



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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Vedanta is not for the timid, not for the weak-minded, not for those who think that this world is all. It is the anubhooti of those heroes who have loved God, who have turned away from the unreal; who have trod the path of right conduct. Really speaking, man is greater than gods and goddesses (devathas). Whereas gods indulge in pleasures, man has the courage to give up all pleasures at a stroke. He is noble in the acts of sacrifice, great in the love of God, exalted with the experience of Brahman. It is the best of men who express the excellences of God and have thus carved a niche in the heart of humanity. Man should strive to imbibe the glorious virtues of Dhruva and Prahlada who reached the peak of anubhooti through one-pointed devotion to God.

The devotees do not fear the world. They fear only God. Even this fear is nothing but their intense ardour for dharma, the law of God. They will never deviate from sadachara. They do not succumb to passions like anger, greed, desire etc. With their knowledge expanded they are detached from their own bodies as a kernel of a dried coconut gets detached from its shell. Having renounced both I and mine, they abide in the Atman. Sages, saints, and Divine Incarnations do immense good to the world by their very presence. They never become a source of fear for the world, nor are they afraid of the world. Untouched by Maya, seeking nothing from this world, they show compassion to the suffering jivas by guiding and leading them to the portals of liberation.

There is no enemy outside. The robbers of spiritual wealth are within the sadhaka himself. They are called the shadvaires, the six enemies. These inner enemies are very powerful in their operation. They should be vanquished, if the jiva has to attain peace of mind. The inner transformation is a state in which mind is free of these enemies within, through the grace of God. When the mind is transformed, the external world also appears changed in one's vision. The ignorant worldlings see in their vision only a material world of diversity. The saint beholds the world as a playground of God. The Brahmajnani sees the world as Brahmachaitanya. Creation (srishti) is in accordance with the outlook (drishti). Firm faith, self-effort and steadfastness in identification with the Reality: these are required to achieve the transformation of mind.

The latent tendencies (vasanas) that the jiva has developed through numberless births fall into two categories: the good tendencies (sadvasanas) and the evil tendencies (durvasanas). All vasanas pertaining to the vishayas are durvasanas. Durvasanas should be destroyed by constantly thinking noble thoughts, by doing only good deeds and by purifying the mind through devotional practices. Vasanas are the dirty spots in the chittha. A single spot of dirt appears conspicuous in a clean cloth. But as the spots go on increasing, spreading all over the cloth, the cloth becomes very dirty and it then becomes very difficult to wash it. Similar is the case with the chittha laden with impurities of vasanas and evil deeds. Unless durvasanas are totally eradicated, no one can get a vision of the Divine.

Once upon a time, there lived a great saint in a forest, engaged in upasana and austerities. People in the neighbouring villages, who heard about the holy man, used to go to him for darshan and the holy man used to instruct them about God, bhakti and right conduct. All felt happy in the presence of the saint. The fame of this saint reached the ears of the King also. The King, accompanied by his trusted minister and body-guards, disguised as ordinary persons, started visiting the hermit. Contact with the holy man gradually brought about purification and a change of outlook in the King. One day, after disclosing his royal identity, the King respectfully



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appealed to the venerable saint to visit his palace and sanctify it by the touch of his holy feet. The saint, who had by his divine insight already known about the King, now replied: O King, I do not mind visiting your palace. But listen, your palace is filled with a stinking smell, which I can hardly withstand. Remove that dirty smell and I shall of course be pleased to go with you. Where can one see a place as clean and tidy as the King's Palace! The King was surprised to hear that his palace was emitting a bad odour. He went back to the palace and ordered his men to keep the whole palace and its precincts absolutely clean and tidy. The next day also, the King repeated his request to the saint and the saint now said: Yes, I shall see. Let a few days go. This discourse cannot be discontinued all on a sudden. Meanwhile, O King, keep on coming here. When God wills, I will one day go with you to the palace.

A few days passed and the King was regular all the while in his visits to the saint. Moved by the earnestness and humility of the King, the saint now consented to visit the palace. The King and the venerable sadhu accompanied by other men, set out to the palace. On their way to the palace, they had to pass through a cobbler's street. One can imagine the atmosphere of a cobblers' street. The offensive smell of the skins and hides was too much for the King. But the Sadhu, who had no bahia drshti, walked on unconcerned. He seemed to have been unaffected. This was a surprise for the King. Here was a person, King thought, who a few days ago had told him that the bad odour of palace would be unbearable to him, but now, the stink of the hides was nothing to him! Out of eagerness to know the truth of the matter, the King humbly put in: Maharaj, may I ask you one thing? You had expressed that the bad smell of the palace was something which you would not be in a position to withstand. My palace is neat and clean. But this street is filled with nauseating smell, yet this stink is not affecting you at all. I cannot understand this.

With a smile, the saint gently replied: O King, dealing with skins and hides, is a mode of life of these poor cobblers. They are doing all this as a means to their livelihood. This does not offend me at all. But in your palace, there is the offensive atmosphere of vishaya vasanas. It is this stink of bhoga that is repulsive to me. The King should set an example to the subjects by an exemplary noble life. Everyone should purify his thought, word and action and observe dharma. This is the way to peace, prosperity and immortality. The words of the saint went deep into the heart of the King. He was roused from slumber. The true aim of life shone before him. Vairagya dawned on him. He renounced all the pleasures and relinquished even the throne also. Even though the saint assured him that his royal duties would not hinder his spiritual pursuit and that it was his duty to govern the country, the King could no longer remain in the palace. Intense vairagya blazed forth in him and he yearned for spiritual life and set out immediately in his homeless wandering.

This transformation of the King, instantly brought about by the contact with the saint, extols the efficacy of satsang. The ultimate purpose of life is God-realization. Only by realizing God can one experience unbroken peace and everlasting freedom. Not to become a slave of prakrithi, to strive incessantly to win the saving grace of God, this is what every sadhaka should do. Physical, mental and intellectual disciplines should be directed to God-attainment.

(To be continued)