



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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The refrain of this moving song, Hari alare, meaning, God has come, is an affirmation of the saint's vision of God. God being both Personal and Impersonal, it lends itself to a twofold definition, twofold interpretation. From the standpoint of approach to the Saguna, it means the direct, face-to-face, enrapturing vision of Saguna Brahman, appearing before a love-lorn devotee pining for intimate contact of the Beloved. Love, aspiration, vigils and prayers prepare the devotee for such a vision.

From the point of view of the impersonal approach, it means the dawn of God-consciousness, the ecstatic vision of God as the deepest Self and the support of the universe. God is essentially formless; yet, for the sake of bhaktas He assumes forms. God is beyond all attributes; yet, in relation to the Universe, He is the Lord of endless auspicious qualities. The goal of all forms of sadhana, the culmination of all paths, is the vision of God or experience of God.

The vision of God sends the devotee to the height of rapture. In grateful acknowledgment of grace bestowed on him by the All-Merciful, he exclaims: Blessed am I, for I have seen the One who is hard to see, the One whose praises are sung in the Vedas, the One whose glories are inexhaustible, the One who is the Creator of this universe. Through ignorance I remained, life after life, oblivious of His presence and glory and wandered through innumerable wombs. Then the Compassionate One awakened in me a craving for His vision. How can I get, at least once, the vision of that Being who is beyond the reach of intellect? With this thought and desire, I searched for Him, the hidden One, in caves, in the forests, in the mountain peaks, in the sacred shrines, in the pages of the holy Books, but alas! I could not catch a glimpse of His form. I listened to expositions. I came upon several guides, upagurus, but none could show me the path to the Beloved. I renounced my kith and kin, my home and social duties, and donned the geruva robe, wandered forth as a homeless pilgrim, repaired to the Himalayas and performed rigorous tapas. I lived a life of intense austerity. Giving up the solid food and the fruits of the forests, I lived only on water. Later I gave up even water and air alone became my food. Thus years passed and yet alas! I could not get His darshan. Thus, not only years, but several births passed and finally, God's grace descended on me and I met my Sadguru. Sadguru accepted me and initiated me into the mystical wisdom. He gave me the Manthra charged with the power of His own tapas. The Guru's grace and the invincible Manthra rent asunder the veil and I beheld the ancient One, the Divine, and the dweller in the hearts. Gone for ever is my illusion of I and Mine. The Beloved has filled within and without.

This ecstatic exclamation of the devotee shows how rare is the contact of the Sadguru, how coveted is the goal. The Truth-seeker, who takes refuge at the Feet of the Sadguru, should first know that the Sadguru is the embodiment of the Truth, the knower of the Truth and the revealer of the path to Truth. Having known this, he should have perfect faith in the teaching which the Guru imparts and in the path which he prescribes. He should have the pure bhava that the chosen deity whom he has been worshipping through innumerable births, has now assumed a form of the Guru to guide him towards Realization. When this bhava comes upon him, love, reverence and devotion towards the Guru are bound to arise. The devotion to the Guru should grow steadily, from moment to moment, until it becomes the parabhakti, supreme God-love.



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In the path of bhakti, loving devotion to the Guru or the chosen deity, takes the form of anusandhana; in the path of vichara, anusandhana of one's own Self is designated as bhakti. So long as a trace of self remains, real bhakti cannot appear, for in bhakti, one recognizes only one reality and that is God, one has only one object of love and that is God. In this all-consuming love, I and mine cannot remain.

Until knowledge reveals the unreality of the ego, the jivatman remains identified with the ego. So long as identification with the ego lasts, one cannot do anusandhana of the Atman. Hence, knowledge is essential even in the stage of anusandhana.

Ego is the greatest impurity. Since jnana destroys the ego, jnana is considered to be the greatest purifier. In the state of bhakti, individuality is lost and the devotee is filled with God. The devotee imbibes the qualities of God. Hence bhakti is purity itself.

There is the infinite. That is God from whom all jivas have emerged. There is also the personal ego, which is but illusory. The personal 'I' should merge in the infinite. Then one experiences the infinite, for infinite alone is. Egoism obstructs the merger, the disappearance of the 'I' notion. To get rid of this egoism, knowledge is required.

Passions, petty-mindedness, selfishness, all these nourish the ego. He who wants to cultivate devotion or seek knowledge, should therefore develop in himself noble qualities of head and heart. Humility is the ornament of a devotee.

By ethical conduct and sattwic qualities, the mind should be purified. Book-knowledge, in the absence of good conduct, can never be considered as a means to cultivation of jnana. One should assimilate the wisdom of the holy texts through pure conduct (sadachara), practice of disciplines (abhyasa) and association with the wise (satsang). Great souls are moving Theerthas. In their presence one's dormant spiritual impulse gets awakened. But one should receive their divine influence and the ennobling teaching in the vessel of one's heart. What you have heard from the Guru and the holy ones, what you have read in the sacred books, should be deeply pondered over as the cow chews the cud and digests what it eats. It is only by devout reflection and deep meditation that one can enjoy the elixir of spirituality (adhyatma-rasa) contained in the immortal teaching of the Guru and the scriptures.

To feel the presence of God within and without, one should raise oneself to a higher order of consciousness. Imagination cannot beget God-vision. You should direct your entire energies of the body, mind and heart towards the life's greatest mission, namely, God-realization. Look not hither and thither. Resist the lure of the sense world. Fall not into temptations. Reject from your bosom baser desires and baser instincts once for all and consecrate your heart to God. Do not get involved in unwanted affairs. Make your thoughts, words and actions pure.

To acquire secular knowledges a sharp intellect alone is enough. But to attain the exalted knowledge of God, intelligence should be combined with purity. Exalted conduct should become habitual to you. That is to say, you should be incapable of evil in thought, word or action.

A man who longs for God-vision should forget himself in the contemplation of God's glories. If he thinks that others should praise him and honour him, he is mean-minded; he is tamasic in nature and unfit to possess bhakti. First commandment of bhakti is self-abnegation.



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Truthfulness should be allied to non-violence (ahimsa). These two, satyanishta and ahimsa, are great moral virtues which light up one's path to God. He, who utters only truth, develops tremendous spiritual power. He gets vak-siddhi. Whatever he says comes to pass. The sadhaka should keep ahimsa as an ideal for practice and realization. In thought, word and action, one should not injure any living being. One should not become a source of trouble and annoyance to others. The perfection in ahimsa comes only with the universal vision of God. Beholding the Divine dwelling in the heart of all creatures, the devotee is incapable of causing any harm to any one. The whole creation becomes his kith and kin, nay his own Self. In the positive sense, ahimsa is identical with cosmic benevolence. A Sage alone knows the truth of the maxim: Ahimsa is the supreme dharma.

Free of guile, firm of resolve, steadfast in vows, with mind strengthened and steadied by disciplines, a real Sadhaka never deviates from his nishta, from the path, and from his loyalty to his chosen ideal (Ishtadevatha). Come what may, as ordained by prarabdha, his faith remains unshaken. As a tortoise withdraws its limbs to the outer shell at the approach of the enemy, so too, he brings all sense organs under control while moving in the midst of worldly attractions.

When vairagya becomes natural, temptations cease, cravings become extinct, and one no longer falls into the trap of sense objects. Till then, one should be careful. When jnana blazes forth within, ego perishes in toto. Till then one should actually dread this dire enemy, the ego. When one sees the world as a theatre of God's sportive play, one is not deluded by forms and not bewildered by events.

Jnana is inner illumination. Until jnana dawns, one's perception partakes of the nature of one's own mental condition. The world is a vast mirror and every one sees in it one's own mental projection. The power with which one sees a thing as it really is, without being distorted by any mental colouring, is called jnana. This jnana does not exist in prakrithi; it is a power innate in every jivatman. It is the radiance of the Divine.

The supreme purusha dwells in every one. Hence all powers are inherent in man. But man is in a slumber of avidya. When jnana dispels avidya, man transcends his limitations and becomes conscious of his oneness with the omnipotent.

To behold the presence of the Supreme Being in His creation, the eye of jnana should open. Until this eye opens, man's source of illumination is the Guru's Teaching and the Holy Scriptures. There is the Vedic commandment: Let your mother be God unto you; let your father be God unto you; let your Guru (Acharya) be God unto you; let your guest be God unto you. One has to remember the presence of God in these objects of reverence: parents, teacher and the guest, and thereby purify one's vision. It is not possible for a sadhaka to see God in every one. If one attains such a vision, then, he is not a sadhaka, he is a jnani. People glibly talk about universal fraternity; but they cannot love the members of their own family. They continue to harbour thoughts of hatred, rage, jealousy etc. Each one should test himself. The sadhaka has to first develop devotion and bhava towards his Guru and the Chosen Deity. Through such cultivation of devotion, his mental distractions will cease and the mind will become inwardised, uplifted and concentrated on the Divine. Finally it becomes as pure as Consciousness itself. In the state of utter purification, mind is not the mind of gunas; it is chaitanya itself, jnana itself.

The mundane relationships and the mundane affection that sustain such relationships are in the realm of Maya. They are all based on the conception that body is the self. Hence no one, however close he may be in relationship to you, can take you beyond Maya. But there is one



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who is beyond Maya, and engaged in a mission of mercy, leading the souls in distress towards deliverance. He is the Sadguru. Relationship with Sadguru is therefore the most sacred relationship. All others help you to wander in samsara, but Sadguru alone shows the path to liberation. Sadguru transforms you unto his own Satchidananda swaroopā.

Those magnanimous souls who have experienced Brahman, who abide in Brahman, in whom the little I has vanished; who revel always in the bliss of swaroopā, alone can love all alike, for they have realized the ultimate truth. They have the constant vision: All in the Self and Self in all. Through Samadhi and re-emergence (uthana) repeated several times they have attained the sahaja state.

In the advent of God as the Guru, man gets the privilege of beholding his chosen deity in flesh and blood, the privilege of receiving the Upadesha direct from His lips and the privilege of enjoying the happiness of the two forms of mukti, salokya and samipya. But this is a supreme secret known only to His real bhaktas. Even great yogis have failed to recognize the incarnated Divine. Devotees like Arjuna and Uddhava had the fascinating experience at the Feet of Bhagawan Sree Krishna. Gita is a song of God. It is verily an ambrosial stream of love that flowed from the Supreme Being, not only for Arjuna's enlightenment, but for the blessing of the whole mankind. Gita dialogue is a communication between the Divine and the devotee, a teaching imparted by the Universal Guru to an earnest disciple. Perfect rapport between Krishna and Arjuna makes Gita a heart-to-heart communication. The disciple, Arjuna receives the teaching in profound reverence and shraddha, in the rapture of bliss unspeakable, in the silence of utter surrender, struck with the wonder of a divine vision bestowed on him. The lord abided in His habitual divine poise; the devotee attained tanmayatwa by shravana and bhakti. In that intimacy, though bodies remained two, there was inwardly a mystical union.

To transcend the ego-consciousness and to attain identity with the deity through the force of devout contemplation or a rapture of a sudden vision is called tanmayatwa. It is difficult for the mind to attain this state of tanmayatwa through mere thought or tattwa vichara. But by the power of ecstatic devotion, the mind easily attains the form of the deity, Bhagavadaakara. Such is the power of intense love for God. The sweetness of bhakti and the impress of the Saguna cannot be wiped out even by the monistic experience, advaitanubhooti.

The divine form, effulgent with chaitanya, is difficult to behold even for the yogis. God, therefore, out of His infinite compassion, takes on a human form and appears before mankind. Holding the attribute of perfect humanity (manushyatwa) He moves amidst mortals, guiding them on the path, teaching them the law, and leading them towards Deliverance. But alas! Men, devoid of faith and knowledge, perceive only the human upadhi and not the divinity. The bhakta recognizes the Divine through a higher order of spiritual insight. Having recognized Him, his life and nature get transformed. His vision expands. Losing himself in the love for God, he becomes one with the whole of creation. In his vision the world shines as a divine manifestation and a divine sport.

The devotee has carved a niche in his own heart for the perpetual worship of his chosen deity. The sweet Name of the Lord, His beautiful form, His sportive leelas, His nectarean utterances, the scenes of His ministry and the intervention of His grace in times of crisis, all these constitute themes for blissful meditation, and the connected links in the unbroken anusandhana of Saguna Brahman.