



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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No man can tell you: I am here to protect you, have no worry. For every jiva is the helpless victim of time and has to leave the body one day or other. But God is eternal. God is not an individual. He is the infinite Power. He is also the ocean of love and mercy. He is the Father and Mother of the Universe. He alone will be with you here and hereafter.

Yama's discourse to Nachiketha on secrets of Brahavidya deal with the nature of ignorance, the fitness for Wisdom, the swaroopa lakshanas of the Atman, the process of enquiry, the nature of anubhooti and the glory of liberation. All these topics discussed in the Upanishads are of importance to a real seeker of Truth.

Many might have gone through this Upanishad and committed to memory the actual verses dealing with Atmavidya. But how few imbibe the true Nachiketha spirit! How few are true to India's spiritual tradition! How few are true to their own conscience! All want God, eternal happiness, freedom from misery. But rare indeed are those who are prepared to sacrifice the little self and exchange sense pleasure for super sensuous bliss, for strenuous preparation (tapas) and for observance of the dharma of discipleship.

Yama's lengthy talks on profound spiritual themes reveal how happy he was to impart the knowledge to his worthy disciple Nachiketha. Unless the disciple has absorbing interest on the subject as well as quick and correct comprehension, no Master will impart such teachings at a stretch. In ancient days when seekers went to the Sage, the former were asked to live in hermitage for years together engaged in tapas.

When a group of Brahmacharis, with intense desire for knowledge of Brahman, approached the Sage Pippalada, the latter asked them to live in his hermitage for a year engaged in tapas controlling the senses and observing strict brahmacharya. So also, when Indra and Virochana representing gods and demons went to Prajapathi for spiritual initiation, they were asked to wait for several years.

Indra had to live for one hundred and one years with the Guru before he was fully instructed. The asura Virochana stayed with the Guru only for 32 years but he went away wrongly understanding the doctrine of Atman. The seekers in those days knew the inestimable value and greatness of the Upadesha.

But Nachiketha did not have to pass through such a stage of probationary and preparatory tapasya. The reason was, not that the Guru in this case was a superhuman being like Yama, but that the disciple was exceptional in virtue and fitness. Whether human or superhuman, the Guru is not an individual, but the infinite power. Therefore it does not make any difference if the Guru is a human being or a superhuman being. What is required is that he should be a realized Master.

For a Master like Yama, it did not take time to convince himself that the new seeker from the human world was utterly free of tendency for enjoyment, kama vasana. Nachiketha's aspiration for Wisdom, the yearning for anubhooti, was such a powerful pravaha (tidal flow) that no desire, even a trace of it, could ever have strength to remain. When the current is strong, it sweeps away anything and everything it comes across.



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Nachiketha was a worshipper of the Goddess of Wisdom, Jnana Devi. At Her Altar he offered in sacrifice all that mankind hold dear and valuable, power and self, ego and the body.

His yearning for wisdom (Jnanarthi) was equal in strength to the stream of ecstatic devotion to God. Amidst transient objects, holding himself steady in the field of svadharma, with a pure and steady mind as his ornament, he unswervingly carried on the quest.

By his own example Nachiketha teaches how a genuine vidyarthi, a spiritual aspirant, should conduct himself in this world and in the next. In this world as well as in Yama's abode, Nachiketha remained the same individual, the soul of flaming spiritual hunger.

The aspirant should strive to propitiate the Goddess of wisdom whose throne is his own heart. He should do tapas without any laziness, dullness, despair, or sense of defeat. When laziness comes, sadhana is at a standstill. If you have spiritual zeal, behind your tapas, love, light and energy will inundate you when you chant the Name of God or practice meditation or go through the daily round of duties. Nachiketha's mind had been totally withdrawn from the world of pleasures, from the world of fancy. The world of Being, the world of Bliss, the world of Reality – this alone dominated his consciousness. Hence Yama's words of instruction and exposition became in him the flashes of illumination.

Desires and passions are great distractions. So long as they are there, active or dormant, there cannot be a spiritual awakening; there cannot be even attainment of concentration at the time of worship or shravana in the presence of the Guru. But anything is possible through God's grace. When one becomes a recipient of grace, he suddenly awakes from the slumber of ignorance and attachment. To illustrate the truth that desire for worldly things impedes the spiritual progress of the Sadhana, Divine Mother narrated a story.

There was a Brahmin. From childhood, he lived a life of traditional piety, dharmanishta and brahmanical vritti like swadhyaya (study of scriptures), worship of Sandhya, chanting of the Name of God, fasting, upasana etc.

He was very regular in his anushtana. But despite all this, unfortunately, he had a powerful desire for accumulation of wealth. He developed a strange notion that happiness would come only if one had enormous wealth, a palatial house to live in, creature comforts etc. But he had also realized that being born in a Brahmin family the scope for material prosperity, the chance for becoming rich was very slender. How to earn money was the thought that engaged his mind day in and day out.

Finally an idea occurred in his mind. He must worship and propitiate Gajalakshmi, the presiding deity of affluence and wealth. Through Her grace he would have his desire fulfilled. Being a person of faith he started doing the upasana of the Goddess in right earnest and devotion and regularity. Thus he carried on the practice of the Name of God, the worship of the deity etc in amazing nishta all the while his mind attached to wealth.

Thus years passed. One day the Brahmin as usual went to the nearby river for ablutions. He chanced to see his own image in the water. Those days there were no mirrors. To his shock he found that his hairs had all gone grey. Oh the old age had come upon him! He became painfully conscious of the years he spent in the upasana of Devi. Even with all these years of worship and Namajapa, he had not got a vision of the goddess even once or even in a dream. He thought all his upasana was in vain. Sense of despondency crept into his mind.



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He however continued his practices like a machine, with no joy or enthusiasm. He could not leave his nishta. Through years of practice, upasana had become the very part of his life. Without practice he could not live in peace.

One day after his return from the bathing ghat, he was sitting under a tree when suddenly he remembered that he had left his rosary his japamala at the river ghat. He felt too fatigued to walk again to the river. Despair weakens not only the mind but body too. Mind and body are related to each other.

When one becomes weak, the other too goes weak. When a person is imbued with zeal and energy, even his emaciated body will put on energy and capacity for sadhana.

The Brahmin was in a fix and did not know how to get back his rosary. At that time a village rustic, a person of low caste, noticing this brahmin's predicament, approached him with folded palms in reverence and accosted him: Venerable Sir, what can I do for you? Do you need any help? When the Brahmin explained the situation, the man said: Venerable Sir, I am shudra unfit to touch your holy rosary which holds the power of your japa of years. However, presently I can get it here without my touching it. Please keep your eyes closed. Never open them until I tell you. The Brahmin acted likewise. Just after a moment, the Brahmin was asked to open his eyes. Here is your Japamala, said the rustic with a radiant smile.

The Brahmin was astonished at this miraculous feat and asked his shudra benefactor: Please tell me how you acquired this power. I have been worshiping the Goddess Gajalakshmi and doing upasana for the past many years; but till now I did not get any power, or the fulfillment of my desire. I could not win Devi's favour at all. The Shudra replied: I simply invoked the deity of my upasana. It is only by Her grace and power that I could procure your rosary in an instant.

The Brahmin's mind rose up in respect for the adept occultist in front of him. In contrast to his failure to win the favour of Devi Gajalakshmi, here was a man, who even though low-born had won the grace of the Deity through upasana. The Brahmin now requested him to impart to him the secret Manthra which made him great. The occultist replied: Normally I do not give any upadesha. In this case let me ask my Mother, my Deity. I shall do as she commands.

After sometime he reappeared and told: I am sorry Sir, I have no permission from Devi to give you the Manthra. She does not wish it. Please let me go.

This was an awakening for the Brahmin. He was wonderstruck to observe that the occultist had advanced so much on the path of Upasana that he was in a position to hold converse with the Deity, whereas he, a Brahmin, with all his worship, Japa and various upasanas for many years, could not gain anything, either a vision of Devi or any favour from Her. Fie upon my love for lucre, thought he, how great it is to be in communion with the Goddess! But alas! I was a slave to gold. All my penance for years has become a sheer waste.

Divining his mental state, the occultist comforted him saying, Look yonder, and he pointed his finger to a direction behind him. The Brahmin saw a strange phenomenon. A cremation ground rose up in his vision and he saw several of his own bodies being consigned to flames! Think not, O holy man, said the occultist, that your penance has been a waste.

Your accumulated vasanas which those bodies symbolize are being burnt one by one, in the scorching flames of your tapas. Tapas bears fruit. When these vasanas are destroyed, you will



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get the vision of the goddess, you will attain the consummation of your life. Do not lose heart. Strive with renewed vigour. After a short spell of silence he continued: Go thou to that yonder forest and thou will meet Thy Guru.

Thanking the strange rustic who wielded enormous occult power, the Brahmin now proceeded towards the forest. There he met a venerable Sadhu living in a peaceful hermitage. The contact with the occultist, the darshan of the Sage and the sylvan quietude of the forest, all exerted a tremendous influence upon his mind. A fit of powerful dispassion came upon him. He renounced the world, took sannyas, received Upadesh from the Sage and continued his tapas with greater intensity.

Now the Goddess Gajalakshmi suddenly appeared before him ready to offer him a veritable shower of gold! Paying obeisance to the Goddess, the ascetic, now a prince of vairagya, said: O Mother! Strange it is that You deigned to appear before me today with thy boon of gold. All these years, despite my strenuous tapas, you did not grant me darshan even once.

Now I have no need for gold. Only bless me O Mother, that I may never forget Thee even for a minute. Devi, with a benign smile on Her lips, said: "Child! It is not that I did not grant you Darshan all these years. I have been always with you but alas! You could not behold Me through your own folly. You put up a screen before your very eyes and that prevented you from seeing Me. That screen was your attachment to wealth. Now that screen is no more there and therefore you are able to behold Me." So saying Devi blessed him and disappeared.