



RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH

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July - August, 2018



5. Om Mahaujase Namah

ॐ महौजसे नमः ।

The Great Light

He is the unbroken awareness because of which everything else shines.

6. Om Karanodbhavaya Namah

ॐ कारणोदभ्वाय नमः ।

Born for a specific purpose

His birth was not the result of past karma, but for the divine purpose of renewing human life and transforming the world.

7. Om Jagaddhitavataraya Namah

ॐ जगद्धितावताराय नमः ।

Born for the welfare of the world

As Bhagavan Krishna says in the Gita, when Dharma wanes and Adharma reigns, Bhagavan takes an avatar to restore Dharma and protect the virtuous. We mortals cannot grasp in what illusive form He comes to save the world.

8. Om Sri Bhuminathasthalotthithaya Namah

ॐ श्री भूमिनाथस्थलोत्थिताय नमः ।

Born in the sacred place of Bhuminatha

Siva is called Bhuminatha in the temple in Tiruchuzhi where Ramana was born. Many saints have sung the glory of Bhuminatha.



BALCO - Country's Pride, Chhattisgarh's Treasure

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

Balco has not only contributed in making the country self-sufficient in production of aluminium and power but has also proven its mettle on the lines of global standards in generating employment, assisting community development, complying with industrial health, safety, security and environment norms, achieving productivity, customer satisfaction and ensuring optimum quality. In lot of these areas, Balco has also set bench marks. In the last 50 years Balco has formidably contributed to the growth of the nation and also contributed phenomenally to the exchequer. Balco has also made the Country proud by exporting its aluminium products to International market. Post disinvestment, there has been a drastic enhancement in the production capacities of aluminium and power. The one lakh tonne/annum aluminium production capacity now stands at 5.70 lakh tonnes/annum and similarly the power generation capacity has increased from 270 MW at the time of disinvestment to 2010 MW at present. The white metal from Balco's smelters has also made the country proud by finding application in the manufacture of strategic defence equipment and has also soared into outer space as raw material in specific equipment of our prestigious missiles. This has been indeed an illustrious application of Balco's aluminium and has contributed in enhancing our Country's role in space research.

Balco has always given priority to community development in its operational areas. The purview of its Community Development Programme today covers nearly 110 villages from an initial reach of 4 villages. Residents in Balco's operational areas have been benefitted in the areas of health, education, self-dependence, basic infrastructure, women empowerment etc. In the past five decades the operational areas of Balco have witnessed the growth of schools, hospitals and other infrastructure which was necessary for providing facilities to the residents for a comfortable living.

Balco has always been concerned about environment conservation and its improvement and the plantation of more than 33 lakh saplings bears testimony to this fact. Modern equipment has been installed in the units which helps in water conservation. Specialised national and international agencies have been engaged to help maintain safety standards to ensure industrial safety. Balco Hospital has been modernised to provide excellent medical facilities to people working in the Plant as well as to those residing in the vicinity. Modern equipment has been installed in the Hospital and the Hospital has also recently earned itself an I.S.O. Certification for its modern systems and quality health care.

The glorious journey that Balco has seen in the past 50 years speaks volumes of its potential to not only help India reach higher levels of production in aluminium and power in the future but to ensure the perpetual spread of prosperity and smile across the Country.

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



Ramesh Nair
CEO & Whole Time Director
Balco



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

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24 Gurus

Shiromani Vijay

This year Guru Poornima is on July 27th. We come across two types of Gurus – Siksha Guru and Diksha Guru. Here we examine the Siksha Gurus as explained in the Srimad Bhagavatam.

The eleventh *skandha* of the Shrimadbhagvatam narrates a fascinating conversation between Yadu and *Avadhuta*. Avadhuta is no other than Dattatreya the universal Guru. For a realised person like Dattatreya for whom Atman was his Guru. But he considered the whole world was his Guru as the world taught him everything. He classified all the things in the world as either good or bad. If he look at evil he felt he should not do it. So, he considered that “evil” was his Guru. If he saw good, he would wish to do it. So, he considered that “good” was his Guru. To illustrate this, he talked of 24 Gurus consisting of the elements, animals, people from various walks

of life. The lessons learnt were as follows.

Earth - patience, forgiveness, forbearance and doing good to others.

Water - the cleansing and nourishing quality along with purity.

Air - the quality of non-attachment while moving everywhere. Also, the aliveness in the prana.

Fire - the quality that burns everything to its essence

Sky or Space - the limitlessness which holds everything like the all-pervading Atman.

Moon - the changelessness amidst its seeming waxing and waning.

Sun - the indifference to situations. Sun reflected in various pots of water, appears as so many different reflections, so also Brahman appears different in different bodies. Also,

Sun is indifferent to the surface on which it shines.

Pigeon - Attachment is the cause of bondage and suffering. Pigeon due to its attachment with young ones gets caught and dies in the net attempting to save the little ones.

Python - contentment with whatever it gets. Python does not actively hunt for its prey and is content with whatever creature comes into its contact and does not hanker after for more.

Ocean - unmoving quality. In spite of hundreds of rivers fall into the ocean, it remains the same. So also we should remain unmoved among all sorts of temptations, difficulties and troubles.

Moth - Control of senses. Moths are enamoured of the brilliance of the fire and end up in being burnt. Similarly we must not be passionate and control our senses and to fix the mind on the Self.

Bee - not be a burden to one householder. Bee sucks the honey from different flowers and leave the flowers intact.

Honey-gatherer - never hoard up wealth which is useless. Honey-gatherer easily takes all the honey

hoarded by bees. Bees had collected the with great with great difficulty.

Male Elephant - men should destroy lust and not fall into traps of women and come to grief. Male elephants blinded by lust for the female elephant's touch, falls into a pit to be caught, enchained and tortured by the goad.

Deer - any vulnerability is an obstacle in the spiritual path and our Sadhana can come to a naught. Deer lost its concentration when it was enticed by music and was trapped by the hunter.

Fish - our greed must be destroyed. Fish covetous of food falls an easy victim to the bait,

Dancing girl **Pingala** - Instead of hoping for things not under our control, if we turn towards ever present divine to find peace. The dancing girl kept waiting the whole night for customers in vain. Suddenly she abandoned the hope of looking for customers, she was at peace with herself and she had sound sleep.

Raven - To let go of wealth and sensual pleasures to be truly happy. A raven was pursued by large birds for the piece of flesh in its mouth. Once it dropped the piece of flesh,

all birds flew away and the raven attained peace.

Child - Happiness which comes from living completely in the present moment without a care or ego.

Maiden - To continue the sadhana, spiritual sadhaka should remain in solitude. Even a close partner is a hindrance. The maiden not to disturb her guest, broke the bangles in each hand till only one was left on each hand. Then there was no noise while she was pounding rice.

Serpent - Ascetic should not build a home for himself. He should live in caves and temples. A serpent does not build its hole. It dwells in the holes dug out by others.

Archer - Intense one-pointedness of the mind.

Spider Brahman, who is both the material and instrumental cause of the universe, and during dissolution universe goes back to Brahman. Spider weaves its web with saliva from itself, and when it is done with it, takes it back into itself.

Wasp - With constant contemplation, one can merge into our Atman. A wasp catches hold of a worm, puts it in its nest, and gives it a sting now and then. Constantly fearing the wasp, the worm becomes

a wasp.

This story of 24 Gurus has a tremendous significance for any disciple. Discipleship is a state of consciousness. The relationship between a Guru and a disciple has to be intuitive flashes of a pure mind without any preconceived notions.

Bhagavan Ramana also had narrated this story to many of his devotees. According to Ramana - The Guru is within and we need to remove the ignorant idea that he is only outside. But so long as we think we are separate or that we are the body, an external Guru is necessary and he will appear to have a body. When the wrong identification of oneself with the body ceases, the Guru will be found to be none other than the Self. Ramana considered Arunachala as his Guru and sang hymns to Arunachala.

All of us though we theoretically understand that we are not the body, we are not able to abide in that knowledge. Hence, we seek an external Guru to guide us.

Let us rededicate ourselves to our Guru Ramana's teachings.

Om Namo Bhagvate Ramanaya!! ■
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Kendra Bulletin

May and June were packed with discourses. Despite being summer months, we had a good attendance which included our regulars.

6th May - Shri Ambarish Dave spoke on the Teachings of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi during which he emphasized the importance of Self enquiry and meditation.

13th May - Bhagavan's Aradhana Day was observed with songs in praise of Maharshi sung by Smt. Jayanthy Aiyer. She was accompanied on violin by Shri A.G. Subramaniam and on the mridangam by Shri Vignesh.

20th May, 17th & 24th June - Swami Durgeshananda began a discourse on Vivekachudamani. For this, Swami ji illumined the text with numerous examples from the Bhagavad Gita and allegorical stories to make the slokas accessible to devotees. His talks have been very well attended.

27 of May and 3rd June - Shri Ambarish Dave spoke on the Essence of Upadesa Saram, Bhagavan's poem in 30 verses which he said was an essence in itself.

10th June - Smt Jayanthy Aiyer started the recitation and explanation of Bhagavan's song, Aksharamanamalai with the first 14 verses. This was followed by 15 minutes of meditation.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

July 1st & August 5th	Shri Shankar Narayan Ji	Sat Darshanam
July 8th & August 12th	Swami Prabhuddhananda Ji	Katho Upanishad
July 15th	Smt Jayanthy Aiyer	Aksharamanamalai
July 22nd & August 19th	Swami Durgeshananda Ji	Vivekachudamani
July 29th & August 26th	Shri C.A.Subramaian	Essence of Srimad Bhagavatam

The Sunday Satsang timing has been revised- from 5.30 PM to 7PM.



Healing Blame and Aversion through Ramana Upadesa

Michael Highburger

Often we find ourselves gripped by feelings we have no power to control. No matter how much we may want to avoid reacting to given events, internally or externally, we are sometimes ill-equipped to greet circumstances with equanimity. A fierce resistance to given situations bubbles up from within and we find ourselves labelling or dismissing others in an aversive way, even if only in our thoughts. At times we may feel threatened by what our family members and colleagues say and do. When challenged in a work-related project or for that matter, in any life situation, we find ourselves blaming others for our difficulties. Or we may blame ourselves or be gripped by fear and anxiety about the future. All these mental states could be grouped under the heading of *blame and aversion*.

The pervasive tendency to blame and aversion, neurologists tell us, is linked to evolutionary biology. It seems we are hard-wired to isolate

danger and threat from benign and benevolent conditions as a way of better ensuring our survival. This may be the reason the news cycle tends to be negatively focused—news agencies naturally just want to sell their products and thus invariably take advantage of the fact that readers and viewers are neurologically prone to give importance to what is potentially harmful or threatening. The fact is, neurologists tell us, we are evolutionarily biased toward eliminating potential threats, even when there are no immediate threats. The propensity to look for something or someone outside ourselves as the cause of our pain and suffering—called scapegoat projection—gives a sense of control over the events of our lives, the illusion of being able to regulate and defend against suffering and hardship. By blaming or threatening the culprit, we feel assured that we can reduce the chance of a recurrence of the undesirable episode.

It has been observed in baboons that when the alpha male bites a junior male, the junior male will in turn bite a female who will in turn bite a baby. If this sounds like the fellow who gets yelled at by his boss at the office and then goes home and promptly yells at his wife who then shouts at their six-year old, who then kicks the dog, that is because it is the same phenomenon. But it is not restricted to primates.¹ When laboratory rats are given regular electric shocks, they develop stomach ulcers, a condition sensitive to stress. Rats that had the opportunity to go over and bite another rat following an electric shock didn't develop ulcers or other symptoms of stress. In further experiments, rats were trained to press a lever to avoid the shocks. But when the lever was disconnected, the rat continued to press it even though it did not prevent the shock. These rats did not develop ulcers. It is believed that the *felt-sense of control* prevented the stress response.²

This study is revealing and gives a compassionate angle from which to view the contagion of blame, aversion and vengeance as a means of discharging painful emotion. Blame and aversion could be seen as the nervous system's effort to modulate stress and trauma, to find something

or someone to hold responsible for one's pain and frustration. Such a propensity may even be neurochemical, a way of clearing the stress of painful experiences, internally or externally generated. If, on the other hand, we have no way to release such frustration, if we feel like we have no influence over the events of our lives, then resilience is diminished and the deleterious effects of stress emerge.

Evolutionary biologists tell us that the instinct for revenge in humans is universal. Primatologists have observed revenge behaviours in most species of non-human primates. And anthropologists have documented the ubiquity of scapegoating and ritual sacrifice, the practice of blaming the sufferings of the community on a single individual and then ritually eliminating him or her. Such tendencies arise in developed societies in, for example, persecutions and ethnic-cleansing. The predisposition to blame and aversion is likely an evolutionary adaptation and is thus deeply ingrained. Sophisticated game-theory models show that blame and punishment have a social function but evolutionarily stable models depend on the element of unconditional forgiveness. Such research reveals that natural selection leads "self-interested

organisms toward the acquisition of behavioural processes that allow them to forgive so that they can benefit from cooperative friendships and family relationships.”³

Cultures the world over have adopted means for moderating the revenge instinct and have taught methods for regulating blame, aversion and vengeance. As cultures developed, such interventions became more sophisticated with the establishment of judicial systems designed to regulate revenge, make it less lethal, less contagious. Ethical and religious development in recent millennia has led to forgiveness and surrender practices that are not only revered for reducing the likelihood of harmful behaviour but seek to cultivate the higher virtues such as empathy, altruism, compassion and unconditional love.

Bhagavan Ramana’s teaching embodies these virtues and tells us the process for enhancing them. Atma-vichara is one of his key methods for tackling unwanted mental states by refining attention and self-awareness. It is through bare attention and investigation that the unconscious roots of blame and aversion can be brought into the light of awareness, and thus defused.

When we get in touch with our mental states, the need to off-load

the by-products of trauma by volatile means is decreased. In other words, awareness is the lever we are free to press in order to override the instinct to fix the problem by ‘getting even’. The difficulty in stemming blame, aversion and scapegoat projection is that they often function below the threshold of conscious awareness, are contagious, and rise up unawares in the collective through bigotry, sectarianism, ethnic hatred, blood feuds and war. It has been pointed out that our reptilian brains⁴ cannot always tell the difference between a real threat and an imagined one, so we are quite capable of reacting defensively to relatively benign circumstances. One recent study by Gallup Poll⁵ reveals the complexity involved. It graphed the responses of interviewees questioned about their most dreaded fears. One would assume that the fear of death would be at the top of the list. But surprisingly—or not so surprisingly—this fear was outranked 2 to 1 by what psychologists call *glossophobia* or the fear of public speaking. This is a remarkable finding in that it would seem to suggest that we modern urban dwellers don’t need to have a hungry lion in the room to have elevated cortisol levels, to be in a state of panic, but only need to perceive that our self-image is under attack. This

would explain the intensity that blame and aversion can sometimes generate even when there is no discernible outward threat. Punishment and blame are ways of maintaining security and standing in the community and would seek to communicate to others that if our self-image is disparaged, there will be consequences. Herein lies the connection between blame and the classical aim of the spiritual traditions, the one unassailable, perennial culprit that above all others needs to be reckoned with for progress in cultivating virtue, namely, our self-centredness and conceit.

Religious traditions since the dawn of time have sought ways to regulate blame and sensed its relationship with narcissism. Bhagavan's *vichara* is geared toward undercutting both our narcissism and our tendency toward aversion, the two being intimately linked. When we experience feelings of blame or aversion, view another as an adversary, we imagine we are protecting ourselves by empowering ourselves to make a stand against them in the future. But *vichara* asks us to find out where this self we presume to be protecting is to be found. *Vichara* is thus a means of reorienting ourselves, pulling the rug, so to say, out from under the assumptions needed for

blame and aversion to arise in the first place. By virtue of its ability to "sift Reality from unreality"⁶, Bhagavan says, enquiry leads us out from the illusion that the entire blame-game depends on. "The enquiry 'Who am I?' is the principal means [for] the removal of all misery,"⁷ he argues, simply because aversive conditions are seeded in ignorance and delusion. But if *atma-vichara* "is the way,"⁸ as Bhagavan claims, how does it work? The answer is simple: *vichara* exposes mental states at the place of their origin. The one who asks, "Who is it that is angry right now?" or "Who is it that is judging?" or "Who is it that needs to criticise, disparage and reject?" is by the very question detaching from the experience of the aversive state in order to become the one *observing* it. The one observing is not the one who is angry, for example. Simultaneously, the process of unmasking mental states reveals the false assumptions we have about the nature of the Self and the presuppositions we have about being a person in a body in a world. Instead, through enquiry we come to see that the world and the body are in *us*. But then what is this 'us'? If we say it is the Self, then we find ourselves hard-pressed to define it. Bhagavan says that the Self is Pure Awareness and

“the world, the individual soul and God are [mere] appearances in It.”⁹ The world (object) and mind (subject) are unreal, Bhagavan says, so the goal is neither refuge in the world of objects nor in that of the egoic subject but in the Reality beyond both.

Each aversive experience has a narcissistic hook. Blame is built on reinforcing the egoic assumption by creating opposition to the other. Whenever we feel cheated or mistreated by another, there is always someone who is indignant, who feels disrespected, who needs to be defended. This is a great opportunity to benevolently identify our attachment to our self-partiality, to remind ourselves to bring vichara into play and thus find out *who or what* this offended one is. We do not need to take it on faith that the narcissistic centre is unreal; we can discover it directly by enquiring into it¹⁰. It is not a question of doing battle with ourselves, of manhandling ourselves, imagining that if we beat up on ourselves enough, we will overcome our narcissism—this is just more of the old dispensation, more aversion. Instead, we compassionately and honestly acknowledge where things stand and where we have work to do, seeking to maintain the humility and patience that honest enquiry

demands.

Sometimes our aversive states seem inevitable as though fated. But if *destiny is just a tightly-bound bundle of habits*, the reactive patterns we find ourselves enmeshed with merely signal habit, our way of dealing with similar conditions in the past. Aversion, like any mental state, is not born of necessity but is a probability. If it were absolutely determined, then vichara, and indeed all forms of sadhana and intervention in respect of mental states, would be futile. In responding to an emergent aversive state, vichara does not necessarily mean the question, “Who am I?” which may prove too steep in the heat of the moment. Rather we make our enquiry less ambitious and when observing that our heart rate has increased or our hands are trembling, we ask a simple vichara question like, “What is going on just now?” “Why is my pulse racing?” “Why do I feel panicked?” As stated previously, such questioning is not designed to make the aversion disappear. The aim is much more modest, i.e. just being able to identify the appearance of aversion.

The mystification at the heart of the blame-game is the in-group/out-group distinction for which all acts of othering is based. And yet, we

simultaneously intuit that it is unreal. Blame and aversion depend on the self/other polarity which Bhagavan had long since divested himself of. The reader may recall the scene of a small group of devotees walking with Bhagavan in Palakotthu. Guy Hague, an American metallurgist from California living for two years in the Ashram in the late 1940s, spoke up: “Maharshi, when one attains jnana, how does one help others?” Without the least pause the Master turned to him and replied in unfaltering English, “When one attains jnana, there are no others!”

Bhagavan lived his teaching day in and day out. It is not that he was trying to abolish social norms such as the in-group/out-group distinction but only that he knew it to be based on illusion. This is why he could commune with outcasts and the poorest of the poor, the simplest peasant farmer, because for him they were not other than himself. If *there are no others*, then there is likewise no one to blame and no one to separate oneself from. If *there are no others*, then all blame and othering is brought to rest in the Self.

When enthralled with mental states, they seem real. And some aversive states can even be enjoyable, at least

in the short-run, granting us a sense of control, a sense of solidity. We love blame and aversion because they make us feel self-righteous and significant, after all, ego is born in opposition and differentiation. But if aversion has a honeyed-tip, it also has a poisoned-root¹¹. Bringing vichara to bear on mental states such as blame, anger and resistance grants the needed understanding regarding the ultimate status of all states: they are just states of mind, fleeting and unsubstantial, *not* Self. But again by what practical means do we arrive at this insight? By identifying the mind state as a mind state. To do this we cannot have our vichara practice depend on the little time we get to spend in our place of meditation but have to make it portable and take it with us wherever we go. When we see that vichara can be practiced in an ongoing way throughout the day wherever we are, then it is a matter of remembering to observe our mental states during the waking hours of our daily life. We watch for the arising of fear, blame, anger, resentment or, for that matter, any mental state—disappointment, confusion, distress, loneliness, frustration, etc. We name such states as they appear to us without trying to make them go away. This is the edge in

vichara practice: simply stepping back and observing where we are caught. The trick is in *noticing* mind states rather than getting involved with them. We want to avoid struggling with them because trying to make them go away almost guarantees they will linger. Worse than that, resisting our mind states causes them to multiply as second-tier mental states of aversion pitted against the first. Hence we neither try and push them away nor cling to them, after all, vichara is not about confrontation but about stepping back into the awareness of the Witness. If pain accompanies a mental state, we identify the pain, feel it fully and give ourselves empathy. But if we make the state of aversion into an enemy, we replicate the aversion. The art is mothering our mental states the way we might console a crying child. Thus classical vichara or ‘Who am I?’ helps us to see that there really is no one to whom such states belong. In other words, the so-called ego is unsubstantial. The micro- vichara of noticing and naming functions as a complimentary practice and helps us to see that mind states are likewise unsubstantial.

Enquiring into painful emotions and the core hurt is the key to releasing the feeling of aversion. While vichara does not necessarily grant immunity

to future aversive states, it readies us to deal with them when they arise. Each time we sally forth to greet them, we learn to let go a little. If once we find ourselves less attached and able to avoid being force-marched into complete identification with our mental states, then vichara begins to look like surrender. This is something Sri Ramana hinted at on various occasions, namely, that vichara serves to train our capacity to surrender. In surrender, rather than questioning through enquiry, we greet each negative mental state with the energy of letting go. Surrender helps us get beyond the need to identify with our mental states and to dispense with the relentless chatter of the mind invariably accompanying them. In surrender, we slow down enough just to appreciate things as they are without having to know anything about them. As we walk, see and hear without blame, aversion or evaluation, the world begins to look very different and at times even appears blessed. What previously may have evoked annoyance and resentment when the mind was busied with the interminable thought stream suddenly becomes the locus of freedom just by being experienced with an empty non-evaluating mind. Even if the tug-of-war between being caught up in our

mental states and being detached from them continues, we incrementally gain ground with continued efforts, or in the case of surrender when we are ready, with continued *non-efforts*, i.e. just letting things be in their own way.

When a poet once proclaimed that it is sometimes *necessary to reteach a thing its loveliness*,¹² he did not mean that the world needed to be altered. Rather, the world is fine as it is if only we allow it to be just as it is. Surrender frees us from being compelled to view the world through the filter of mental defilements such as judgment, criticism and aversion, all the while unmasking the fiercely clung-to illusions we have about our fundamental nature. In Bhagavan's words, "If you consider yourself the body, the world appears to be external [and unreal]; [but when] you are the Self, the world appears as Brahman."¹³ So *reteaching a thing its loveliness* is going forth each day and being present to the world as it is in its blessedness, seeing the inherent goodness in ordinary things, setting aside opinions and preferences, feeling one's feet on the ground, sensing the wind blowing against the skin, hearing the sounds of birds or children playing, or for that matter, hearing the sounds of lorry horns. *It doesn't have to be a blue iris;*

*it could just be weeds in a vacant lot*¹⁴, writes Mary Oliver. If we condition our contentedness on ideals, then we will be for ever in bondage to the changing circumstances of the external world. In other words, if it *does* have to be a blue iris, then all is lost. Why? Because some vital part of ourselves or our world is taken to be weeds and is slotted for extermination. The *blue iris* will not always be blue, or in blossom, so it will be lost too. But if we can hold the *weeds in a vacant lot* for the beauty that is their nature, then the space the blue iris once occupied will also be beautiful just as it is. As soon as we let go of picking and choosing, of judging and dismissing, of blaming and resisting and of being swayed by mental states, the whole world becomes beautiful, as does every person in it. This is what Bhagavan meant by *vichara* resolving itself in surrender. It carries us beyond blame, anger, fear and aversion and allows for the spaciousness of a mind absent of clutter, freeing up our generosity and compassion, moderating our attachment to mental states and allowing the inherent peace that Bhagavan insisted is our birth-right, to become ours once again. ■

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- 1 Robert Sapolsky in *The Mind's Own Physician: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama on the Healing Power of Meditation*, edited by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD & Richard J. Davidson, PhD with Zara Houshmand, 2011, pp. 76-81.
 - 2 Ibid.
 - 3 See the work of Axelrod, Grim, Nowak and Sigmund and others cited in "Family, Friendship, and the Functions of Forgiveness" in *Beyond Revenge: The Evolution of the Forgiveness Instinct*, Michael E. McCullough; and "The Forgiveness Instinct", p. 125.
 - 4 The reptilian brain, i.e. the brainstem and the cerebellum, is the oldest of the three parts of the human brain which includes the limbic and the neo-cortex.
 - 5 Published in 2011.
 - 6 Self-Enquiry §12.
 - 7 *Talks* §454.
 - 8 *Talks*, §430.
 - 9 *See Who am I?* §2: "[T]hat Awareness which alone remains — that I am"; also see *Who Am I?* §16.
 - 10 Extended cognition in neuro-science proves that there is no discrete isolated entity called the ego or self. Feral children, i.e. human babies brought up in animal groups, are revealed under examination to be genetically human, but theirs is not human cognition and after a certain age socialised outside the human context, they cannot learn human speech and human culture. We are mimetic creatures and learn by imitation and thus human cognition is extended and embedded in the collective.
 - 11 A line from the Buddha.
 - 12 "Saint Francis and the Sow" by Galway Kinnell.
 - 13 *Talks* §272.
 - 14 "Praying" by Mary Oliver.
-



Cracking the Conundrum

Vijay Vancheswar

It is a fact of life that we find it extremely difficult to accept the state of 'What is'. 'What Is' is a state that has no duration. We are conditioned to live in the span of duration. This is temporal and expands horizontally as the creation of our mind: the historical past and the mysterious future. Our mind rarely focusses on the state of 'Here and Now'. As part of our innate programming we relish living under the influence of temporality primed by our mind which creates the notion of space and time. The Upanishads, Vedas and Masters repeatedly encourage us to understand the futility of temporal existence. While we accept this intellectually, it just does not seep in! Reading, hearing, discussing and even reflecting many times does not seem to release us from this trap. And yet, we find some individuals who are able to live their daily life in peace and bereft of the chatter of the trouble- monger -

excessive thinking. These fortunate few, if one may term them so, are blessed with a couple of attributes. For one, they are consciously alive, living in the moment. Secondly, they do not bother with proving a point. The reason simply seems to be a firm understanding of the incompatibility of understanding reality with an attachment to the illusory and capricious sense of individuality. Terence James Gray (better known as Wei Wu Wei, meaning '*non-action or non-doing*') repeatedly underscores this in his writings. He says, 'Thought is discursive, and therefore subject to seriality of time. Every 'event' that becomes dialectically comprehensible is subject to space-time. Noumenon or the absence of phenomenon is entirely intemporal, and only the intemporal is 'what-we-are' as opposed to the temporal which is our appearance manifested as space-time. Only when the mind is in a state of 'fasting' are we in a state of availability.

Peace reigns when we are connected to our source. It oscillated within the bipolar illusory realms of pain and pleasure when we get entangled with phenomenon. Our goal should be to connect with the state of what is; conceptually called 'noumenon', the subjective aspect of phenomenon. Objectivization of noumenon results in the appearance of phenomenon. Children are blessed with a natural gift of not excessively dwelling into the aspects of phenomenon. As we grow, so does our sense of self-importance. This traps us with the need for status, power, recognition, acknowledgment and approval. The joker in the pack is death of the body, by when it is far too late to repair and undo the damage caused and accrued! The crux of all teachings is to be absolutely convinced that what is real is the absence of phenomenal presence. Phenomena presence is a reflective aspect of what always is. 'What Is' or the state of 'I Am' is the subjective aspect of phenomenon, termed conceptually as 'Noumenon'. Phenomenon as Wu Wei says can have no apparent existence apart from noumenon. Noumenon in turn, has no existence apparent or non-apparent, except as a concept. This is the reason why great masters

including Sri Ramana accord the highest regard to Silence. Silence is the 'First Principle'. The moment we speak it is no more the truth; it is an aspect (conditioned by the speaker's inclinations and belief's) of the First Principle. Conceptually and for convenience, we can term it the Second Principle, nothing more. Thus, the spoken word be it through satsangs or well-intentioned discussions is a derivative of the Second Principle- comforting for the treacherous mind but limited to it only. As Sri Ramana says these are at best pointers to prod a seeker to be with and within himself.

Yet another serious misunderstanding that is widely prevalent is on the concept of 'doership'. Bhagavan Ramana accords the highest importance to the need for giving up doership and volition. The key to understanding this is highlighted by Wu Wei, the importance of non-action, not in-action. As highlighted in the Bhagavad Gita, none can be inactive. By its very nature, creation will propel us to act, some more, some less, some at a moderate level and some at a hyperactive level. This is governed by the innate nature of each individual, over which there is very

little control. To validate this, all that we need to do is look around at a family with children brought up in very similar circumstances and under identical environment of upbringing codes, values and norms. The divergence in the nature of each child in a family would be most revealing. One would be an introvert, perhaps shy; the other of a garrulous and outgoing temperament, yet another a cautious and careful spender, another a spendthrift and so on and so forth. The oft repeated query by people that if we give up doership, how will work go on, or will it encourage laziness is also misplaced. Sri Ramana has highlighted this across many of his answers to queries. Examples include, *'If you are destined to cease working, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it. If you are destined to work, you cannot leave it; you will be forced to engage in it. So, leave it to the Higher Power. You cannot renounce or hold as you choose.'* Again, Sri Ramana says, 'Success and failure are the result of parabhdha and not of will-power. A man may be doing only good and noble actions and yet prove a failure. Another may do otherwise and yet be uniformly successful. This does not mean that will-power is present in the one and not in the other.' Interestingly, Sri Ramana

provides an excellent insight into the difference between ego and egoism. It is important to understand this concept in full measure as there exists a lot of misunderstanding on this subject. Ego is identification with a name and form. It happens even in the case of a realized soul or a sage, for living his or her life, till parabhdha runs its course. Ramana explains that for a realized soul there is no egoism or extension of the ego through a sense of volition primed by one's sense of doership. Hence when asked as to whether astrological predictions won't be true for those whose egotism gets destroyed, Ramana's answer is : In the case of those whose egotism is destroyed , even if they appear to see, they do not really see. "Both in the case of a jnani and ajnani, ego is sprouting forth, but with this difference, namely the ajnani's ego when it rises up is quite ignorant of its source, or he is not aware of his sushupti in the dream and jagrat states; whereas a jnani when his ego rises up enjoys his transcendental experience with this ego, keeping his lakshya (aim) always on its source. This ego is not dangerous: it is like the skeleton of a burnt rope: in this form it is ineffective. By constantly keeping our aim on our source, our ego is dissolved in its source. like a

doll of salt in the ocean.” ‘The burnt rope still looks like a rope, but it can’t serve as a rope if you try to bind anything with it.’

The conundrum that surrounds the spiritual quest can only be cracked if we deeply reflect on the teachings of Masters and unconditionally accept that a) Presence means phenomenal absence. Absence of phenomenal presence will keep us connected with our source or noumenon , b) The state of ‘ I-am’ is one of abidance, not striving or doing ; beyond this, is what We-Wu-Wei terms the ‘absence of both existence and non-existence’, what he conceptually terms as ‘potential plenum’ expressed as ‘OM’ in vedanta, the beginning-less, endless and ever existing ‘void’ which is neither an object or subject, the First Principle which defies words c) The remembrance has to be on ‘ non-doing or non-action’ not inaction. Non-action implies ‘non - volitional living, letting life flow, being lived rather than struggling and striving with the phenomenal vagaries and apparent occurrences of daily living.

Simply put,” *It is only with total humility and in absolute stillness of*

mind that we can know what indeed we are”. As repeatedly emphasized by the late Ramesh Balsekar, an ardent devotee of Sri Ramana, “The core of the teaching is to give up one’s sense of personal doership (‘*kartutva*’-the devil in the conundrum!). We can be happy in our daily living only if we remain connected to our ‘Source’. We get disconnected when we keep thinking of ourselves and keep on whining and complaining about the unusual happenings in life. We get disconnected when we blame and condemn anyone- ourselves or others- for anything that has happened in life. “*A man expresses his cleverness and pride by his attitude whereas we see the wisdom of the wise man by his questions and humility*”. As Sri Ramana says, ‘We have the one and only freedom -to stay connected with our source by turning inward’. We can as We Wu Wei puts it, ‘live gladly’. We are free to do it. It is our only freedom, a phenomenal freedom: “Living free” is being “as one is”. This is beyond “doing” and “not-doing”. It is being as-we-are.■

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The Action Imperative

Tuktuk Ghosh

There are moments, sometimes extended, when the world gets too much with us. We long to withdraw into a shell and shut out the disturbing cacophony around. Seeking solace and comfort in just being and not getting caught up in frenzied action seems alluring. It is this frame of mind that has been institutionalized in many faiths and religions through the practice of scripturally prescribed austerities or retreats which allow one's inner core the ambience and space to introspect, heal and rejuvenate. The popularity of such exercises of spiritual renewal has increased world over. They have accordingly been customized as immersive contemporary formats, well-suited to the needs of our demanding times. Many of us would either have participated in one or more of such programmes or would be planning to do so in the near future.

These salves to the soul are no doubt important and must be gone through with. However, the discerning seeker

realizes, after each such participation that the break from the mundane and the everyday-rush can at best provide transient bliss. Something more substantive is called for in addition to spiritual getaways.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings shine the beacon on this conundrum. An apt verse from the Upadesa Saram in this context:

Vinaiyin vilaivu vittay

Vinaikkadal vizhttidu mundipara

Vidu taralilai yundipara

The fruit of action having perished by our experiencing it as a pleasure or pain, remains as seed and thereby causes us to sink in the ocean of action. Therefore action does not give liberation or freedom from the bondage of action.

A fruit consists of two parts, the edible flesh and the seed. Though the flesh is eaten and thereby ceases to exist, the seed remains, waiting to develop into a new plant, which will, in turn, yield more fruit. It is comparable to

the fruits of our action. If we perform a good act, we will, in due course, experience its fruit, in an appropriate positive form. Similarly, for a bad act, we will experience its fruit in a negative form. The part that remains as a seed, is 'vasana', a propensity, desire or latent impulsion, that will propel similar action yet again. The currents of action will inevitably build up with their own momentum and lead to the ever widening ocean of perpetually recurring activity. It is thus definite that no action can ever, by itself, enable us, even indirectly, to attain liberation. We are responsible, to a larger or lesser extent for the travails that we find ourselves in and from which we seek relief so desperately.

So, is there a way forward which Bhagavan points towards ? There is, as may well be expected.

Karuttanuk kakkunitkamiya
kanman

Karuttai tiruttiyak dundipara

Gativazhi kanbikku mundipara

Nishkamy karma or desireless action which flows from love of God, surrendering its fruits entirely up to Him, purifies our mind and thereby makes us recognize what is the correct path to liberation. This purity and clarity of mind enables us to understand that atma vichara is not an action but an

action -free state of subsidence of mind. It is the preliminary stage leading to complete self surrender, the state in which we merge completely in the source from which we arose, our sat-bhava or real being.

The rigour that is required to internalize these teachings of Bhagavan may appear to be daunting. Bhagavan invested his entire life to distil these verities and it is only natural for us - mere mortals- to cower in apprehension doubt and pessimism. Overlaying each and every action with such sublime feelings is no mean task. They are taken up ever so often in auto- mode, without so much as sparing more than a passing thought for their whys and wherefores, leave alone whether they are at all necessary. We have allowed ourselves, willy-nilly, to become bonded slaves of unthinking ossified habit and just refuse to acknowledge that unpalatable fact. If we were to calculate how much of our lives are spent pursuing what are, in reality, the non-essentials and merely products of routine drudgery, we may end up very stupefied.

Now is the time - as good as any other- to ponder deeply on Bhagavan's immeasurably valuable teachings and enhance our everyday lives, notwithstanding the implicit and overt challenges. ■

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The Essence of Grace

Geeta Ravichandran

Many a seeker is prone to think that the manifestation of grace is to be necessarily accompanied by special phenomena which would effectively silence the questioning mind and confer a sense of fulfillment. Therefore some part of the quest is often dedicated to chronicling the external signs of grace. In this endeavor the powerful and often unobtrusive presence of grace is missed. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson “*A wise old proverb says, ‘God comes to see us without bell’; that is, as there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins.*” (From the Essay-Over Soul). The understanding that every effect is permeated by underlying grace would perhaps be the dawning of realisation.

The Panchakrityas denote the

five-fold action of the Cosmic Force. These are Srishti which is creation, Sthithi which is sustenance, Samhara meaning dissolution, Tirodhana or veiling, (the act of Maya) and most importantly Anugraha which represents Grace. Anugraha or Grace is the most tangible attribute of Divinity, which is capable of touching and transforming human lives.

Swami Shantananda Puri would quote this Shloka from the Soundarya Lahiri to describe the nature of grace.

*Bhavaani tvam Daase mayi vitara
Drshhtim sakarunaam*

*iti stotum vaanchan kathayati
bhavaani tvam-iti yah /*

*tadaiva tvam tasmai dishasi nija-
saayujya-padavim*

*mukunda-brahmendra-sphuta-
makuta-nirajita-padaam //22 //*

Meaning- When one prays
“Bhavaani! Please cast your gracious

glance on me who is your slave”, even as one utters the word –“Bhavaani! You...”, you grant him identity with you and one is able to witness the *nirajana* (waving of lights during the worship) of the brilliant crowns of Lord Vishnu, Lord Brahma and Lord Indra.

Relying on the interpretation of the Paramacharya of Kanchi, Swamiji explained that the word *Bhavaani* can be interpreted in two ways - one as a noun and another as a verb. The root word is *bhava* which means to be or become. As a noun *Bhavaani* is a name of the Divine Mother. In this context, *bhavaani* would mean -let me become or let me be. So *bhavaani tvam* would mean “May I become You”. The Divine Mother is an ocean of grace. So when a devotee seems to be seeking identity with Her and utters two simple words *bhavaani tvam*, She immediately without the least hesitation makes him one with Herself and grants him Saayujya – which is the status of identity with the object that is worshipped. The wonder here is, that the Divine Mother does not even wait to hear the full prayer but in her anxiety to fulfill the devotee’s wish makes him one with Herself.

The nature of grace that is free

and readily available is not to be dismissed as a mere poetic flight. It is an experiential reality that grace is vouchsafed to all those who seek it. However a common affliction that plagues the mind is disbelief, as making the cause- effect connection is almost a compulsion. Therefore the question arises that what is it that one has to do, to undertake, to perform -to experience the reality of grace. The answer to this was given by Ramana Bhagavan himself-

Questioner: May I have Guru’s grace?

Sri Ramana Maharshi: Grace is always there.

Questioner: But I do not feel it.

Sri Ramana Maharshi: Surrender will make one understand the grace.

Bhagavan’s reply is significant. Surrender is required not for attracting grace but for understanding that grace is ever present . The nature of the sadhana of surrender was explained by Bhagavan himself in answer to a question of Swami Madhava Tirtha-

Q- It is believed that if we surrender to Guru or God, then the reality of the individual goes away, and in exchange we get the support of a bigger Reality and Divine power

shines in us.

A- To expect to receive a bigger Divine power after surrendering is not the true attitude of surrender.

Surrender, thus does not admit a clever bargain being sneaked in. The difficulty arises when it is assumed that grace should ensure success in all endeavors and should shield one from adversity at all times. A foil to this cherished assumption is seen in Kunti's counterintuitive prayer. Kunti prayed to be visited by troubles as her faith in the constancy of grace had been tested and proved. Even as she sought troubles she recalled the numerous instances how crises passed by one after another, giving her the opportunity to witness the operation of grace. Grace is then evident not only when a desired outcome is obtained, but in the ability to shrug off a disappointment or learn a lesson of fortitude or to overcome obstacles with greater efforts.

Bhagavan's words to Swami Natanananda throw light on the omniscience of grace.

–“Is it the body in front of me which desires to obtain my grace? Or is it the awareness within it? If it is awareness, is it not looking upon itself as the body and making this

request? If so let the awareness first of all know its real nature. It will then automatically know God and my grace. The truth of this can be realized even now and here.”

Here Bhagavan clarifies that grace is omniscient. Whatever effort that is required to be made is only to remove the ignorance which prevents its perception as the underlying, unalterable essence. Grace blossoms from within a seeker since it is the of the nature of pure awareness. It works its effect even on those who do not seem to merit or deserve it. Grace represents the abiding love of the Creator for His creation without distinction of any kind.

Anugraha is the act of grace by which the ego with all its limitations is vanquished and light from the core of being shines forth. Its function is to confer the ultimate liberation. It may perhaps be said that it is to display Anugraha or grace that the other four *kryias* of creation, sustenance, dissolution and concealment have come into play. It is like a torrent which sweeps every creature that lingers even somewhat hesitantly in its vicinity into its inexorable fold.■
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Divine Love

*“I am in love with the one
Who knows no death, no evil, no form.
I am in love with the one
Who knows no place, no space, no beginning, no end.
I am in love with the one
Who knows no fears nor the snares of this world,
The Boundless One who knows no bounds.
More and more I am in love
With my husband
Known by the name of Cennamallikarjuna.
Take these husbands who die and decay,
And feed them to your kitchen fires!”*

Identity of my Husband

*All of mankind are my parents. It is they
who made this matchless match of mine
with Chenna Mallikarjuna.
While all the stars and planets looked on ,
my guru gave my hand into His;
the Linga became the groom,
And I the bride.
Therefore is Chenna Mallikarjuna
my husband
And I have no truck with
any other of this world.*

By Akka Mahadevi



Aksharamanamalai Part 10

67

Bi/diyil/lunai/char

Bi/diyil/lenai/char

Bi/diyun/dranak/ken

Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! Without fear I have sought to reach Thee that art fearless. Then why art Thou afraid of being united (with me)?

It requires great courage for anyone to leave the lure of sense-pleasures and to seek to be united with God. Such a one is the true hero (*dhira*). The devotee-soul feels happy that she has escaped from the clutches of sense objects and has learnt to rely on God as the sole refuge. There can be no fear in God. God is fearless because He is non-dual. It is only where there is duality that there can be fear. The devotee soul longs for the realization of non-duality which is fearlessness. God should welcome this. Why, then, does He hesitate to accept the soul? Does it mean that He is afraid? What reason is there that He should be

hesitant? So, the devotee-soul pleads with the Lord that He should fulfil her longing without delay.

The first line may also be rendered thus: Frightened by sense objects, I have sought to be united with Thee that art fearless.

68

Pul/lari/ve/durai

Nal/lari/ve/durai

Pul/lida/ve/yarul

Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! Which is wrong knowledge? Say, which is right knowledge? And, bestow Thy grace so that I may attain the latter.

Ignorance is not mere absence of knowledge. It is perverted or wrong knowledge. It veils the real Self and projects the non-real world. Thus it becomes the root cause of bondage. The removal of ignorance is through right knowledge — knowledge of the non-dual Self. It is the immediate

experience of the Truth that releases the individual from its individuality and enables it to realize its non-difference from the Self.

In order to gain this final goal, the devotee-soul prays for God's grace. Even to be able to distinguish between right and wrong knowledge, the guidance of God or *guru* is necessary. The venom of error consists in its posing to be truth. In order to unmask error, one has to gain wisdom which results from divine grace. When wisdom is gained, there is no duality any longer, no sorrow.

69

Bu/mana/ma/manam
Pu/rana/manan/golap
Pu/rana/mana/marul
Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! Let this mind, which is (now) attached to the world, get attached to the Whole and become wedded to the Whole! Do bestow Thy grace!

What occupies the mind in the state of ignorance is the non-real world of which it itself is a part.

The world fills the mind; the world is too much with it. It is on account of this that there is misery, endless suffering. The way to remove misery lies in detaching the mind from the world and attaching it to God who is the Whole

(*purna*). When the Whole occupies the mind — in the language of bridal mysticism, when the mind is married to God — the mind gets dissolved, and what remains is the non-dual *Brahman* — bliss experience.

Purana manam which means 'plenary marriage' or 'marriage with the plenum' is the consummation of the life divine. It is the same as *advaita anubhava* (non-dual experience).

70

Peyar/ninait/tida/ve
Pidit/tizhut/tanai/yun
Peru/maiya/rari/var
Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! When I merely thought of Thy name, Thou didst drag me unto Thyself. Who can know Thy greatness!

The mere thought of Arunachala is believed to be efficacious in releasing the soul from bondage. Ramana, as a young lad, heard the name 'Arunachala' uttered casually by an elderly relative. Without any ostensive reason, he was attracted to Arunachala; and he made the epic journey to the Sacred Hill, after reaching which he had no desire to go anywhere. He lived in Arunachala for the rest of his life. Arunachala waits only for a pretext to save the devotee-soul. It is enough if she remembers the name; and

there the Lord comes to claim her. The devotee-soul is dragged even without her will — dragged away from worldly attachments, and unto the Lord's being. Such is the transcendent greatness of Arunachala! It is beyond measure, beyond description.

71

Peyt/tanam/vida/vidap
Pe/yap/pidit/tenaip
Pe/yanak/kinai/yen
Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! In order that my (low) ghostly nature may leave, Thou, as the obstinate ghost, hast possessed me and made me behave like a ghost.

The ego is the base ghost that possesses the soul. In order that this ghost may be driven away, God must possess the soul. The soul was world-mad formerly; now it becomes God-mad. Possession by the evil spirit is displaced by possession by the highest Spirit, God. When the soul becomes God-possessed she behaves like a child, or a lunatic or one possessed (*bala-unmatta-pisachavat*).

The devotee-soul wonders at the new life that has come to her as a result of God's grace. Her new madness is an elevating experience. Her new possession is what will save her and make her whole. Those who wallow

in worldliness may call her mad. But if this be madness, then madness has value, and not sanity.

72

Pain/godi/ya/nan
Pat/rindri/va/damal
Pat/trukko/dayk/ka
Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! Do protect me like a supporting pole so that I may not wither away like a tender creeper that has no support!

Without a tree or supporting pole, a creeper cannot survive. What gives strength to the creeper and makes it grow is the supporting tree or pole. Similarly, the devotee-soul cannot subsist without God. God is her mainstay and support. So, she appeals to God praying that He should not forsake her. *Maya* and *samsara* are powerful forces that create adverse conditions. If the devotee-soul should battle against them and succeed, she must have God's constant and unfailing support.

Among the analogies for mind's devotion to God given by Sankara in the *Sivanandalahari* is that of a creeper entwining a tree (*lata kshitiruham*).

73

Podi/yal/mayak/kiyen
Bo/dhataip/parit/tun

Boi/dhattaik/kat/tinai

Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! Stupefying me, as if with magic powder, Thou hast taken away my intelligence and shown me Thy wisdom.

The soul's intelligence is in fact, no intelligence; it is nescience. It is ignorance posing as knowledge. Hence, its removal is difficult. Only God's Grace can help to remove it. Grace can work wonders like magic powder. The magician strews some wonder powder on the patient; the patient loses his initiative and will, and becomes an instrument in the hands of the magician. He no longer sees with his own eyes; he sees with the eyes of the magician. Similarly, the Lord who is the greatest magician (*mayin*) overpowers the devotee-soul with His magic spell, grace, so that the soul may have her ignorance, which is mistaken as intelligence, destroyed. When this is done, God's wisdom, which is the supreme knowledge, is revealed to the soul. Here, there are not the distinctions of seer, seen, sight and object. This knowledge is not a modification of the mind. It is Pure Awareness (*chin-matra*) which is God, the Self.

74

Pok/kum/vara/vumil

Podu/veliyini/larul

Po/rat/tan/gat

t' Aruna/chala.

O Arunachala! In the common space, where there is neither going nor coming, show me the battle that is waged by grace.

The common space here spoken of is the limitless nondual Reality, *Brahman*. The ether of the heart is a symbol for it. Here, there is no bondage, no duality, no birth, no death. It is the region beyond transmigration. Brahman is the Infinite, unlimited Reality (*bhuman*). Since there is no duality there, there is no question of going and coming. Birth and death, and all change can belong only to individuals. But there is no individualism in Brahman which is one only, without a second (*ekam, eva, advitiyam*). Gaining this *Brahman* is the goal of life.

How is it to be gained? By battling against and conquering plurality, or the notion of plurality and its cause, nescience. This battle can be successfully waged only with the help of God's grace. The devotee-soul here prays for a sight of this battle royal between the darkness of ignorance and the light of wisdom, the success of the latter assured with the help of divine grace, which is only another name for wisdom. ■

Source TMP Mahadevan's Book Arunachala Siva Aksharamanamalai



श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

71

पी.वी. शास्त्री, एक वकील, 1945 में अपने 23 वर्षीय विवाहित पुत्र की मृत्यु से विक्षिप्त, श्री रमण के पास आए।

यह घटना इतनी दारुण व्यथाकारक थी कि मुझे लगा कि मैं अब जी नहीं पाऊँगा। घोर निराशा के कारण मैंने अपने सारे सांसारिक कर्तव्यों से मुख मोड़ लिया। कुछ समय बाद मुझे रमणाश्रम के प्रति आकर्षण हुआ और मैं परिवार सहित वहाँ गया। मैंने पढ़ा था कि श्री कृष्ण ने अपने गुरु संदीपनी ऋषि के पुत्र को पुनर्जीवित कर दिया था। हम व्यथा में इतने पागल हो गए थे कि हम सोचने लगे कि भगवान रमण महर्षि भी हमारा बेटा—जीवित कर वापस दे देंगे।

हम रमणाश्रम पहुँचकर महर्षि के कक्ष में गए। हमारे मन में एक ही विचार था कि हम उनसे प्रार्थना करें कि वे हमारे पुत्र को फिर से जीवित कर दें; किंतु प्रबल इच्छा होते हुए भी हम यह बात कहने के लिए अपना मुँह नहीं खोल पाए। हमें महर्षि के कक्ष में मानसिक शांति की अनुभूति होती, किंतु हम उनसे यह कहने का साहस नहीं जुटा पाए कि वे हमारे पुत्र को वापस लौटा कर हमें दे दें। अंत में हमने निर्णय लिया कि अब हमारा यहाँ ठहरे का कोई अर्थ नहीं।

जब हम आश्रम से वापस जाने की बात कर रहे थे, मेरी भेंट नेल्लोर निवासी सुब्बाराव से हुई। वे भी मेरी तरह पेशे से वकील थे, किंतु अब वकालत छोड़कर आश्रम के स्थायी निवासी हो गए थे। उनके पूछने पर मैंने

उन्हे सारी बात बताई। मैंने यह भी माना कि महर्षि की सन्निधि में हमें शांति मिलती है, पर कक्ष के बाहर आते ही हमारी वेदना ज्वालामुखी के समान भड़क उठती है। हम अपनी दारुण व्यथा महर्षि से नहीं कह पा रहे हैं।

सुब्बाराव ने वचन दिया कि वे हमें अगले दिन महर्षि के पास ले जाएंगे। दूसरे दिन हमने महर्षि से अपना दुख कहा और सहायता की प्रार्थना की; किंतु हम यह नहीं बता पाए कि हमारी वास्तविक इच्छा अपने मृत पुत्र को वापस पाने की है। हमारी दुखभरी गाथा सुनकर महर्षि ने सिर हिलाया और 'सरि', 'सरि' ('अच्छा', 'अच्छा') बोले। हमने जाने का निर्णय कर लिया, क्योंकि हम जो हम चाहते थे उसके मिलने की आशा नहीं रही।

जाने से पहले मेरे मन में विचार आया कि मुझे आश्रम द्वारा प्रकाशित कुछ पुस्तकें खरीदनी चाहिए। जब मैं पुस्तकहाट पहुँचा, मैंनेजर महोदय ध्यान में बैठे थे किंतु उन्होंने तुरंत आँखें खोलीं। बातों-बातों में मैंने उनसे अपनी सारी कहानी बता दी। उन्होंने कहा कि महर्षि आपके बेटे को पुनर्जीवित कर तो सकते हैं किंतु आपका लड़का बहुत आध्यात्मिक और भक्तिमय युवक था, वह किसी उच्च लोक में गया होगा, और आपके पास वापस आना पसंद ना करे। मैंने उन्हें दृढ़ विश्वास दिलाया कि हमारा इतना अधिक प्रेम था कि वह अवश्य वापस आ जाएगा। इस पर उस सज्जन ने दूसरा प्रश्न किया: मान लो, कल्पना करो कि महर्षि उसे वापस आपके पास ले आते हैं और उसके बाद आप दोनों मर जाते हैं, तब क्या होगा ? इस प्रश्न ने मेरे भ्रम के घने बादलों को घटाटोप हटा दिया और मुझे लगा कि बेटे को वापस लाने का विचार हमारा निरा पागलपन था। उसी समय मुझे ऐसी प्रतीती हुई, और आज भी है, कि महर्षि पुस्तकहाट के मैंनेजर के माध्यम से मुझसे बात कर रहे थे।

हमने अपने बेटे को पुनःजीवित करवाने की आशा छोड़ दी, और तुरंत वापस जाने की योजना भी बदल दी। शांति प्राप्त करने के उद्देश्य से हम 12 दिन और रुके। श्री रमण के शब्द 'अच्छा', 'अच्छा' हमें उसी प्रकार सहायता कर रहे थे जैसे एक सद्गुरु सहायक होता है। हमें महर्षि का अनुग्रह प्राप्त हुआ और वे निशब्द नीरवता से हमारे हृदय पर प्रभाव डालने लगे। उन्होंने

अपनी रहस्यमय शक्ति द्वारा हमारे हृदय से दारुण व्यथा के घने काले बादल हटाकर हृदय चीरने वाली वेदना का अंत कर दिया।

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जगदीश्वर शास्त्री (1894 - 1983), एक लब्ध प्रतिष्ठ संस्कृत विद्वान, चालीस वर्ष तक श्री रमण के साथ रहे। महर्षि उन्हें 'जगदीशा' कह कर बुलाते थे, जिससे उनका प्रेम और घनिष्टता प्रकट होते हैं।

सन् 1942 में शास्त्री एक घातक रोग से ग्रस्त हो गए, जिस पर कोई भी दवा कारगर नहीं हो रही थी। उन्होंने अपने इष्ट रमण महर्षि के लिए प्रार्थना स्वरूप आठ पर का 'प्रापत्ति अष्टकम्' भावपूर्ण काव्य लिखा। श्री रमण का शास्त्री के प्रति रहस्यमय वत्सलभाव था। उन्होंने शास्त्री को मृत्यु के मुख से निकाल कर दीर्घायु प्रदान की।

छगनलाल योगी (सं. 45) कहते हैं कि वे एक बार शास्त्री के साथ बंबई की तारकोल की तेज गर्म सड़क पर चल रहे थे। उन्हें विश्वास नहीं हो रहा था कि कोई इतनी गर्म सड़क पर नंगे पाँव कैसे चल सकता है। जब उन्होंने इस विषय में पूछा, तब शास्त्री ने कहा कि मुझे महर्षि की ओर से 'रवि-रक्षा' प्राप्त है। मैं चाहे जितनी भी गर्म सड़क पर चलूँ, मुझे कुछ नहीं होता। शास्त्री ने यह भी बताया कि उन्हें 'रवि-रक्षा' कैसे प्राप्त हुई।

एक दिन दोपहर के समय जब महर्षि अरुणाचल पर रहते थे, उन्होंने अपना कमंडल उठाया और पूछा कि क्या मैं उनके साथ घूमने चलना चाहूँगा ? मेरे यह कहने पर इस भयंकर धूप में हम कैसे घूम सकते हैं, वे बोले, "तुम भी ठीक वैसे ही घूम सकते हो, जैसे मैं घूमता हूँ। क्या मैं भी तुम्हारे जैसा दो हाथ पैर वाला मनुष्य नहीं हूँ ?" मैं कोई वाद-विवाद किए बिना, उनके साथ घूमने निकल पड़ा। महर्षि की तरह मेरे पैरों में भी कोई पादूका नहीं थी। तेज धूप में तपे पत्थर अत्यधिक गर्म थे : उन पर चलने से मेरे पैर जलने लगे। कुछ देर तो मैंने सहन किया, किंतु जब असह्य हो गया, मैं चिल्लाया, "भगवान ! मेरे पैर बहुत जल रहे हैं, मैं एक कदम भी और नहीं

चल सकता। चारों ओर आग बरस रही है। यदि इस भयंकर धूप में मैं थोड़ी देर और खड़ा रहा तो मेरा सिर फट जाएगा और मैं मर जाऊँगा।”

महर्षि मुस्कुराए और अत्यंत शांत वाणी में बोले, “जगदीशा, डरना छोड़ो और सुनो; तुम्हें यह दृढ़ भावना करनी है कि तुम सूर्य हो। ‘सूर्योस्मि’ [मैं सूर्य हूँ] मंत्र का सच्चे हृदय से जाप करने लगे। इसका परिणाम कुछ ही देर में दिखाई देगा। तुम स्वयं ही सूर्य—स्वरूप हो जाओगे, तुम में सूर्य की विशेषता आ जाएगी।”

मैं महर्षि की शिक्षा मानकर सूर्य मंत्र का जाप करने लगा। कुछ ही देर में उसका प्रभाव दिखाई दिया। धूप की तेजी घटती गई, और जलन की संवेदना कम होती गई। मैं महर्षि के साथ बिना कोई कष्ट अनुभव किए चलने लगा। बाद में मेरे आश्चर्य का ठिकाना न रहा, जब मैंने देखा कि इस मंत्र के जाप का प्रभाव स्थायी हो गया। मैं अब मंत्र का जाप नहीं करता हूँ, किंतु मुझे सूर्य की गर्मी से कोई कष्ट नहीं होता। अब मैं गर्मी में नंगे पाँव तारकोल की सड़क पर बिना किसी कष्ट के चल सकता हूँ।

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टी. के. सुंदरेश ऐय्यर (1896 - 1965) तिरुवण्णामलै के स्कूल में अंग्रेजी के अध्यापक थे। आश्रम में मात्र अंग्रेजी जानने वाले दर्शनार्थियों के लिए दुभाषिये का कार्य करते थे। महर्षि के निर्देशन में आश्रम में प्राप्त डाक का उत्तर लिखने का कार्य भी करते थे। उनके संस्मरण *At the Feet of Bhagavan* पुस्तक में हैं।

सन् 1908 में, जब मैं 12 वर्ष का था, मेरा चचेरा भाई कृष्णामूर्ति प्रतिदिन महर्षि के पास जाता और उनके सामने स्तुति अथवा भजन गाता। मेरे पूछने पर वह बोला, “अरुणाचल के स्वामी शिव; स्वयं मनुष्य रूप में वहाँ हैं, तुम भी मेरे साथ क्यों नहीं आते?” मैं भी पहाड़ी पर गया और शिला पर बैठे महर्षि को देखा। उनके आस-पास लगभग दस भक्त बैठे थे। सबने एक-एक गीत गाया। महर्षि ने मुझसे पूछा, “क्या तुम नहीं गाओगे?” मैंने जो भजन गाया

उसका सारांश था, 'हे प्रभु, ऐसा वरदान दो कि मेरी जिह्वा पर तुम्हारा नाम रहे, भले ही मेरा मन भटकता हो।' महर्षि प्रसन्न हुए और बोले, "हाँ, यही होना चाहिए।" उस दिन से मैं नित्य प्रति उनके पास जाने लगा।

उन दिनों महर्षि की आकृति तपे हुए सोने के समान दिखाई पड़ती थी। वे केवल मात्र बैठे रहते थे, बहुत ही कम बोलते थे। उनके मंत्र मुग्ध करने वाले व्यक्तित्व से सब पर एक सम्मोहक दीप्ति छा जाती थी। महर्षि से एक जीवनदायिनी धारा प्रवाहित होती थी, जिससे उनके आस-पास बैठे व्यक्ति प्राणवंत हो जाते थे। उनके नेत्रों से निकलनेवाला प्रकाश सबके हृदयों में अमृत सींचन कर देता था।

एक दिन अमावस्या थी। क्योंकि मुझे अपने पिता का श्राद्ध करना था, मैंने सबके साथ नाश्ता करने से मना कर दिया। महर्षि ने कहा कि मेरे पिता स्वर्ग में हैं, इसलिए उनके लिए और कुछ करने की आवश्यकता नहीं और मेरे नाश्ता करने से उन्हें कोई हानि नहीं होगी। पुरानी परंपरा के कारण मैं बैठने से हिचकिचाता रहा। महर्षि ने उठकर मुझे नाश्ते के लिए बैठा दिया। उस दिन से मेरा श्राद्ध प्रथा से विश्वास हट गया।

स्कंदाश्रम में एक मोर सदा महर्षि के पीछे-पीछे घूमता था। एक दिन एक बड़ा सा साँप आश्रम में आ गया। मोर ने उसे तीखी चोंचें मारीं। साँप ने अपना फन फैलाया और दोनों जन्मजात शत्रु प्राणान्तक युद्ध के लिए तैयार हो गए। महर्षि साँप के निकट गए और बोले, "तुम यहाँ क्यों आए? यह मोर तुम्हें मार डालेगा। अभी यहाँ से चले जाओ, यही अच्छा है" साँप ने अपना फन झुकाया और चुपचाप सार कर चला गया।

सन् 1933 में अपने 36 वे जन्मदिन के अवसर पर मैंने, महर्षि के समक्ष दुखी मन से बैठे, तमिल में एक कविता उनको संबोधित करते हुए लिखी। इसका सार था कि मैंने जीवन के साढ़े तीन दशक बीता दिए किंतु आपके वास्तविक रूप को देखने का सौभाग्य प्राप्त नहीं हुआ। हे भगवान्, आज के दिन तो मुझे अपनी कृपा का स्पर्श होने दो। उन्हें वह कागज देकर मैंने प्रणाम किया। उन्होंने मुझे बैठने को कहा; फिर एकाग्र दृष्टि से मेरी ओर देखा। मेरा मन अब भी विवादग्रस्त व विचारमग्न था। अचानक मैं देह-भान

भूल गया और महर्षि में खो गया। मैं अंतर्मुख हो गया। महर्षि का स्वर मुझसे मनचाहा देखने को कह रहा था।

महर्षि में हमें ईश्वर के सर्वज्ञ और सर्वशक्तिमान होने का ठोस प्रमाण मिलता है। यद्यपि हम बाहर से पहले जैसे ही दिखते हैं, किंतु हमारे बिना जाने महर्षि हमारे अहंकार और स्वार्थपरता की गहरी जड़ों को नष्ट कर देते हैं।

पेरू (दक्षिणी अमेरिका एक देश) से एक दम्पति, जिन्होंने महर्षि की महानता के विषय में सुना था, आश्रम आए। वे गरीब थे। निम्नतम श्रेणी में जहाज में यात्रा करने के लिए भी उन्हें वर्षों तक पैसे बचाने पड़े थे। उस पति-पत्नी के लिए पृथ्वी पर महर्षि का विद्यमान होना जीसस का पृथ्वी पर पुनरागमन था, और वे उन्तें देखने के लिए लालायित थे। एक दिन संध्या समय महर्षि के सम्मुख बैठकर वे पेरू की बात करने लगे। वे अपने शहर के समुंद्र के किनारे का वर्णन कर रहे थे। तभी महर्षि ने कहा कि वहाँ के समुंद्र तट पर संगमरमर बिछा हुआ है। जिसके बीच-बीच में नारियल के वृक्ष लगाये गए हैं। संगमरमर के ही बेंच हैं। आप पति-पत्नी उनमें से पाँचवे बेंच पर बैठते थे।

ये बात उनके लिए अत्यंत विस्मयकारी थी। वे बड़े अचम्भे में पड़ गए कि महर्षि को ऐसे सूक्ष्म विवरण की जानकारी कैसे हुई। महर्षि मुस्कुराए और बोले, “मैं कैसे जानता हूँ यह महत्त्व नहीं रखता, यदि आप यह समझ लें कि आत्मा, स्थान और समय में मर्यादित नहीं 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

8 फरवरी, 1937

353. भक्त : तुरीय क्या है ?

महर्षि : केवल तीन अवस्थाएँ हैं, जाग्रत, स्वप्न तथा सुषुप्ति। तुरीय चतुर्थ नहीं है : यह इन तीनों का आधार है। किन्तु लोग इसको सहज में समझ नहीं पाते। इस कारण इसको चतुर्थ अवस्था तथा केवल सत्यता कहा जाता है। वस्तुतः यह किसी वस्तु से पृथक नहीं है, चूँकि, यह समस्त घटनाओं का आधार है; केवल यही सत्य है; यही तुम्हारा वास्तविक अस्तित्व है। तीनों अवस्थाएँ इसी पर क्षणिक दृश्य की भाँति प्रकट हो केवल इसी में लीन हो जाती हैं। अतः वे मिथ्या हैं।

चित्रपट के चित्र परदे पर केवल अस्थायी छाया हैं। वे प्रकट होकर कभी आगे तथा कभी पीछे चलते हैं; एक बदलकर दूसरे आते हैं; अतः मिथ्या हैं, जबकि परदा सदैव अपरिवर्तित रहता है। कलापूर्ण चित्र भी इसी प्रकार हैं : आकृतियाँ असत्य हैं तथा परदा सत्य है। हमारे साथ भी ऐसा ही है : जगत् के दृश्य आन्तरिक अथवा बाह्य केवल अस्थायी दृश्य हैं तथा हमारी आत्मा से स्वतन्त्र नहीं हैं। उनको सत्य तथा उनकी स्थिति अपने से बाहर मानने का हमारा यह जो स्वभाव बन गया है, यह स्वभाव ही हमारे निज स्वरूप को छिपा रहा है और अन्यता को सामने ला रहा है। केवल नित्य—सिद्ध सत्य—स्वरूप आत्मा की उपलब्धि से ही सब असत्य छिप जायगा, और यह ज्ञान हो जायगा कि वे आत्मा के अतिरिक्त कुछ भी नहीं हैं।

तुरीय आत्मा का केवल दूसरा नाम है। हम जागृति, स्वप्न, सुषुप्ति का भान रखते हुए भी स्वयं अपनी आत्मा से अनभिज्ञ रहते हैं। तथापि आत्मा अभी और यहाँ है, केवल यही सत्य है। इसके अतिरिक्त कुछ नहीं है। जब तक देह से तादात्म्य रहता है जगत् हमसे बाहर स्थित प्रतीत होता है। केवल आत्मा का साक्षात्कार करो, तब संसार है ही नहीं।

354. एक थियोसोफिस्ट, अमरीकी महिला ने जिज्ञासा की : किन साधनों से मैं अपने गुरु के निकटतर पहुँच सकती हूँ ?

महर्षि : अब तुम उनसे कितनी दूर हो ?

भक्त : मैं उनसे दूर हूँ। किन्तु उनके अधिक समीप आना चाहती हूँ।

महर्षि : यदि तुम पहले अपनी आत्मा को जान लो तब तुम मालूम कर लेना कि दूसरा तुमसे कितनी दूर है। अभी तुम कौन हो ? क्या तुम व्यक्तित्व हो ?

भक्त : हाँ, मैं व्यक्तित्व हूँ।

महर्षि : क्या व्यक्तित्व आत्मा से स्वतन्त्र है ?

भक्त : कभी-कभी।

महर्षि : किस समय पर ?

भक्त : मेरा आशय है कि मुझे सत्य के कुछ स्फुरण होते हैं जो मुझे अन्य क्षणों में नहीं होते।

महर्षि : उन स्फुरणों का किसे भान होता है ?

भक्त : मुझे, मेरा आशय है मेरे व्यक्तित्व को।

महर्षि : क्या इस व्यक्तित्व को यह बोध है कि वह आत्मा से पृथक है ?

भक्त : कौन-सी आत्मा ?

महर्षि : तुम व्यक्तित्व किसे मानते हो ?

भक्त : निम्न आत्मा।

महर्षि : तो मैं यह पूछता हूँ क्या वह निम्न आत्मा उच्चतर आत्मा को स्वतन्त्र जानता है ?

भक्त : हाँ, कभी-कभी ।

महर्षि : यह कौन अनुभव करता है कि अभी वह गुरु से दूर है ?

भक्त : उच्चतर आत्मा ।

महर्षि : क्या उच्चतर आत्मा के देह है जो कहती है कि गुरु उससे दूर है ? क्या वह तुम्हारे मुख के माध्यम से बोलती है ? क्या तुम उससे पृथक हो ?

भक्त : क्या आप कृपा कर मुझे परामर्श देंगे कि मैं किस अभ्यास द्वारा वह जागरूकता प्राप्त कर सकती हूँ कि बिना देह के भी मैं जो कुछ करती हूँ—जैसे सुषुप्ति में—उसका मुझे भान रहे ।

महर्षि : जागरूकता तुम्हारा स्वरूप है । गहन सुषुप्ति में अथवा जागृति में, वह एक ही है । तो उसकी पुनः प्राप्ति ही क्या है ?

भक्त : किन्तु मुझे स्मरण नहीं अपनी सुषुप्ति में मैंने क्या तथा किस प्रकार किया ?

महर्षि : यह कौन कहता है, “मुझे स्मरण नहीं” ?

भक्त : मैं अब कह रही हूँ ।

महर्षि : तब भी तुम वही थीं; तुम सुषुप्ति में ऐसा क्यों नहीं कहतीं ?

भक्त : सुषुप्ति में मैं क्या कहती हूँ मुझे याद नहीं ।

महर्षि : जाग्रत अवस्था में तुम कहती हो, “मैं जानती हूँ, मुझे स्मरण है ।” वही व्यक्तित्व कहता है, “मुझे ज्ञान नहीं था — मुझे सुषुप्ति में स्मरण नहीं था ।” सुषुप्ति में यह प्रश्न क्यों नहीं उठता ?

भक्त : सुषुप्ति में क्या होता है, मैं नहीं जानती । इसी कारण मैं अब जिज्ञासा कर रही हूँ ।

महर्षि : इस प्रश्न का सम्बन्ध सुषुप्ति की अवस्था से है तथा वहीं यह पूछा जाना चाहिए। जाग्रत अवस्था से इसका सम्बन्ध नहीं है तथा इस प्रश्न का कोई स्पष्ट कारण नहीं है।

वास्तव में सुषुप्ति में तुम परिमितता से रहित होते हो एवं कोई प्रश्न उत्पन्न नहीं होता। जबकि अब तुमने परिसीमाएँ बना ली हैं, देह से अपना तादात्म्य कर लिया है, औश्र इस प्रकार के प्रश्न उठते हैं।

भक्त : मैं इसे समझती हूँ किन्तु इसकी अनुभूति नहीं करती हूँ (जैसे—विविधता में एकता)।

महर्षि : चूँकि तुम विविधता में हो, इसलिए कहती हो कि तुमने एकता को समझ लिया है—कि तुम्हें स्फुरण होते हैं, आदि: वस्तुओं आदि का स्मरण है; तुम इस विविधता को सत्य मानती हो। इसके विपरीत एकता ही सत्यता है तथा विविधता मिथ्या है। एकता अपने आपको— अपनी सत्यता को प्रकट करे इसके पहले विविधता का जाना आवश्यक है। वह सदैव सत्य है। वह अपने अस्तित्व का स्फुरण इस मिथ्या विविधता में प्रकट नहीं करती। इसके विपरीत यह विविधता सत्य में रूकावट पैदा करती है।

तदुपरान्त कुछ अन्य व्यक्ति इसी विषय पर चर्चा करते रहे।

महर्षि : अभ्यास का लक्ष्य है अज्ञान का निवारण, न कि साक्षात्कार कि उपलब्धि। साक्षात्कार नित्य—सिद्ध है; अभी और यहीं। यदि इसकी प्राप्ति नये सिर से होती तो यह विदित होना आवश्यक था कि साक्षात्कार एक समय अनुपस्थित है तथा दूसरे समय उपस्थित है। उस अवस्था में, यह स्थायी नहीं होता, एवं इस कारण प्रयास करने योग्य भी नहीं होता। किन्तु साक्षात्कार स्थायी तथा नित्य है तथा यहीं एवं अभी है।

भक्त : अज्ञान निवारण हेतु अनुग्रह आवश्यक है।

महर्षि : निश्चय ही। किन्तु अनुग्रह निरन्तर है। अनुग्रह ही आत्मा है। यह कोई वस्तु नहीं है जिसकी प्राप्ति करनी है। केवल इसके अस्तित्व को बोध होना आवश्यक है। उदाहरणार्थ, सूर्य केवल प्रभा है। वह अन्धकार नहीं

देखता। जबकि दूसरे लोग कहते हैं कि सूर्योदय होते ही अँधेरा भाग जाता है। इसी प्रकार, अज्ञान भी भ्रम है, वास्तविक नहीं। उसके मिथ्या होने के कारण, उसके मिथ्यात्व का बोध होते ही उसका निवारण होना कहा जाता है। फिर, सूर्य है, तथा प्रकाश भी है। तुम सूर्य के प्रकाश से घिरे हुए हो। तथापि यदि तुम्हें सूर्य को जानना है तो तुम्हें उसकी ओर अपनी दृष्टि करनी होगी और उसे देखना होगा। इसी प्रकार अनुग्रह केवल अभ्यास के द्वारा प्राप्त होता है यद्यपि वह यहीं एवं अभी है।

भक्त : मैं आशा करता हूँ, समर्पण की निरन्तर कामना होने से अनुग्रह में वृद्धि का अनुभव होगा।

महर्षि : एक बार मैं ही सदैव के लिए समर्पण कर डालो और इच्छा को समाप्त कर दो। जब तक कर्तृत्व की भावना रहती है तब तक इच्छा है; यही व्यक्तित्व भी है। यदि यह समाप्त हो जाय तो शुद्ध आत्मा प्रकाशित होगी। स्वयं कर्म नहीं अपितु कर्तृत्व की भावना ही बन्धन है।

“शान्त हो जाओ तथा जान लो मैं ईश्वर हूँ।” यहाँ शान्त होने का अर्थ है, पूर्ण समर्पण जिसमें किञ्चितमात्र भी व्यक्तित्व का अवशेष नहीं है। निश्चलता व्याप्त होगी तथा मन में कोई क्षोभ नहीं होगा। मन का क्षोभ वासना, कर्तृत्व की भावना तथा व्यक्तित्व के कारण है। यदि यह समाप्त हो जाय तो शान्ति है। यहाँ ‘जानने’ से आशय है ‘होना’। यह सापेक्ष ज्ञान नहीं है जिसमें ज्ञान, ज्ञाता तथा ज्ञेय की त्रिपुटी है।

भक्त : क्या “मैं भगवान् हूँ” अथवा “मैं परब्रह्म हूँ” का संकल्प सहायक है ?

महर्षि : “अस्तित्व ही मैं हूँ” “मैं हूँ” ईश्वर है—यह सोचना नहीं “मैं ईश्वर हूँ”। अनुभव करो “मैं हूँ” यह चिन्तन मत करो “मैं हूँ”। निर्देश है—“जानो मैं ईश्वर हूँ” न कि “विचार करो मैं ईश्वर हूँ।”

बाद में श्री भगवान् ने कहा : यह कहा गया है— “अस्तित्व ही मैं हूँ” इसका अभिप्राय है कि मनुष्य को आत्मभाव से रहना चाहिए। वह सदैव केवल आत्मा

है। इसके अतिरिक्त वह कुछ नहीं है। तथापि वह जिज्ञासा करता है “मैं कौन हूँ” ? जो माया से भ्रमित है वही यह जिज्ञासा करेगा “मैं कौन हूँ ?” न कि वह मनुष्य जिसे स्वयं का पूर्ण ज्ञान है। आत्मा का अनात्मा से मिथ्या तादात्म्य ही तुमसे प्रश्न करता है, “मैं कौन हूँ ?”

श्री भगवान् ने बाद में फिर कहा : तिरुवन्नामलाई के अनेक मार्ग हैं, किन्तु किसी भी रास्ते से वहाँ पहुँचो तिरुवन्नामलाई वही है। इसी प्रकार विषय का प्रवेश व्यक्तित्व के अनुसार विभिन्न होता है। तथापि आत्मा वही है। किन्तु तिरुवन्नामलाई में रहते हुए, कोई मार्ग पूछे तो यह हास्यास्पद है। इसी प्रकार आत्मा होकर आत्म-साक्षात्कार कैसे करूँ यह पूछना अर्थहीन है। तुम आत्मा हो। आत्मभाव से रहो। यही सब कुछ है। आत्मा का शरीर से अब मिथ्या तादात्म्य के कारण प्रश्न उदय होते हैं। यही अज्ञान है। इसको जाना होगा। इसके हटने के पश्चात् केवल आत्मा ही है।

355. क्या निरक्षरता की तुलना में शिक्षा ज्ञानी को जगत् के लिए अधिक उपयोगी नहीं बनाती ?

महर्षि : एक सुशिक्षित व्यक्ति को भी अशिक्षित ज्ञानी के समक्ष सिर झुकाना होगा।

निरक्षरता अज्ञान है : शिक्षा पाण्डित्यपूर्ण अज्ञान है। दोनों ही अपने वास्तविक लक्ष्य से अनभिज्ञ हैं; जबकि ज्ञानी अनभिज्ञ नहीं है क्योंकि उसके लिए कोई लक्ष्य नहीं है।

356. भक्त : संसार में निद्रा क्यों है ?

महर्षि : केवल पाप के कारण।

भक्त : क्या यह नष्ट हो सकती है ?

महर्षि : हाँ।

भक्त : ऐसा कहा जाता है कि स्वयं का अनुभव कराकर ही यह नष्ट होती है।

महर्षि : फिर ईश्वर की भक्ति क्यों ?

भक्त : सुषुप्ति को कैसे नष्ट किया जा सकता है ?

महर्षि : इसकी क्रियाओं तथा प्रभावों से अवगत न रहने से।

भक्त : यह कैसे किया जा सकता है ?

महर्षि : केवल आत्म-विचार द्वारा।

संस्मरण

357. श्री भगवान् तिरुवन्नामलाई में अपने निवास की कुछ घटनाएँ सुना रहे थे :

1. एक दिन उन्हें एक पत्ते पर रखकर किसी वस्तु के कुछ कण चखने के लिए दिये गये। यह बताया गया था कि यह पाचन में अच्छी सहायता करता है। उन्होंने उसका सेवन किया। बाद में उन्होंने अपना भोजन किया। कुछ समय पश्चात् जो लोग उपस्थित थे वे सब प्रकाश से घिरे हुए (तेजोमय) दीखे। कुछ समय के बाद यह अनुभव विलीन हो गया।

2. जब वे पवलकुनरु में निवास कर रहे थे, उन्होंने पर्वत के एक झरने में स्नान करना चाहा। पलानिस्वामी को इसकी सूचना दे दी गयी। समाचार फैल गया कि जड़ पद्मनाभस्वामी ने, जो पर्वत पर निवास कर रहे थे पलानिस्वामी के साथ श्री भगवान् को पर्वत पर अपने आश्रम के निकट ले जाने का आयोजन किया है। श्री भगवान् को सूचित किये बिना ही पलानिस्वामी उन्हें वहाँ ले गये। वहाँ स्वागत का विशाल आयोजन था। उनके लिए बैठने का प्रबन्ध किया गया, दुग्ध एवं फल भेंट किये गये तथा पद्मनाभस्वामी अत्यन्त कृपाशीलता से उनकी सेवा में उपस्थित रहे।

3. यद्यपि 'आत्म-साक्षात्कार' पुस्तक में जड़ पद्मनाभस्वामी के सम्बन्ध में लिखा है कि वे श्री भगवान् को हानि पहुँचाना चाहते थे, वास्तव में वे महर्षि के प्रति सर्वदा कृपालु थे, ओर उनके हास्य को भ्रान्त धारणा के कारण द्वेषपूर्ण समझ लिया जाता था। उनकी एक ही कमजोरी थी कि वे श्री

भगवान् के नाम से धन—संग्रह करना चाहते थे जो निश्चय ही महर्षि को पसन्द नहीं था। जड़ पदमनाभस्वामी में कोई दोष नहीं था।

4. माधवस्वामी सेवक ने प्रश्न किया : क्या श्री भगवान् मन्दिर में भूमि के नीचे तहखाने में महीनों तक निराहार रहे ?

महर्षि : !—ओउम् !—ओउम् !—भोजन आता रहता था—दूध, फल—किन्तु भोजन का ध्यान ही किसे था।

5. आम के पेड़ की गुफा में निवास करते समय श्री भगवान् मन्दिर की प्रतिमाओं के लिए कमल, पीले फूल एवं हरी पत्तियों से मालाएँ बनाते थे।

6. कल्याणमन्तपम के पूर्ण हाने के पश्चात् श्री भगवान् वहाँ एक रात्रि वेश—परिवर्तन करके रहे थे।

7. जब वे मन्दिर के अहाते में एक वृक्ष के नीचे बैठे थे तब कभी भी स्नान न करने से उनके शरीर पर धूल जम गयी थी। दिसम्बर की शीतल रात्रियों में वे पैरों को मोड़, अपना सिर मुड़े हुए पैरों के बीच में रखते तथा बिना हिले—डुले रहते। प्रातःकाल धूल की परत ओस तथा कुहरे से भीगकर सफेद दीखती। धूप में सूखने पर वह काली प्रतीत होती थी।

8. श्री भगवान् पर्वत पर निवास करते समय घण्टे बजाकर, पात्रों, आदि को स्वच्छ कर जड़ पदमनाभस्वामी की पूजा में सहयोग देते थे और सारे समय मौन रहते थे। वे चिकित्सा—शास्त्र के ग्रन्थ, जैसे मलयालम में 'अष्टांग हृदय' भी पढ़ते थे तथा अन्य साधु के पास सहायता के लिए आने वाले रोगियों को पुस्तक में बतायी चिकित्सा का निर्देश करते थे। वह साधु इन पुस्तकों को स्वयं पढ़ने में असमर्थ था। ■

क्रमशः

“श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत” पुस्तक से उद्धृत

(संग्रहकर्ता - श्री मुनगल एस. वैकटरामैया

अनुवादक - श्री दिनेशचन्द्र शर्मा)

Translated from 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi'

Murthi and Bhagavan

What is the difference between the Murthis outside and the image of Bhagavan inside!

NOTHING : Both are divinities. Perfect representations of God. The Murthis and Guru can both bestow health, prosperity and Mukti.

EVERYTHING : The Murthis themselves cannot aid liberation as they are not in the form of the Guru - they can't instruct us to do a specific Sadhna suitable to us. They are remote to our intellect i.e., so much time has elapsed since they walked on this earth that our mind can easily plant a doubt in our minds if the Puranas are really fact or fiction. However, a true Bhakta can indeed see the Guru in them and get guidance for their liberation then the Murthi manifests as a Guru form and thus Ramana and the Murthis are the same.

It is important to know that there is no difference between God & Guru. Bhagavan explains that it is the Self or God in our hearts which when sufficiently propitiated by various Spiritual and religious practices manifests in our life or within the span of our attention as Guru.

It is thus important to recognize when Guru manifests in our life as the precious fruit of many births of Murthi Seva and eagerly imbibe the teachings of such a Guru and attain liberation or peace quickly. It would indeed be amusing to even the Murthi / God itself if we continue to give priority solely to religious practices alone, even after coming in contact with the Guru. Ironically, we sometimes ignore the progressive manifestation of God as Guru in our lives and even start treating Guru as another Murthi without putting efforts to live by his teachings which places Mukti or peace at so much within our reach in this short life span itself.

That could be one major significance of Ramana to sincere Bhaktas of all forms of God.

Compiled by A Sridhar Nagarajan



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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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