



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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In the words of Sree Tara Devi.

Music is an art, closely associated with religious devotion. Most of the saints who reveled in the love of God, expressed their sentiments of love in their outpouring that took the form of songs and hymns. Meerabai sang and danced in a state of ecstatic abandon, forgetting herself and the world, her whole being immersed in the supreme love for her deity, Bhagawan Sree Krishna. The immortal songs of saints have become a source of religious inspiration for the initiates of spirituality as well as for the generality of mankind. Music has enriched their devotional career and the appeal of their compositions to human heart.

Thus, music is a great help in cultivating devotion and is a fit vehicle for singing the praises of God. There is the joy of holy communion when the devotee sings in solitude, when he pours forth his heart to his deity of love; there is also a religious rapture experienced by the congregation, when a music concert is held, when the singer by his absorption within himself, by his classical alapanas and heart-entrancing ragas, is able to carry the whole audience into a state of concentration and joy. Music has thus the power of unifying all minds in a gathering, and of taking the minds of the audience to a self-abnegating bliss.

A specific mental inclination which is guided by the past samskaras, and an absorbing fondness of the mind, is what is called abhiruchi. One should have abhiruchi, whether it be for music, or for pursuit of any noble art of his choice. Then only he can put his heart and soul in that pursuits and achieve excellence. This applies to adhyatmic pursuit also. The aspirant who has abhiruchi for the Name of God, for devotional pursuit of God, and for meditation on Him, persists in sadhana with all zeal and enthusiasm; sadhana itself becomes a source of continuous joy and mental elevation for him.

When one is engrossed in singing, one forgets oneself, and that is the secret of joy that one experiences in the music. The self, the personal ego, is the obstacle to joy-experience. When this subsides in the fervour of singing, one's native blissfulness comes to the forefront. It is for the pleasure of God and for his own ananda that a devotee sings, and not for public appreciation.

The joy that manifests itself when self subsides, is an indication that one's real nature is bliss itself. Even in the midst of activity one can have an experience of this natural blissfulness. Activity is an expression of energy. Ecstatic absorption in activity comes when one has deep love for the deity, and also shraddha and concentration in actions. You should rejoice in your duty, looking upon it as a form of service offered unto God. Without display and ostentation, you should silently serve, making such service itself a worship of your deity. Ostentation implies egoism; in it, there persists a desire for recognition and reward, a desire that others should see, appreciated and applaud one's deeds and accomplishments.

Action should become a sacrificial offering to the Supreme, a Yajna. It is the yajna concept that imparts to actions, a sanctity and spiritual status of sadhana. In any Yajna, the yajna kunda is set up, and oblations are poured to the blazing fire, as havis to the deity. The leaping tongues of fire that emanate from yajna kunda at the auspicious time signify the bhava of the devotee, that the deity is pleased with the offering. The fire also has another function. It burns away



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whatever is put into it, reduces everything to ashes. Whole life of a spiritual aspirant should be a continuous yajna. Such a yajna, when conducted properly on adhyatmic disciplines, invokes the grace of the antharyami.

It is the grace of the antharyami, Atma Kripa, that reveals the truth of Self to the consciousness of the aspirant. When all actions become a Yajna, those very actions become a force that destroys all the six passions and the latent worldly tendencies. Actions bind; actions also lead to liberation. Ego-centered, desire-motivated actions bind the jiva to samsara, because such actions produce vasanas. Actions that have become a Yajna, or actions performed in the attitude of a yajna, purify the mind and become indirectly the cause for release.

To transform action into yajna swarupa, there is a technique based on knowledge and purity of attitude, bhava shuddhi. This technique can be learned only at the Feet of the Sadguru. Sadguru initiates the aspirant to the knowledge of truth and the methodology of inner quest. Actions based on this knowledge, and prompted by pure bhava, not only lose the binding effect, but gain the purifying power, and through such purifying process, soon assume the form of a Yajna. When ego, agency and desire are not there behind the action, that action is a yajna acceptable to the Divine.

Sadguru's grace and guidance is required even to intellectually apprehend the import of the sacred scriptures. Behind the surface word-meaning of the scriptural texts, there is a deeper meaning. This deeper meaning is known only to an Anubhavi, a man of God. By the grace and guidance of the Guru only, the aspirant can grasp the esoteric meaning of the shastras.

Strengthening of the bond of love to God is essential sadhana for a devotee, for a karma yogi, as well as for an aspirant of wisdom. In the state of ignorance, the bond of love is only with one's own body, with one's kith and kin, and with the objects of enjoyment. This is only attachment, moha. To get rid of this, one should enter into conscious link with the Almighty. The Supreme is the Nirguna, the attributeless absolute. He is also the saguna deity. To perceive the saguna deity as the ultimate Nirguna Brahman, there should be spiritual illumination.

To worship the deity, one should have the knowledge of the deity as well as devotional fervour and bhava. Ancient sages realize Brahman through austere penance and long meditations. Such rigorous tapas cannot be performed by modern people. Hence the process of sadhana has been simplified into the worship of the deity, practice of japa etc. Congregational singing of the praises of God, devotion to svadharma, performance of duties in the spirit of yajna etc.

By worship of the deity, and by religious pilgrimage to the shrine of God, the mind eventually gets fixed on one ideal. This fixity of mind on the chosen ideal of devotion is the most important factor in sadhana. Shraddha, devotion and pure bhava, should be unified. This takes the worshipper to the realm of higher devotion, bhakti.

It is said that one can be born in a temple, but should not die there. The meaning is that the sadhana for God-realization must begin with faith in the deity and worship of the deity, but it should not stop there. One should advance towards contact of the Divine within and communion with Him. Self-knowledge should dawn; the spiritual faith in the personal God, the deity, must bloom as the universal vision of the Paramatman. By the process of chanting of the Names, performance of archana etc. and by worshipping the deity with devotion and pure bhava, the worshipper must become effulgent with Atmic lustre, Tejaswi.



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All forms of sadhana such as worship, meditation, upasana, anusandhana etc. imply relationship with the Saguna Brahman. The Nirguna is the ultimate Truth that can be experienced only in Samadhi. The term, nirguna dhyana is only a conventional expression. In fact, the Nirguna cannot be meditated upon. Meditation is included in triputi, whereas the Nirguna is beyond triputi. The pursuit of Reality along the vichara path, is a process of elimination, Neti Neti celebrated in the Upanishads.

When all manifestations of prakrithi which constitute the prapancha, are eliminated through this neti process, the substratum that is left behind, is Brahman. It is the unreal that is discarded through vichara; the Real shines untouched, as the ground of all negations, all the while. It is the Real that the devotee loves and worships as his chosen deity. The devotee is not directly concerned with the elimination of the unreal. When you hold fast to the Feet of God through His Name, eventually, identification with the unreal upadhis drops off automatically.

This is a sacred Mandir, a house of God, and you are all assembled before the adorable deity. In the Temple, where the Saguna Brahman is worshipped as the Deity, one should not speak on advaita, for the jivas are in the plane of duality. Though the nondual Brahman is the Reality, and that Jivatman is not different from Him, the Jivatman does not know his relation to Brahman. Hence he should worship the Sadguru, be devoted to the Saguna and thus attain chittha shuddhi, before he can comprehend the advaitic Truth. The Vedanta which Mother expounds is based on anubhooti. It is not dry knowledge, shushka jnana, it is anubhava jnana.

Mother has never ignored Saguna, nor has She discarded worship. Though devoid of ritualistic paraphernalia, Mother too worshipped the saguna deity through love. It was an inner worship in which love was the most prominent factor nay the sole factor. Lights and sounds and divine forms that appeared within Her during meditation, presented to Her consciousness the wonderful facets of God's glory. Hence there was no need for Mother to negate them as unreal. God is described as having the splendour of millions of suns. Everything is from a ray of His radiance, the inner light, the mystic sound, the spiritual forms etc. This is the attitude of the devotee's mind towards visions in meditation.

The foundation of spiritual life should be well laid. Then only can one scale the heights in adhyatma yoga. This foundation is made of faith in the Guru's words, devotion to the deity, and adherence to morality and virtuous conduct. Without this foundation, it is futile to discuss higher metaphysical truths, yogic experiences, Nirvikalpa Samadhi etc.

Inner purity is essential. In ancient times, the attitude of the seeker was entirely different. The aspirants would take refuge at the feet of the Sage, serve him with great devotion, develop humility and attain mental purification through penance. Then only they would be given initiation. They knew that by Guru's grace only would they secure release from the shackles of samsara.

Parental love is considered as the pure and unselfish love in this world; but several times superior to this love is the purest love of the Realized Master towards his disciples. Then alone is the uplift of the disciple, when he realizes this truth. This also is the knowledge that takes him to the summit of Yoga. Who can ever understand the nature of the boundless love of God towards His devotees ! Is not urged by His infinite love and compassion for the jivas that He, the Supreme Being, the omnipotent Lord of the universe, takes birth even in the subhuman species like Fish, Tortoise, Boar etc. Imagine then, how deep, how intense, how infinite, how



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indescribable, is the divine love. Under the urge of this love, God gives Himself to His devotee. If you think about this love of God great purification will come to you.

One should be awake to the glory of God. Then all pairs of opposites are transcended; one becomes free of bondage. This awakening itself is the spiritual experience that the Vedas extol. Go on purifying your bhava for your Guru and God. Your bhava is your spiritual asset. God responds to your bhava. When suffused with sublime bhava, one becomes inspired; the inner path gets illumined; higher insight dawns; and one experiences the closeness and companionship of God.

As the bhava becomes pure, the nature of the mind itself undergoes a change. The mind means the guna-ridden mind; with such a mind, one cannot approach God, for such a mind blocks his passage, his inner path to God. Mind should cease to be the mind. It is the play of gunas that perpetuates the mind. When gunas are transcended, mind is no mind, it is pure awareness. It is this pure Mind that reflects the Parmatman.

So long as the jiva remains ignorant of his true nature, he is a mental being, affected by his own mental conditions. Mind is included in the subtle body. Identification with the subtle body is bondage. Therein is the seed of transmigration. This identification goes only through the grace of God. When you receive the grace of God, the nature of the upadhis is revealed. Confusion ends. The mistaken identity with the unreal goes. You awake to God-consciousness.

For bhava to dawn, for absorption in meditation to take place, and for mental equilibrium to be maintained amidst varying life situations, the support of the jiva is faith. Faith is innate in every one. But the jivatman should get this awakened in him. Then only he can have a sense of security. If you have faith unshakable, your actions will show it; the Guru's Teaching will remain engraved in your heart in golden alphabets of knowledge; there will be no need on the part of the Guru to repeat the instruction.

That power of avidya which makes one forget Guru's greatness and teaching is pramada. Laziness, dullness, slumber, and inadvertence, are all manifestations of tamoguna in the mind of man. Pramada is terrible. Due to pramada, the jiva loses discrimination, slips into adharma, shirks his duty, commits mistakes and goes to the extent of doing even loathsome deeds.

Learning and the intelligence, by themselves, do not lift consciousness to the realm of Reality. Even great scholars remain bound to their mental modes and are seen to have become victims of pramada; such is the play of Maya. Grace of God is all-important. To get the grace, you should accept God as your own and surrender yourselves completely to Him. You should pray to Him from the bottom of your heart. The awareness should be there with you that other than God there is none for you, here and hereafter.

This awareness will give you the thrill of closeness to God. Intimacy of bhakti, which blesses a devotee in his relation to the Deity, is something to be personally experienced. It is this intimacy of relation to God that gives zest to spiritual endeavours as well as to performance of worldly duties. Open your heart to your Deity, long for His vision, talk to Him, work for him and be with Him always in and through and activity. Depend upon none but God. God will look after you with loving care and will bear the responsibility of providing yogakshema to you. Have faith.

(To be continued in the next.)