



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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Though the Absolute is essentially attributeless, the Vedic sages have assigned due importance to the worship of Saguna Brahman. Prayers and hymnal praises in the Vedas indicate the need for a devotional approach on the part of the seeker. Though the predominant aspects of vichara yoga are discrimination and introspection, the general attitude of approach to Saguna has necessarily to be one of extreme humility, profound reverence and total reliance on God's saving grace.

The upanishadic discourses are preceded by prayer invoking Divine blessings for removal of impediments on the path so that the Guru's instruction may awaken the consciousness of the jivatman in slumber. Devotional relationship with the Saguna is actualized in the disciple's relation to the Guru. The seeker-jeeva is in the plane of ignorance, though he is a mumukshu; the realized Guru is one with Truth by virtue of His realization of It. Hence he instructs from the plane of Enlightenment. The very presence of the Guru creates a spiritual atmosphere. Though the disciple has not seen God, he is associated with one who has realized God. The Guru's realization proves that God exists and that what one has attained can be attained by all. This is the most inspiring factor in the spiritual education of the disciple. The Guru is not a mere guide. His teaching may be verbal, but his functioning is of a mystical order. He lifts the disciple from the dualistic plane of ignorance to the absolutistic state of Brahman-Knowledge.

The eyes alone are not enough for perception. There should be light to illumine the objects. In the spiritual sphere, the object is one's own real being, the Atman, which is the absolute. But it is revealed only to the vision illumined by divine grace, namely, jnana Drushti. Self-knowledge is a power dormant in the jivatman. It is this power that the Sadguru awakens and activates by his esoteric initiation and spoken words.

The exposition of Truth on the part of the Guru is not a public discourse. It is a soul-to-soul communication taking place in an atmosphere of mutual rapport between the enlightened Guru and the earnest disciple. The light and coolness of the moon are a matter of experience for every one; but the nectar inherent in the moon can be enjoyed only by a Chakora bird. So too, the verbal exposition of Self-knowledge can be intellectually grasped by all men of intelligence; but only an ideal disciple, a spiritually competent soul enjoys the nectar of the Guru's teaching. That is to say, he only awakes to Self-knowledge. Knowledge is the nectar that makes one immortal.

The initiated disciple should remain wide awake in the knowledge inculcated by the Guru. Along with such vigilance there should burn in him constantly the fire of aspiration. Love of objects should be replaced by exclusive devotion to the Supreme. Just as a person, scorched with intense thirst, intensely longs for water and runs in quest of a well, so too, nay, a hundred times more intense than this, should be the yearning of an aspirant for God-experience.

In exceptional souls, mystically awakened from a life of slumber, his intense thirst for God is like a fire that blazes forth all on a sudden. In the case of others, even though the yearning may be mediocre in the beginning, it will grow intense through the grace of the Guru and through cultivation of dispassion and disciplines. Among the fourfold vedantic disciplines known as Sadhana Chathushtaya, mumukshutwa is placed significantly in the last.



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Sadhana Chathushtaya is the base on which spiritual mansion to be raised. Discrimination between the Real and the unreal, aversion to enjoyment of the fruits here and hereafter, the wealth of six attributes such as Sama, Dama, Uparathi, Thitheeksha, Shraddha and Samadhana, and lastly strong yearning for liberation (mumukshutwa), these four constitute the means of spiritual attainment. Without these disciplines and qualities, the pursuit of God does not end in success.

With a little intelligence and study of the vedantic texts, it is not difficult to convince oneself intellectually that Atma alone is real and everything else is unreal. But this is not the discrimination eulogized by the sages. True discrimination must result in the rejection of craving for sense pleasures, in the turning away from the ephemeral, and in steadfast devotion to the pursuit of Reality. Such a mind which has turned away from sense pursuit is bound to shine with attributes conducive to higher pursuit. A person whose mind has become calm through renunciation and right conduct, who has developed virtues that are auspicious, competent to receive Upadesha from the Guru.

The secret of the inner pursuit of Atman, the esoteric of spirituality and the methodology of meditation cannot be mastered by mere study of the Upanishads. One must learn at the Feet of the Guru. The jivas are in prakrithi; hence knowledge of the Atman and anusandhana of the Atman, are not possible through intelligence. Only by divine grace one gets the intuition of the Atman, discriminative insight and knowledge of kinship with the Supreme. Scriptural erudition is included in Apra Vidya only. To reach the state of Para Vidya, knowledge of Brahman, the affirmatory upadesha-vakya and the guidance on the inner path, must come from the Sadguru. Such is the law in spirituality.

Spiritual initiation introduces the earnest aspirant to closeness to one's chosen deity and an intensification of spiritual practices. Sadhaka comes to the awareness that the Guru, the Deity and the Atman mean one and the self-same reality. Hence his mind becomes free of inner conflicts. Philosophical pursuit and religious devotion blend. Refined emotion and sharpened intelligence both work in unison. Even before delving into his own recesses of the heart, he begins to revel in the new-found devotional bond and feels a sense of blessedness. Rapport with the deity and reverence for the Guru eventually ripen into intense devotion to the supreme Being and a state comes where even a moment's break in remembrance and a lapse into separation, is felt as agony unbearable.

Of course, such ecstatic love is a boon from God. Innocent minds, through obedience to the Guru, open to divine grace rather quickly; but minds overburdened by pre-conceived notions and doubts and vikalpas, take time even to develop an attitude of surrender to the higher power.

Intellectual development is of course important in empirical vyavahara; but for spiritual fulfillment, what is to be accomplished is merger of the intellect in the Paramatman. Abstract vichara and utter surrender can co-exist, for both are inspired by the same spiritual impulse. Both lead to inward silence, merger of intellect and the Vision of the Paramatman.

The place where a sage or a saint lives is a holy place. It is filled with holy vibrations. Living here, and tuning oneself to the divine presence, one should do tapas and earn spiritual merit. One should go on engaging oneself in good actions, noble thoughts and meditation on God. The fruition of such tapas in that holy place is the dawn of enlightenment, in which fire all karmas accumulated in innumerable lives and all vasanas developed, will be burnt. Thus, with vasana seeds, ego and the karmas destroyed, one becomes immortal.



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Home, Garhasthya, established in spirituality, opens the door to Deliverance. But it is not as easy as one imagines to reach the highest peak of spirituality while living in Home. As a matter of fact, in every path, one has to exert oneself and encounter hardships. Mere family bond, thriving on affinities and attachments does not ensure liberation. It is only an earthly institution and not spiritual order. The relationship between the jivas is a bond created by ignorance. Only attachment grows out of it. One must realize one's relation to God, and base all mundane affinities on the divine relationship. Bond with God alone is capable of conferring peace, happiness and liberation. Knowing this relationship with God, one should observe Garhasthya dharma. Then alone home becomes a liberating order. Build your life on God and then only you will find real happiness, a sense of security and ultimately the sense of fulfillment itself. To forget God and the purpose of life is indeed misery. He who does not give any place to God in his life, is steeped in tamas, submerged in slumber, afflicted with misery and enveloped by fear. He remains estranged from his own real nature.

If you depend upon Satyavasthu, you are safe everywhere. Things and situations in samsara cannot be relied upon. But God is eternal. He is without beginning and without end. The six fold vikaras of prakrithi such as birth, growth, decay, etc, do not touch Him. He is your inmost reality. Knowing this truth through the upadesha from the Guru, fix your attention on Him and meditate on Him with all your heart. Let God be the focal point of your entire processes of life. Live in Him and for Him. Even the most trivial act you do should be spiritualized by doing it for Him. Through constant practice, you can learn to live in His presence everywhere at all times. When the buddhi-vritti attains the form of long, constant, unbroken, stream like flow towards the Divine, it is called Tapas. As a river merges in the ocean, buddhi must merge in the Supreme. Till such merger is attained one should not leave one's nishta in sadhana.

The householder's life is one of manifold activities. Therefore he should strive to transform his activity itself into a form of sadhana. Whenever he is free of his duties, he should engage himself in spiritual practices like meditation, Nama Japa etc. He should never waste his time on idle reveries, unwanted talks, aimless pursuits, destructive criticisms, etc. He should hold on to God in happiness as well as in misery. He should learn to view everything from a spiritual perspective and keep his mind in equanimity. Tests and trials of life should not unnerve him. With steadfast faith as his support, he must face all challenges with courage. He should welcome all situations as God-send.

The permanent residents of Shakthinagar and those who visit this place for a few days' sadhana, should make the best use of the solitude, tranquil atmosphere, silence, the spiritual air and the routine devotional programmes available in this Retreat. Their primary concern should be the control of their own minds.

Engage the mind always one form of sadhana or other. Never give room for kalpanas in your mind. Strengthen your devotional bond with your deity. Practice self-withdrawal and selflessness. It is only when you forget your Deity and violate the disciplines that your minds become a whirlpool of worldly thoughts and passions. Accumulated vasanas are in the chittha. It is your own vasanas that appear and agitate your mind as passions and reactions. When you look into a mirror, you see your own image. Similarly, what appears in your mind is your own vasana. Nobody else is responsible for your mental reactions. This truth a sadhaka should know and desist from blaming others for his mental unrest and miseries.



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After experiencing total absorption of mind in Brahman, from that summit of spiritual enlightenment, Sankara sang praises of the Supreme, conceived in diverse Saguna Forms and aspects, all reflect the matchless grandeur of the Nirguna as well as the supreme beauty and blissfulness of the Saguna, showing thereby that the nirguna and saguna are one and the same reality. He sank into the ocean of Satchidananda and emerges into the conscious state, interpreting his experience in words of poetic beauty and excellence. Sankara was a Tapaswin par excellence. Entering deep into his own Buddhi-Guha, cave of the illumined intelligence he realized the Infinite, the Existence-knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Personal experience and dialectical skill helped him to expound the Upanishads convincingly. He had the detachment of a philosopher and profound humility of a Bhakta. Even though he had realized perfect identity with Brahman in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, he adored God, taking the position of a humble worshipper.

Union with God the Absolute, or rather experience of Brahma is only in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, where subject-object relation is transcended. God alone is. Hence no one claim equality of status with the omnipotent God. Even great Jnanis adore Isvara, the Creator, Preserver and Dissolver of the Universe. True import of the Mahavakya is not in jiva becoming Brahman, but in losing the separative 'I' in the ocean of Brahman. Mahavakya affirms the nonduality of Brahman.