



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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Upanishads are a treasure house of wisdom. They deal with Brahma Vidya, Knowledge of the Absolute. People study them, commit the verses to memory, repeat them before audiences and expound their meaning. With all these, how is it that jnana does not dawn?

Mere study of the Upanishads is not what is called as 'Shastra Abhyasa'. The truths and injunctions of the scripture should come to your guidance whenever you tend to go wrong, whenever tendency towards adharma arises in you. That is a kind of awakening. Shastra Abhyasa, which does not bring about such awakening, is futile.

Without abhyasa, anushtana and acharana, the mind will not become pure by mere study of the Upanishads. In the absence of purity, Jnana cannot dawn. Fixing the mind again and again on God by withdrawing the prajna from the unreal, is abhyasa; regular observances of sadhana as prescribed by Sadguru; is anushtana; conduct which is righteous, which is in obedience to Guru's moral behests, is acharana. By these three only, you can move in the direction of Knowledge.

The truth regarding God, Self and the world are not open to human intellect, which is involved in prakrithi. The scripture alone is the valid means of knowledge concerning these. But, after knowing the truth indirectly through the scripture, you should proceed towards attainment of direct knowledge and intimate experience. That is sadhana. Without such sadhana, if one continues to indulge in the scripture itself throughout one's life, how can one realize the purpose of life?

Scriptures do not reveal the hidden truths to immature and impure intellects. They have a depth which only the Grace of the Guru can illumine. Without intellectual competency and Guru's guidance, people understand the Upanishads wrongly. Wrong understanding leads to wrong interpretations. This leads one astray and leads others also along the wrong path. What little faith and devotion one had inherited from the tradition of religious living evaporates with the onset of wrong knowledge. The egoism that one is the learned, crops up. This ego becomes the greatest obstacle for the dawn of Knowledge.

Sadguru initiates the seekers into the Atma Tattwa. His potent Word, whether it is the Mahavakya, or the Pranava, is a vehicle of power of intimate experience. It has the power to awaken not only the spiritual impulse, but also the spiritual consciousness in the seeker.

But the seeker should grasp the truth properly. He should have shraddha, profound reverence for the Guru's Word, yearning for liberation and thirst for knowledge. He should bring into practice what he has listened to. Then the teaching becomes effective.

Shravana and svadhyaya (listening and study) alone are not enough. The truth, which you have once grasped through shravana, should be repeatedly reflected upon. Reflection should develop into deep contemplative thinking. Then only the idea of Truth gets firmly stabilized in your consciousness. Grasp of Truth by means of shravana is in the intellect; reflection takes place in the mind; deep contemplative thinking is by the chittha. But when this chittha also subsides, jnana flashes. Intimate experience alone gives the jnana, which is free of doubt.



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When the idea of Truth is firmly rooted in one's consciousness, his outlook and actions will reflect the quality of knowledge. This is 'Acharana'. Making Knowledge a dynamic force in the actuality of conduct is Tapas. By merely sitting with eyes closed, one does not become a Tapaswi. The flame of Tapas should be the very glow of illumination within and the radiance of purity in the outer actions.

Great Truth is embedded in the Manthra or the Vakya. The power, which reveals this great Truth, is Enlightenment, Jnana. When the obscurity of Tamas and the distractions (vikshepas) of Rajas disappear by the power of the Manthra or the Vakya, intimate experience comes. This experience is Bliss. Bliss is the Reality, your true nature.

The nature of Atman, therefore is Bliss and Peace. Opposed to this Atmic nature, is the mind of gunas. The jiva dwells in a state of identity with the mind. Hence his own true nature of Bliss is hidden from his experience. He becomes a victim to mental states of pleasure and grief. The knowledge that one is not the mind should become a steady state of consciousness. For this, steadfastness in Truth is required. You should never deviate from the Truth into which the Guru has initiated you. This is Dharma. Truth is one and nondual. Truth is God. Hence, multiplicity, 'Nanatwa', is only an appearance and not the reality. It is God who shines in diversity of expressions.

When you are firm in the knowledge that dualities of the mind and the idea of multiplicity in creation are a work of delusion, the mind will become serene. The mind should remain in a state above the ripples of prakrithi. It should be tranquil in all life situations. A tranquil mind is the fit instrument for Yoga. Even for worldly success such a mind is required.

When happiness comes, the mind should not get elated and remain immersed in it; when adversity comes, it should not sink into despair. Nothing can touch your native state of Atman. Under the sway of the gunas, mind has moods. But when it is joined to God, it becomes steady, strong and serene.

The gaze of the truth-seeker should be inward-fixed. Petty worldly things, situations of life and affairs of others, should not drag the mind from its poise of tranquility. Society cannot be shunned; nor can duties be ignored. But in the midst of these, you can be alone with God. This is real solitude you should enjoy.

The scriptures, the saints and the Sadguru may instruct you, inspire you and illumine your inner path. But to receive instruction, to reflect on instruction, to deeply contemplate on the Truth, to discriminate aright, to bring into daily life the Guru's Teaching and finally to rise to the plane of anubhoothi: this is your duty. If you have discharged this duty, it is true discipleship; it is the sign of Guru's Grace.

The signpost is useful only to those who read and understand and thus know the direction of the way. To the blind, to those who cannot understand the writing on the signpost, it is of no use. Scriptures are useful only to those who can understand its true import, who are earnest in following the teaching, who have been properly instructed by the Guru on the inner path. Those who do not know how to tread the inner path cannot derive adequate benefit from the scriptural study. Sadguru alone can initiate you to the inner path.

A view prevails that there is no mention of bhakti in the Upanishads. This is wrong. Grand ideal of Bhakthi, the spirit of Bhakthi, permeates the body of the Upanishads. Only a discerning eye



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can perceive it. Without loving devotion and reverence for the Divine dwelling in one's own heart, one cannot hope to attain Atma Jnana and through Atma Jnana the release from the wheel of samsara. God is the Atman in everyone.

Then, there is another notion that Upanishads expound only Jnana and that they are silent on dharma. This too, is equally a wrong notion. Moral imperatives occupy a prominent place in the Upanishadic teaching. The Sages imparted Brahmavidya only to these who were sinless, unsmitten by sense cravings, whose passions have subsided in the ardour of Tapas, who were virtuous in thought and conduct. Dharma is the base for Jnana. Both dharma and jnana rest on Truth. How then can dharma be excluded from the Upanishads?

Some think that jnana yoga expounded in the Upanishads does not stress the importance of the Guru. This too is an erroneous idea. Those who underestimate the role of the Guru on the basis of the upanishadic doctrine of self-effort will do well to turn to the Prashnopanishad and correct their view. In that Upanishad, the Sage imparts teachings to several seekers who approach him with fuel in their hands as disciples and ask questions to him with profound humility and thirst for knowledge. The Sage did not instruct them immediately on their arrival. The seekers were asked to remain with him in the hermitage for some period engaged in tapas. Unless the mind is purified by tapas, the mind cannot assimilate the profound instruction on Brahma Vidya.

The Upanishad signifies teaching of the sacred Truth. Where there is teaching, there exist a Master to teach and a disciple to learn. Upanishads affirm that Knowledge cannot be gained without the help of the Guru.

Those who say that the Guru is required only to a certain stage and that afterwards Guru is not required, also grope in darkness. They cling to duality, which is in the domain of darkness. They do not know the principle of the Guru Tattwa, the need for Grace and the identity of Atman and the Guru. Real understanding is required at all stages in sadhana. Merely sitting with eyes closed does not constitute tapas. Tapas which is not guided by Knowledge, is not tapas at all.

Atman, the Nirguna Tattwa, has no form, no name, and no qualities. It is unique. How can one do anusandhana of the Atman which intellect cannot conceive at all? One should gain the intuitive glimpse of the Atman through the Grace of the Guru. This knowledge alone can be the basis of anusandhana. Anusandhana of the Atman is Bhakti, which belongs to a high order. It is the highest stage in Vichara Marga.

One should have purification of the mind; abundance of ethical virtues mentioned in 'Yama and Niyama', a sattvic disposition, solitude, intellectual competence, aptitude for investigation and a place of tranquil surroundings to live in. Then alone one can pursue the Vichara Yoga exclusively.

When you approach the scripture, or the saints, or the Sadguru, or God Himself, your motive should be liberation from the bondage of prakrithi. Of course when God-love dawns, even craving for Mukti disappears. But if you do not recognize your present state as one of bondage, how can there be an urge for release? Without urge for release how can there be an honest and sincere striving?



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The two strong ropes that bind the jiva to mortal plane are egoism (abhimana) and sense-indulgence (vishaya sanga). From these two arise all the rest, the sense of mineness, the agency, the enjoyership, karma vasanas, raga and dwesha and all violent and rajasic passions.

In the intellect of the indiscriminating man, the notion 'I' stands for the body. His personality is confined to the body only. This is dehabhimana. From this arises the feeling of agency and from the feeling of agency starts the karmic flow.

In the pure intellect, the aham is the pure sphurana of the Atman. This is unbroken consciousness of the Self, encompassing everything, yet detached from everything. But when the intellect is veiled by ego, the prajna becomes egocentric. Then one behaves as though he is the body. He gets attached to the body. His entire life becomes centered on the body. Such a life becomes one of selfish pursuits and constant mental unrest.

The veiling power, the avarana shakti inherent in Tamoguna covers the Atman as the mythological demon, Rahu, does the orbit of the sun. When one's own Self is thus hidden from view, one mistakes the body itself for the Self. Identified with the body, the purusha, otherwise the non-attached Witness considers himself the doer and the enjoyer and gets entangled in the web of vyavahara and karma vasana. Unless you know the nature of the ego, you cannot eliminate the ego. The intellect associated with the ego cannot understand the ego. The perception, which reveals the nature of the ego, is an insight coming from the Atma Chaitanya.

This insight comes only by the Grace of the Guru. Guru and the Atman are identical. As by ideal virtue of putradharma one pleases one's father, so too, by ideal discipleship, one should win the grace of the Guru. First, what is to be gained is a penetrating perception, 'vichakshana buddhi'. Divine Eye opens only afterwards. When Divine Eye opens, you get the synoptic vision of Truth, 'samyak darshana'.

In devotion too, there should not be any place for an 'I' apart from the Deity, Ishta Devata. With such non-differentiating attitude, abheda buddhi', you should worship the Deity. God should possess your entire being, leaving no scope for a separate 'I' to flourish and seek any goal apart from the Deity. That is the nature of Bhakti.

Perfect devotee recognizes the Divine Nature of the Saguna Manifestation through Jnana Chakshu. For such a devotee, love for the Saguna itself is the fulfillment. If he longs for a vision or an experience or a yogic power, apart from the Divine, he is not a perfect Bhakta. To be united with the Divine is the supreme dharma. It is the very law of life spiritual. To seek anything apart from God is a delusion, 'bhranti'. Devotion to the Deity leads to Enlightenment, even if one has not read any scripture or reflected on the doctrine of Identity. For him, mastaka (brain) becomes the pusthaka (scripture). That is to say, all knowledge flashes in his consciousness by the grace of God.

Devotion combined with moral idealism, is a tremendous force that eliminates abhimana and all other forms of ignorance. By pathivrathya, several women in ancient India had become great Jnanis and Yoginis. So also, by mere devotion to Guru, one gets jnana. Ideals may vary.

But one should stick to that particular ideal which has come to him through svadharma. On that ideal so chosen, he should concentrate all his mind, devotion and energy. Then it leads to perfection.



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So also, in the approach to God, one particular path, a particular Yoga, which suits one's temperament, should be his main path; other yogas should only be the aids. Steadfastness in one's own path is essential. It is fickle-mindedness to go on experimenting on several paths and never sticking to any. Denial of ego is the fundamental feature in all the yogas.

Ego should be banished. But who is to do it? All want ego. No one is prepared to leave it. Then who is to expel the ego from one's bosom? Such is the long association and acquaintances with the ego that you think you are the ego. You are not able to think of an existence without ego. Now this ego has gained such strength that he turns back and asks you: Who are you to expel me? I am ever with you. Never will I leave you. The jivatman should feel that alliance with the ego is a continuing misery. Then only yearning for liberation comes. He should also recognize the supremacy of Grace. Then comes the mood of surrender.