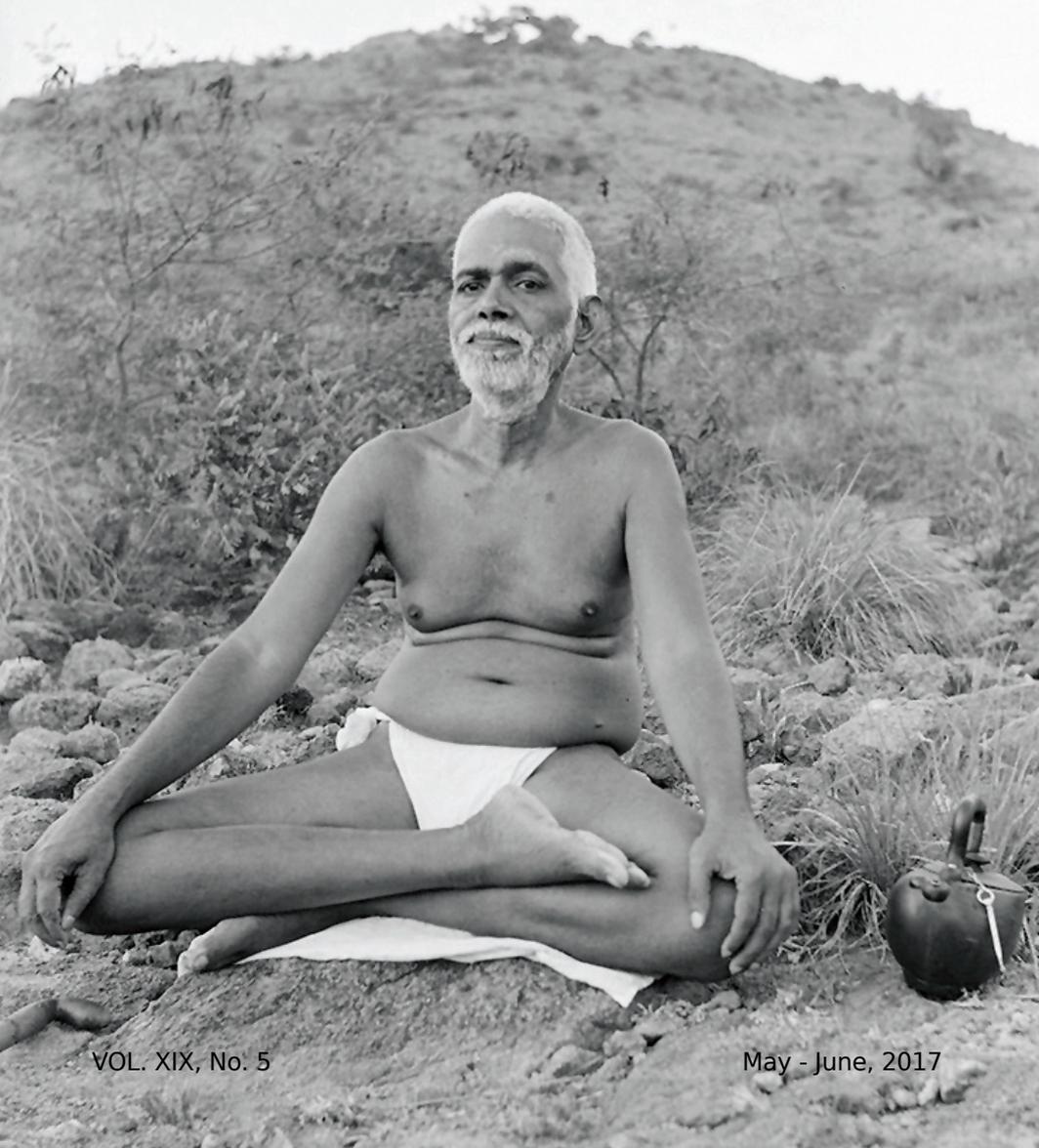




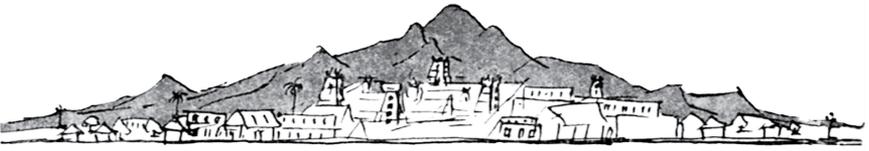
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RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH



VOL. XIX, No. 5

May - June, 2017



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

RAMANA GYAN DIRECT PATH

VOLUME XIX ISSUE 5

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Cover: Bhagavan sitting on the slopes of Arunachala



Editor's Note

Our subscription for Direct Path has remained Rs. 10 per issue for the past 20 years and due to high inflation we are not able to defray our costs. So from this issue onwards we are increasing our rates to Rs.25 per issue. We would highly appreciate if the Life subscribers also contribute, however this is only a suggestion. The new subscription rates are given in the box below.

We again urge devotees to get their spiritual queries answered by Swamijis and Ramana scholars through the columns of our magazines. Such answers may benefit other devotees also. Please send the queries to **shiromani.vijay@yahoo.co.in**

All views are welcome to make the magazine better. Some of the articles may have been edited for clarity and brevity.

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

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

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That Holy Grail Called Happiness

Shiromani Vijay

Recently the Happiness Index Rankings for 2016 was published. The criteria of measuring Happiness Index has been changing over the years and this index is almost based on GDP. Visionary Robert Kennedy in his presidential campaign said “That Gross National Product measures everything except that which makes life worthwhile”. Is Happiness based on money a country has – does well-being and material growth go hand-in hand? While this index may indicate a gross nation’s happiness, it is far removed from the subtle personal happiness of its citizens.

Decades ago Bhutan rejected GDP as the way to measure progress but championed a new approach to development based on spiritual, physical, social and environmental health of its citizens and natural environment naming it gross national happiness (GNH). As the criteria for

measurement is very difficult and subjective, perhaps each country should device its own basis for measuring Happiness and measure over time how it is faring. There is also the Happy Planet Index which takes into account the resources of our planet used to create our well-being and in this measure the so called advanced affluent countries come last.

Why do we want to measure Happiness at all? Because all of us are clamouring for “Happiness”. That Happiness is the spoken and unspoken “choiceless” quest of all living beings has long been accepted; even the tiny ant races towards the sugar cube in the pursuit of happiness. I seems that no one wakes up in the morning thinking, "May I suffer the whole day?" Which means that somehow, consciously or not, directly or indirectly, in the short or the long term, whatever we

do, whatever we hope, whatever we dream — somehow, is related to a deep, profound desire for well-being or happiness. As Pascal said, even the one who hangs himself, somehow, is looking for cessation of suffering as he finds no other way.

Now that we seen that attaining Happiness is our primary occupation, every moment of our life, we need to get a clearer idea of Happiness.

Unfortunately we tend to believe that the Holy Grail is to be found externally through an endless acquisition of relationships and possessions. This is not to say that per-se relationships and possessions are bad. We need food to eat; clothes to wear; a roof over our heads. We need to bring up children, educate them; and of course material wealth helps in satisfying these needs and comforts. While allocating weightage to material wealth and comforts, we should always think of its marginal utility. But where we appear to be making a grave mistake is in identifying these as a source of happiness. All religions have always made this point and our scriptures in Vedanta have elaborately discussed the topic of happiness.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishads boldly

proclaims:

आत्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति

It is for one's own sake everything else is loved

Whatever we do, is for our own sake with the expectation that it will bring us happiness. For example, I love mangoes for my sake as it makes me happy when I eat them, I love my dog for it makes me happy in its company and similarly I love my child for my sake for the happiness it gives me. We might love sweets but after a point we don't enjoy it any more- we might even start hating it. A Relationship initially brings us joy but in time seems banal. Neither the objects can give lasting joy nor the relationships give us lasting happiness. These just point out that the happiness is not in the thing or the relationship we are pursuing but is within us. We often confuse happiness with pleasure which is based on time, object, place and situation. And more we chase this, it seems to turn its back on us. And when we delve deeper, we observe that all the pleasures we get from objects can be surpassed and hence it is a never-ending chase.

Having said that all of us are chasing happiness, why do we want to be happy at all? It is because that is our

natural state and we want to move to that state. Happiness is a deep sense of peace and fulfilment which pervades all the emotions be it joy or sorrow and not just the pleasurable sensations. We seem to be in this state when we are in सुषुप्ति or deep sleep. The moment we get up we start to search for happiness. We feel there is an incompleteness or void which can be filled by the objects of the world. Our scriptures point out that this is due to अज्ञान or ignorance that we are born with. This ignorance generates desire or काम to fill the void, this desire drives us into action or कर्म, and action in time bears fruit or फल of either happiness or sadness and the cycle goes on. So how do we break this cycle? Initially we must convince ourselves that happiness is our nature and is very intimate to us. Next step is to look for this intimate thing referred to as Atman or “I” through study of Vedanta, careful reasoning and Self

enquiry. On further analysis and contemplation, we comprehend that is inner “I” is the same inner “I” in all beings. This is stated in Isavasya Upanishad

यस्तु सर्वाणि भूतान्यात्मन्येवानुपश्यति ।

सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुप्सते ॥

What does this knowledge give us? It gets us out of any hatred we have towards other beings and more importantly it gives us fearlessness as fear is born out of the feeling of separateness. When there is no fear and no hatred, what we experience is peace and happiness which does not depend on external factors. Ramana Maharshi was in this state of happiness treating all beings as same and from His experience He taught us the method of Self-enquiry which would lead us all into happiness. ■

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We wish all our readers a happy
Hevalambi Samvatsara!

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Bhagavan and His Universal Compassion

Rochie Rana

A man came to Ramana Maharshi and said, “I have come from very far, somewhere in Germany, and I have come to learn from you.” Ramana said, “Then you go elsewhere, because here we teach unlearning. Learning is not our way. You go elsewhere.”

Ramana Maharshi had no use for 'lectures' or philosophy. In fact, he was philosophy-himself. He had no teachings. He was teachings. Bhagwan laid emphasis on the fact that the self could be found through awareness. He used to often smile and say “The state of self-realization, as we call it, is not attaining something new or reaching some goal which is far away, but simply

being that which you always are and which you always have been. All that is needed is that you give up your realization of the not-true as true.”

A devotee once asked him what he should read for personal study and Bhagavan's answer was “The Self is the real book. You can glance anywhere in that book; nobody can take it away from you. Whenever you are free, turn towards the Self. Thereafter you may read whatever you like.”

Bhagavan had his own special ways to reach out to his devotees and there was none who wasn't touched

by the miracles of Bhagavan's being and his words and miracles.

Once, a devotee who had suddenly lost his only son came to Bhagavan in

“*Maharshi had no use for 'lectures' or philosophy. In fact, he was philosophy-himself. He had no teachings. He was teachings.*”

”

a state of sharp anguish, seeking relieve from the grief of losing his son. He asked a few questions about life and loss in which his misery was evident, and he was inconsolable.

Bhagavan, as usual, asked him to enquire into the Self and find out who is grieving. The devotee was not content; he still continued to mourn at Bhagavan's feet. Bhagavan then said "I will tell you a story from Vichara Sagaram and that might help you put your grief into perspective.

Two youngsters by the name Rama and Krishna told their respective parents that they would go to foreign countries to educate themselves in further studies and consequently earn a lot of money. After a period of time, one of them died unexpectedly. The other studied hard, earned a lot and was living blissfully.

Some time later the one that was alive requested a merchant who was going to his native place to tell his father that he was prosperous and contented and that the other boy who had come with him had passed away. Instead of passing on the information correctly, the merchant told the father of the person who was alive, that his son was dead, and the father of the person that was dead, that his son had earned a lot of wealth and was

living joyfully.

The parents of the person, who was actually dead, were happy in the thought that their son would come back after some time, while the parents of the person whose son was alive, but was reported to be dead, were in great grief and turmoil.

In fact, neither of them saw their son but they were experiencing happiness or grief according to the reports they received. That is all. We too are similarly situated.

We believe everything that the mind tells us and get deluded into thinking that what exists does not exist and that what does not exist exists. If we do not believe the mind but enter the heart and see the son that is inside, there is no need to see the children outside."

The man finally saw the light in what Bhagavan was trying to tell him and once he comprehended the true nature of things, his anguish soon turned into a reality in which the light of consciousness shone to help him break free from the illusory world of Maya, which Bhagavan explains simply as "Maya is what is not; what remains over is the true Self."

There is a similar story of Bhagavan always watching over his devotees in which G.V. Subbaramaiah arrived

at the Asramam, after the death of his dear wife and after completing the ceremonies; he was naturally distraught at the passing away of his beloved wife.

Bhagavan Ramana looked at him with a lot of kindness and affection and this helped to diminish his mourning and bereavement. GVS said that his wife was appearing in his dreams regularly. Bhagavan Ramana smiled and left this at that. After sometime, GVS admitted with much astonishment that she no longer appeared in his dreams, to which Bhagavan R a m a n a benevolently said “She was in your mind. Now she is in your Heart.”

Bhagavan’s compassion was not just limited to his devotees or even just human beings.

The story goes that once somebody brought Bhagavan a wounded dove. Bhagavan held it in his hands for some time and then asked the devotees gathered in the hall, "Who will take fine care of this bird until it is quite fighting fit"? No offer came. Some time before the appearance of the dove, the Maharani of Baroda

had presented a white peacock to the Ashram and everybody was fervently enthusiastic to take charge of it. Bhagavan looked around and started talking to the dove, "What a pity you are not a peacock. You are a mere dove, a useless little thing, not a valuable bird presented by a Maharani. Who wants you? Who will care for you"? The dove was kept in the Ashram in a little cage, became well and flew away and Bhagavan himself would shine the light of his presence upon the bird while it was in the cage.

“ *Bhagavan’s compassion was not just limited to his devotees or even just human beings.* ”

Bhagavan, by his gesture of love and nurturing the wounded silently taught the

lesson of universal compassion to all those who were willing to learn by example.

His kindheartedness for animals was well known. On the roof of the Old Hall, squirrels would often build their nests. Once, accidentally some new-born squirrels fell on Bhagavan's sofa. Their eyes were yet unopened and the size of each baby squirrel was smaller than a thumb and clearly incapable of taking care of themselves. The mother squirrel

ignored them and carried on tending to her other little squirrels. The baby squirrels were in the palm of and Bhagavan and his face glowed with love and affection for them. He asked for some cotton to be brought and made a soft bed for them. He also took a bit of the cotton and squeezed it to resemble a needle. He dipped it in milk and squeezed milk into the tiny mouths. At regular intervals, Bhagavan repeated this act of compassion. He tended to them with great care till they grew up and ran around. They did not run away, only ran around Bhagavan who was both their mother and father.

The most beautiful story about Bhagavan and his love for animals, though, remains the story of Lakshmi the cow.

Sometime in 1926, four years after Sri Bhagavan came to live at the foot of the holy hill beside the samadhi of the mother, Arunachalam Pillai of Kumaramangalam, entered the ashram with a cow and her young female calf and offered them to Sri Bhagavan in token of his devotion. Bhagavan tried to dissuade him pointing out there were no proper facilities at the ashram for looking after the cow and the calf. However Arunachalam Pillai was

very adamant and even said that he was not interested in taking back the Cow and the Calf even if somebody were to cut his throat. Seeing his insistence and the devotion behind it, one Ramanatha Brahmachari who was then living near Bhagavan declared energetically that he will take care of the cow and the calf. As the Calf came on a Friday, Maharshi named her 'Lakshmi'.

Ramanatha somehow tended to her for two or three months but Lakshmi was very playful and she ruined all the vegetable plants at the Ashram. If anyone chided her, she used to go to Bhagavan for protection. Ramanatha could not put up with all these troubles and hence handed over the cow and the calf to one Pasupathi, a keeper of cattle in the town. Once the cattle keeper came to the Ashram along with the Cow and the Calf and then they went back. At that time Lakshmi saw the whole of the Ashram. Remembering the route carefully, she began to visit the Ashram from the next day onwards regularly. Lakshmi used to lie down by the side of Ramana's Couch. If food was available she would insist that Bhagavan alone should give it to her.

Bhagavan himself once pointed

out the sanctity of Lakshmi by saying, “what tapas she must have performed in her previous births! It may be that she is living in our midst now only to complete her unfinished tapas’.

On Friday, the 5th of Ani, in the bright fortnight, in Sukla Paksham, on dvadasi in visaka nakshatra in sarvadhari year [that is, on 18th June 1948] the cow Lakshmi attained mukti.

About Mukti itself, Bhagavan used to say,” Mukti or liberation is our nature. It is another name for us. Our wanting mukti is a very funny thing. It is like a man who is in the shade, voluntarily leaving the shade, going into the sun, feeling the severity of the heat there, making great efforts to get back into the shade and then rejoicing, ‘How sweet is the shade! I have reached the shade at last!’ We are all doing exactly the same. We are not different from the reality. We imagine we are different, that is we create the bheda bhava [the feeling of difference] and then undergo great

sadhana [spiritual practices] to get rid of the bheda bhava and realize the oneness. Why imagine or create bheda bhava and then destroy it?”

The eternal thought to carry with us into our daily lives and one which inspires us to seek and find mukti for ourselves is what Bhagavan says “Distracted as we are by various thoughts, if we would continually contemplate the Self, which is Itself God, this single thought would in due course replace all distraction and would itself ultimately vanish;. The pure Consciousness that alone finally remains is God. This is Liberation. To be constantly centered on one’s own all-perfect pure Self is the acme of yoga, wisdom, and all other forms of spiritual practice. Even though the mind wanders restlessly, involved in external matters, and so is forgetful of its own Self, one should remain alert and remember:

"The body is not I." ■

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Kendra Bulletin

The significant event was the observance of Bhagavan's Aradhana Day on 14 th April. After the customary invocation prayers, Brahmachari Shuddhananda gave a meaningful and inspiring talk on Mindfulness-For Happier Living making numerous references to Bhagavan's teachings. He spoke about "Guru" in particular. He led a session on "meditation" at the end of his talk. At 8.30 pm the vast congregation recited of Aksharamanana Malai to coincide with the time at which Bhagavan left his mortal coils in 1950.

Swami Chidananda of FOWAI Forum gave an in-depth spiritual discourse on Dakshinamurthy Stotra which was attended by a packed audience.

The discourses on Kathopanishad by Swami Prabhuddananda, on Atma Bodha by Swami Durgeshananda and on Bhagavad Git by the Secretary Shri P.N.Vijay continued regularly.

The Managing Body and the EGM met during this period and the new Managing Body took office. The names of the Managing Body are published elsewhere in this issue. During the EGM many Members participated in the discussions and gave several valuable suggestions for improving the reach of the Kendra for spreading the Teachings of Bhagavan.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 7th & June 4th	Upadesaram Swami Durgeshananda
May 21st & June 18th	Bhagavad Gita Shri. P N Vijay
May 28th & June 25th	Atma Bodha Swami Durgeshananda



Greening of Arunachala

P N Vijay

Arunachala Hill is a symbol of the Agni aspect of Lord Siva. To Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi it was Lord Siva himself. Holy spots like Virupaksha Cave and Skanda Ashrama are found in the Hill. Kartikai Deepam is lit every year on the Summit watched with awe and devotion by countless devotees. A Parikrama around it (called Giri Valam in Tamil and Giri Pradhakshina in Sanskrit) is equivalent to a Parikrama around Mount Kailas and Lake Manasarovar.

Over the decades deforestation and urbanisation of Tiruvannamalai had led to a massive cutting of trees and the green cover over Arunachala was lost. But Conservationists with the help of the Local Government have been doing remarkable work and restored some of the lost green cover. The greening story goes back to the mid-90s, with the founding of the Annamalai Reforestation Society, a civil society initiative, followed

by the Tiruvannamalai Greening Society (TGS), founded in 2004 by the then district forest officer (DFO) Pasupathy Raj along with several local functionaries.

Lending remarkable momentum to these nascent efforts, The Forest Way (TFW), a unique afforestation initiative in reserve forest countered the damage wrought on a fragile, semi-arid ecosystem where pilgrims arrive by the thousands, a forest wilfully set afire by goat herders so fresh shoots would grow, illegal logging of the little timber that survived, and the occasional bout of lightning in the scorching summers. Arunachala is an inselberg, a relatively isolated hill that rises abruptly from the plains. While the initiative has assumed a life force of its own now, at TFW's heart lies the passion of a trio: V. Arun, an engineer who left a corporate job to focus on alternative education and the environment, dedicated conservationist Akila Balu, and British educator-

environmentalist Govinda Bowley. Since 2008, TFW has deployed a group of 30 permanent and 80-odd casual workers during the planting season and of course active volunteers. TFW annually reforests 15,000-18,000 trees, though of the 1.5 lakh trees they have planted so far, only about 50% take root in wet years and less than 25% when it does not rain. “If the dice is rolled too early, trees may not catch,” says Bowley. “Neither water nor soil can be carried up the hill. Ideally, if the southwest monsoon is expected to be good, we plant ahead of it. If a young plant dies, it dies, and yet, the success rate has surprised us.” TFW’s reliance on deep local knowledge has had a lot to do with its success. There’s C. Parasuraman, 35, the ‘chief seed collector’, who has worked on land since he left school after Class X, and now mans the shaded mother bed where seeds germinate — in some species only 5% sprout, others can take months. “I learnt germination techniques for different seeds through trial and error. A dip in boiling water or acid, for example, can mimic what a bird’s alimentary canal would do for seed distribution in nature,” he says. During planting season, K. Maasilamani leads a team of up to 50 workers from the village of Adaiyur close by. The Class III dropout knows every fold, gully, valley, ravine and slope of the

hill intimately. “We always say he has a built-in GPS and Google Earth map inside him,” laughs TFW trustee Arun, 47. Maasilamani’s native wisdom is key to balancing the needs of different groups — villagers, forest officials and project coordinators. “I explain to them that plants are like our children,” says the weather-beaten grandfather for whom greening is a way of a life and not an ideological response to environmental crises.

Even as reforestation continues apace, other dangers are posed by the development of residential plots on agricultural land, expansion of roads, and increased vehicular, noise and light pollution, all of which isolate the vulnerable young ecosystem on the lone hill, preventing the movement of animals to and from nearby forest areas. As Tiruvannamalai braces for a severe drought this summer — some perennial ponds at the foot of the hill have already gone bone dry — TFW soldiers on with efforts that are finally paying off after over a decade of dogged work. ■

Editor’s Note: We acknowledge the Hindu for information provided in this piece. Those who wish either to donate or participate in this worthy cause can get details from <http://www.theforestway.org/>



The Restive Mind

Dr. Tuktuk Ghosh

Many a time we have been told, “it is all in the mind”. The highs, lows, torments and tribulations that etch our lives all have a path to the much theorised and yet barely understood mind. Our state of being is defined by it. The tireless quest to unravel the most intricate and indescribably unique canvas can never abate, come what may.

Many believe that the true Self can be realised only when the restive mind- as distinct from the restless mind- is stilled and calm permeates the essence of existence. Meditation, in its varied hues and interpretations, is the best marketed route to the fabled calm. That there is still a huge unmet gap between “icchha” and self-realisation is testament to how far we still have to go. A pilgrimage of faith and hope is an apt description of where we find ourselves.

One of the paths to achieve the ever elusive inner peace and deep meditative bliss, which found pride

of place in Indian tradition, was of renunciation and asceticism. In the contemporary context, however, this does not have many takers. It is not because of lack of serious interest in spiritual ascension and evolution. It has more to do with its disconnect with life styles. Sri Ramana, in his time itself, acknowledged that it was not imperative to give up worldly responsibilities in favour of a purely meditative regimen. He consistently endorsed the view that realisation of the Self was equally accessible to everyone, irrespective of their physical circumstances. Devotees were advised that it would be spiritually more productive for them to discharge their regular, assigned duties and obligations with an awareness that there was no individual “I” performing or accepting responsibility for the acts which the body performed. It was Bhagavan’s firm belief that mental attitude had a greater bearing on spiritual advancement than any

other situational factors and always discouraged all questioners who believed that a manipulation of their environment, however slight, would be spiritually beneficial.

This brings us back to the restive mind. As Bhagavan so forcefully presented it, the one obstacle is the mind. It must be overcome. The feeling, “I work” is the hindrance. Make no effort to either work or renounce. What is destined to happen, will happen. If you are destined not to work, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it. If you are destined to work, you will not be able to avoid it and you will be forced to engage yourself in it. Leave it to the higher power; you cannot renounce or retain as you choose. While one is engaged in search of God - the higher power- within, work would go on automatically. The Self is all. It is universal. The Self is the undercurrent that vivifies the mind and enables it to carry on its activities. This awareness is of paramount importance and must never be lost sight of. It must be a constant backdrop, alive in every context. Constant contemplation of this reality will enhance meditative efforts and still the mind. The true relationship of the mind to the Self will then unfold in an exquisitely

meaningful sense. It will engender a more spontaneous and authentic acceptance that the only choice to be had is to turn the mind inward and renounce activities there. The fundamental questions of who one is, trapped in a tangled web of debilitating limitations and deficiencies, may well flash some faint hints of tantalising answers, though arguably this may be the exception.

It was Bhagvan’s advice that self-enquiry involves intense activity of the entire mind to keep it steadily poised in awareness. When the mind has nothing to hold on to, to obsess about, it becomes still. The purpose of effort is to get rid of all efforts.

For the struggling, straddling spiritual aspirants - like many of us - it often is a daunting task to accept the world around, its hurly burly and often inscrutable happenings, essentially as a conscious witness and simultaneously work towards stillness, nirvana. Activity of a certain genre has to make way for another sublime one. Striking the perfect balance is both a challenge and surrender to blissful worship. ■

Shiva Arunachalaya, Shiva Arunachalaya, Shiva Arunachalaya.
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Sri Ramana Maharshi, The Jivan Mukta

V.S. Krishnan

I 895. Venkataraman was about 16 years then. The studies did not interest him. Most of the time, he remained in contemplation. He found happiness only while standing before the image of Meenakshi temple at Madurai. He was moved while reading the works of Saivite saints. Then he had an unusual experience with death. While sitting in his uncle's house, suddenly, he felt he was going to die. The fear of death prompted him to enquire what death is all about. He questioned himself "What happens when death comes knocking at your door? What is it that dies?" He then lied down imagining himself dead. He held his breath, kept his mouth shut, pressed his lips tight and considered himself a corpse. He even visualized his body being carried to crematorium and burned. He then pondered the question: "With the death of the body, am "I" dead? Is the body "I"? This body is silent and inert. But I am still aware of the full force of my personality

and I could even hear the sound of "I" within myself. It was that current or force that constituted my Self and kept me acting and moving. The body may be burnt and turned to ashes but I will not become extinct because I am not the body. I am the deathless spirit, the indestructible conscious entity" The focus of his attention then turned on "I". The fear of death had vanished because, absorbed into Self, he became aware that there is no death to Self. After the experiment with death, the external world lost all its relevance to Venkataraman. He remained withdrawn to himself. When he heard his relation mentioning the name 'Arunachala', the very name 'Arunachala' made profound influence on him. He felt Lord Arunachala was beckoning him. One fine morning, he wrote a note stating that he was leaving and nobody needs to search for him. He left the note in a prominent place, went to the station, bought a ticket with the money he was supposed

to give as fee. Overcoming many obstacles, he reached Tiruvannamalai, went straight inside the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Arunachala and embraced the Lord. He then emerged from the temple as a realized saint. It happened on the 1 st first September 1896. It was he who gave the answer to the world's cry for liberation. He has renounced everything which the modern world held as highly valuable. He was what the world has come to know as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

He explained his experience in his Arunachala Ashtagam thus: "As I saw Lord Arunachala, my mind turned inward and I saw Him within. Elated, I asked myself "whom I saw?" I realized that I saw my own 'Self', my Atma. How can I describe that which is indescribable? It can only be experienced. "Oh! Arunachala, this is what you taught me in silence", he said in one of his songs later. After the death experience, he was all along feeling a light heat passing through his body. Even his mind was under some stress. Now, after having surrendered, he felt light, transcended from the domain of body and mind.

"Atman is like a powerful magnet. Hiding itself in the recess of the heart, it slowly draws the individual towards

it", he said. "The individual feels as if he is striving to seek the Atman while in fact it is the Atman within that draws the individual towards it. As the individual reaches near it, the magnet (Atman) restricts his worldly activities, makes him still and conscious. As the proximity increases, the magnet (Atman) completely submerges the individual. Thus, the individuality of the Jiva ceases to exist. He becomes conscious of it and overwhelmed by such experience, he attains the state of Samadhi. Actually, the individual Jiva is like the needle caught by the power of magnet. Our effort at self-knowledge is like a divine magnetic action. The individual is striving to reach only up to the sphere where the magnetic force extends. Once he reaches there, the magnetic force draws him towards it and integrates him." This is what happened to Sri Ramana Maharshi.

The saint remained at the Arunachala temple precincts for some time. From there, he moved over to different places till at last he found a place congenial to his spiritual pursuits. He has chosen Virupaksha cave, located on the eastern slope of the hill, as the ideal ground to contemplate and meditate. He found solace and peace in the serene surroundings here.

Most of the time, he was in a state of silence, Samadhi and introspection. “Sometime when I opened my eyes, I found it a day. At some other time, it was night. I never knew when the sun rose or set”, he said. During the period of his stay here, he had totally detached himself from the world and turned within. He was unaware of the existence of body or its needs and remained unresponsive to any external moves. During his stay here, his mother also came to live with him, followed by her youngest son, Nagasundaram. Maharshi stayed here for 17 years, contemplating, meditating, meeting devotees and reading scriptures. “As I studied the sacred books, I found that they were analyzing what I had already felt intuitively,” he said. Though traces of Vedanta and concepts of Upanishads reflected in his teaching, they were only similarities which tallied with his own experience. Later, in 1917, he moved over to a hermitage called Kandasram, located slightly higher the hill. He spoke very few words. The time he has not spoken was more than the time he has spoken. A devotee asked him: “What is that one thing, knowing which all doubts would be cleared?” Maharshi replied: “Know the doubter. If the doubter is known,

doubts will not arise”.

Sri Ramana Maharshi became a great source of inspiration. Many people came to him and raised their doubts, fears and sorrows and invariably, his answer was: “Find out who doubts? Who fears? Who is suffering? It is the mind that raises these questions. Calm the mind, go beyond the mind and body and realize your innate essential nature”, he said. He said that body and mind are objects that appear and disappear just like pictures on a screen. They are subject to motions and emotions, but the Self, like the screen, remains still, unmoved. The Self has no thought and no action. It is beyond time and place. It remains like a detached witness. “Once you realize Self, you are on the right path to liberation,” he said.

Many aspirants came to Maharshi with various doubts in their mind but sitting in silence before the saint and having experienced the peace and serenity that radiated from him, all their doubts cleared. Paul Brunton, an accredited journalist from Britain was in quest of spiritual knowledge. He came to India and sought guidance from Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati Swamikal of Kanchi Mutt who directed him to see Maharshi at Tiruvannamalai. The journalist

who was awarded the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy by Roosevelt College, USA, sat cross-legged before Maharshi, waiting for an opportunity to clear the doubts which he had noted down in a piece of paper. There was silence all over. He felt he was falling in the vast expanse of the ocean of silence. While remaining in silence, the whole world became still or non-existent. When the world itself has disappeared, there are no issues, no problems and no doubts. Remaining in silence, Brunton got the message loud and clear that there is nothing to know other than the 'Self'. Having received the grace of Maharshi, he returned with a sense of fulfillment. He explained his spiritual experience in his book, "A Search into Secret India". Soon, many westerners started heading towards India with Tiruvannamalai as their ultimate destination.

We get a fair knowledge about Maharshi's teachings from the advice he has given when he was only 21 years. "The five elements of fire, air, earth, water, space do not constitute my "I", nor my "Self" is made of the five Jnanendriyas, nor my "I" comprises of five Karmendriyas. The air that forms my breath and creates the energy within is also not "I". My inner equipments (Antakaranas) do

not form part of my "I". "After I reject all the elements which do not form part of me that which alone remains is the Self. This advice, given by Maharshi to a group of devotees, was brought out in the book form "Who Am I?" by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai.

Just as the truth of rope is not perceived so long the myth of snake persists in mind, unless the imaginary world is removed from mind, the real 'Self' is not realized. The very awareness of one's existence which is expressed as "I AM" is Self-knowledge. A devotee said: "It seems very difficult to attain Self-realization". Maharshi replied: "There is nothing to realize afresh. Realization is already there. There is never a moment when the Self is not. It is ever present. If it was not present but attainable by some effort, at some time, it is not worth pursuing, because what is got afresh will also disappear as it appeared. What is not natural is not permanent." "Self is not realized because you are already the Self. It is already there. It is eternally obvious. It is ever present (nityasiddha). It is more intimate than anything," What is needed is to discard the idea "I am not realized".

One comes to know and perceives different things, but the first thing that he experiences is his own existence.

This experience of 'being', expressed as 'I AM', is the fundamental experience. It is based on this experience; he gains all other knowledge and gains all other experience. The very sense of 'being', 'existing' or the awareness of "I AM", is Self knowledge, but when the individual identifies himself with his body and mind, he forgets his real essential nature (Swarupa). Just as the pure crystal covered with a colored cloth appears colorful, when the concept of body and mind is superimposed on the Self, he does not see the light of the Self shining within us. It is to rescue the individual from the delusion, "I am the body" or "I am the mind", Maharshi advised us the ideal way, the path of Self-enquiry (Vichara Marga). It is a process by which the attention shifts from the world outside to the reality of the Self within. This is the process by which one questions "Who Am I? Am I the body? Does the body constitute the Self?" The body is like a corpse when we sleep. The body cannot be the Self because body is insentient, ever changing, and perishable. "Am I the mind"? Mind is only a cluster of thoughts. It is the mind which creates the false notion of 'I' (ego). "What constitutes the real 'me'?" One should keep on questioning the source of 'I', eliminate by his own power of

reasoning those non-self elements till at last, he finds the real 'I' shining as the ever existing reality (Atma). As the questioning continues, he negates those elements which do not constitute his identity and the realization dawns that he is the pure Consciousness, eternal, ever free and supreme (*Nitya suddha, buddha, mukta, swarupa*). This consciousness which is beyond the body and mind which is beyond time and place is Self-knowledge. If one abides in this state, the 'I am the body' idea would disappear. This is the supreme Sadhana.

The teachings of Maharshi are available to us mainly from three sources, from the words he has spoken, from his silence and from his works. Some of the immortal works done by Maharshi are "*Naan Yaar?*" ("*Who Am I?*"), "*Aksharamana Malai*" (Marital garland of letters), "*Ullatu Narpadu*" (The forty verses of truth) "*Upadesa Unthiyar*" and "*Guruvachaka Kovai*". These are considered as outstanding works that lead to Atma Vidya (knowledge of Self). Going through these verses, a devotee remarked: "He was excellent in eloquence and controlled in speech". Notable among Maharshi's disciples are Muruganar, Kavya Kanda Ganapati Muni, Kunju Swami, Sundaresa Iyer, Devaraja Mudaliar, Major A.K. Chadwick,

Arthur Osborne and the list goes on and on.

On May 19, 1922, the mother who presented to the world a great spiritual leader bid farewell. The mother's body was taken down and last rites were performed. A Matrubuteswar shrine also came up over her Samadhi. Soon, Maharshi left Kandasramam, came down and stayed at the thatched shed near the shrine. As more devotees started coming, it became an Ashram and gradually acquired the name "Sri Ramanasramam".

Maharshi remained in Samadhi, the un-interrupted state of realization. He lived beyond the realm of body or mind. An occasion for leaving the body came in April 1950. It came in the form of a disease. Doctors' attempt to cure the body illness failed. While devotees were chanting Akshara Mana Malai hymns, the sparkling eyes of Maharshi closed their lids and Maharshi attained Maha Samadhi. There is no death or decay to Maharshi. Kathopanishad says "whoever realizes the Atman becomes free from the agonies of death". The light that radiated from Maharshi is still illuminating Sri Ramanasramam and surroundings and the grace that emanated from him still guides the devotees all around. Though the seat

he used to sit is empty, his invisible presence is felt everywhere. His message of Supreme Self, Atman, continues to reverberate.

Though Maharshi appeared to have lived by speaking, writing and doing several other things, he was, in reality, a Jivan Mukta, totally liberated. Who is a Jivan Mukta? Yoga Vasishtha clearly defines the qualities of Jivan Mukta. "Pleasures do not delight him, pains do not distress. He is beyond the mind which produces feelings of likes and dislikes. He rules over his body wisely and does not starve it. He appears to be externally engaged performing action that suits the occasion and speaking words that are appropriate to the circumstance. One may not find any outward difference between a Jivan Mukta and an ignorant person but the real difference lies in the 'impersonality' of the former and the 'personality' of the later and in the desirelessness of the former and the multiplicity of desires in the later. Though the Jivan Mukta appears like any other human, doing worldly activities (Vyavahara) deep within, he is beyond activity or inactivity, beyond the concepts of 'I' and 'you', beyond knowledge and ignorance and always calm, peaceful and in supreme bliss. ■

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Dropping the Sense of Doership

D. Samarender Reddy

“What is knowledge? And what is the nature of this ego? 'God alone is the Doer, and none else' --- that is knowledge. I am not the doer; I am a mere instrument in His hand. Therefore I say: 'O Mother, Thou art the Operator and I am the machine. Thou art the Indweller and I am the house. Thou art the Driver and I am the carriage. I move as Thou movest me. I do as Thou makest me do. I speak as Thou makest me speak. Not I, not I, but Thou, but Thou.'”---

Ramakrishna Paramahansa

“The present difficulty is that the man thinks that he is the doer. But it is a mistake. It is the Higher Power which does everything and the man is only a tool.” --- **Ramana Maharshi**

Are we in control of the body and mind? That is, do the body and mind respond with speech, motion and thoughts to our commands? Are we the author of our thoughts and the agent of our speech and actions? Let

us enquire.

You may say, I think as I want to, speak as and when I want to, and move around as I wish. To be sure, we seem to be able to move our eyes, tongue and limbs through our thinking. But is thinking in our control? That is, are thoughts arising due to our own volition?

If we are in control of our thoughts and our thinking is only in response to our needs and wishes, then we should be able to cease thinking when we have no need for it, as say when we sit to meditate. But it is commonly observed that when we sit for meditation and try not to think, we are often assailed by unnecessary and unwanted thoughts. If thinking was in our control, then we should be able to switch off thinking whenever we want to. But clearly we are unable to do so. If thinking is happening so by itself even when we want it to stop, then clearly it cannot be us doing the thinking but it is thinking

happening by itself to which we are a witness.

What about, say, the time when we sit for an examination. When we see the question(s), do we not deliberately set out to think out the answer and write it down? That is, do not our answers in the form of thoughts occur to us out of our own volition? All that is based on memory, and when we desire to retrieve the answer from our memory, the answer just seems to pop out from our brain/mind, without us consciously doing anything to aid the process except perhaps trying really hard to remember, which is another way of saying when we desperately want to remember something often the brain/mind aids us by making us recall such information almost automatically and instantaneously without any conscious effort on our part. But think of those who have Alzheimer's, who cannot recall even when they desperately want to. If memory retrieval was in our control, we should not so fail.

Well, what about thinking that happens when we deliberate in our minds as when making a decision. We may seem to weigh the pros and cons when deciding. But the thoughts that occur when we do so, occur automatically and in some mysterious

fashion. That is, we are not creating the thoughts but the thoughts form in our mind and we recognize such thoughts or become aware of such thoughts when they enter our consciousness. We are not choosing our thoughts. If we are not choosing our thoughts, who or what is doing so?

Thoughts form in our minds, quite often in response to external stimuli and environment, due to various factors, some of which are our past experiences stored in the form of memory, the tendencies and desires lodged in our subconscious minds, ingrained habits, condition of our body etc. But you could well ask, isn't the sum total of all such factors who we are and so isn't it we the multitude of such factors doing the thinking? Aren't we the authors of such thinking?

But clearly we feel ourselves to be a unity, and not some entity dispersed over such a range of factors, and moreover, when we say "I" it is merely just another thought, the I- thought. The I-thought being a thought cannot think other thoughts. A thought cannot be the author of other thoughts. So, the I-thought, who we think we are, is not the author of thoughts.

If we are not the author of the thoughts that course through our minds incessantly, then we are also not

the agents of our speech and actions because they are driven by thoughts and we are not the author of thoughts. Truly speaking, then, we are neither the author of our thoughts nor the agent of our speech and actions. Who then is? God is the doer and we as body-mind are merely instruments in

his hands. So, it is a matter of wisdom to give up the sense of doership by not ascribing to ourselves the authorship of thoughts and the agency of speech and actions through the above-mentioned reasoning. ■

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The degree of freedom
from unwanted thoughts
and degree of concentration
on a single thought
are the measures
to gauge spiritual progress,

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi



The Role of the Mind

O, employ not the mind
In your search for truth
Truth is not "out there"
As an objective reality
Truth is "in here" as you

You are the truth, no less
Only, do not mistake
The body and mind
To be the self
And drop all thought
For truth dawns
When the mind is quiet
And that is the only role
That the mind has
In the search for the truth
To merely step out of the way
And not create illusions.

D. Samarender Reddy



Aksharamanamalai Part 3

15

*Kannukku kannai kannindri
kaanunai,
Kanuvathu yevar paar, Arunachala*

O Arunachala! Being the Eye of the eye, without eye Thou seest. Who can see Thee? See!

‘Of all the sense organs’, as the saying goes, ‘the most important is the eye’. What light is for the external world, that the eye is for the living individual. The eye is even more important than light, for what is the use of light if there be no eyes to see? The eyes may be wide open and in a sound condition. But if the mind be absent, they cannot see. While without the eyes the mind can see, without the mind the eyes cannot see. In dreams the physical organs do not function; but the mind creates its own organs and causes experience. The mind too is not an independent light. It borrows luminosity from the Self. In sleep the

mind does not function; yet there is experience — the experience of the non-existence of objects. That experience is the Self. God is the Self, the eye that never fails. As Sri Ramana says in the *Forty Verses on Existence*, the Self is the endless eye (*antamilak kann*). In the present verse he observes that Arunachala is the eye of the eye. Answering a question about the moving power behind the sense organs and mind, the *Kena Upanishad* seeks to indicate the nature of that power which is *Brahman* by saying that it is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of the speech, the breath of the breath, the eye of the eye. The third eye assigned to Lord Siva is a symbol of the fact that the Supreme is the eye of the eye.

The eye derives its ability to see from God; but God does not depend on the eye for seeing. God sees without the help of the eye. God, the

Self, is pure experience; He makes all experience possible. But He himself is not an object of experience. Only the conditioned can be experienced; the unconditioned is never an experienced content. Hence Sri Ramana asks, 'Who can see Thee?'

16

***Kandham irumbu pol kavarndu
yennai vidaamal,***

***Kalandhu yennodu iruppai,
Arunachala***

O Arunachala! Like magnet which attracts iron, thou shouldst draw me, and without letting me go, be in union with me.

One of the familiar similes for *bhakti* (devotion) is the attraction of iron filings by magnet. This figures as one of the five found in a verse of the *Sivananda Lahari*: *ankolam nijabijasantatir ayaskantopalam suchika sadhvi najjavibhum lata kshitiruham sindhuh sarid vallabham prapnotiha yatha tatha pasupateh padaravinda dvayam chetovrttir upetya tishtathi sada sa bhaktir ityuchyate.*

The seeds of the ankola tree on falling to the ground go and attach themselves to the trunk of the tree. The needle sticks to the magnet. The chaste

woman thinks constantly of her lord. The creeper winds itself onto a tree. The river flows unceasingly towards the ocean. When the mind in a similar way remains at the feet of God without moving from there even for a moment, that is *bhakti*.

The point to be noted about the simile of the magnet is that without itself moving, the magnet draws the needle unto itself. The nature of the needle is such that it gets influenced by the magnet. God is the unmoving (*achyuta*) principle. Yet His influence moves the devotee-soul who in turn seeks Him alone to the exclusion of all other ends.

Here, in this verse, the soul longs to lose herself in the Being of God. She implores her Lord to engulf her so that there may be no individuality left in her. The union viewed from the side of the soul is sometimes compared to that of water with water, milk with milk.

17

***Giri uruvagiya kirubai kadale,
Kirubai koorndu arulvai,
Arunachala***

O Arunachala! Ocean of grace in the form of Hill! Graciously bestow Thy grace on me.

The Lord appears as the Hill of Light. The analogy of the hill is designed to remind us of the majesty, magnificence, and magnitude of God. The splendour of Arunachala is immeasurable. He is beyond the reach of speech and mind. Even the gods could not gauge His greatness. He seems to stand afar, towering over everything. He is transcendent. Yet He is immanent. There is nothing nearer than He, for He is the Self of all. He is the vast sea of mercy, the ocean of grace. The mythical milk-ocean is the symbol of benignity and benevolence. God is compared to the ocean by virtue of His graciousness and goodness. If He is the height of wisdom, He is the depth of feeling also. He encompasses all, engulfs all. It is on His grace that all subsist.

There is no prayer that is more efficacious or noble than the one for the descent of His grace. People often pray for petty things. This is no doubt better than not praying at all. But the best prayer is that which is not motivated by the spirit of the market. One ought to pray because one ought to. Grace is the complement of prayer. The devotee-soul prays to God for nothing but God who is grace; and the prayer itself is made possible because of grace.

18

*Keezh melengum kilar oli mani en,
Keezhmayayai paaz chai,
Arunachala*

O Arunachala! The gem that shines below, above, everywhere! Do destroy my baseness!

To us of the plains, the mountain top is above and the ocean bed below. Limited as we are, we make such distinctions as high and low, far and near, before and after, good and bad. To God, however, who is omnipresent and all-pervading there are no distinctions whatsoever. He is the same everywhere, always, and in all things. In fact, there is no 'other' to Him. He is the One, without a second. He is the Self-luminous Consciousness. Hence the comparison to the luminous gem. Its light does not discriminate between one and another, although it is highly precious. God, the *Atman*, is *svayam-jyotis* (Self-luminous). In the words of the *Upanishad*, "It is below and above, it is before and behind, it is to the south and to the north. The Self is all this." Although the Self-effulgent Intelligence is always there, we close our eyes and complain that we do not see. Nescience (*avidya*) blinds us. It is the root of all evil and sin. It constitutes the basic baseness. The devotee-soul

appeals to God for the removal of (*avidya*). She reminds Him of His promise: *sarva dharman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja, aham tva sarva papebhyo mokshayisyami ma suchah* Surrendering all dharmas, seek refuge in Me alone. I will release you from all sins. Do not grieve!

19

***Kutram mutru aruthennai
gunamai paninthal,
Guru uruvai olir, Arunachala***

O Arunachala! Destroying my sins completely, save me by making me good, O thou that shinest in the form of the Master!

‘Destroy my baseness’, pleaded the devotee-soul with the Lord in the previous verse. The same plea is repeated here. The basic baseness is nescience (*avidya*). Here it is referred to as sin or defect (*kutram*). Nescience is the root of all other sins. *Saiva Siddhanta* enumerates three primary defects of the soul: anava, maya and karma. In *Advaita Vedanta*, three generations of defects are often mentioned: *avidya*, *kama* and *karma*. *Karma* consists of the deeds that we do and their residual impressions. Desire (*kama*) is the seed of these. It, in its turn, is the result of the wrong

identification of the self with egoity, etc., which is nescience (*avidya*) or ignorance (*ajnana*). Thus nescience is the original sin (*mula mala*). All other sins will vanish only when nescience is completely destroyed. Nescience is compared to the darkness that blinds, the knot that binds, etc. Wisdom is the light that will dispel this darkness, the sword that will cut this knot. It is by the grace of God that wisdom is gained. Wisdom is the supreme good. To use a saying of Socrates, knowledge is virtue. The natural goodness of the soul is revealed when the defects are removed. God removes the defects, functioning as the Guru. The word Guru means, ‘the one who destroys the darkness of ignorance’. The one who destroys ignorance cannot be himself subject to ignorance. This is God, the Supreme Self. God, Guru, *Atman* — these are but the different forms of one and the same Reality — the Reality, that as the world teacher, is called Dakshinamurti, the truth that is all pervading like the ether:

*isvaro gurur atmeti murti bheda
vibhagine*

*vyomavat vyapta dehaya
dakshinamurtaye namah. ■*

*Source TMP Mahadevan’s
Book Arunachala Siva
Aksharamanamalai*



श्री रमण महर्षि के संस्मरण

54

अन्नामलै स्वामी (1906-95) की बचपन से ही आध्यात्म में रूचि थी। वे 1928 में श्री रमण के पास आए। आश्रम के भवन निर्माण कार्य में दस वर्षों तक व्यस्त रहने के बाद वे आश्रम के निकट एक कुटिया में साधना के लिए एकांत में रहने लगे।

सन् 1928 में एक घुमक्कड़ साधु ने मुझे रमण महर्षि की तमिल पुस्तक 'उपदेश उनडियार' दी। उसमें महर्षि का फोटो भी था। उस फोटो को देखते ही मुझे लगा ही यही मेरे गुरु हैं। मेरे मन में उन्हें देखने की तीव्र इच्छा जाग्रत हुई। उस रात मुझे सपना आया जिसमें महर्षि एक पहाड़ी से आश्रम की ओर आ रहे थे। दूसरे दिन मैंने निर्णय लिया कि मैं उनके दर्शन के लिए जाऊँगा।

लगभग दोपहर एक बजे जब मैं आश्रम पहुँचा तो मेरा स्वप्न सत्य हो गया। महर्षि अरुणाचल की पहाड़ी से धीरे-धीरे उतर कर आश्रम की ओर आ रहे थे। उनके कक्ष में जाने के पश्चात् मैं वहाँ जाकर उनके सम्मुख बैठ गया। उन्होंने कुछ देर मेरी ओर देखा। मुझे ऐसा लगा कि जैसे कड़ी धूप में चलने के बाद मैंने ठंडे पानी के तालाब में डुबकी लगाई हो। मैंने ठहरने की अनुमति माँगी, जो मिल गई और साथ ही महर्षि के परिचारक का काम भी मिल गया।

थोड़े दिन बाद मैंने महर्षि से पूछा, वैज्ञानिकों ने ऐसे विमान खोज

निकाले हैं जो बहुत तीव्र गति से आकाश में यात्रा करते हैं। आप हमें भी ऐसा यान दें जिससे हम शीघ्रता और सरलता से संसार सागर पार कर जाएँ। महर्षि का उत्तर था, “आत्म विचार ही वह यान है जो तुम्हें चाहिए। यह सीधा, तीव्र गति वाला और उपयोग करने में सरल है। तुम आत्म-साक्षात्कार की ओर निरंतर बढ़ रहे हो। तुम्हारे मन के कारण ही लग रहा है कि आवश्यक गति प्राप्त नहीं हो रही।” आनेवाले वर्षों में मेरा महर्षि से कई बार आध्यात्मिक वार्तालाप हुआ, किंतु उनका मूल उपदेश, ‘निरंतर आत्म विचार करो, शरीर को आत्मा से भिन्न समझो, तथा आत्मा को जानने का प्रयत्न करो’, कभी नहीं बदला।

उन दिनों आश्रम के क्षेत्र में कुछ चीते थे, जो रात्रि के समय वहाँ आते थे। एक बार जब महर्षि लघुशंका के लिए गए, एक चीता तालाब के पास दिखाई दिया। वे जरा भी नहीं डरे। उन्होंने चीते की ओर देखा और कहा ‘पोडा’ (चले जाओ), और चीता तुरंत चला गया।

मेरे परिचारक बनने के दो सप्ताह पश्चात् नेल्लोर (आंध्र प्रदेश का एक जिला) के कलेक्टर बहुत सारी मिठाई लेकर महर्षि के दर्शन के लिए आए। कक्ष के बाहर जब मैं मिठाई बाँट रहा था, मैं ऐसी जगह चला गया जहाँ कोई मुझे नहीं देख पाए। स्थिति का लाभ उठाकर मैंने खूब मिठाई खाई। वापस जाकर जब मैंने खाली थाली सोफे के नीचे रखी, महर्षि बोले, “तुमने बाकी सबसे दुगना हिस्सा ले लिया है।” मैं स्तब्ध रह गया और मुझे स्पष्ट हो गया कि उनसे कुछ भी छिपाना असंभव है।

मेरे आने के एक मास पश्चात् महर्षि ने मुझे आश्रम में भवन निर्माण कार्य की देखभाल का उत्तरदायित्व सौंपा। उस समय आश्रम की गौशाला के निर्माण का कार्य चल रहा था। महर्षि इसे विशाल स्तर पर बनाने के पक्ष में थे, किंतु धन की कमी के कारण सर्वाधिकारी इससे सहमत नहीं था। यह समस्या बड़े रहस्यमय ढंग से सुलझ गई।

मद्रास के **Sunday Times** समाचार पत्र के संपादक ने महर्षि के दर्शन के बाद उनके विषय में एक प्रशंसात्मक लेख प्रकाशित किया। इसे पढ़कर

कोई राजपुत्र अत्यंत प्रभावित हुआ। कुछ समय पश्चात् वह शिकार के लिए गया और उसका पीछा किया, किंतु बाघ उसके सामने आक्रमण करने की मुद्रा में आ गया। अधिक डर के कारण वह गोली चलाने में असमर्थ हो गया और उसके हाथ सुन्न हो गए। तभी अचानक उसे महर्षि का स्मरण आया और उसने प्रार्थना की कि यदि मेरे प्राण बच गए तो इस बाघ की खाल और 1000 रू आपकी भेंट कर दूँगा। उसके हाथ की सुन्नता तुरंत समाप्त हो गई और बाघ को मार कर वह अपनी जान बचाने में सफल हो गया।

जब पोस्टमैन 1000 रू का मनीऑर्डर लेकर आया तो मैं उसे महर्षि के पास ले गया। वे बड़े निर्विशेष भाव से बोले, “हाँ, मुझे पता था कि मनीऑर्डर आएगा। इसे सर्वाधिकारी के पास ले जाओ।” {महर्षि ने जीवन भर कभी भी पैसे नहीं छुए} इस प्रकार गौशाला महर्षि की योजनानुसार बन गई।

भोजन कक्ष के निर्माण में मजदूरों में कुछ स्त्रियाँ भी थी, जिन्हें देखकर मैं यौन विचार से परेशान हो जाता था। मैंने महर्षि से प्रार्थना की, “मैं मोक्ष नहीं चाहता। केवल इतना चाहता हूँ कि स्त्री की कामना मेरे मन में न आए।” महर्षि हँसे और बोले, “सारे महात्मा इसी के लिए संघर्ष कर रहे हैं।” यौन-विचार से बचने के लिए मैंने स्त्री मजदूरों को हटाने का निर्णय लिया। महर्षि ने असहमति जताई। उनका कहना था कि तुम अपने मन को वश में नहीं कर पाते हो, इसलिए स्त्रियों की मजदूरी क्यों जाए ?

1930 के दशक में आश्रम में जो भी भवन निर्माण हुआ, उसका निर्देशन महर्षि ने ही किया। वे मुझे बता देते थे कि क्या-क्या होना है। यदि मुझे संदेह रहता तो वे कागज पर नक्शा बनाकर समझा देते। यद्यपि सब योजनाओं में अंतिम निर्णय उन्हीं का था, किंतु वे सदा कहते कि यह तो केवल मेरा सुझाव है, निर्देश नहीं।

महर्षि उदाहरण द्वारा मार्ग-दर्शन करते थे। रसोईघर के पास एक कमरा धूल से भरा और गंदा था। बहुत से लोग उसमें से होकर निकलते

किंतु किसी ने उसकी सफाई पर ध्यान नहीं दिया। एक दिन महर्षि ने स्वयं झाड़ू लेकर उसे भली प्रकार साफ कर दिया। बहुत से आश्रम निवासियों ने उनके हाथ से काम लेने का प्रयत्न किया, किंतु उन्होंने झाड़ू नहीं छोड़ी और बोले, “अब आप को गंदगी प्रतीत हो रही है, पहले क्या यह सब आपको नहीं दिख रहा था।” उस दिन के बाद से वह कमरा नियमित रूप से साफ किया जाने लगा।

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मौनी साधु (1898-1971) एक ऑस्ट्रेलियन थे, जिनका नाम एम सुडौस्की था। उनकी चिर प्रतिष्ठित पुस्तक *In Days of Great Peace* है। ब्रंटन की *A Search in Secret India* (सं1) पढ़कर वे महर्षि के प्रति आकर्षित हुए और 1949 में कुछ महीने आश्रम में रहे।

पच्चीस वर्ष की आयु में थियोसोफी से प्रभावित होकर मैंने मनन, चिंतन आरंभ किया। कुछ वर्षों के निष्फल प्रयास के बाद मेरा उत्साह फीका पड़ गया। मैंने बहुत से तंत्र-मंत्र व जादू की विद्याओं के प्रयोग किए। अंत में जब मैंने *A Search in Secret India* के अंतिम दो अध्याय पढ़े तो मुझे विश्वास हो गया कि मुझे सच्चे गुरु प्राप्त हो गए। मैंने पेरिस के रोमन कैथोलिक मठ में महर्षि के बताए ‘आत्म विचार’ का अभ्यास प्रारंभ किया। कुछ महीने के बाद मैं इस मार्ग का साधक बन गया। किंतु मेरा वास्तविक रूपांतरण हो 1949 में महर्षि के समक्ष आने पर ही हुआ।

जब मैं उनके कक्ष में पहुँचा तो मुझे पास बैठने के लिए महर्षि ने हाथ से जो संकेत किया उसकी मृदुता और सौम्यता से मैं अभिभूत हो गया। वे इतने सादगीपूर्ण और महिमावान थे कि मुझे तत्काल यह बोध हुआ कि मैं किसी महान व्यक्ति के समक्ष हूँ। महर्षि के सामने पहुँचने पर सारे सिद्धांत और सीखी हुई विद्याएँ धूल में मिल जाती हैं। ऐसी शांति की अनुभूति होती है जो मनुष्य की समझ से परे है। महर्षि के पास बैठकर जो

अनुभव होते हैं वे जन्मांतरों तक को प्रभावित करने की क्षमता रखते हैं।

महर्षि का मुख अलौकिक सौम्यता, अनंत करुणा और प्रेरणा से परिपूर्ण है। उनसे नितांत पवित्रता और शांति विकीर्ण होती रहती है। उनके समक्ष रहने मात्र से हमारे भीतर महान आनंद की अनुभूति होती है। महान सत्य का जो प्रकाश मैं महर्षि के माध्यम से देखता हूँ, वह मेरे मन को आन्नदित कर देता है। धन्यता की अंतहीन लहर उठती है और मुझे आप्लावित कर देती है। वह मुझे विचार, कष्ट और दुख के पार ले जाती है, जहाँ न मृत्यु है, न बदलाव, केवल अनंत अस्तित्व है। काल व समय वहाँ नहीं है, उसकी कोई आवश्यकता ही नहीं है।

महर्षि की आध्यात्मिक कीमियागरी (Alchemy) के समक्ष भौतिकवादता (Materialism) पवित्र और उदात्तभाव में रूपांतरित हो जाती है। जब कभी भी मैं उनके सम्मुख बैठकर उनकी आभा की अदृश्य किरणों को आत्मसात कर रहा होता था, तब सोचता था, मैं कब और किस प्रकार इस प्रशांति की अनुभूति कर ऋण चुका पाऊँगा ? मैं एक स्वप्नदर्शी, एक ऐसी सत्ता के चरणों में बैठा था जिसने समस्त मानवीय समस्याओं को सुलझा लिया है। मेरे समक्ष अब सांसारिक लगाव की हास्यास्पद सत्यता संपूर्ण अनाकर्षण नग्नता के साथ उपस्थित थी। मेरी आत्मा के मंदिर में एक नई दिव्य ज्योति प्रवेश कर रही थी, जहाँ निराशा, संघर्ष और भ्रम की कोई संभावना नहीं थी।

महर्षि की उपस्थिति ही हमें सारे पापों से मुक्त कर, पवित्र कर देती है। वे सामने विद्यमान हों तो हमारा मन सच्चाई के दर्शन में कोई बाधा नहीं डाल पाता। मैंने अनुभव किया कि प्रश्न और समस्याएँ जो कुछ समय पूर्व अगम्य लगती थी, उनके समक्ष स्वतः सुलझ गईं। जिन्होंने महर्षि को नहीं देखा है उनके लिए महर्षि के नेत्रों से प्रवाहित होनेवाली भव्यता की तीव्रता कल्पनातीत है। उनके नेत्रों से एक शक्तिशाली, मधुर शांति का झरना बहता है। जब भी वे हम से बात करते उनके नेत्रों में गहरी सहानुभूति, गहरी समझ और अनुकंपा छलकती थी।

महर्षि के समक्ष बैठकर परमेश्वर का विद्यमान होना एक सच्चाई बनकर अनुभव में आता है। इस बात को किसी प्रमाण की आवश्यकता नहीं है। सबसे बड़ा रहस्य और आश्चर्य तो स्वयं महर्षि हैं। हम इस रहस्य को समझने अथवा इसका अनुमान लगा सकने में भी समर्थ नहीं हैं। ऐसे रहस्य का पता तो मौन में स्थित अपनी ही गहराई में डूबकर लगाया जा सकता है। महर्षि की समीपता मन के स्थिर करने के प्रयास को किसी और की तुलना में अनंत गुणा अधिक सरल बना देती है।

महर्षि के चरणों में बैठकर मैंने विचार—प्रवाह को रोकना सीखा। इससे पूर्व कई वर्षों तक लंबे प्रयास और घोर प्रयत्नों के उपरांत भी मुझे इसमें संपूर्ण सफलता कभी नहीं मिली थी। ऐसा लगता था मानों महर्षि किसी बड़े मैकेनिक की भांति मेरे मन के प्रत्येक पुर्जे को भली प्रकार जानते हैं, और उसे सही रहने का निर्देश दे रहे हैं। उन्होंने रहस्यमय ढंग से मुझे आंतरिक अनुभूति प्राप्त करने में सहायता दी, किंतु कैसे, यह भेद मैं नहीं जानता। मैं इसे गुरु की आध्यात्मिक किमियागरी (Alchemy) कहूँगा।

जब मुझे यह समझ आया कि महर्षि कितने महान हैं तब मैंने अपने से कहा, इन ऋषियों के पास न कोई पदवी है, न सनद, फिर भी वे मोमबत्ती जैसे सांसारिक वैभव के सामने सूर्य के समान हैं, और मुझे यह बोध हुआ कि सारे सांसारिक पद और प्रतिष्ठा कितने खोखले हैं। ■

क्रमशः

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

(संपादक - प्रो. लक्ष्मी नारायण
अनुवादक - डॉ. छाया तिवारी)

Translated from Hindi version of book

'Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi'



श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत

18 जनवरी, 1937

331. अन्तरराष्ट्रीय शान्ति संघ की एक अमरीकी महिला, श्रीमती रूरना जैनिंग्स ने विश्व में शान्ति के प्रसार के विषय में श्री भगवान् से पूछा।

श्री भगवान् ने उत्तर दिया कि यदि कोई आत्मा की शान्ति प्राप्त कर ले तो व्यक्तिगत किसी प्रयास के बिना भी उसका प्रसार स्वयं ही होगा।

जब व्यक्ति स्वयं शान्त नहीं है तो वह संसार में शान्ति का प्रसार कैसे करेगा ?

भद्र महिला ने पूछा कि क्या यह सत्य नहीं है कि आत्मा के साक्षात्कार के लिए पूर्व का मार्ग वैज्ञानिक है।

महर्षि : तुम आत्मा ही हो। यह सिद्ध करने हेतु किसी भी विस्तृत विज्ञान की आवश्यकता नहीं है।

भक्त : आपके कथन का सामान्य सत्य मैं समझती हूँ। किन्तु उसके लिए कोई व्यावहारिक पद्धति अवश्य होगी, इसे ही मैं 'विज्ञान' की संज्ञा देती हूँ।

महर्षि : इस प्रकार के संकल्पों की समाप्ति ही आत्मा का साक्षात्कार है। उदाहरण : गले के हार को खोया हुआ मान लेना। जगत् तथा स्वयं अपने शरीर को आत्मा से पृथक् कोई नहीं देखता। व्यक्ति सब कुछ

देखता है क्योंकि वह स्वयं सद् रूप आत्मा है। ईश्वर तथा जगत् सब हृदय में हैं। द्रष्टा को देखो तो सब कुछ आत्मा ही भासित होगा। अपने दृष्टिकोण को बदलो। अन्तर्मुख होओ। आत्मा को खोजो। द्रष्टा एवं द्रश्य का आधार कौन है ? उसे खोज लो और समस्त समस्याओं का समाधान हो जायगा।

तदुपरान्त महिला को 'मैं कौन हूँ ?' पुस्तिका के बारे में बताया गया। महिला ने श्री भगवान् से अन्य प्रश्न पूछने से पहले उस पुस्तक को पढ़ लेना स्वीकार किया।

332. भक्त : तमिल में तीन शून्य (मुप्पाज) क्या हैं ,

महर्षि : (1) तत् = ईश्वर तुरीय।

(2) त्वं = जीव तुरीय।

(3) असि = असि तुरीय।

तुरीय जाग्रत, स्वप्न तथा सुषुप्त अवस्थाओं का आधार है।

भक्त : प्रथम तथा द्वितीय स्पष्ट हैं; तृतीय क्या है ?

महर्षि : समस्त व्यापकता को जागृति कहते हैं;

समस्त प्रकाश को स्वप्न कहते हैं;

अनन्त को सुषुप्ति कहते हैं;

इन सब की पृष्ठभूमि असि—तुरीय है।

भक्त : यह कितना आश्चर्यजनक है !

महर्षि : क्या यही सब है ? वाद—विवाद की कोई सीमा नहीं है। सुनो। वे कहते हैं कि महावाक्य 'तत्त्वमसि' सामान्य है; अन्य पाँच शब्दों का तत्त्वम् असि अति निजम् अत्यन्त गोपनीय है जिसका उपदेश दक्षिणामूर्ति ने

मौन में किया था; पाँचों शब्दों के तदनुरूपी पाँचों अवस्थाओं को व्यवस्थित रूप में रखना।

‘विचार सागर’ को देखो; लेखक ने आधार को अधिष्ठान से भिन्न बताया है। उसके अनुसार रज्जु सर्वदा आधार है जब वह सर्प दीखे अथवा भिन्न दीखे। रज्जु अधिष्ठान है चूँकि वह जो वास्तव में है उससे भिन्न प्रतीत होती है। यह सामान्य अधिष्ठान है। इसमें सर्प का आभास विशेष अधिष्ठान है। अब प्रश्न उठता है : जीव का अधिष्ठान एक है; ईश्वर का दूसरा है; यह दो अधिष्ठान एक कैसे हो सकते हैं ? वे उत्तर देते हैं, दोनों अधिष्ठानों का आधार एक ही है।

इसके अतिरिक्त लेखक ने अनेक ख्यातियों का वर्णन किया है:

(1) असत्-ख्याति : रज्जु के होने से सर्प का आभास हो रहा है जिसका यहाँ अस्तित्व ही नहीं है।

(2) सत्-ख्याति : स्वयं रज्जु सर्पवत् प्रतीत हो रही है।

(3) आत्म-ख्याति : रज्जु की जानकारी न होने से, पहले कहीं अन्यत्र देखे हुए सर्प की स्मृति के कारण भ्रान्ति उत्पन्न होती है।

(4) अख्याति : पूर्णतया मिथ्या।

(5) अन्यथा-ख्याति : सर्प की आकृति की मानसिक कल्पना करना और उसका आभास होना, जैसा कि वह उसके सामने ही हो।

(6) अनिर्वचनीय-ख्याति : जिसकी व्याख्या नहीं हो सकती।

यहाँ वह प्रश्न उठाता है : यदि जगत् भ्रम हो अथवा मिथ्या, इनमें से कोई एक, यह पहले अनुभव का ही परिणाम हो सकता है। उस समय वह सत्य रहा होगा : एक बार सत्य सदैव ही सत्य होगा।

वह इसका उत्तर देता है : अनुभव का सत्य होना आवश्यक नहीं;

वास्तविक सर्प को बिना देखे केवल उसका चित्र देखा हो और एक प्रभाव पड़ा हो, तो व्यक्ति भ्रम से रज्जु को सर्प समझ सकता है। इसी प्रकार जगत् का सत्य होना आवश्यक नहीं।

इन वाद—विवाद में समय क्यों नष्ट करते हो ? केवल मन को अन्तर्मुख करो तथा समय का सदुपयोग करो।

जीव की ब्रह्म से एकता होने में, ब्रह्म श्रुतमात्र है तथा जीव का प्रत्यक्ष अनुभव होता है। तुम प्रत्यक्ष अनुभव से ही लाभ उठा सकते हो : अतः देखो तुम कौन हो ?

तब ईश्वर का वर्णन क्यों किया गया है ?

चूँकि तुम जगत् को देखते हो और यह जानना चाहते हो कि यह कैसे उत्पन्न हुआ ? वे कहते हैं कि ईश्वर ने इसकी सृष्टि की थी। यदि तुम्हें मालूम हो कि तुमको तथा और सब कुछ को ईश्वर ने बनाया है, तो तुम्हारे मन को कुछ सन्तोष हो जाता है और उसकी बेचैनी में अपेक्षाकृत कुछ कमी आ जाती है। किन्तु यह साक्षात्कार नहीं है। यह केवल तभी हो सकता है जब तुम स्वयं अपने आपकी अनुभूति कर लों; यही पूर्णता है अथवा साक्षात्कार, आदि है।

वाद—विवादों के प्रसंग में—‘वृत्ति प्रभाकर’ के लेखक के अनुसार उसने इस ग्रन्थ को लिखने के पहले 3,50,000 पुस्तकों का अध्ययन किया। इसका क्या उपयोग है ? क्या वे आत्मा का साक्षात्कार करा सकते हैं ? ‘विचार सागर’ तर्क तथा तकनीकी शब्दों का भण्डार है। क्या ये भारी ग्रन्थ किसी वास्तविक उपयोग के हैं ? तथापि कुछ लोग उनका अध्ययन करते हैं तब ज्ञानियों के पास केवल यह देखने जाते हैं कि क्या वे उनके प्रश्नों का समाधान कर सकते हैं। उनका अध्ययन नये संशयों के उदय एवं उनका समाधान उनके मनोरंजन का हेतु है। इसे बिलकुल निरर्थक जानकर ज्ञानी ऐसे मनुष्यों को प्रोत्साहित नहीं करते।

एक बार उनको प्रोत्साहित करने से उसका अन्त नहीं होता। केवल आत्म-विचार ही उपयोग का हो सकता है।

जो तर्कशास्त्र, 'ब्रह्मि-प्रभाकर', 'विचार-सागर' अथवा 'सूत्र-भाष्य' तथा अन्य इस प्रकार के वृहत् ग्रन्थों से परिचित हैं, वे इस प्रकार की छोटी-सी पुस्तक जैसे 'सत्य उद्घाटित' (Truth Revealed) आदि में रुचि नहीं ले सकते जिसमें केवल आत्मा का ही विवेचन है तथा वह भी स्पष्ट, क्योंकि उनके अन्दर वासनाएँ भरी हुई हैं। केवल वे जिनके मन कम मलिन हैं अथवा निर्मल हैं, छोटी एवं उपयोगी पुस्तकों में रुचि ले सकते हैं।

333. प्रत्यभिज्ञ = प्रति + अभिज्ञ ?

'अभिज्ञ' प्रत्यक्ष अनुभूति है; 'प्रति' से तात्पर्य है, पहले से ही प्राप्त ज्ञान की पुनः स्मृति।

“यह एक हाथी है” – प्रत्यक्ष अनुभूति।

“यह वह हाथी है” – प्रत्यभिज्ञ है।

तकनीकी ग्रन्थों में प्रत्यभिज्ञ से अभिप्राय है नित्य-सिद्ध सत्यता की अनुभूति करना तथा उसको स्वीकार करना।

शून्य, अतिशून्य तथा महाशून्य से एक ही आशय है अर्थात् अद्वितीय सद्दस्तु। ■

क्रमशः

“श्री रमण महर्षि से बातचीत” पुस्तक से उद्धृत

(संग्रहकर्ता - श्री मुनगल एस. वेंकटरामैया
अनुवादक - श्री दिनेशचन्द्र शर्मा)

Translated from 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi'

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and yet leave seeds that cast the agent
into an ocean of Karma.
Karma yields no salvation*

Ramana Maharshi {Upadesa Saram (2)}

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