic three lines are used either daily or especially during certain rites and ceremonies, by men. They are supposed to represent Lord Shiva's threefold power of will (icchasakti), knowledge (jnanasakti) and action(kriyasakti). Further this symbolizes Shiva's trident(trisula) and

the divine triad of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

To those who apply it, 'Tripundra' is a reminder of the spiritual aims of life; the truth that body and material things shall someday become ash, and that 'mukti' or release from bondage is a worthy goal. 'Tri' means three, 'Pundra' means one which is released. There are three horizontal lines of vibhuti (holy ash) on the brow, the dot (bindu) in the centre denotes the third eye or the one that enables perception and understanding of the 'Truth' or immutable 'Reality': the 'One' without a second. Holy ash, usually produced from burnt cow dung, is a reminder of the temporary nature of the physical body and the importance of spiritual attainment and closeness to Shiva (Atman-Brahman)."

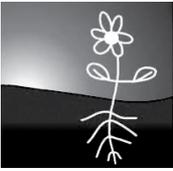
"The first line is equated to Garhapatya (the sacred fire in a household kitchen), the 'A' syllable of "Aum", the Rajas guna, the earth, the external Atman, Kriyā – the power of action, the Rigveda, the morning extraction of Soma, and Maheshvara. The second streak of ash is a reminder of Dakshinagni (the holy fire lighted in the South for ancestors), the

*sound 'U' of "Aum", Sattva guna, the atmosphere, the inner Atman, Iccha – the power of will, the Yajurveda, midday Soma extraction, and Sadasiva. The third streak is the Ahavaniya (the fire used for Homa), the 'M' syllable in "Aum", the Tamas guna, Svarga – heaven, the Paramatman; the highest Atman (Brahman), the power of perception, the Samaveda, Soma extraction at dusk, and Shiva. Applying Tripundra on the forehead is termed as "Bhasma dharana": The word 'Bhasma' means calcined ash. Those who wear 'Tripundra' on their forehead, often recite the mantras of the Lord while remembering its spiritual meaning and it is not just a sign of culture or identification" **

The number 'Three' (3) is said to have the meaning of positive affirmation. It is supposed to instill the confidence and faith to clearly focus on our purpose in life. A holy number, 'Three' represents the Holy Trinity: mind, body, and spirit and helps us pursue the path laid out by Sri Ramana Maharshi, to transcend the traps of the phenomenal world, understand our true nature and 'Be as We Are'. ■

* Wikipedia

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Nirvana

All is abolished but the mute Alone.
The mind from thought released, the heart from grief,
Grow inexistent now beyond belief;
There is no I, no Nature, known-unknown.
The city, a shadow picture without tone,
Floats, quivers unreal; forms without relief
Flow, a cinema's vacant shapes; like a reef
Foundering in shoreless gulfs the world is done.

Only the illimitable Permanent
Is here. A Peace stupendous, featureless, still.
Replaces all, - what once was I, in It
A silent unnamed emptiness content
Either to fade in the Unknowable
Or thrill with the luminous seas of the Infinite.

Sri Aurobindo



Putta Bhatta Jataka - A Queen wife speaks up

Neera Kashyap

Jatakas are the 550 symbolic birth stories of the Buddha in Pali which reveal some event in the long series of his previous existences as a *bodhisatta*. A bodhisatta is one who, while destined to become a Buddha, defers his own enlightenment to help others evolve similarly, by bringing the message of deliverance to many.

Like all Jataka tales, the Putta Bhatta Jataka too portrays a *bodhisatta*. In this tale, set in a timeless past, his role is subsidiary but pivotal in establishing gender justice, in this case between a king and his queen. The story is ageless, yet provides lessons for our contemporary struggle for gender equity.

The story: In Benaras, the Bodhisatta is the son of one of King Brahmadata's courtiers. On coming of age, he becomes the king's adviser in both spiritual and temporal matters. It so happens that

the king is afraid of his son, fearing he may injure him so he sends him away from the city. Taking his wife with him, the son comes to live in a village. In time he hears of the king's death and sets out to return to Benaras so "that I may receive the kingdom which is my birthright," says he. As a traveller he receives food to eat which he is advised to share with his wife. Instead, he eats it all himself. She thinks, "A cruel man this, indeed!" and is filled with sorrow.

In Benaras, he is made king and she his queen consort. Thinking "a little is enough for her", he shows her no other consideration or honour, not even to ask after her welfare. As the new king's adviser, the Bodhisatta notices both the king's scant regard for his queen as well as the queen's steadfast love for her husband, and takes a pledge to make him show her respect and honour. As a ploy, he approaches the queen and appeals to

her sense of charity - “ought you not to give the old Fathers a piece of cloth or a dish of rice?”

The queen replies: “Dear sir, I never receive anything myself; what shall I give to you? When I received, did I not give? But now the king gives me nothing at all: let alone giving anything else, as he was going along the road he received a bowl of rice, and never gave me a bit – he ate it all himself.”

The Bodhisatta asks the queen if she would be able to say this in the king’s presence. She assents. His strategy: he would ask the queen the same question before the king and she should give the same reply. The scene unfolds as planned. To her answer that she receives nothing from the king, the Bodhisatta counters: “Are you not the queen consort?”

She replies: “Good sir, what boots the place of a queen consort when no respect is paid? What will the king give me now? When he received a dish of rice on the road, he gave me none, but ate it all himself.” When the Bodhisatta asks the king if this was true, the king assents.

The Bodhisatta turns to the queen and says, “Then lady, why dwell here with the king after he has become

unkindly? In the world, union without love is painful. While you dwell here, loveless union with the king will bring you sorrow. When one honours not – as soon as you see it, you should go elsewhere.” He speaks the following stanzas:

Honour for honour, love for love is due:

Do good to him who does the same to you:

Observance breeds observance; but 'tis plain

None need help him who will not help again.

Return neglect for negligence, nor stay

To comfort him whose love is past away.

The world is wide; and when the birds descry

That trees have lost their fruit – away they fly.

Hearing this, the king gives his queen all honour and from that time on they dwell together in friendship and harmony.

The story does not provide enough details of the relationship between father and son nor between husband

and wife for us to get to the root cause of the new king's lack of giving to a spouse who has loved and served him well. Hence, the need to use creative imagination for an analysis of the story.

The father feels a mysterious threat from his son, 'fearing he may injure him', which leads to the son being exiled. The threat is probably not from any latent cruelty in the son nor a disloyalty that could cause physical injury but from an apathy or indifference that prevents a person from feeling enough emotion to relate, to care, to commit, to decide, to act, to reason or even to retain emotion as memory. Psychologists suggest that an overarching cause for apathy is pessimism about the future. It is likely that pessimism about the future was the king's own inner condition which he projected onto his son as a child-heir, thus pulverizing the boy's emotions in his very childhood.

Since emotions are important as preparatory ground for reasoning, analysis, motivation, decision-making and inner guidance, their absence or reduced presence works in reverse causing an attitude of unconcern, unresponsiveness and a paralysis of commitment. Also called

'flat affect', apathy is essentially the feeling of not feeling or not feeling enough, leading to a bluntness or flatness of expression.

Flat affect is an attitude that could derive either from early childhood that leads to the belief that no matter how much one applies oneself, one still can't succeed or a series of events in one's current life that leave one feeling one simply can't win. In the Puta Bhatta Jataka, the death of the father appears to trigger the assertion of the underside - a narcissistic ego that places oneself first and everyone else a far second. That is perhaps why the wife's sense of shock and sudden realisation when she sees her husband eat all the food, expressed in the words, "A cruel man this, indeed!" and is filled with sorrow."

While the Bodhisatta notices the king's lack of concern and respect for his wife – now his queen consort – it is likely that the king is already displaying traits of both narcissism and flat affect in his rule as king. This deep-rooted condition could only be resolved in the love of a good and steadfast wife who endures her sorrow till compelled to speak. And the enlightened Bodhisatta compels her to speak. It is worth noting here that the Bodhisatta himself probably

enjoys considerable respect as the son of an old courtier and as an established adviser on temporal and spiritual affairs himself, having earlier served the old king and now the current ruler.

In Buddhist psychology, the right or ripe moment is given great importance. Because the queen has endured – endured the hardship of exile by her husband’s side, endured the sorrow of his scant concern and respect – she is ready to speak when the right moment comes. The significant fact is that she is supported by an enlightened ally who knows that her love is the one route that could lead to a breakthrough. This support combined with her enduring goodness allows her to air her grievance without fear when the moment is ripe. And the Bodhisatta’s

goad that she leave a loveless union – *the world is wide; and when the birds descry that trees have lost their fruit – away they fly* – is the shock and potent threat necessary for the king to feel emotion once again – to feel a return flow of love and resolution in the power of an enduring love.

Perhaps the key to gender equity relevant to contemporary times lies in a woman’s preparation towards fearlessness which could lie in endurance or self-reliance or any combination of qualities that will give her the strength and courage to speak up when required. So that when the moment is ripe there will be enlightened support in helping her achieve a breakthrough in the patriarchal dominance and unconcern that has reigned through time. ■

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“To BE” is to realise – Hence I AM THAT I AM. I AM is Siva. Nothing else can be without Him. Everything has its being in Siva and because of Siva.

Ramana Maharshi



The Eternal Elusive Quest For Elixir

Tuktuk Ghosh

There is no end to craving for more and more in life. This ceaselessly propels us to rush from one milestone to another. All our energies, mental, emotional and physical are invested in this continuum. So much so that there is a very strong urge for immortality, to live on even after having moved on from the physical form.

In Hindu tradition, the eternal quest for the elixir of immortality, is best exemplified in the Kumbh Mela celebration, held every 12 years, in the four holy cities of Prayagraj (earlier known as Allahabad), Ujjain, Nasik and Haridwar. It brings together sciences of astronomy, astrology, spirituality, ritualistic traditions and socio-cultural customs and practices.

The latest Kumbh at Prayagraj, at the confluence or “Sangam” of the holy rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati, concluded on Mahashivaratri on 4th March 2019,

after 49 days of utterly mesmerizing spiritual experiences. It had been inaugurated on Makar Sankranti on 13th January 2019. A temporary city, erected on 3200 hectares along the river front, with all conceivable amenities, made it easy for devotees to immerse themselves in myriad rituals, snan, prayers, chants, bhajans, satsangs, discourses, yagnas, deepdanams and other religious programmes. It drew in a record 25 crore visitors. Interestingly, three Guinness World Records were set during this period. These related to quickest hand print painting with 7664 participants in 8 hours on the theme of “Jai Gange” in 3 colors of yellow, blue and orange, parading the largest number of buses with a fleet of 503 buses across a stretch of 3.2 kilometres and the largest collective sanitation drive ever taken up, albeit they had no connection with the core spiritual aspects of the festival. It was truly hi-tech, too. Such an innovative and extensive use of upgraded ICT

in the Kumbh Mela had never been seen before. Little wonder that it was lavished with fulsome praise. The Ivy League Harvard University declared it a worthy case study to be analysed in its regular educational courses. UNESCO nominated it as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of humanity and amongst the largest peaceful gatherings of the world.

Let us trace the roots of the Kumbh Mela- the festival of the sacred pitcher. The term Kumbh comes from the root, kumbhak, the sacred pitcher of the elixir of immortality. There is a mention of kumbh and the bathing ritual associated with it in the Rig Veda (verse 10.89.7). It speaks of the benefits of bathing at the sangam, diminution of negative influences and rejuvenation of the mind and soul. Prayers for the kumbh are also found in the Atharvaveda and Yajurveda. The Puranas recount how the Gods and demons fought over the sacred pitcher (kumbh) of “amrit” (nectar of immortality) called the Ratna of the fabled Samudra Manthan. It is widely believed that Lord Vishnu, disguised as the enchantress, Mohini, whisked the kumbh out of the grasp of the covetous demons. As he took it heavenwards, a few drops of the precious nectar fell on the four sacred

sites, mentioned above. The flight and the ensuing pursuit are said to have lasted 12 divine days which are equivalent to 12 human years. The rivers along the sites, Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godavari and Shipra, are believed to have turned into “amrit” at the given cosmic moment, giving pilgrims who take a holy dip in them, the essence of purity, auspiciousness and - most importantly-immortality. Historic evidence points towards the rule of King Harshavardhana (c 590-647 A D) when the Kumbh Mela got widespread recognition. Huien Tsang, the famous Chinese traveler has prominently highlighted the grandeur of the festival in his acclaimed travelogue. Texts also tell us that Adi Sankaracharya initiated the Kumbh Melas and 10 Akharas, closely linked to the Melas.

In the elusive quest for immortality it is beneficial to find solace in Bhagavan’s Upadesa Saram, verse 26:

“ Being our real self is knowing our real self, because our real self is devoid of two. This is tanmaya-nishta, the state of being firmly established as tat or it, the absolute reality called brahman”. ■

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Aksharamanamalai Part 13

97

Vī/duvit/tīrt/tula

Vīdu/pukkup/pai/yavun

Vī/dukāt/tinai/yarul

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Dragging me out of my house (the ego), Thou hast made me enter into the Heart-home, and slowly Thou hast shown me That itself as Thy home. Such is Thy grace.

The ego is the false 'I'. It is this which binds the soul. By God's grace the devotee is liberated from the constricting bondage forged by egoity. She enters the Heaven of the Heart-ether which is the house of God, the seat of the true Self. The Tamil *vidu* means both 'house' and 'liberation'. The ego is the prison-house of the soul. The Heart is her true home where she finds liberation.

Reference may here be seen to Ramana leaving his uncle's house in Madurai and arriving at Arunachala.

98

Veli/vittēn/un/seyal

Verut/tidā/dun/narul

Veli/vit/tenaik/kā

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! I have made public Thy doings. Do not hate me for this. But do save me by admitting me into the Space that is Thine (i. e. grace).

In this hymn the devotee-soul has spoken about the sports that the Lord has played with her. He should not take any offence at this. It is the longing that she has for Him that has made her speak in the way she has done. The Lord, in His infinite mercy, should overlook all this, and come to save her.

99

Vē/dān/tat/tē

Vē/rara/vilan/gum

Vē/dap/poru/larul

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Do grant me graciously the essential truth of the Vedas which shines in the Vedanta as the distinctionless Reality.

Vedanta means the end or goal of the Vedas. It is so called because the purport of the Vedas is taught therein. The purport is that the Supreme Self, *Brahman*, is nondual, one without a second. The distinctions that are experienced in the world, and the particulars that constitute it are not real; they are but apparent. The devotee-soul prays that this plenary truth be revealed to her. *Brahman* is the source of the Vedas; *Brahman* is to be known from the Vedas.

100

Vai/dalai/vāzht/tā

Vait/tarul/kudi/yā

Vait/tenai/vidā/darul

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! Considering even my slander as praise, take me under the protection of Thy grace, and do not reject me.

In taking liberties with the Lord, the devotee has hurled words of blame against Him. This is because she has intensive love for her Lord. He is not one who is carried away

by the expressed words. He knows the inner intentions. He knows that the devotee's abusive expressions are but praises. He has to save not only those who speak sweetly of Him, but also those who say harsh things about Him. Are there not cases of saints who hurled stones at Him or beat Him with a bow, club, or stick?

The first three words of this verse may also be taken to mean: "Blessing me by placing Thy hand on my head."

101

Am/buvil/ā/lipōl

An/buru/vuni/lenai

An/bāk/karait/tarul

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! As snow in water, dissolve me as love in Thy form which is Love. Thus be gracious.

Snow and water are not different from each other. Only in appearance do they differ. When snow melts, it becomes water. The soul and *Brahman* are not different. It is the adjunct of the soul's nescience, that makes for the apparent difference. When nescience is destroyed through knowledge, the truth of non-duality is realized. An *Upanishadic* text compares release (*moksha*) to milk being poured with

milk, or water with water. There is no difference between milk that is poured and milk that is poured with, between water that is poured and the water that is poured with. It is all milk, all water. The nature of the Self is pure love, happiness, bliss. The things that we imagine we love, do but reflect a fragrance of the love that is the Self. The Sage Yajnavalkya says to Maitreyi in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*: “Not for the sake of the husband is the husband dear, but for the sake of the Self is he dear. Not for the sake of the wife is the wife dear, but for the sake of the Self is she dear... Not for the sake of all is all dear, but for the sake of the Self is all dear.” The Self is the seat of happiness. It is Love itself. In the present verse, the devotee-soul prays for the dissolution of her separate individuality so that she may realize her true nature as the non-dual Love.

102

Aru/naiyen/drenna/yān

Arut/kanni/pattē/nun

Arul/valai/tappu/mō

Arunā/chalā.

O Arunachala! The moment I thought of Thee as Arunachala, I got caught in the net of Thy grace. Will the net of Thy grace ever fail one that is caught in it?

The Arch-Fisherman that Lord Arunachala is, He casts His net of grace in order that the souls may fall into it. The very moment the devotee-soul thinks of Arunachala she falls a prey to His grace. The net is so strong that no escape is possible for those who have found their way into it. The devotee-soul does not wish to escape from it. In the case of the physical net and the fish, the latter loses its freedom when it is caught. But in the case of the devotee-soul, she finds her real freedom when she comes into the ambit of divine grace. ■

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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.

SD/- 

1st March 2019

(Signature of the publisher)



Kendra Bulletin

Satsangs: January - March 4th, 2019

January 6th

The Kendra's first satsang of the year was addressed by Shri Ambarish Daveji in the first of a four-part series on 'Exploring Reality: Understanding the Masters.'

He began by answering the question 'What is Reality?' According to the Upanishads, Reality is 'Satyam', which is unchanging, timeless and without attributes. 'Satyam' corresponds to Brahman in which 'all is born, comes from, lives in and merges'. That which is the cause of everything is 'Satyam'.

Ambarishji went onto explore Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's statement: 'Everything is nothing but the Self'. If Brahman created everything out of Himself, everything is Brahman. We don't see this Reality because of the names and forms we have given to our ideas. In Reality, we are Sat-Chit-Ananda. Existence is 'Sat', Consciousness is 'Chit', pure Joy is 'Ananda'.

He eloquently ended his talk with the powerful phrase: 'Move from goals in life to goal of life'. There is no greater goal than to achieve 'Self-realisation'.

January 13th

In the second of the four part series, 'Exploring Reality: Understanding the Masters', Shri Ambarish Daveji reiterated the idea that the efficient and mechanical force is the same: Brahman. Self-realization simply means 'I'm already there', I just have to realise it. Nothing can be from outside. Every knowledge needs a source. That source of knowledge is within me.

Meditation is bliss but not the ultimate stage, the ultimate stage being the

knowledge of 'Who I am'. The question: How to find out 'Who I am?'...The answer is through knowledge.If you want to know God, you have to love God. A deep love for God is Bhakti. A karma yogi is also a bhakti yogi, bhakti being an essential part of performing karma. If actions are performed with love for God, the fruits will be attributed to Him.

Ambarishji brought new perspectives to the discourse: it is not wrong to want to experience Ananda through the pursuit of our goals but what is illusory is to search for happiness in external objects. For example, if we buy a new car we may think that happiness lies in the car itself, whereas happiness lies within us, in our very nature.Once we understand this, the thirst for chasing our desires with the expectation of getting happiness from the fruit of our actions will cease. This wonderful explanation brought the devotees present closer to Bhagavan Ramana's statement: 'Happiness is your nature. It's not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is to seek it outside when it's inside'.

Another important point was on the general misconception that *Jagat* is Maya wherein Maya is understood as 'illusion'. He clarified this idea by stating that if Jagat is Brahman, then it can't be 'illusion', eloquently explaining that Jagat is Shakti - the power and manifestation of Brahman.

– Marie Elangovan

January 20th

After recapitulating verses 46-48 of Viveka Chudamani, Swami Durgeshanandji covered verses 49-52.

Due to our ignorance in identifying the Self with the Body, Mind and Intellect (BMI), one gets bound to cycles of births and deaths. Discrimination, along with faith, devotion and meditation (as instructed in the sacred scriptures) burns up the ignorance of the BMI complex at its very roots.

The sadhaka then asks his Guru these 7 questions...

1. What is bondage?
2. How did it come into existence?
3. How is its continuity maintained?
4. How do we get free from bondage?

5. What is Non-Self (Anaatma)?

6. What is the Supreme Self?

7. How do we discriminate between the two?

The Guru replies that blessed are those like the *sadhaka* who seek liberation from bondage to attain Self Realization. Swamiji ended the discourse by quoting a verse from Ram Charit Manas:

Ishwar Ansh Jeeva Avinashi

Chetan Amal sahaj sukh Rashi

(Meaning: The individual soul being part of the Supreme soul is indestructible, conscious, pure and a natural repository of bliss.)

When association with the BMI complex is done away with, one realises the unity of the individual soul with the Supreme.

January 27th

In the 3rd of the 4-part series, 'Exploring Reality: Understanding the Masters', Ambarish Daveji said that despite happiness being our inherent and true nature, the mind's superimposition on it the objects of the world sparks off desires. To fulfil these, we perform action (Karma), get their fruits (Karma-Phal) – some good, some bad – resulting in further action, thereby creating endless cycles of births and rebirths. Like data stored in the hard disc of a computer, our desires are stored in our *buddhi* which travels with us from one life to the next.

Jagat (the world outside) is the manifest extension of Brahman (the Supreme Being – substratum of all that is) just as the pot is of clay and waves are of the sea. Just as the rope in darkness is seen as snake due to the superimposition of our latent tendencies on the true Knowledge of it being rope, when realisation dawns we see the rope as rope. Hence rope can be equated with Brahman and snake with Jagat. *Avidya* is the darkness of ignorance and the appearance of the rope as snake *Adhyasa* – caused by the illusory workings of the mind.

The mind's desires being rooted in our likes and dislikes, the Masters and our sacred scriptures have all pointed to the elimination of the mind as the path to liberation. If we give up desires and the expectation from Isvara of a particular fruit of action, accepting whatever is given as *prasad* (as stated in Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's Upadesa Saram – kartur ājñayā prāpyate phala?), then the universal law of cause and effect will cease to exist.

– Rashmi Vyas

February 3rd

In the last of the series 'Exploring Reality: Understanding the Masters,' Ambarishji recapitulated several of the points made in the earlier talks: Brahman is the unchanging entity against which all change takes place; there is nothing to find but something to shed: the *ahamkara* of 'I'; *maya* creates jagat, *avidya* creates individuality; it is our *upadhis* of body and mind that superimpose jagat onto Brahman, Isvara's grace lying in our attempts to know Him by transcending these.

How do we attempt to know Him? Through *antahkaran shuddhi* or the removal of thoughts and desires by replacing these with thoughts of God. The methods are given in Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's poem, Upadesa Saram - *kāya-vān-manah kāryam-uttamampūjanam japa-ścintanam kramāt* (Meaning: This is certain: Worship, praise and meditation, Being work of body, speech and mind, Are steps for orderly ascent). Ambarishji's major point was: through purity, which comes gradually, one can merge into Brahman like a river merges into the ocean.

To a question on science and spirituality, he said: the direction of science is to know the parts in order to know the whole; the direction of Vedanta is to know the whole so one knows the parts. In answer to another question on the journey from one body to the next, Ambarishji said: 'just before death, first the *vac* (speech) leaves, then the mind and finally the *pranas*; conversely at birth, first the *pranas* enter, then the mind awakens and last comes speech, when the baby cries out at birth.

– Neera Kashyap

February 10th

Supporting dark glasses after eye surgery, ‘Bollywood Swamiji’ as Swami Prabuddhanandaji jokingly referred to himself, resumed the study of Adhyay 1 Valli 3 of Kathopanishad.

Whatever is more subtle is more comprehensive, intimate and indivisible. Accepting this principle is vital to understanding verses 10, 11 & 12. Hearing is subtler than any sound; mental cognition of sound is subtler than our sense of hearing; buddhi or intellect is subtler than mind; and choiceless conscious identity is subtler than buddhi. If this is understood, then logically we understand that consciousness is the most comprehensive of all objects, of all that Is.

The same Truth is mistaken to be you, me and different identities. All become both manifest and unmanifest within consciousness. This Truth is obvious, but is not understood due to faulty thinking. Disparities, differences and illogicality all arise in the realm of thought.

Swamiji illustrated this by answering a question on the practice needed to enable abiding in states glimpsed in meditation: these states are merely subjective; none can abide in any state outside of the Self. One can abide only in what one Is, therefore clear understanding of oneself is vital, and the Shastras help to achieve this.

– *Bharati Mirchandani*

February 17th

Shri Ambarish Daveji’s opening statement in his talk on ‘Daily life and Self Knowledge’ was: In deep sleep, ‘I am’ Is, even when there is no body, mind and intellect. Just to know this is Self-Knowledge. Since *jagat* is a vast collective of our own desires, the Lord gives us exactly those conditions to fulfil our desires and needs – not greed –so we can go beyond in search of our real nature in this changing world of *asatyam*. Since the Lord himself wishes us to return to Him, there is guidance given for this return through the shastras. These have two parts: Dharmashastra and Brahmashastra. Dharma is not to be confused with religion. It is to follow the order and functioning

of the cosmos. By following dharma and using the connecting pathways of *artha* and *kama* we achieve *moksha* or Brahman, the attributeless.

The principles of dharma in daily life include several points covered in Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's Upadesa Saram: leave the fruits of your actions to the Lord's will with such surrender that one forgets what one wants; serve and worship the world because the Lord lives in the world in various forms; seeing oneself free of all attributes is to see the Lord, for He shines ever as the pure Self.

Ambarishji also stressed other methods: the capacity to expand beyond oneself to include the world in a feeling of oneness; to keep japa going in the backdrop –so this imbues our daily actions with the sanctity the sacred *japa mantras* possess.

– Neera Kashyap

February 24th

Swami Durgeshanandaji began his discourse on Vivekachudamani by portraying the plight of *jiva* who seeks to derive pleasure from situations which are essentially transient. When shattered by the miseries of the world, he realises the illusionary nature of worldly happiness.

Through verses 52 to 60, Swamiji elucidated the importance of relying on the Self - Purusharth - rather than on outside help in our search for the eternal. For example, we can shift a heavy load from our own head to another's, but our hunger cannot be satisfied by another's eating. Similarly, our own sickness cannot be cured by someone else taking the medicine. So for liberation, the effort will have to be our own.

Even strange predicaments require the observance of ritual efforts to free oneself of their hold. Swamiji recounted the incident of a gentleman who was haunted by the ghost – pretatma – of a person who had died. It was only through the enactment of proper prayers and *kriya karma* could the gentleman liberate both himself and the ghost from further unrest. From worldly efforts, we must move towards the attainment of Sat Chit Ananda. The supreme secret of achieving this aim is not through yoga, karma or the study of scriptures

which can serve only as aids, but through the complete identity of jiva with Brahman. This alone is the way.

– *Indra Sharma*

March 4th

The dark night of Phalgun, Maha Shivratri, was considered to be of great spiritual import by Sri Ramana Maharshi. It was celebrated with great ardour at the flower bedecked Kendra on this auspicious day. Priests chanted Ganesh Vandana, followed by the names of Shiva, while all joined in the singing of Upadesa Saram.

Strong rhythms of Rudram followed by the gentler Chamakam accompanied the *abhishekam* of the Shivalingam. Milk, curd, fruits, honey, coconut water and sandal paste were poured on the lingam. The last was collected separately for all to anoint themselves, while the rest was served as *prasada*, food graced by Shiva and Ramana.

After the ritual cooling of the Shivalingam, the priests performed arati, then proceeded to decorate the lingam while Daya Bhai and his accompanying musicians-Arun on the keyboard, Ankit on the tabla, and Varun handling percussion - replaced the austere, auspicious Vedic vibrations with trendy Hindi chants to Shiva as Bholenath, the easily pleased god of simple folk.

While devotees clapped along, Shiva continued to be offered all his favourite things: *vibhuti*, a new *veshti*, *sindhoor*, sandal paste, a *rudraksh* mala, flowers, cannabis and bilva leaves, and then more fruits and flowers. The atmosphere was charged with abundance, exuberance and immense grace.

– *Bharati Mirchandani*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Satsang timings: 5pm - 6:30pm

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
March 3rd	No Satsang	
March 4th	*Maha Shivratri Celebrations	*Puja/Abhishekam/Bhajans
March 10th	Katho Upanishad	Swami Prabhuddhananda Ji
March 17th	Saddarshanam	Shri Shankar Narayan Ji
March 24th	Vivekachudamani	Swami Durgeshananda Ji
March 31st	Topic To Be Announced	Shri Ambarish Dave Ji
April 7th	Katho Upanishad	Swami Prabhuddhananda Ji
April 14th	*Bhagawan's Aradhana Day	Swami Chidrupananda Ji Head Of Chinmaya Mission Noida Bhajan's By Smt Jayanthi Aiyer Ji & Group
April 21st	Saddarshanam	Shri Shankar Narayan Ji
April 28st	Vivekachudamani	Swami Durgeshananda Ji

* *Special Event*



श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

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पन्तुलु लक्ष्मी नारायण, संस्कृत और तेलुगु भाषाओं के विद्वान थे और कुशल आशुकवि (Extemporaneous poet) थे।

जब मैंने महर्षि के कक्ष में प्रवेश किया, वहाँ वेद पारायण हो रहा था। महर्षि अपने सोफे पर केवल कौपन पहने बैठे मुझे एक महामहिम के समान प्रतीत हुए। इस प्रथम दर्शन ने मुझमें गहरी श्रद्धा जगा दी। महर्षि ने मेरे मर्म को इतनी गहराई तक स्पर्श किया कि जब वे नाश्ते के लिए उठे तो मैं अपने आप को रोक नहीं पाया और उनके सामने दंडवत् प्रणाम करने के लिए लेट गया। इस हड़बड़ी में वे सारी पुस्तकें जो मैं उन्हें भेंट करने लाया था नीचे गिर पड़ी। किसी भक्त ने उन्हें उठाने में मेरी सहायता की।

नाश्ता होने के बाद मैं आश्रम में स्थित अपने कमरे में गया और भगवान रमण की स्तुति में 'आत्मभिष्ट निवेदनम्' शीर्षक से 20 श्लोक लिखे। जब मैं महर्षि के कक्ष में गया तो मैंने अपना परिचय संस्कृत में दिया, क्योंकि मैं नहीं जानता था कि महर्षि तेलुगु भली प्रकार से बोलते और समझते हैं। मैंने जो श्लोक लिखे थे उन्हें पढ़कर सुनाने की अनुमति माँगी। महर्षि ने सिर हिलाकर स्वीकृति दी। मैंने बहुत भावावेश के साथ अपनी कृति सुनाई।

संध्या के समय आश्रम में भक्तों ने मुझसे आशु-कविता की माँग की। विषय चुना गया - 'भगवान श्री रमण महर्षि'। जब मैंने रचना प्रारंभ की तो मुझे ऐसा लगा जैसे किसी दिव्य शक्ति ने मुझ पर अधिकार कर लिया है; कविता-प्रवाह बिना रुके चलता गया। एक सज्जन ने जल्दी-जल्दी सारी कविता लिख ली और समाप्ति पर मुझे कागज़ देते हुए प्रार्थना कि जो शब्द

छूट गए हैं उन्हें पूरा कर दें। मैंने कहा कि काव्य के शब्द मेरे होंठों पर भगवान रमण की कृपा से आए थे और मुझे स्वयं याद नहीं मैंने क्या कहा था। महर्षि भी बोले कि यदि ये प्रयत्न भी करें तो भी मूल रूप पकड़ में नहीं आ पाएगा।

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भाऊराव अठावले, महाराष्ट्र के थे। वे महर्षि के समक्ष मराठी भजन सुनाया करते थे।

मैं बड़े धार्मिक और आध्यात्मिक वातावरण में पला बड़ा हुआ। सन् 1939-42 के बीच अपने इंजीनियरी के कार्य में बहुत श्रम करने के कारण मैं गृध्रसी (Sciatica) का शिकार हो गया। दर्द कम नहीं हो रहा था; मैं दुर्बल होता जा रहा था। मैंने सच्चे हृदय से प्रार्थना की कि मुझे एक ऐसे महात्मा के दर्शन होने चाहिए जैसे 'स्वामी जी' के दर्शन मेरे दादा जी को हुए थे, जिससे हमारे परिवार का बहुत कल्याण हुआ था।

फरवरी, 1942 में जब मैं गहरी नींद में था, मुझे एक स्पष्ट और आश्चर्यजनक दिव्य दर्शन जैसा स्वप्न आया। मैंने देखा कि एक पहाड़ की गुफा के बाहर एक महात्मा बैठे हैं, जिन्हें सुनने वालों की भीड़ में मैं भी हूँ। मैंने अपने आस-पास के लोगों से पूछा कि प्रवचन कब प्रारंभ होगा। मेरे पास बैठे एक वृद्ध व्यक्ति ने हाथ उठा कर कहा, मौन ही स्वामी जी की भाषा है, और उनके भक्तों की कोई शंका शेष नहीं रहती। जब मैंने पूछा कि स्वामी जी दिख नहीं रहे, कहाँ हैं? उसने कहा कि वे तुम्हारे पास ही बैठे हैं। अपने आस-पास देखने पर मुझे एक छरहरा युवा पुरुष दिखा, जो एक श्वेत कौपीन पहने था। उसके मुख पर मनोहारी मुस्कान थी। मैंने उन्हें प्रणाम किया और उनका नाम पूछा। अपने हृदय की ओर उँगली से संकेत करके वे मराठी में बोले, 'इसे रमण महर्षि कहते हैं।' ऐसा कहकर वे मोहक ढंग से मुस्कुराए और मैं अति प्रसन्न चित्त जग गया। मुझे लगा कि यह मेरी प्रार्थना का उत्तर था। मैं प्रसन्नता अनुभव कर रहा था।

मैंने महर्षि की महानता के विषय में कुछ नहीं सुना था। मैं उनके विषय

में जानने को उत्सुक था। अचानक एक दिन एक परिचित ने कहा कि वे अपनी रामेश्वरम् की यात्रा के दौरान तिरुवण्णामलै रुके थे और उन्हे रमण महर्षि के अति आनंददायी दर्शन हुए। उन्होंने परामर्श दिया कि मुझे भी वहाँ जाना चाहिए।

वर्ष 1942 के एक दिन प्रातः छह बजे मैं रमणाश्रम पहुँचा। मैंने महर्षि को अपनी ओर आते देखा। मेरी प्रसन्नता की सीमा नहीं रही। जैसे ही मैंने प्रणाम किया, वे बोले, “तुम पूना से आए हो, बेहद थके हुए लग रहे हो।” मैं यह सुनकर आश्चर्य—चकित हो गया। दोपहर को जब मैं कक्ष में उनके सामने बैठा, उन्होंने मेरे स्वास्थ्य के विषय में पूछा। मैंने कहा कि मैं पिछले तीन वर्ष से गृध्रसी की भंयकर पीड़ा झेल रहा हूँ। अच्छे से अच्छे चिकित्सकों के उपचार के बाद भी रोग बढ़ता जा रहा है।

महर्षि कृपालुता पूर्ण स्वर में बोले, “तुम शांति से यहाँ रह सकते हो। तुम्हारा रोग आसाध्य नहीं है।” उन्होंने गीता का श्लोक (अध्याय 2.14) उद्धृत किया, जिसका अर्थ है: हे कुंतीपुत्र, इंद्रियों और विषयों का संस्पर्श ही शीतल—उष्ण, और सुख—दुख का अनुभव करता है। वे आते हैं और नष्ट हो जाते हैं, इसलिए अनित्य हैं। हे अर्जुन, उन्हें सहन करो।’ इस प्रकार सान्त्वना देकर मुझे शांत किया। उनके वचन सुनकर मुझे बहुत राहत मिली। तीन—चार महीने में मेरा रोग दूर हो गया।

उसके पश्चात् मैं प्रति वर्ष तीन—चार बार उनके दर्शन करता रहा। यह क्रम उनके महानिर्वाण, अप्रैल 1950 तक चला। मैं उनके निकट संपर्क में आया। वे मुझे शारीरिक व मानसिक पुनर्जीवन देते रहे और अपनी धन्यता प्रदान करनेवाली कृपा की उस शीतल छाँव में मुझे सदा के लिए समेट लिया जो वर्णन से परे है।

आश्रम से उनकी बीमारी का समाचार मिलने पर मैं वहाँ पहुँच गया। देह त्याग के दिन तो मेरी भावनाएँ कुछ नियंत्रित रहीं, किंतु दूसरे दिन रात्री को मैं बहुत बुरी तरह से रो पड़ा। मैं बहुत बेचैन अनुभव कर रहा था क्योंकि मैं अब महर्षि के दर्शन नहीं कर पाऊँगा। अचानक रात्री के अंधेरे में, कुछ पदचाप सुनाई दीं और महर्षि स्वयं हाथ में लालटेन पकड़े हुए प्रकट हुए। वे अत्यंत मृदु, सौम्य स्वर में बोले, ‘तुम क्यों रो रहे हो ? क्या मैंने तुमसे नहीं कहा था

कि मैं यही हूँ, कहीं नहीं जा रहा हूँ।' मैंने अपने पर नियंत्रण किया और नीचे झुककर उन्हें प्रणाम किया। जब तक सिर उठाया, वे जा चुके थे, मुझे आश्चर्य और एकाकीपन में छोड़कर।

रमण भगवान को मेरे सहस्त्रों प्रणाम।

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डॉ. आर. सुब्रमणियन, मद्रास राज्य के पब्लिक हेल्थ विभाग के डायरेक्टर थे। इन्होंने इस बात का उत्तरदायित्व लिया था कि महर्षि की प्राणघातक व्याधि का सर्वश्रेष्ठ उपचार हो।

एक बार महर्षि को हल्का सा पीलिया हो गया। उपचार के कारण उनका भोजन भात और छाछ तक सीमित था। आश्रम की डिस्पेंसरी के डॉ. शिव राव को लगा कि महर्षि दुर्बल होते जा रहे हैं, इसलिए उसने महर्षि से कुछ प्रोटीन-युक्त भोजन और विटामिन खाने की विनती की, जो उन्होंने अस्वीकार कर दी। (महर्षि का समत्व भाव पर बहुत जोर था। वे कभी भी अपने लिए किसी विशेष व्यवस्था के पक्ष में नहीं थे।)

मैं उन दिनों आश्रम में था। एक दिन जब महर्षि स्नान घर से बाहर आए, मैंने उन्हें प्रणाम किया और कहा, "डॉ. शिव राव तथा आश्रम के अन्य लोगों को भगवान (भक्तगण उन्हें इसी नाम से संबोधित करते थे) के स्वास्थ्य की बहुत चिंता है। वे चाहते हैं कि भगवान कुछ प्रोटीन लें। मैं भगवान से निवेदन करता हूँ कि उनकी संतुष्टि के लिए वे उनकी प्रार्थना स्वीकार कर लें।" महर्षि मुस्कुराए और बोले, "हाँ, तुम जो आवश्यक समझते हो, उसका प्रबंध कर दो।" मैंने यह बात डॉ. शिव राव को बताई। विटामिंस तो आश्रम की डिस्पेंसरी में थे, किंतु प्रोटीन-युक्त खाद्य नहीं थे।

मैं तुरंत मद्रास लौटा। मुख्य औषधि विक्रेताओं के पास प्रोटीन फूड की तलाश की। विश्व युद्ध का समय था। औषधियों की कमी थी। प्रोटीन फूड एक ही दुकान पर मिला। वहाँ केवल सात बोतलें थीं मैंने खरीद लीं और उन्हें लेकर आश्रम पहुँचा। मैं एक बोतल और चम्मच लेकर कक्ष में गया। एक-एक चम्मच खाद्य बैठे हुए सब भक्तों को देकर, एक चम्मच खाद्य

महर्षि को दिया। उन्होंने उसे लेकर पूछा कि यह क्या है? मैंने कहा कि यह प्रोटीन खाद्य है जो वे प्रतिदिन एक चम्मच खाने के साथ मिलाकर खा सकते हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि इस निर्देश के साथ बोतल अमुक व्यक्ति को दे दो। कुछ दिन पश्चात् किसी अति उत्साही भक्त ने महर्षि की पत्तल पर दो चम्मच प्रोटीन—खाद्य परोस दिया। महर्षि ने तुरंत उसको लेना बंद कर दिया और आदेश दिया कि बोतलें डिस्पेंसरी में रोगियों लाभ के लिए प्रयोग की जाएँ।

महर्षि के अंतिम ऑपरेशन के पश्चात् मुलाकातियों का आना निषिद्ध कर दिया गया। किंतु महर्षि के परामर्श के विरुद्ध डिस्पेंसरी के कमरे के बाहर बिस्तर लगवाया। उनका कहना था कि लोग दूर—दूर से उनके दर्शनों के लिए आते हैं और वे उन्हे निराश नहीं लौटाना चाहते।

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एन. पोनैय्या मलेशिया में रहते थे। सन् 1938 में जब श्री रमण-भक्त रमणपादानंद वहाँ प्रचार करते पहुँचे, तब पोनैय्या ने महर्षि के विषय में सुना।

मुझे सन् 1948 में ही आश्रम की यात्रा का अवसर मिला। ठहरने के लिए मुझे शयनागार (Dormitory) में जगह मिली। सभ्य—सुविधाहीन इस घास फूस के छप्परवाले बड़े कमरे में अन्य साधु और भक्तों की संगति के कारण मुझे एक अवर्णनीय सुख मिला। यहाँ ऊँच, नीच; जाति, संप्रदाय; या ऐसे किसी भी आधार पर कोई नीति या नियम नहीं था।

मैंने चरम श्रद्धाभाव से महर्षि के कक्ष में प्रवेश किया। महर्षि आत्म निमग्न, शांत व मौन, अपने सोफे पर अधलेटी अवस्था में थे। मैं भी उनके सम्मुख, सबके बीच बैठ गया। वहाँ संपूर्ण शांति थी। मुझे ऐसा अनुभव हो रहा था कि इस सारे संसार में कुछ भी ऐसा नहीं है जो महर्षि की पवित्र उपस्थिति में बैठने से अधिक सुखदाई होगा।

महर्षि के दर्शन मनुष्यों का एकाधिकार नहीं था। पास के एक बड़े पेड़ से उतरकर गिलहरियाँ अपना हिस्सा माँगने आ पहुँची। सुंदर मोर भी आए।

महर्षि ने बहुत प्रेम से उनकी ओर देखकर कहा, “ओह—तुम्हें भूख लगी है ?” एक डिब्बे से कुछ दानें निकाल कर उन्हें खिलाए। वे प्रसन्नता से ऐसे वापस चले गएँ जैसे बच्चा माँ के खिलाने के पश्चात् भाग जाता है।

एक दिन बंबई का एक बैरिस्टर महर्षि से मिलने आया। उसने कुछ ऐसा उलझाने वाला प्रश्न किया, जिसका कोई संतोषप्रद उत्तर नहीं हो सकता। बौद्धिक चर्चा प्रारंभ हुई। जब उसमें गतिरोध आया तो महर्षि ने सैद्धांतिक प्रश्नों की व्यर्थता की बात कही। उन्होंने कहा कि यदि वह शांति से बैठकर आत्मचिंतन करे तो स्वयं अपने प्रश्नों के उत्तर पा लेगा। दोपहर बाद प्रश्नकर्ता बोला कि एक बात को वह स्पष्ट रूप से समझ गया है, किंतु एक अन्य बात का एक पहलू वह समझ नहीं पा रहा है। महर्षि ने कहा, “विश्लेषण करते रहो, सब प्रश्नों के उत्तर मिल जाएँगे।”

महर्षि रमण का दर्शन एक अद्वितीय विलक्षण अनुभव है, जो संभवतः शब्दों में नहीं बताया जा सकता। मैं इतना ही कह सकता हूँ कि मुझे एक असामान्य पुलकित करनेवाली सिहरन हुई, जैसे मेरे शरीर में बिजली का प्रवाह दौड़ गया हो। मैं एक क्षण के लिए किसी और लोक में पहुँच गया। महर्षि की संगीतात्मक और प्रेरणादायी तमिल उक्तियाँ अविस्मरणीय हैं, और वे आश्रम यात्रा की स्मृतियों के साथ जुड़ी, मेरे मन में गूँजती रहती हैं।

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स्वामी सत्यानंद, 1946 से महर्षि के महानिर्वाण तक उनके परिचारक रहे।

मेरा जन्म 1916 में केरल प्रदेश में हुआ। मेरी माता धार्मिक वृत्ति की थी। साधुओं को भोजन देना, उनकी सहायता करना उनका स्वभाव था। उनके संरक्षण की पवित्रता ने मुझे ग्यारह वर्ष की आयु में ही आध्यात्मिकता की ओर मोड़ दिया। एक बार में कुछ साधुओं के साथ रामेश्वर की यात्रा पर गया। रास्ते में हम जिस मठ में रूके उसके प्रबंधक ने मुझे महर्षि की महानता के विषय में बताया और एक कागज़ पर रमणाश्रम का पता भी लिखकर दे दिया।

जब मैं तिरुवण्णामलै पहुँच कर श्री महर्षि के कक्ष में गया, वे अकेले बैठे थे। उन्होंने मेरी ओर देखा और मुस्कुराए। वह मुस्कान मैं कभी नहीं भूल सकता। महर्षि की कृपा से मुझे आश्रम में उनकी निजी परिचर्या का कार्य मिल गया।

महानिर्वाण के दिन, 14 अप्रैल 1950 को, हम महर्षि के शरीर की मालिस कर रहे थे। लगभग संध्या पाँच बजे उन्होंने उठकर बैठने में हमारी सहायता माँगी। ठीक उसी समय भक्तों ने 'अरूणाचल शिव' 108—पद वाला महर्षि रचित गान, का प्रारंभ किया। जब महर्षि ने उसे सुना तो उनका मुख एक दीप्त मुस्कान से खिल उठा। उनके नेत्रों से अश्रु झरने लगे और लंबे समय तक झरते रहे, जिन्हें मैं थोड़ी-थोड़ी देर में पोंछ देता था। मैं उन्हें अदरक का उबला हुआ पानी चम्मच से पिला रहा था।

महर्षि की साँस धीरे-धीरे धीमी पड़ती गई और ठीक 8.47 संध्या समय रुक गई; न कोई संघर्ष, न कोई आलोड़न, मृत्यु का एक भी चिह्न नहीं। उसी समय बाहर खड़े भक्तजनों ने आकाश में एक चमकता हुआ पुच्छल तारा देखा, जो ऊपर जाकर लुप्त हो गया।

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हनरी हारटुंग (1921 - 88) एक स्विस थे। इन्होंने काफी समय तक स्विट्जरलैंड में श्री रमण केंद्र चलाया और श्री रमण रचित 'सत् दर्शन' का फ्रेंच में अनुवाद किया। फ्रेंच दार्शनिक Rene Guenon से प्रभावित हो कर इन्होंने Analogies of Interest Between Guenon and Ramana Maharshi नामक पुस्तक लिखी।

मैंने सुना था कि महर्षि भारत के परंपरागत ज्ञान के आधिकारिक प्रतिनिधि हैं। मैं उनके पास 1947 में गया। मैं बंबई में जिस व्यक्ति से मिला उसने मुझे अभिवादन करने से पूर्व ही कहा, "मैं तुम्हारी प्रतीक्षा कर रहा था, मुझे तुम्हें रमण महर्षि के पास ले जाना है।"

इसके बाद दो दिन और दो रात की रेल यात्रा। जहाँ गाड़ी रुकती वहाँ कोलाहल पूर्ण रंग भरे लोगों के दृश्य देखने को मिलते। मैं सोच रहा था कि

महर्षि से क्या प्रश्न पूछूँ। अंत में मैंने दस प्रश्न तैयार किए, जैसे 'पृथ्वी पर मेरे होने का क्या अर्थ है ? मृत्यु के बाद क्या होता है ?' इत्यादि।

अगले दस दिन मैंने आश्रम का विधि-विधान वाला जीवन जिया। घंटो श्री रमण के सामने ध्यान में बैठता। वापस आने के दिन मेरे प्रत्येक प्रश्न का उत्तर मुझे बिना पूछे ही मिल गया—कभी किसी और के पूछे प्रश्न के उत्तर से, कभी महर्षि द्वारा लिखी पुस्तकों के पढ़ने से, और कभी रसोई घर के काम में हिस्सा लेते हुए, इत्यादि। यह सब अनुपम आध्यात्मिक सच्चाई का सूक्ष्म हस्तांतरण था, जहाँ मौन ही भाषा थी।

अपने जीवन के अंतिम दिनों तक महर्षि ने इस बात का ख्याल रखा कि उन्हें मिलने के लिए जो भी आए—चाहें वह दरिद्र हो, पैदल चल कर आया हो या बड़ी कार में, उसे बात करने का अवसर मिले। वे मानव-रूप-धारी दिव्य-सत्य की जीवंत मूर्ति को नमन करते आते थे। महर्षि की प्रेम और शांति से पूर्ण मुस्कान और उनकी प्रभावशाली आकृति को शब्दों में वर्णित नहीं किया जा सकता।

उनसे मिलने के तीस वर्ष बाद मैं फिर एक बार, पत्नी सहित तिरुवण्णामलै में हूँ। इस यात्रा की अनुभूति मेरी आत्मा की गहराई में वैसे ही उतर गई है जैसी कि तीस वर्ष पूर्व 1947 में वह मेरे अंतर्तम को छू गई थी। महर्षि का जीवन हमारे व्यक्तिगत विकास के लिए अनुपम उदाहरण है। महर्षि ज्ञानियों और पवित्र पुरुषों की श्रंखला की अंतिम कड़ी थे। ऐसे पुरुषों का प्रभाव हमारे जीवन को अर्थपूर्ण बनाता है, व्यवहार में सुव्यवस्था लाता है, और हृदय को परम शांति प्रदान करता है। ■

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

28 फरवरी, 1937

373. हिज हाइनैस महाराज मैसूर ने प्रातःकाल 9.15 से 9.30 तक श्री भगवान् से नव-निर्मित स्नानागार में निजी भेंट की। महाराज ने श्री भगवान् के चरण कमलों में सिर टेककर प्रणाम करते हुए कहा : मुझे श्री भगवान् के जीवन-चरित्र को पढ़ने का सौभाग्य प्राप्त हुआ है। मैं बहुत समय से उनके दर्शन का इच्छुक था, किन्तु मेरी परिस्थितियाँ ऐसी हैं जो इस तरह की आकांक्षाओं की पूर्ति सरलता से नहीं होने देती। अपनी समस्त मर्यादाओं के कारण मैं अन्य शिष्यों की भाँति यहाँ ठहर भी नहीं सकता। जो पन्द्रह मिनट मैं यहाँ रहूँगा उसमें केवल आपके अनुग्रह की प्राप्ति के लिए प्रार्थना करूँगा। (विदा लेते समय हिज हाइनैस ने श्री भगवान् को पूर्ववत् प्रणाम किया तथा दो उत्तम दुशाले तथा कुछ धनराशि कार्यालय को भेंट कर विदा ली।)

13 मार्च, 1937

374. त्रावणकोर के महाराज ने संध्या के 4.30 से 5.15 तक भेंट की।

त्रावणकोर के महाराज जो महारानी सहित तिरुवन्नामलाई प्रातःकाल 8 बजे की ट्रेन से पधारें थे, 4.15 बजे सायंकाल आश्रम में दर्शन हेतु आये। जिस कक्ष में श्री भगवान् विराजमान थे, वहाँ से जनता को बाहर कर

दिया गया था।

एक दुःखजनक भूल के कारण प्रतिदिन आने वाले भक्तों को भी उस भेंट के समय बाहर कर दिया गया था। एक अवकाश प्राप्त जिलाधीश ने राज्य परिवार का श्री भगवान् से परिचय कराया। हिज हाइनैस के दो ए० डी० सी०, महाराजा के व्यक्तिगत सचिव, त्रावणकोर राज्य के कुछ अधिकारी तथा मैलापुर के एक वकील उपस्थित थे। चर्चा का प्रारम्भ जिलाधीश ने किया जो मन, ध्यान, साक्षात्कार, सृष्टि का अभिप्राय, आदि विषयों पर चलती रही। महारानी ने अपने संशयों को प्रकट करते हुए कुछ प्रश्न किये जिन सबका श्री भगवान् ने समाधान किया। हिज हाइनैस महाराजा ने भी चर्चा में भाग लिया। पूरी वार्ता तमिल तथा मलयालम में हुई।

त्रावणकोर राज्य परिवार के आगमन के समय महारानी ने अपनी सुसंस्कृति, तथा सजीवता का बहुत अधिक परिचय दिया। उनको मलयालम, तमिल तथा अंग्रेजी भाषाओं का अच्छा अभ्यास था। अधिकतर प्रश्न महारानी ने किये थे। एक प्रश्न था :

भक्त : खोज कैसे आरम्भ करें ?

महर्षि : आत्मा सबको स्पष्ट है तथा प्रारम्भ भी उसी प्रकार स्पष्ट है।

भक्त : प्रगति की जो मेरी अवस्था है उसमें प्रारम्भ कहाँ से हो ?

महर्षि : प्रत्येक व्यक्ति उपासना तथा जप का कोई अभ्यास करता है। यदि उसमें पूर्ण निष्ठा एवं धैर्य के साथ निरन्तर लगा रहेगा तो उससे आत्मा की खोज स्वतः ही हो जायगी।

(इस वार्तालाप का लेखक उपस्थित नहीं था। उपरोक्त विवरण श्री महर्षि के एक परिचारक से प्राप्त किया गया है।)

21 मार्च, 1937

375. मध्य उम्र के एक कन्नड़ दर्शक ने अकर्म के सम्बन्ध में प्रश्न

किया।

महर्षि : अहंकार के नष्ट होने के बाद व्यक्ति जो भी कर्म करता है वह अकर्म है।

376. एक विद्वान् तेलुगु दर्शक ने, जिसने श्री भगवान् की प्रशंसा में एक भजन बनाया था, पढ़कर सुनाया तथा उसे उनके श्रीचरणों में रखकर प्रणाम किया। कुछ समय बाद उसने उपदेश की आकांक्षा प्रकट की।

महर्षि : 'उपदेश सारम्' में उपदेश का वर्णन है।

भक्त : किन्तु मौखिक तथा व्यक्तिगत उपदेश मूल्यवान् है।

महर्षि : यदि कोई नवीन तथा अब तक अज्ञात वस्तु हो तो उपदेश का औचित्य है। यहाँ मन को शान्त करना एवं संकल्पों से मुक्त रहना है।

भक्त : यह असम्भव प्रतीत होता है।

महर्षि : किन्तु यथार्थतः यही सबकी मूल एवं नित्य अवस्था है।

भक्त : हमारे दैनिक जीवन—व्यवहार में इसका अनुभव नहीं होता।

महर्षि : दैनिक जीवन शाश्वत अवस्था से पृथक् नहीं है। जब तक दैनिक जीवन को आध्यात्मिक जीवन से भिन्न माना जायगा, ये कठिनाइयाँ उदय होंगी। यदि आध्यात्मिक जीवन को यथार्थतः समझ लिया जाय तो व्यावहारिक जीवन इससे भिन्न नहीं दीखेगा।

क्या मन को दृश्य वस्तु मानकर, मन द्वारा उसको प्राप्त किया जा सकता है ? मानसिक क्रिया के स्रोत को खोजकर उसे प्राप्त करना चाहिए। यही सत्य है।

संकल्पों के विघ्न के कारण व्यक्ति आत्मा को नहीं जानता। जब संकल्पों का शमन हो जाता है तब आत्मा की अनुभूति होती है।

भक्त : कोई विरला ही (लाखों में एक) साधनों की पूर्णता तक उसमें लगा रहता है। (गीता 7-3)

महर्षि : जब भी चंचल मन इधर-उधर भागे उसी क्षण वहीं उसे रोको और संयम में करो। (गीता 6-26)

उपनिषदों का कथन है : (मनसा मन आलोक्य) “मन का मन द्वारा दर्शन”।

भक्त : क्या मन उपाधि है ?

महर्षि : हाँ।

भक्त : क्या दृश्य जगत् सत्य है ?

महर्षि : यह उतने ही अंश में सत्य है जितना कि द्रष्टा। द्रष्टा, दृश्य तथा दृष्टि की त्रिपुटी है। सत्य इन तीनों से परे है। यह उदय होते हैं तथा विलीन होते हैं, जबकि सत्य नित्य है।

भक्त : यह 'त्रिपुटी सम्भव' केवल अस्थायी हैं।

महर्षि : हाँ, यदि सांसारिक कार्यों में भी आत्मा का अनुभव करोगे तो त्रिपुटी का अस्तित्व नहीं दीखेगा, वास्तव में वे आत्मा से पृथक नहीं किये जा सकते हैं, और वे एक ही समय विद्यमान होंगे।

22 मार्च, 1937

377. मध्य आयु के एक आन्ध्र-निवासी दर्शक के प्रश्न किया : मनुष्य को दिव्य माना गया है। फिर उसे क्षोभ क्यों होता है ?

महर्षि : दिव्यत्व वास्तविक स्वरूप का सूचक है। क्षोभ प्रकृति का सूचक है।

भक्त : क्षोभों पर विजय कैसे प्राप्त की जाये ?

महर्षि : स्वयं में विद्यमान दिव्यत्व को अनुभव करके।

भक्त : किस प्रकार ?

महर्षि : अभ्यास से।

भक्त : किस प्रकार का अभ्यास ?

महर्षि : ध्यान।

भक्त : ध्यान करते समय मन स्थिर नहीं होता।

महर्षि : यह अभ्यास से ठीक हो जायगा।

भक्त : मन को स्थिर किस प्रकार करें ?

महर्षि : उसे शक्तिशाली बनाकर।

भक्त : उसे शक्तिशाली कैसे बनायें ?

महर्षि : सत्संग से वह शक्तिशाली होता है।

भक्त : क्या प्रार्थना, आदि की आवश्यकता है ?

महर्षि : हाँ।

भक्त : जो क्षोभरहित हो उसके लिए क्या निर्देश है ?

महर्षि : वह पूर्ण योगी है। उसके बारे में कोई प्रश्न नहीं है।

भक्त : लोग भूकम्प, अकाल, आदि विपदाओं के उदाहरण देकर ईश्वर का खण्डन करते हैं। हम उनके इस तर्क का कैसे समाधान करें ?

महर्षि : उन तर्क करने वालों का आगमन कहाँ से हुआ ?

भक्त : वे कहते हैं 'प्रकृति'।

महर्षि : कुछ उसको 'प्रकृति' कहते हैं—दूसरे 'ईश्वर'।

भक्त : क्या संकटकाल के लिए कुछ संग्रह कर सकते हैं; अथवा आध्यात्मिक उपलब्धियों के लिए संकटग्रस्त जीवन व्यतीत करें ?

महर्षि : परमात्मा प्रत्येक वस्तु की देखभाल करता है।

27 मार्च, 1937

378. आन्द्रवासी दर्शक से वार्ता के मध्य श्री भगवान् ने भगवद्गीता के छठे अध्याय का पैंतीसवाँ श्लोक उद्धृत किया :

**असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ (6-35)**

हे महाबाहो ! निःसन्देह मन चंचल और कठिनता से वश में होने वाला है, परन्तु हे कुन्तीपुत्र अर्जुन ! मन अभ्यास और वैराग्य से वश में होता है, इसलिए इसको अवश्य वश में करना चाहिए ।

वैराग्य को स्पष्ट करते हुए श्री भगवान् ने पुनः उद्धृत किया :

**संकल्पप्रभवान्कामास्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ (6-24)**

मनुष्य को चाहिए कि संकल्प से उत्पन्न होने वाली सम्पूर्ण कामनाओं को निःशेषता से अर्थात् वासना और आसक्ति सहित त्यागकर और मन के द्वारा इन्द्रियों के समुदाय को सब ओर से ही अच्छी प्रकार वश में करे ।

अभ्यास पर :

**शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ (6-25)**

क्रम-क्रम से अभ्यास करता हुआ उपरामता को प्राप्त हो तथा धैर्ययुक्त बुद्धि द्वारा मन को परमात्मा में स्थित करके, परमात्मा के सिवाय और कुछ भी चिन्तन न करे ।

ज्ञान पर :

**यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येय वशं नयेत् ॥ (6-26)**

परन्तु जिसका मन वश में नहीं हुआ हो उसको चाहिए कि यह स्थिर न रहने वाला और चंचल मन जिस-जिस कारण से सांसारिक पदार्थों में विचरता है, उस-उससे रोककर बारम्बार परमात्मा में ही निरोध करे।

2 अप्रैल, 1937

379. निलंबूर के एक मलयाली सज्जन, श्री तिरूमलपाद ने 'आत्मविद्या' का अर्थ पूछा।

महर्षि : श्री भगवान् ने पाँच अक्षरों की इस संक्षिप्त रचना का अर्थ इस प्रकार बताया : चिदंबरम् नन्दनार के नाम से सम्बद्ध प्रसिद्ध तीर्थस्थान है। नन्दनार ने अपनी अपनी काव्य-रचना में आत्म-विद्या की प्राप्ति को अत्यन्त कठिन बताया है।

मुरुनगर (श्री भगवान् के पुराने भक्त) ने भिन्न मत व्यक्त करते हुए आत्मविद्या की उपलब्धि को सर्वाधिक सुलभ बताया। भजन की प्रमुख विषय-वस्तु है : "अय्ये अति सुलभम्"। इस असाधारण कथन को स्पष्ट करते हुए उनका तर्क है कि आत्मा स्वयं होने के कारण साधारण-से व्यक्ति को भी नित्य स्पष्ट है। मूल वक्तव्य एवं बाद के तर्क में समन्वय नहीं है। क्योंकि आत्मा समस्त जीवों का आधार तथा स्पष्ट होने के कारण उसकी उपलब्धि की आवश्यकता ही नहीं रह जाती। स्वभावतया इस विषय का आगे निरूपण न कर पा सकते के कारण लेखक ने अपनी बनायी चार पंक्तियाँ श्री भगवान् के समक्ष उनकी पूर्ति हेतु रख दीं।

श्री भगवान् ने शिष्य के कथन के सत्य को स्वीकार किया तथा स्पष्ट किया कि यद्यपि आत्मा स्पष्ट है, तथापि गुप्त क्यों है ? यह आत्मा के देह, आदि से मिथ्या तादात्म्य के कारण है।

भक्त : इस मिथ्या तादात्म्य का कैसे उदय हुआ ?

महर्षि : संकल्पों के कारण। यदि संकल्पों का नाश हो जाय तो वास्तविक

आत्मा स्वतः ही प्रकाशित होगी।

भक्त : इन संकल्पों का नाश किस प्राकर हो ?

महर्षि : उनके आधार को खोजो। समस्त संकल्प केवल 'अहंभाव' में गुथे हुए हैं। इसको नष्ट कर दो; शेष सब नष्ट हो जायगा। इसके अतिरिक्त आत्मा को तो नहीं जाना पर सब कुछ जान लिया; इसका कोई भी लाभ नहीं है। यदि आत्मा को जान लिया तो सब कुछ जान लिया, इसलिए आत्म-साक्षात्कार ही मनुष्य का मुख्य एवं एकमात्र कर्तव्य है।

भक्त : 'अहंभाव' को कैसे नष्ट करें ?

महर्षि : यदि इसके स्रोत की खोज करेगे तो यह उदय नहीं होगा और इस प्रकार यह नष्ट हो जायगा।

भक्त : स्रोत को कहाँ तथा किस प्रकार खोजें ?

महर्षि : वस्तुतः चेतना ही व्यक्तियों को भिन्न-भिन्न प्रकार से कार्य करने के योग्य बनाती है। शुद्ध चैतन्य ही आत्मा है। आत्मा की अनुभूति के लिए केवल 'शान्त होना' है।

भक्त : इससे सुलभ और क्या होगा ?

महर्षि : इस प्रकार आत्म-विद्या की उपलब्धि सर्वाधिक सुलभ है। ■

क्रमशः

“श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत” पुस्तक से उद्धृत

(संग्रहकर्ता - श्री मुनगल एस. वेंकटरामैया
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Translated from 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi'



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into an ocean of Karma.
Karma yields no salvation*

Ramana Maharshi {Upadesa Saram (2)}

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Ramana Maharshi (Upadesa Saram-16)

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

Ramana Maharshi



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