



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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For pursuit of God, one's mind, which is an instrument of quest, should become like a black bee, 'bhramara'. The black bee is interested only in the sweet honey. It remains engrossed in sucking and enjoying the honey deposited in the flowers, without diverting its attention to anything else. So too, the object of mind's ardent quest should be the bliss of God.

Without getting diverted or distracted towards anything, the mind must be employed in the quest of God and the disciplines of sadhana. Duties and worldly occupations should be spiritualized by devotion to God. Then only the mind will remain undivided in its pursuit of the goal of life.

Honey, 'Madhu', mentioned in the Upanishads, indicates Brahman Himself, Who is of the nature of bliss. To use the language of devotion, the honey, the unending bliss, is at the Lotus Feet of the Paramatman.

The term, 'Lotus Feet' of God, mean both: the saguna charana, as well as the nirguna charana. The saguna charana assumes relevance when God incarnates Himself for the good of mankind; or when He is worshipped in the Archa form in the consecrated shrines; or when He is worshipped as one's own Guru. All these three, namely, the Avatar, the Deity and the Sadguru, are visible and accessible to devotion; but their essential nature is verily the Nirguna Brahman, the formless and featureless Absolute.

The nirguna charana signifies the immutable Reality above the triputi, beyond the touch of maya and the reach of intellect, the supreme state where there is no second entity to see, or hear, or feel or comprehend. This charana is in the 'daharakasha', the ether of the spiritual heart, or Pure Consciousness. One cannot worship the nirguna charana unless one's consciousness becomes shorn of ignorance and gets identified with the Reality.

The mind, detached from the world of objects, should be purified by devotion to the Saguna Brahman. Then only, it will become fit to be merged in the ocean of the Nirguna Reality like a salt doll in the ocean. That is the culmination of quest, the end of aspiration and effort for Realization.

The Sadguru embodies the truth as well as the saving grace of the Personal God, Saguna. The upadesha, which the Guru imparts, is the knowledge which is capable of destroying the illusion of duality and taking the mind of the disciple from the realm of the Saguna to the realization of the Nirguna.

The mind must have knowledge of relation to personal God, a fervent devotion to the chosen deity, and a firm dispassion which puts an end to all worldly cravings. Then alone it attains competency, concentration and purification, necessary for flight to the transcendent - daharakasha. The Vedas too, like a loving mother, prescribe yajnas and upasanas, for enabling the seekers to attain competency for the pursuit of jnana.

Whether in the performances of religious sacrifices (yajnas) or in the duties of svadharma, one should achieve a desireless frame of mind. But this desirelessness cannot come all on a sudden. Pleasure-seeking is an inherent trait of every embodied jiva. Hence the Vedas point towards paradises of pleasures as goals to be sought after through the yajnas.



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As one advances in the performances of such obligatory duties and religious yajnas mentioned in the Vedas, one's motivation and outlook undergo a radical change. The commercial approach gives way to disinterested devotion, nishkama bhakti; aloukik drshti.

Thus the devotion goes on increasing, the desires go on dropping off, and the purification comes in greater and still greater measure. Finally, devotion reaches its climax, becomes what is known as parabhakti. Ecstatic God-love, at its supreme summit of purity and intensity, was the state of the Gopis of Vraja, extolled even by great Sages. Devoid of nature's attributes (guna rahitam), free of desires (kamana rahitham), increasing at every moment (pratikshana vardhamanam), continuous and homogeneous (avicchinnam), extremely subtle in nature (sookshmataram) and of the nature of one's own intimate experience (anubhava roopam): these are the characteristics of Gopi's love for Sree Krishna Paramatman.

The whole empirical processes and earthly affinities are based on the personal I. When this I is lost in the oceanic love of God, one forgets one's own body, possessions, kith and kin, domestic happiness, worldly duties, the notions of day and night, and the existence of the objective world. Consciousness, shedding the subject-object relation, now shines as identical with the Supreme Being. It was in this state of nondual God-Consciousness that those paragons of bhakti, the Gopis of Vrindavan, revelled.

Through contact of Saguna Brahman, the Gopis attained not only the merger of mind, but the experience of the Nirguna. A mere thought of the saguna form and the melodious music of the Lord's flute, sent their minds into ecstasy (bhava) and absorption (Samadhi). They attained identity with the Lord of their heart (tadroopatha). Such was the intensity of their love for Krishna.

The Lord attracted the Gopis by His love, divine beauty and auspicious attributes; the Gopis won the Lord and made Him captive of their heart, through the power of unswerving bhakti. Thus, the Lord and the devotee became unified in an indescribable mystical experience.

In the self-forgetting God-love, no upadhis, no duties, no merit or sin, no scriptural injunctions, no social norms, can have a hold on one's consciousness. Everything is left behind when the soul enters the inner chamber of God. Fully possessed of the Divine, the entire responsibility of the God-intoxicated devotee now rests with God.

The last to be transcended in the flight towards absorption in the Supreme, is dharma nishta. He, who has stepped into a life of adhyatma dharma, has to start his spiritual career with devotion to svadharma, and the performance of obligatory duties. This devotion to dharma, called dharmanishta, has to be with the jivatman till God-absorption takes place. Even this last upadhi of dharmanishta has to be renounced and then only union with God is attained. God-absorption means total loss of ego-consciousness in the ecstasy of parabhakti.

There is a world of difference between deviation from dharma on the part of the ignorant, and the renouncing of dharma in the madness for God, on the part of a love-lorn devotee. The former is a deliberate fall, a slip into adharma; the latter is a natural transcendence, a rise to the intimacy of God through profound love and total surrender.

The case of the Gopis was one of dedication of heart to the Lord. Dharma and adharma are dualities of the mind and have relevance only in the empirical plane. But Gopis, through their



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intense Krishna Prem, rose above the mind and world and all dualities and attained the state of samarasa with God.

Dharmanishta will not leave one so easily. It clings to the jivatman up to the advanced state of ecstatic love for God. It drops off only in intense love. The Lord wanted to put the Gopis to a test. Not that He did not know the state of Gopis heart, for what can remain hidden from the Omniscient One! Lord, the Beloved of the Bhaktas, wanted to uphold before mankind, the Gopis' unique style of answering the Lord's murali, forgetting everything and running towards the place from where the music emanated and reaching the Lord's presence on the bank of Yamuna in the calm hour of the autumnal night. The Lord lovingly chided them as follows:

Welcome to you, O blessed ones! Is everything well with Vraja? Tell me the motive of your visit at this frightful night. How is it that you, women, leaving everything, came to this place at this hour! You should not tarry here any longer. Return forthwith to Vraja. The paramount duty and dharma of a virtuous woman is to serve her husband, relatives and the children. You have come here, no doubt, with your minds deeply attached to Me. But let Me tell you, love for Me is fostered, not so much by physical proximity as by meditating on Me or singing My glories. Therefore return home.

Wiping their eyes bedimmed by weeping, the Gopis who had renounced all their worldly attachments and full of love for Bhagawan Sree Krishna, spoke to the Lord, the beloved of their hearts as follows:

O Lord! You ought not to speak so cruelly to us. Kindly accept us who have sought your Lotus feet, renouncing everything. As it has been observed by You, the knowledge Absolute and a Knower of dharma, the natural duty of a woman is to render service to her husband and children. You, O Lord, are the most beloved Friend of the jives, the One Self of all embodied souls. Allow us to serve You, for by serving You, all souls will be gratified as by watering the roots of a tree all its limbs get nourished of their own accord. Be gracious to us, O Supreme Lord; do not frustrate our homes centered in You. Our minds have been lured away by you. Our feet do not recede even a step from Your presence. How then can we return to Vraja? Or, even if we get back to our homes, what shall we do there, when our minds, senses and life remain merged in You and cease to function altogether.

The Gopis continued: Thou the Supreme Lord, for merging in Whom all duties and dharma are meticulously observed, Thou for attaining Whom, everything else is joyfully given up, Thou art our sole Refuge. Could there be any other dharma, higher to that of loving Thee and getting united with Thee! O merciful Lord, if Thou abandon us, what could be our fate in this world! Thou art our all! So saying they burst into tears.

People shed tears out of worldly sorrows. They weep for the sake of perishable objects. But blessed are those who weep for God, whose object of love is God alone. The Gopis' love for Sree Krishna was actually an efflorescence of Enlightenment, 'Jnanothara Bhakti'. The Gopis were sages who had attained Brahmajnana during the Treta Yuga. When the Lord incarnated as Sree Ramachandra, these sages, under the urge of love divine, aspired for the experience of God's sparsha sukha (ecstasy of divine touch) and the ananda of intimate contact with Him. Since the purpose of Rama Avatara was different, the Lord promised to fulfill their aspiration when He would again appear in Dwapara Yuga as Sree Krishna. Thus, as divinely ordained, these sages reincarnated themselves as the damsels of Vraja during the advent of Sree Krishna.



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The nature and purpose of the deeds of God are beyond the comprehension of human intelligence. They cannot be understood even by tapas. Hence they are termed as Leelas. Those who try to measure God's actions by the yardstick of worldly perspective get baffled by the inscrutable nature of divine leelas.

The Vedas lapse into silence saying Neti, Neti, in their attempts to reveal Brahman. They also extol the attributes of Saguna Brahman. This shows that Nirguna and Saguna are one and the same reality and that upasana has been prescribed by the Vedas for realization of Brahman.

The Nirguna can be experienced through devotion to the Saguna. Sankaracharya experienced the Nirguna in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, and on coming back to external consciousness, sang ecstatically in praise of Saguna Brahman. By devotion to Saguna alone, one gets supreme contentment. Vedavyasa compiled all the Vedas and yet he could not find supreme contentment. It was only when he composed Srimad Bhagavata and sang praises of the saguna leelas of God that he experienced within himself the fountain of unending bliss and supreme contentment.

The voice of the Nirguna, the supernal voice of the formless God, cannot be heard with the ears. One must go beyond the three states of waking, dream and sleep and transcend even the Turiya. On the threshold of Turiya, i.e., between the Turiya and the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi which is total absorption in Brahman, there is a state and it is in this state that one hears the voice of the formless Brahman. Whatever inner voice one hears before reaching the transcendental state, is only a mental prompting, a prompting of the clean conscience.

Devotion to Ishta must form an important aspect of sadhana even if one has adopted the path of knowledge in one's search after the Reality. Without devotion to Ishta, the mind cannot remain immersed in meditation. It is devotion that brings about both identity of form (tadroopatha) and merger of mind (manolaya). As long as the gunas operate in the mind, neither tadroopatha, nor laya, can be achieved. These two states of tadroopatha and laya can come only from profound concentration. When agitated by the gunas, the mind is only in a distracted state. It is not fit for yoga.

The mind is pure or impure, according to the nature of thoughts it harbors. When it thinks good thoughts, it is free of impurity; but when it entertains only impure thoughts, it is impure only. In a pure mind, only pure thoughts can arise.

The nature of thoughts arising in the mind depends upon the nature of the vasanas accumulated in the chittha. Pure thoughts result in good actions and impure thoughts in evil actions. Good begets good, evil begets evil. One degrades oneself by one's own impure thoughts and evil actions. You have no enemy outside. You are your own enemy. Your own mind becomes your friend as well as your foe. The mind alone makes bondage as well as liberation.

Make it a point to fill the mind only with noble thoughts. Dwell only on loftier themes. The fruit of formal poojas and the reward of disciplines like Namasmarana is the capacity to comprehend the nature of one's own mind. Such comprehension is possible only in sakshi bhava, and not when one is identified with one's own mind. Sakshi bhava is bound to come to sincere aspirants who lead a life of godliness and gurubhakthi.



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To keep company with noble thoughts within, and noble souls without, is the way to keep off evil. Evil thoughts are a poison to one as well as to others. He who speaks truth, whose conduct is irreproachable, who is all devotion to the Guru, who rejoices in carrying out the commands of the Guru, who does not crave for worldly pleasures, who is always of sattwic temperament : association with him alone should be courted.