



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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The supplicatory prayer addressed to the Divine, seeking refuge (ashraya) is an aspect of sadhana common to all Yogas. Upanishads echo this prayer. This prayer for refuge pervades all stages of quest. Until union with God is experienced sadhana is nothing but an appeal for divine mercy, a persistent seeking of refuge at the Feet of the Almighty. What is meant by this term 'ashraya', refuge? How is it significant in one's approach to God? The external meaning is obvious, the supplicant seeking shelter, protection, at one who is superior to him. But the inner, deeper, spiritual significance should be grasped by all the seekers. Prayer for refuge indicates jiva's longing for release from samsaric chains which he cannot break by his own power, his heartfelt lamentation for spiritual comfort. He finds shelter nowhere, for all are in bondage; though life affords bhoga, he does not find permanent happiness in any attainment. The hollowness of all earthly glories becomes clear to him. He finds a void within himself, which nothing, no one, no attainment whatsoever, can fill. He at least looks to the Unknown, the Infinite, with a fiery longing for vision and experience of the eternal.

Jiva is a reflection of God, caught in the vritti of the anthakarana. When vritties subside, there is no reflection. Hence jivattwa is a bhava and not a reality. The essence of jiva, is God. The innate longing of jiva to get back to the Reality, the longing for God-Consciousness, the keen desire for 'home-coming', this is the soul of prayer when the jiva approaches God for ashraya. The finite cannot comprehend or apprehend the infinite. Jiva cannot know Iswara, bound as he is to the ego born of ignorance. He can only cry and pray and appeal for divine revelation. God must reveal Himself. Then alone jivattwa disappears. This act of grace on the part of God, this dawn of God-consciousness which is instantaneous deliverance from all fear and finiteness and frailties, is signified by the term 'ashraya'. Ashraya bestows 'abhaya' fearlessness. Samsara is the abode of fear. So long as individuality persists, fear is inseparable. But when God consciousness dawns, one transcends duality and perceives only oneness everywhere. The fear comes only from the notion of the 'other'.

God gives ashraya to all jivas. But the jiva must take refuge at His Feet. God resides in every heart, as the Atman. But, because of the veil of ignorance, the jiva does not feel the Divine Presence. Owing to samskaras and attachments to the sense objects, developed through countless births, jiva's mind is world-faced, engrossed in the pursuit of pleasure in the fleeting objects. Identifying himself with the mental modes, assuming the dharmas of prakrithi, the jiva experiences the pleasures and pains and the births and deaths, which characterize samsara. Yearning for release must be intense. The mental gaze must become inward. God must become the sole object of love and seeking. Thus, with this all-absorbing love and longing for God, with the mind detached, withdrawn, collected and concentrated, when you sink into yourselves, you will discover the divine source within, the Atman as your own reality of being. This is 'ashraya'.

Beginning with a mental attitude of surrender, discovery of 'ashraya' is a spiritual state. Thus, God-communion is ashraya; egoless state is ashraya; abidance in one's own true Self is ashraya. When the mind is purified and silenced, when it becomes Truth-faced, 'sanmukha', when it is freed of the gunas of prakrithi and is transported into the nature of



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chaitanya itself, you will not perceive even the trace of samsara. This state is the ashraha which God affords.

Because Paramatman pervades and permeates the world, the prakrithi appears attractive. Paramatman is the essence of your personality, the very support of your life. But because you have no consciousness of this Truth, you get attached to the body, and to all those who are related to the body. Through the word of the Guru and the reflection thereon, understand the illusory nature of the ego. It is because of ego that you remain estranged from the divine and the divine grace. When you know this truth, you will exert yourselves for release. Grihasthashram is the pillar of support for all other social orders. This ashram should become an abode of spiritual power, dharmic splendour, harmony and peace. Then alone there will be peace and prosperity in the country. You, Grihasthas, should awake and arise and ascend the throne of yoga. Dwelling in yoga-poise, abiding in the consciousness of the Self, you should do all your duties in perfection, shraddha, devotion and cheer of spirit. Your life should be totally spiritualized.

Shastras discourse on Brahmavidya and yoga sadhanas. But this scriptural knowledge does not transform attitude, behaviour and conduct. When occasions arise, knowledge fails to come to your aid. Doubts should be dispelled. Questioning must subside. For these, you must seek enlightenment at the Feet of the Sadguru. The budhi must become ripe, luminous and egoless. You must awake to the intuition of the Antharatman. There is a superior skill, by which one can detach the mind from the external and employ it in contemplation, and also, to take the mind from the contemplative pursuit and employ it in duties of life. This skill must come to you, householders. Then alone you can resolve the conflict between the external and the internal and reconcile your worldly duties with your inward contemplation.

Garhasthya is a part you have chosen. Nobody has imposed it on you. Having taken the part, having appeared on the stage of life, you should play your role efficiently, delighting the audience, knowing all the while that it is a play, a drama, and that you are in reality the Self, the witness Consciousness, sakshi chaitanyam. Shraddha and bhava convert duty into a blissful God-communion through service. With such bhavashuddhi, the kitchen will become a yajnasala for you, where the naivedya is prepared for the Deity in several human forms. Be dutiful, be loving, be mindful of your responsibilities, but do not get entangled in any of the prakrithi's snares. Be inwardly detached. As a clever and expert housewife works at the mortar, pounding the household ingredients without being hurt by the pestle, so should you discharge the duties of the world without allowing prakrithi to pollute or bind you.

Make God your constant companion. Contemplate on His glories. Pray from the bottom of your heart for light, for enlightenment, for right guidance, for strength to abide in dharma, for increase in devotion and for liberation from the clutches of egoism. Prayer is not a mantra to be formulated in words. Your whole life should be a prayer. Though your essential nature is the non-dual Brahman, there should be devotion to Saguna and reliance on His grace. Otherwise you cannot transcend the realm of maya. All prayer, devotion, meditation, worship and contemplation, presuppose the concept of God as Saguna. You cannot have any relationship with Nirguna. What is perceived, even through the eye of enlightenment is Saguna only. Nirguna is the finality of experience. Even after experience of Nirguna Brahman, Sankaracharya extolled Saguna.



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Vyasadeva composed the scripture of devotion, Srimad Bhagavatha, extolling Saguna leelas and then only could he find perfect contentment within. Knowledge of the identity of Saguna and Nirguna is the perfect Knowledge.

You, mothers, have great responsibility. In your cradle lies the coming nation. It is the maternal duty to inculcate in children all virtues and to bring them up on the path of dharma. The vibrations of pure and exalted thought should reach and awake even the blossoming life in the womb. Such were the ancient women, the embodiments of jnana and pathivrathya. The milk which nourishes a baby is verily the life blood of the mother. By the magic of her touch, by the light of her look, by the splendour of her love, by the power of her character, a women can tremendously influence her children and shape their character and conduct. If you do not discharge this duty towards your children, great is the loss, not only for your children, but also for the entire nation.

You must look upon home as the Himalayas for your tapasya, and a temple of divinity for your worship of God. Observe nishta in your meditation. When you miss a meal, you feel hungry. So should you feel, when you miss a meditation. Lament not over fate, adversity or planetary positions. Planets cannot harm you. Everyone reaps the result of his own karma. It is your own manasic prapancha that troubles you.

When the child is in deep slumber at first mother calls him loudly. Having no effect, she then lashes cold water on his face and shakes him up. Even then the child remains drowsy. Then, determined to drive away his tamas, she uses force and holding him with both hands makes him stand up. Seeing that the child is not yet ready to walk, she at last literally drags him, that is to say, makes him walk, and if the child is unable to walk, she carries him in her arms and leads him.

Jiva is the child. The Divine, Satchidananda Guru, is the mother. Avidya is the slumber in which the child is drowned. All the methods the mother adopts for waking up the child are the mystic modes of Guru's instruction, both through the word and silence, for waking up the dormant God-Consciousness in the jiva. Terrible indeed the tamasic power of avidya. Under its hypnotic spell, even the learned men behave strangely, mistaking the unreal for the real. They fall a prey to sense allurements, totally oblivious of all that they learned, forgetting the true nature of self and the supreme goal of life.

Grace alone can save. Grace is like sun. It is on every one. But one should become a recipient of it. Hence the need for surrender and sadhana. When it rains, keep open the vessel in the proper position and it will be filled in no time. But if the vessel is porous, the water will leak out. Be like vessels without pores. What to do if there are already pores in the vessel. Well, there is a way. Dip the vessel into the water and let it remain there. That is to say, let your mind remain immersed in constant God-remembrance. Then, by and by, it will become pure.

Two brahmacharis came out of a Gurukula after finishing their study of Vedas and vedantha under the guidance of a Guru. One of them embraced the monastic order in quest of Truth. The other had no sankalpa. As a picture of humility, he submitted to the will of God. He lived in home as a dutiful son, engaged in prayers and meditation. Years passed and he entered the marital life as desired by his father. This householder sadhaka, in course of time, succeeded his father to the Gadi of the King's Preceptor, Rajaguru. The King had great respect to his Guru. Once a big Durbar was convened in



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the palace and the Rajaguru was duly honoured. At that time, in course of his parivrajaka vritti, the above sannyasi happened to arrive at the royal palace. Being a lover of sadhus, the king received him with respect and welcomed him. Seeing his friend in the midst of all royal splendours and enjoyments, the sanyasi sought a private audience with him and chided him as follows: "Ah, how is it that you have plunged into bhoga instead of courting vairagya. Have you forgotten the life's purpose, have you thrown to the wind all the teachings of the scriptures you learned along with me under our venerable guru? I pity you. Now, awake. Follow me." The Rajaguru at once, considering it as a will of God, followed his friend, the Sadhu. Leaving the palace, and walking barefooted, both of them reached outskirts of a village. Rajaguru was all calm, even-minded. The hardship of wandering and the happiness of the palace life were same to him. The sanyasi, making his friend sit in a particular spot, went out for begging alms.

By that time the royal army was passing that way. Seeing the venerable Guru of their King, they at once stopped, went to him, accosted him with due respect. They soon erected a beautiful tent nearby for the comfortable stay of the Guru. He was made to rest on a soft bed, with attendants standing on either side of him, engaged in serving him in many ways. When the sanyasi turned up he did not see his friend. Disturbed in mind, his eyes fell on the newly erected tent and the royal army at some distance. Out of curiosity he went there. Entering the tent, he could not believe his eyes. Approaching his friend, he again admonished him: "What a pity! What a prarabdha it is that bhoga surrounds you wherever you go!

Calm and collected, the Rajaguru replied: "Yes, my friend! It is undoubtedly the prarabdha that has brought bhoga to me. I know it. But it is 'Soubhagya prarabdha'. I do not desire this. My mind is not on bhoga. I rest and rejoice only in my own Self, the Atman, the abode of all happiness." This was an eye-opener to the sanyasi. He fell at the feet of his friend and with folded palms submitted: Blessed are you. You have drunk the elixir of wisdom. You have known the truth of Brahman, the greatest of the great, the subtlest of the subtle. Utterly desireless, you are an embodiment of vairagya. Though I have donned this robe, vasana still troubles me. Desires haunt me. I continue to grope in darkness. Indeed, it is you who truly reflect the glory of our Guru. It is through you that the Guru's fame will spread.

Prarabdha brings enjoyment. But, you should lift your mind above craving. Abide always in Atmanishta. Let your conduct be virtuous. Without moral purity and righteous, conduct, none can rise to the plane of Anubhooti, the experience of Brahmic Consciousness.