



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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Every act of the Guru has a divine purpose behind it. Had Yama not tested Nachiketha, the world would not have got the wonderful picture of a marvelous God-seeker. Nachiketha even now lives in the heart of mankind as an inspiring example of a courageous Sadhaka and Seeker, because Yama made him undergo a series of rigorous tests.

The first test from Yama was to see how far sincere Nachiketha was in his quest. The mode of test followed by the Master was by presenting the goal in such a way as though it is almost unattainable. Here is a little boy, Nachiketha, intent on Realization of Brahman. Has the boy adequately understood the greatness of the goal and the hazards involved in the quest? This is what Yama wants Nachiketha to prove.

Therefore Yama spoke of Brahman as a Truth unknown even to gods. Even if gods are in doubt regarding the nature of Brahman, where is hope for a human mortal? Any one would have thought like that and would have retraced the steps. But Nachiketha had tremendous faith in his own Self. He never looked down on himself thinking: I am an ignorant being. How can I realize the Infinite?

He who entertains such weak thoughts can never attain the Brahmic state. Humility is not self-depreciation. Denial of ego is humility. Nachiketha is humble, but humility is a facet of his simplicity and strength. He who has no ego, no crookedness, no pretence, is simple. Nachiketha had tremendous self-confidence, for he was a person of shraddha.

The ideal, the Realization, is supremely great. It cannot be brought down. One has to rise to it. That needs courage, self-confidence and unflinching determination. Nachiketha is determined to know Truth, to have the Truth and to be one with the Truth.

Yama's reference to Brahavidya as the profoundest science unknown even to gods would imply that he himself was not in possession of that wisdom. An ordinary seeker would have at once thought within himself: Yama himself does not know the Ultimate Truth. How can he guide me then? Well, let me ask some other boon for enjoyment. For Brahma Vidya, I must approach somebody else.

But Nachiketha had no doubt. He had recognized the Great Master in Yama. This recognition was a kind of knowledge and not a mental belief. Even Yama's words could not shake his conviction. He stood firm.

The boy had not heard from anybody that Yama was a person possessing spiritual wisdom; nor had he seen Yama instructing disciples or being adored by disciples. How could the boy then gain the conviction that Yama was an authority on spiritual matters? By divine grace only one can intuitively recognize the Sadguru. Having recognized the Sadguru, where was the need for any test! So the boy stood the second test also successfully.

Yama now proceeds to put the boy into another crucial test by offering him all the pleasures of the world and heavens. You should understand the position of Nachiketha in the proper light. According to Yama's own version, Truth is very hard to realize. There is no guarantee as to



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when one will attain it. The Reality is the subtlest, the profoundest and the utterly incomprehensible.

One knows It only when It reveals Itself. But bhoga, the pleasures of Heaven, have come to him unsolicited. He can have them right now. They are at his feet. He can straightaway start enjoying them. A sadhaka, if he had the slightest trace of vasana in him, would have reasoned with himself: These pleasures have already come to me. Why should I reject them? After all, I am not sure of Realization. For the sake of realizing the Unknowable, why should I give up these heavenly enjoyments?

But as has been narrated earlier, Nachiketha renounced them all. He had turned away, once for all, from the world of appearance. There was no more any vasana in him to produce any desire for anything, worldly pleasures or celestial glory.

People may say they have no desires. When one is in an atmosphere of holy association, desires may remain dormant. But when the atmosphere changes, the cravings do make their appearance. Unless the seeds of vasana are fried in the fire of knowledge, no one can be sure that he is free of desires.

Those who say they have no desires do not know their own mental state. One may be successful in keeping oneself away from the objects of desire, but the cravings for the objects do persist. The real test comes when you are in the midst of enjoyments.

Yama's reluctance to impart the supreme secret also implied that Nachiketha was too young for such quest. The boy had not seen life in its various facets. He had not gained any worldly experience. Without such experiences and without gaining the maturity of mind through such experiences, how can a mere boy aspire for the Ultimate? That was what Yama hinted by way of a test.

But Nachiketha could not accept the position that he was too young for Brahma Vidya. In quest there is no question of age. It is fitness that counts, not the age. Bharat's spiritual tradition amply provides instances of the dawn of Self-Knowledge even from infancy and childhood.

Nachiketha stood the third test also wonderfully well, the test of temptation. Marvelled at the supreme dispassion, discrimination and intense spiritual hunger that possessed the boy, Yama thought within himself: Even I have been caught up by the lure of position.

But this boy at such a young age possesses such mature vairagya. His is indeed the paravairagya that accompanies spiritual enlightenment. He has rejected even the celestial delights, immense wealth, charming women, position, power and everything that constitutes the world of bhoga. Ah! To whom else should I impart the sacred knowledge if not to this boy? He wants nothing but the wisdom of Brahman. Blessed indeed is the boy. Blessed is the line in which he has taken birth.

Yama could not hold himself any longer. The era of testing was over. The Master's heart welled up with joy of having seen a seeker of the highest order, the desireless mumukshu whose mind was totally withdrawn from enjoyment. He now pays the young seeker Nachiketha highest compliments and encomium.



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Says Yama the divine Teacher: There are two paths open to mankind. They are the path of pleasure and the path of spiritual welfare. These two divergent paths serve divergent purposes. The path of pleasure (preyas) leads to sorrow, misery and bondage. The path of spiritual welfare leads to peace and salvation. The intelligent and the discriminating ones choose the path of spiritual welfare. The non-discriminating ones, who are fond of their own bodies, choose the path of pleasure.

O, Nachiketha, intelligent as you are, you have wisely rejected all the things and pleasures and have chosen the path of shreyas. Bhoga which I offered you did not tempt you at all. You are a dheera, the man of knowledge, steadfast intelligence and resolute will. You are eminently fit for highest wisdom. With your penetrating intelligence you have examined the relative worth of all lokas and found them wanting in reality. You yearn only for the Supreme and eternal state. Mansion of Brahman is open to you, O Nachiketha.

Master's praise for the boy came spontaneously from his appreciation of the latter's high spiritual competency and moral strength. It was never an act of testing. Yama is now eager to impart all knowledge to the worthy disciple. But Nachiketha considered himself a seeker.

This shower of praises, coming from a superhuman being like Yamaraja was indeed a test for the boy, the final test. Praises fan up pride and egoism even in the most self-controlled yogis. But Nachiketha remained unmoved.