



# RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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Continuing the narration of the story of the pious Brahmin, the mongoose spoke: After four days of utter starvation, the Brahmin somehow procured a handful of wheat flour. With this, some rotis were made and were equally divided among the four. They were about to start eating, when somebody knocked at the door. Those were the days, when nobody liked the idea of entertaining any visitor, because of the devastating famine that raged in the country.

But the Brahmin whose story I am narrating to you was the one made of a nobler stuff. For him dharma was all important. He opened the door. There stood a visitor, an old man in rags. I am dying of hunger, said he, and it is days since I had anything to eat. I cannot bear this hunger any longer. Kindly give me something to eat. The Brahmin at once welcomed the honoured guest without any hesitation. He thought within himself: One day or other we will have to leave this body. Why not leave it for a noble cause.

Now, here is a guest before me, and it is my sacred dharma to entertain him and be of some service to him in relieving him of the misery of hunger. With such a thought in his mind, gladly he gave his share of rotis to the visitor. With gusto the hungry man devoured the rotis in a second.

This frugal diet only whetted his appetite and he wanted more. Now the wife, the Brahmini who in the noble tradition of Indian womanhood, was a gem of a sahadharmini. She followed the example of her husband by gifting to the guest her share of rotis too.

That too disappeared in a trice into the all-consuming fire of hunger and the visitor expressed his longing for some more. As the parents, so are the children. The son and his wife, too, now inspired by the example of the aged parents, willingly offered their shares for the sake of satisfying the guest.

Brothers and sisters, here is a picture that eloquently glorifies the ideal householdership, as depicted in the sacred lore of India. The guest is God, in Indian culture. To serve the guest even by sacrificing one's own precious life is a virtue that has been extolled even by the gods. Such noble souls are the salt of the earth. Their lives illumine the corridors of history. It is this observance of dharma, this spirit of self-sacrifice that has immortalized Bharat.

The old man, continued the mongoose, now relieved of the pangs of hunger, heartily blessed that virtuous Brahmin family with the words 'May your fame endure as long as the sun and the moon shine'. All the four died of starvation but such was the merit of their self-sacrifice that they got salvation.

When I rolled on the remnants of that wheat flour scattered on the floor, half of my body was mysteriously transformed into gold. Since that incident of physical transformation, I have been wandering here and there, seeking holy places, dharmakshetras, Yajnasthalas etc. with a fond hope that the other half of my body too will be turned golden. But nowhere could I get the desired change. Now, the fame of the great Rajasuya Yajna having reached my ears, I hastened to this place only to get disappointed.

Listening to this wonderful tale, Dharmaputra's subtle pride of virtue vanished. In the world, God does not allow anyone to nurture the feeling of pride and egoism for long. Experiences of



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life mellow the jivas. The design of the world itself is such that it teaches man that he should not be vainglorious about himself.

In scholarship and learning, in power and position, in physical prowess, in intellectual talents, man will always come across others superior to him. Pride and vanity are obstacles to God-attainment. One can invoke divine aid only through humility, one may have in one's possession immense wealth, massive learning, great social status and power; but he should remain humble at heart with the thought that God alone is, and that the jiva is but an insignificant instrument only.

Such understanding will check the rise of egoism. Everyone is divine in nature. Viewed from this position of identity with the Supreme also there can be no room for pride and egoism. He who is absorbed in God-contemplation, who is established in his real nature, will never swerve from the righteous path.

Happiness abides only in reliance on God. Through self-abnegating bhakti and upasana of the Deity, one enters the paradise of God. This paradise, Swarga, is within every one. It is all bliss. He who has tasted this bliss, which is his own real nature, returns not to samsara. After leaving the body, he gets absorbed in God.

Problems and privations will come to everyone. One must turn them into penance and meet every situation with calmness and courage. Look at the Brahmin in the story. Even in extreme penury, he did not lose sight of God. He did not forsake his dharma. He did not give up his good qualities. Death is inevitable for the born. But reflect, Atman is birthless, the body comes into being and goes back into elements.

This truth the bhaktas know. Hence he does not pay undue attention to the body. He is free of worldly attachments and cravings, for he has realized his eternal relationship with God. All his dealings in the world are in and through God. His mind is never tainted by selfishness.

By accepting Garhasthya and the role of wifehood, Divine Mother has shown the sanctity of home-life and the pivotal importance of Garhasthya among other orders of life like Brahmacharya and sannyasa. She has also taught how to build a spiritual life even in the problem ridden domesticity.

Sannyasi lives in seclusion. He has no worldly duties to discharge, no problems of the world to disturb him. He has to solve only the problem of his own mind. The duties of life have a spiritual utility for a householder. To lift the mind from passions to passionless poise, Nirvikaratha and satkarmanushtana (performance of noble actions) are essential.

To be continued.