



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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The minds that approach God are of two types: the intellectual and the innocent. The intellectual approach is a rational approach in which discrimination, introspection, reasoning, deep thinking and metaphysical enquiry predominate. As in any other yoga, in Jnana Yoga too, the aspirant should have with him a particular kind of intellectual equipment, qualities and attitudes.

The equipment essential in this path of jnana is a pure, sharp, penetrative and introspective intellect, which is free of the touch and taint of the ego. The fundamental quality required, is a powerful and enlightened dispassion, which arises from clear awareness that all objects are perishable and all pleasures are transient. The governing attitude should be one of identity with the Reality, adoration of the Reality and devotion to the Reality.

Ego is the first form of ignorance. When allied with the ego, the intellect gets clouded and bewildered. The projection of such an intellect is distorted, dim and blurred. Prajna cannot expand so long as the intellect remains associated with the ego. Even the possession of an ego-free intellect is not enough. The pursuit of enquiry in Jnana Yoga demands for its success, certain facilities. The sadhaka should have solitude, the benefit of guidance by a Realized Master and also steadfastness in anusandhana. Worldly distractions, too much of involvement in activities, too much of associations are not favourable for deep thinking and metaphysical investigation.

Enquiry also is not enough. Mental moods do not remain the same always. They vary. Hence, to make the mind fit for deeper investigation; there should be anushtana also. Thinking without anushtana cannot gain clarity. The Enquiry dawns in a mind, which is disciplined and purified by anushtana. What is the place of the Guru's guidance in Jnana Yoga? The pramana for the truth of Brahman is the scripture. Scripture is a record of direct experience, anubhooti. Scripture holds profound meaning and mystical depth. The heart of the scripture is not open to ego-tainted intellect.

On the surface, scripture is the word form of anubhooti. Behind the word form, there is the meaning and beyond the meaning, is the goal. Different intellects find different meanings in the same scripture. Which meaning is correct? The intellect understands according to its own meager light. Very often its conclusion is wrong. Even if the word meaning is understood, it is not knowledge. The goal lies beyond intellect. Understanding scripture is not knowledge of Brahman.

Scholarship is not anubhooti. Brahman is realized only in anubhooti. He cannot be discovered in the pages of the sacred books. If the goal is lost sight of, and the time is spent only in mastering scriptures, one cannot be said to be a sadhaka on the jnana path. Knowledge comes only by contact with the Sadguru, by direct teaching from the Sadguru.

Until mystic eye opens, the object of your perception is prakrithi only. The real perception is not through the eyes or through the mind, but through the eye of wisdom, Jnana Chakshu. To see the world as it really is, to see the sportive play of God, you



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should have your jnana chakshu open. Opening of the jnana chakshu is the significance of the spiritual initiation. The Sadguru alone can initiate you to the inner path, to a state of inward awareness, to a kinship with God and to the unitive Wisdom of Brahman.

In the communion between the disciple and the Sadguru, is the transmission of spiritual knowledge. It is a heart-to-heart communication. He who has realized the Satyavasthu and has become one with It, is the Sadguru. He, who dedicates himself to the quest of Satyavasthu, is the sadshishya. Sadguru instructs through compassion and sadshishya opens himself through surrender. Sadguru whispers the sacred word from the nondual poise of Realization and sadshishya receives the Word through shraddha and surrender. This is initiation, 'Upadesha Deeksha'. The sadshishya who is a highly competent candidate for wisdom (uttamadhikari) awakes to Enlightenment, the moment the sacred Word is imparted by the Sadguru. Such is the wonder of the Word.

When shraddha is awake and surrender too complete, there is nothing that can prevent one from waking into God-Consciousness. Scripture too affirms: Man of shraddha awakes to the Reality. In the case of mediocre aspirant, 'madhyamadhikari', the process of Jnana is through steps, stages and gradations of discipline. The main steps of Jnana are Shravana, Grahana, Hridaya sparsha, vivechana, and veekshana, Manana, Dharana, Smriti, Anusandhana and Anubhava. Mere listening with ears does not constitute shravana. So also, listening to discourses, deliberations, lectures and scriptural expositions by persons who have no intimate anubhooti, also does not go by the term shravana. The Word must come from the Realized Guru. His word alone is charged with power. The Word of the Guru originates from Truth and is an expression of the power of anubhooti. Others' words emanate from intellect, which is an affect of avidya.

How can a product of ignorance dispel ignorance? The instruction that can touch the heart must come from the heart. The Guru who has experienced Brahman, alone can instruct from the level of the heart about Reality. Listening to the Guru's instruction should be with entire attention, yearning for Truth, reverent bhava and with an awareness that one knows nothing. Then only it is shravana. The import of instruction is grasped in the intellect. This intellectual grasp is called 'Grahana'. When the Word reaches the intellect, the mental impurity is washed away. The Word is the purifying 'Ganga Teertha'. When the mental impurity is washed away, the vibrations of the Word reach and touch the heart.

The intellectual grasp should become an emotional assimilation of knowledge at the level of the heart. This is the stage of what is called the 'hridaya sparsha'. This stage is reached only through shraddha. Shraddha is the power that carries the assimilated knowledge into the field of conduct. Spontaneous acceptance of the Guru's word as truth and the dynamism of this certitude in the conduct, 'acharana', together come to be known as 'shraddha'. Conduct, acharana, strengthens conviction.

Knowledge grows through corresponding pure conduct. The assimilated knowledge is dynamic and fresh, because it is born of shraddha and has the force of pure emotion. It is like a flowing rivulet, ever active, ever pure. The assimilated knowledge becomes manifest as discrimination, vivechana, in the midst of diverse mental modes and in the conflicting claims of duty. Discrimination co-exists with penetrating perception, 'veekshana'. When vivechana and veekshana powers are fully awake, you will be able



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to detect even the subtlest of your mental activity. You will be able to distinguish the right from the wrong, the real from the false. You know what to do, and what not to do.

Mere observation of mental modes and knowledge of your defects are not enough. You should be able to remain detached from the modes. You should be able to remove your defects. Then only you have reached the stage of vivechana and veekshana.

By discriminative analysis and penetrating perception, when one is able to have control over his own mental life, he reaches the stage of philosophic reflection, 'Manana'. A mind, which is disturbed by passions and cravings, cannot do 'manana'. Guru's instruction is not for the utterly ignorant. Nor is it for the fully illumined. It is for the aspirant who has weaned his mind from sense pleasures and who can comprehend the Guru's profound instruction.

'Manana' eliminates the mental modes and makes prajna inwardised. What was only a vague idea before becomes now clear in Manana. You cannot explain a philosophical concept or discourse; if you do not gain clarity through 'manana'. It is manana that rouses intellect from a state of dullness and arrests the mental vagaries and outgoing tendency. Manana clears the mental atmosphere of clouds and cobwebs. Manana leads to 'Na-mana', a state where the mind is free of the distracting and irrelevant modes.

In this state, the perception becomes keener and subtler and the prajna gets a grasp on the central 'Truth-idea'. This fixity of prajna on the central 'Truth-idea' is called 'Dharana'. Continued practice of 'dharana' is a form of intellectual tapasya.

By this process, a veil of oblivion drops off, and smrithi dawns. Smrithi is memory of svaroopta. What was a 'Truth-idea' in the state of dharana now becomes Truth-awareness. Smrithi is different from smarana as an act. Keeping the idea of God or Atman in the mind through the help of reflection and repetition of the Name or the Vakya, is called smarana, remembrance. It is a mental exercise. If your mind is assailed by agitation, remembrance will go. But, smrithi is not a mental faculty. It is intuitive insight revealed to consciousness. It comes from beyond the intellect and hence, belongs to spiritual order. When smrithi wakes up, dharana develops into a mystic hold on the Reality.

Now, the sadhaka feels closer to Reality. Without the help of reasoning or knowledge of philosophic doctrines, he is assured of a divine power within. He never forgets the goal. He is awake to his supreme duty. From the level of thought, he has risen to the level of 'feeling'. Feeling is a stage of growth between the intellectual idea and the intimate experience. It is an intuitive flash. With the dawning of smrithi, with the gaining of the mystic hold on the Reality, meditation proper and anusandhana begin.

The soul now meditates on itself as the soul, withdrawn from ego and mental pre-occupations. What is known variously as dhyana, nididhyasa, vichara and anusandhana, is one and the self-same Godward movement of the pure mind, having a mystic hold on the Reality to rest upon. Atman is Nirguna Tattwa. It is beyond the range of intellect. Unless one gains the mystic hold on Atman, one cannot do anusandhana of the Atman.



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One's love cannot be withdrawn from the transient and the temporal and directly and entirely focused on Atman. Atman is the seat of love divine. When the glimpses of the Atman are gained through the mystic hold, one's entire devotion, concentration and love go to Atman. All energies of intellect and emotion are attracted towards the Atman. Hence, Anusandhana of the Atman is termed as bhakti, according to Jnana Yoga.

Until perfect experience of Brahman is attained, the ego and the vasanas are still active in some form or other. One should be therefore vigilant against snares of Maya. The sadhaka, who has reached the stage of anusandhana, stands as it were, in a junction of the two worlds: the world of mystic rapture and the world of ego and darkness. Above, is the region of Truth and Resplendence; beneath is the region of falsehood and darkness. There is the possibility of entering the realm of Truth; there is also the possibility of falling into the realm of illusion.

If anusandhana, anushtana, dharma and shraddha are with him as the propelling forces, deliverance comes. Otherwise, illusion overtakes. The more one advances, the subtler becomes the Maya, the greater becomes the tests of prakrithi. With the mystic hold on Atman, one begins to experience the joy of communion, the strength of Truth in conduct, the peace, the comfort of the Divine, the living presence of God within and the security of the Divine guidance and protection.

But again, when the ego and the vasana obstruct the communion, he experiences the anguish of separation, the torments of the dark world, a feeling of the withdrawal of grace. This is silent anguish, almost unbearable, which the aspirant experience in his pursuit of Wisdom.

Jnana Yoga is the process of negations and affirmations. Negation is 'Neti'. Affirmation is 'soham'. Negation is elimination of the unreal, the limiting adjuncts. One has to negate every mental mode, including the last mode, the ego. Buddhi vritti is employed in both negation and affirmation. But how far one can negate and affirm? The mind is now entangled in the body, in the objects of desire, in the emotions. The mind should be withdrawn from all these. This is the function of 'Neti'. The mind so withdrawn has to be made to merge in the Reality. The prajna has to be fixed in the Divine. This is the function of soham. But so long as prajna is confined to the ego one cannot negate the ego.

The ego cannot eliminate the ego. Ego can be negated only by a superior perception. This superior perception is viveka. So also, for affirmation of 'soham', there should be pure bhava.

So long as ego is there, this bhava cannot arise. The ego is mixed up with the Atman. To separate Atman and the ego there should be viveka. The intellect tainted with the ego, has no power to isolate the ego. Hence the bewildered consciousness mistakes the ego itself for the Atman. This is the hurdle, most difficult to cross, in Jnana Yoga. The 'I' is common to both, the ego and the Atman. But their dimensions are different. This, the deluded does not know. The real 'I' is the sphurana of the Supreme. But the apparent and separative 'I' is individualistic. It is confined to the body.



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Because shraddha has not dawned and the sadhaka has not become a recipient of Guru's grace, he does not experience the true Atmic nature, even though the Guru repeats the instruction. It is God, the absolute, who abides as the Atman. Because ego is mistaken for the Atman, the deluded does not adore the Atman. He forgets that Atman is the Lord and not the individual. The ego indulges in self-praise, and is elated by praises coming from other egos. It does not worship the Divine.

It does not remember that God alone is praiseworthy. Due to lack of reverent bhava, one sees the temple of God as a mere place of congregation and the Image of God as a mere stone. The heart becomes as dry as a stone. This is the miserable lot that comes to those who adopt the intellectual approach without guidance by the Sadguru. In real, well-guided pursuit of Jnana Yoga, there is due place for devotion, reverent bhava, worship, adoration, fear of God, humility and surrender. If these are absent one is not in the path of Jnana at all.

The progress of anusandhana is frequency of contact, communication and communion with the Divine. By the power of anusandhana, one is always in a meditative state even in intense activity. Mind becomes purer, broader, vaster, sublime, stronger and God-fixed. When anusandhana becomes constant, it ends up in anubhava, the intimate experience. The mystic hold, the smriti, now blossoms into supreme enlightenment. Buddhi divested of avidya, and fused with the Reality, shines forth as Truth-bearing Consciousness, 'Ritambhara Prajna'. This is the culmination in Jnana Yoga.