



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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Shravana (listening to the Guru), manana (reflection) and nididhyasa (contemplation) constitute the three main vedantic disciplines for God-realization. Shravana, in the primary sense, is the act of hearing the sacred Word from Sadguru, at the time of adhyatmic deeksha, spiritual initiation. In the secondary sense, it is listening to the expositions of Truth, or to the instructions and injunctions on sadhana, or to the accounts of divine glories, directly from Sadguru and the Realized personages. The words of the spiritually wise, the awakened one, alone are charged with purifying, inspiring and awakening powers.

The dormant spiritual impulse is activated by the words of the Sadguru. One should know the greatness of the Guru, the greatness of initiation, the nobility of the 'Guru-Shishya bond' and also the glory of the Goal in view. Then only the bhava dawns. Bhava is essential in the stage of shravana. This bhava, generated by real understanding, is one of deep reverence to the Guru and unreserved surrender to his guidance. Along with bhava, the seeker should have faith in the Guru's words and trust in his directions. The Word should be received with undivided attention, concentration, humility and intense spiritual hunger for knowledge and Realization.

The Word (shabda), the mind and the knowledge, should be unified. Then only, shravana is effective. The word means the sound-form of the Reality. The word contains the vibrations of spiritual energy, the forces of Guru's tapasya and anubhooti (experience) combined. The mind means, the faculty of concentrated attention. By knowledge is meant, the knowledge of the greatness of God and the import of the Guruvakya. The word enters through the auditory organ, 'shravanendriya', the mind receives the word in the state of concentration. But understanding of the import of the word is in the intellect.

If the intellect has not grasped the import of instruction, 'artha jnana', one has not reached even the stage of shravana in the vedantic discipline. Shabda is heard through the ears; artha (meaning) is grasped through the intellect; and tattwa (reality or Truth) is apprehended by spiritual insight (jnana). Shabda is gross; artha is subtle; and tattwa is the subtlest of the subtle. The word and the meaning belong to mediate knowledge, paroksha jnana. But the reality reveals itself only to intimate experience (aparokshanubhooti). You should listen to the Guru with absolute shraddha.

Your whole body should become the ears, as it were. All parts of your personality should participate. It is the response from the total man that counts in the effectiveness of the Guru's Teaching, whether the mode of teaching is the spoken word or symbolic silence.

Passing through the attentive ears, the word must reach the intellect. Then only awakening comes. The veil is over the intellect. The word alone has the power to lift it. Mind is the obstacle. If the mind is afflicted with doubts and distractions, the word cannot be assimilated by the intellect. As between prayer and the fulfillment, between surrender and divine grace, between yearning and the Vision, between effort and



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accomplishment, there exists a close relation, so too, there is a relation between the Guruvakya and Shravana.

To get a firm grasp of the correct meaning and the deeper significance of the Guruvakya and the scriptural truths, there should be, on the part of the disciple, the reflective analysis and the logical investigation, which together come under the category of 'Manana'. In Manana, the power of reasoning is applied to the process of thinking so that clarity may emerge. Removing doubts, false understandings and accumulated clouds of confusion, reflection leads understanding to the plane of higher contemplation.

Manana is mental churning. Entering the whirlpool of modes, it weans the mind from its externalizing tendency. It sets up a continuity of identical ideas, all pertaining to the truth of the Guruvakya. Manana is possible only through the vritti that is introvert.

Introversion of vritti is possible only if the mind is detached. Detached frame of mind comes either through dispassion or through devotion to God. For cultivation of knowledge through reflection, one should therefore have in his possession, an intellect free of ego touch and a mind withdrawn from enjoyment.

Aversion to reflection, introspection and deep thinking betrays intellectual inertia, arising from mental distractions and egocentric pursuits. When distractions cease through devotion and egocentric pursuits give way to righteous actions, the intellect emerges, with powers of discrimination, analysis and deep thinking. The culmination of manana is 'Na-Mana', which means the disappearance of the disturbing desires, dark emotions, distracting imaginations and moods of frustration and elation.

Inwardness developed through reflection, keeps the mind clear of sleep, sloth and emotional excesses. The road to equanimity is manana. Sometimes the latent vasanas may become too powerful to resist. Even the strength of reflection cannot counteract them.

Therefore the sadhaka should continue to have shravana and satsang. If the Guru repeats instruction, the indication is, the disciple is in dire need of repeated shravana. What is known, as 'Nididhyasa' is continuous contemplation of the Truth-idea, firmly grasped through reflection. Like unbroken flow of oil from one vessel to another, the contemplative stream should flow uninterruptedly towards the Reality. The nididhyasa, the vichara and the dhyana are states almost similar in nature. The difference, if any, is in accordance with the bhava of approach to Reality. Unless the mental modes subside, one cannot contemplate, or meditate, or do vichara. The formless Reality has assumed forms, names, personality and attributes, from time to time, in crucial periods of human history, for the great purpose of establishing Righteousness.

Thus, the Saguna Sakara Brahman became the object of worship, adoration and devotion. To be established in devotion, to be steadfast in worship, the mind must become free of the lower currents. To make the mind modeless, first the mind should be made to assume a single powerful vritti, the form and idea of the Saguna Brahman. So long as the mind is subject to fickleness, selfishness and doubt, it cannot hold fast to God. It is the strong and concentrated mind that can remember God constantly. God is beyond prakrithi. It is divine grace that takes you beyond the domain of parakrithi. Therefore, one should have the guidance and grace of the Sadguru. He, who is



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sheltered by Grace, safely treads the inner path. Even if he happens to have a fall through the force of prarabdha, the fall will turn out to be a mild one, like a fall on a smooth bed. The fall on a hard stone is disastrous.

Ignorance means forgetfulness of God. You should make remembrance constant. Intellectual brilliancy alone is not enough. Shraddha should be joined to it. Then philosophy becomes a way of life, a pattern of conduct. Where shraddha rises and responds to the Guru's Teaching, there, one becomes a recipient of the elixir of God's compassion, 'Karuna Rasa'. Then, knowledge dawns in him. Such is the greatness of the Guru's Teaching.

The wisdom of the Guruvakya is a great wealth. It should be protected from dark and asuric forces, the inner foes of man. The thieves start their operation during night. Hence a night watchman is employed for guarding the properties.

'Night' signifies darkness of the forgetfulness of God. Passions are thieves. It is only when you forget the Witness within that the passions gain the upper hand. Hence slumber not. Be alert and watchful. Discrimination is the night sentinel of the inner world who can safely keep the wealth of jnana from thieves. Watchman's job is to guard the property from the attack by external robbers; but the robbers who rob the wealth of jnana are already within you. They remain hidden in your own minds. You have to detect them and throw them out.

It is not enough that you know the nature of the ego intellectually. You should lead an egoless life. When you deliver a nice speech or write a good book or produce a creative piece of art, or do some service to the country, people will begin to shower praises on you. Or, if they do not come to you to praise you, you will go to them seeking their opinions and expecting their praises; or a desire for praise will lurk in your bosom. All these indicate the working of the ego. A humble devotee of God will, on the other hand, say within himself: 'O God, thou art the prompter and the doer. I am only Thy instrument. What credit is there for an instrument! All glories are Thine. I have no power except what Thou hast given me for Thy work.

Without trying to eliminate egoism and to cultivate moral qualities, the sadhakas are eager to know how far they have progressed, what stage they have reached. Atman or God is beyond all states and stages. States and stages are within the realm of prakrithi. You should attain the yogic poise, which is distinguished by steadiness of mind, luminosity of intellect, same-sightedness and fearlessness. Exuberant energy flows from yogic poise. Stone-like inertia is not yoga. Established in yogic poise, you should function in the world of duty, reflecting in your conduct, the luster of dharma and the light of knowledge.

The Ramayana can be explained allegorically. But the descent of God as Sree Rama is a historical fact. The supreme has trodden this earth as various Avataric Personalities for global mission. The nature of the avatar, the mode of his life, the field of his activity, the manner of His ministry, the method of His teaching, the way of His divine leelas and the measure of His manifested power, all these are in accordance with the need of the age.