



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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Sense of duty, 'karthavya bodha', is a distinguishing human attribute. As social beings, yours is a collective life marked by co-operative endeavors for peace, security and stability. You have duties to discharge, responsibilities to shoulder and moral obligations to fulfill. Whether in home or in society, harmony is promoted through conscientious performance of svadharma.

The Guru and the disciples, the parents and the children, the husband and the wife, the rulers and the ruled, all have to observe their respective dharma. It is adherence to dharma and performance of duties that ensure peace and well being.

By intelligence alone one cannot discern the course of dharma. To gain insight into dharma, to discern one's duty in particular situations, one needs the light of knowledge to guide one's understanding.

Svadharma Nishta and devotion are inter-related. The one promotes the other. That by performing which you feel drawn towards God, your mind is cleared of distractions and you get the peace of a clean conscience, is svadharma. If you neglect svadharma, you will have a disturbed mind. A disturbed mind is unfit for meditation. By doing your duties in an attitude of service to God, your devotion will grow and the mind will become pure and serene.

You have to do all actions connected with your svadharma with an attitude proper to yajna, without forgetting God, without losing sight of your ultimate purpose, namely, God-realization. Actions are not the end; they are the means to an end. The end is God-experience. You should be always mindful of your goal. Then your outlook and the way of work will change.

If one forgets God and gets immersed in activity only, the result will be only accumulation of karma, and not acquisition of spiritual merit or mental purification. When one remains engrossed in the pleasures of home and activities of social life, there is the likelihood of one's forgetting God and the upadesha of the Guru altogether. Where there is pramada, there, an atmosphere of peace and spirituality cannot exist.

Activity takes a major part of a householder's time. Hence his sadhana has to be in the midst of activity itself. Activity itself should become a mode of his sadhana. By constantly remembering God and by doing all actions for the sake of God, one should gradually eliminate egoistic notion in one's consciousness.

Concentration power increases by devotion to duty also. You must apply your full mind to the work on hand and perform it as a service to God. When devotion to duty comes, the mind rests on work without distractions. This way, the concentration power of the mind increases.

Along with performance of duty, there should be steadfastness in the observance of anushtana, daily practice of adhyatmic disciplines. For you, the devotion to the chosen deity is of supreme importance. Without devotion you cannot perform your duties or serve with whole-hearted fervour. From steady devotion to the deity will come to you knowledge, discrimination, detachment, mental poise and courage to face the trials of life.



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Whether you are inclined towards the vedantic viewpoint or practice of yoga sadhanas, your devotion to the chosen deity should not diminish. You should remember your Ishta at every beat of your heart. Any discipline, any mode of spiritual quest, in which devotion and reverence for God have no place, is barren. It cannot purify the mind. It cannot break the fetters. The supremacy of bhakti is indisputable.

The practice of devotional disciplines builds up a magnetic centre of spiritual life. From such a centre of awakened spirituality flows a force which purifies your emotions and strengthens your faltering steps on the path to realization. Your whole vision will become suffused with a sublime bhava. The very sight of the Guru, the image of God, the devotees and the sacred books will evoke in your heart a profound reverence for God. You will feel the influence of divine presence, the vibrations of tapas and the currents of love.

Even those deny God and advocate materialistic doctrines pray for God's help when they are face to face with danger and calamity. Faith in God is a psychological necessity whatever be the path one follows or the doctrine one believes in. The study of shastras is a means to the understanding of the greatness of God. Along with such study, there should be worship of the deity and steadfastness in meditation.

All vyavahara of the jivatman is in the realm of ignorance. The mind too, which is the instrument of perception and knowledge, is a product of avidya. Being in avidya, the mind gets influenced by its own perceptions. Wrong apprehension, misunderstanding, attachment and repulsion, rajasic passions and the condition of general restlessness; all these are mental afflictions of the jivas in ignorance.

With such an afflicted mind one cannot go forward on the path of adhyatmic sadhana, one cannot worship God, one cannot be successful even in one's worldly duties. The mind should be disciplined. A disciplined mind is a mind that has been brought under control. Therefore, to bring the mind under control and to maintain the mental equilibrium in all life-situations is the primary duty of a sadhaka.

When ignorance is dispelled, the vision is transformed; the body and mind become instruments of divine power; vyavahara becomes worship; existence becomes a rapture. When you win God's grace, even Himalayan misery will appear as the tender touch of a flower. Such is the state of a mind strengthened by spiritual disciplines and sheltered by divine grace.

The whole life is to be dedicated to the quest of God. You should know that to realize God means to lose oneself in the boundless being of God. For such losing of oneself in God, you should achieve the merger of mind, the extinction of the separative I and the eradication of the latent tendencies.

The mind is filled with the impressions of names and forms and events. It is these worldly impressions which agitate the mind with sankalpas, vikalpas and passions. The mind which is all these, casts a veil over the consciousness of one's own inmost reality.

The mind should be exhausted of its worldly content. Impressions and images of the world should be wiped out and the image of the Divine should be installed therein. Then only worship of God and spiritual life begin.



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The vasanās should be totally attenuated. There is a merger of mind in tamoguna, like experiences of swoon and sleep. This type of merger does not change the nature of man. The mind revives again and the passions continue to disturb. The merger of mind consequent upon destruction of vasanās, is a spiritual experience. It is a merger of mind in reality or God. This merger unites the jivatman with Paramatman.

As ornaments melt down into the liquid form of gold, so too, the mind should melt away into formless Consciousness, in the fire of aspiration and devotion for God. Without devotion to God the mind will never lose its worldly form and merge in God. Passions subside when bhakti awakes. Bhakti is indeed an inner fire which consumes away the worldly cravings and the ego-notion.

The aspiration that precedes spiritual experience is really a form of devotion itself. It checks the vagaries of mind and gives the mind tremendous strength and one-pointedness, which are necessary for higher pursuit of yoga.

To exhaust the mind of its worldly impressions and images, of names and forms, of persons and objects, it should have a prop to hold on, an object of superior attraction. This prop is Saguna Brahman, the Personal God, and the human incarnation of Isvara.

Though all names and forms of the world are of Maya, the name and form of the Personal God are permeated by the imperishable effulgence of God. Personal God is the prop for meditation; the devotion developed towards Him is the means to purification and gateway to salvation.

Sweet is the Name of God, as sweet as emancipation itself. There are bhaktas who have said that the sweetness of the Name is greater than emancipation. Name is the very embodiment of supreme bliss. But this bliss inherent in the Name can be experienced only through intense and self-forgetting love for God. When the devotee utters the Name of God with his love-filled heart, he gets intoxicated with bliss. Finally, the name, the bliss, the love, the devotee and God all become one in that unique experience.

God becomes visible, accessible, lovable and intimate, when He takes on name, form and personality. This event of God's appearance in a human form is a blessing for the whole world. But even to recognize the divinity of the incarnated God, knowledge is essential. The intuition of the Atman, the vision of God's omnipresence, and the recognition of divinity in God's avatar, all these belong to a superior order of illumination, jnana.

Ecstatic devotion originates from jnana. The form of God shines in the heart of the devotee in all resplendence. Meditating on that divine form, chanting the divine name, extolling the divine glories and beholding the divine leelas, the devotee reaches the summit of God-experience.

Exclusive devotion (ananya bhakti), exclusive love (ananya prem) and the bhava of non-difference (ananya bhava) are characteristics of a life absorbed in God. Exclusive devotion means unswerving devotion to one's chosen deity; exclusive love means a love that is focused on God and God alone; and the bhava of non-difference means the attitude that apart from God there is neither a personal I or an objective world.

(To be continued)