

9. Yanthram & Manthram

MAN has immense capacities latent in him, waiting to be tapped and used. He has many talents which he has to bring to light. He feels the urge to love all beings, to share his joys and griefs with his kind, to know more and satisfy the curiosity of his intellect, to peep behind the awe and wonder that Nature arouses in him. He is able to gather information about all kinds of things from all comers of the world, but, he is unaware of what happens in the comers of his own mind. He knows who is who among all the rest, but, he does not know the answer to the simple question, "Who am I?"

The fact is, he has to ask it himself and seek out the clue to the enigma himself. He has not felt that it is essential to know the answer; he is content to move about blindly in the world, groping his way in the dark. Without knowing who he himself is, he is rashly judging, labelling and even libelling other men! This is the fundamental reason for the hollowness of human life today, for the hate and fear that stalk the world.

The *Vedhas* and *Shaasthras* of India have the key to that answer; they can teach you the process by which you can discover it for yourself if you are so inclined. There are only twenty-six letters in the English alphabet; yet by combining them in various ways, thousands of books are written. So too, the ideas and hints given in the *Vedhas* may be a few-, their application explains the entire literature of *Akshara*, which means both 'letter' and 'indestructible.' Every person born in Bhaarath must be an exemplar of these disciplines; for, 'Bhaa' implies 'splendour,' *prakaasham*, the splendour that is encased in man, and '*Rathi*' implies 'the desire to manifest it, to taste it.' Live up to that glory and you will all be transformed into fullness.

The Divine Principle

You are the Formless (*Niraakaaram*) come in the form of Man (*Naraakaaram*), the Infinite, come in the role of the finite, the Formless Infinite appearing as the formful infinitesimal, the Absolute pretending to be the Relative, the *Aathma* behaving as the body, the Metaphysical masquerading as the merely physical. The Universal *Aathma* (Self) is the basis of all being. The sky was there before houses were built under it; it penetrated and pervaded them for some time; then, the houses crumbled and became heaps and mounds; but, the sky was not affected at all. So too, the *Aathma* pervades the body and subsists even when the body is reduced to dust.

The same inexplicable, invisible, electric current, when it enters a bulb, a fan, a stove, a cooler, or a sprayer, activates each one of them or all of them together. Similarly, *Ishwara sarva bhoothaanaam*' the Divine Principle activates all beings. That is the inner core, the Divine Spark, more minute than the minutest, more magnificent than the most magnificent. To observe the minute you must use a microscope; to bring the

remote nearer your eye, you seek the help of a telescope; these are *Yanthras* (material instruments). The instruments that help you to visualise the Core that has such strange contradictory attributes are called *Manthras*---*formulae* that save you when you meditate on them. They are also called *Thanthras* (Ceremonies and rites) when their practical application has to be emphasised. Faith in the efficacy of these *Manthras* and in the utility of the procedure prescribed, as well as in the existence of the Core are all essential for success in the great adventure, just as faith in the efficacy of the *Yanthra*, in the correctness of the procedure, and in the existence of the material he is seeking to know more about are essential for the scientist.

"The liberation from night"

You must tackle this problem, straight from where it starts. Ignorance can be cured only by knowledge; darkness can be destroyed only by light. No amount of argument or threat or persuasion can compel darkness to move away. A flash, that is enough; it is gone. Prepare for that flash of illumination; the light is there already, in you. But, since it is heavily overlaid by repressing factors, it cannot reveal itself. "The liberation from night" which happens when the light is revealed, is called *Moksha*. Every one has to achieve it, whether he is striving for it now or not. It is the inevitable end to the struggle, the goal to which all are proceeding.

But, please do not be afraid of reaching the goal of liberation (Moksha)! Do not conceive that stage as a calamity. It is the end of calamity. It is death to all grief; the birth of joy---a joy that knows no decline, the death of grief, grief that will never more be born.

Well, how do you prepare yourself for the stage? I must tell you that the answer is in that very word Moksha, itself. It is self-explanatory. '*Mo*' indicates *Moha* (delusion; being deluded by the scintillating, the gaudy, the transitory, the temporary trash); and, '*ksha*' means *kshaya* (decline; disappearance, destruction). It requires you to keep the flights of your mind away from these deluding attractions, and on the straight path towards liberation.

Avoid illusion by denying it

See how the insufferable heat of the Sun is controlled and modulated and reduced by your bodily mechanism to the congenial temperature of 98.4 degree; so, you too should keep the destructive force of your elemental passions born out of the clamour of *sabdha*, *sparsha*, *ruupa*, *rasa*, *gandha* (sound, touch, form, taste, smell) rigorously in check and bring it down to tolerable levels, yielding comfort and congenial living. You yourselves create the illusion of which you are the slave; deny it, don't give it a chance to lord over you, then it will not harm you. Someone was told, "There, inside that well, lies your shadow." He said, "No; it cannot be." But, he decided, nevertheless, to go and verify the fact. He walked up to the well and peeped in. And, lo, he found it was true. The well had his shadow inside! Poor fellow, he did not know that the shadow would be there only when he looked in! Do not test *Maayaa*. Try to locate it, it will present itself. You can avoid it only by denying it; you can escape only by concentrating on the substance; do not attach any value to the shadow, whether inside the well or outside it. For, after all, it is just a shadow!

Illusion haunts man as *kaama* or *thrishna* (desire). Desire calls for *sabdha*, *sparsha*, *ruupa*, *rasa*, *gandha*---the qualities of the Five Elements of which man is the complex; *sabdha* of *Aakaasha* (space), *sparsha* of *Vayu* (air), *ruupa* of *Agni* (fire), *rasa* of *Jala* (water), and *gandha* of the Earth. Man is prompted by the element of Space in him to seek sweet sounds that satisfy the ear, by the element of Air in him to run after smooth and soft things that yield pleasure to the skin, by the element of Fire in him to pursue things that by beauty of form appeal to the eye, the Water element in him to crave for food and drink that are tasty to the tongue, and by the inner urge of the element of Earth in him to cater to the nose, by trying to enjoy perfume and fragrance and pleasant smells. *Kaama* (desire) has a two-headed son, *krodha-lobha* by name, the twin-headed monster anger-greed. Through the malignant designs of these three, you are robbed of lasting happiness.

Be the Prince you really are

Unaware of your Divine Status, you revel in low company; you toil and sweat as the slave of mean passions which drag you into disgrace. Be the Prince you really are. Be like the lotus, which though born in the slush at the bottom of the lake, by sheer will-power rises above the waters to see the Sun and be inspired by its rays. The lotus discards contact with water, though it is born and bred in that element; so, you too should avoid being attached to the elemental passions, that the elements constituting you urge you into. How long are you to sit content with the minor role of a clown or a clout? Are you not ashamed? Have you no ambition? Why smother your genuine talents under a self-imposed mask? All these are zero roles; take on the role of the hero which is your right, and shine!

I shall tell you how to deserve that role, how to earn it from the *Suuthradhara*, the Director of this play. Enter on a course of spiritual discipline; your experience itself will tell you the validity and the value of that course. Instal a radio receiver, select the wavelength of the station you propose to listen to, switch on correctly to that wavelength, and you hear the programme clear and distinct. Your ear will tell you the accuracy with which you have tuned. Similarly, take on a form of *manthra* (*manthraswaruupam*); pronounce it and meditate on it with accurate care and steady attention; tune in to the Voice of within you. One of the obstacles in the way of the spiritual aspirant is the satire and criticism poured on him by quacks that crowd round him. Do not pay heed to their advice or their barbs. They are experts only in the silly short-lived trivialities of social life or sensual pleasure. Most people nowadays are more interested in the history of film stars than in the history of *Yogis* and *Paramahamsas* (*ascetics* of the highest order) who can save you from the disaster of deep-seated ignorance.

Three-stranded rope of Yama

Yama or the God of Death is described as dragging his victims to his abode by means of the rope of paasa (snare). Well. He has no rope factory there, for supplying him with the rope he needs. You manufacture the rope yourself and have it ready round your neck; he has only to take hold of the rope and pull you along! It is a three-stranded rope, the strands being *Ahamkaara*, *Vishayavaasana* and *Kaama* (Egoism, Sense-attachment and Desire).

Do not respect men who are caught up in the tangle of the senses. Give respect according to the knowledge each possesses of himself, i.e., of the Immanent and the Transcendent. How do you fix the price of cane? According to the sugar content, is it not? You evaluate oranges in proportion to the juice they contain, is it not? So too, a man is worthy of honour in proportion to the knowledge of the Self he has acquired. This knowledge alone can confer steadiness and strength. Without it, all profession of renunciation, all pretence of devotion, all performance of charity are but tongue-deep or skin-deep!

It is not the resolution that matters; it is resoluteness. Resolution is just a string of words. You may know the 700 *slokas* of the Bhagavadh Geetha by heart; but, believe Me, the time you spent in learning it by rote, and in reciting it, is all a waste, if you do not resolutely act upon even a single *shloka*. Why? That learning might even be handicap; for the skill has affected your head, and made it swell with pride.

Dharma will never play false

Bhagavadh Geetha is a means by which you can get immersed in your own *Bhagavadh-bhaava* (relationship with God). If you are so immersed, you will have undiminished, undiminishable

Aanandham, Nithyaanandham (Eternal Bliss). Now, in your ignorance, you feel small, you feel miserable, you feel that the wicked, the greedy, the cruel, are all happier than you and unjustifiably so. You feel it is unjust that you who are so truthful, so loving, so good, should suffer. Just ponder over this. Are they as happy as you imagine, and is your condition so bad as you picture? Just investigate and you will find out for yourself. They are only painted pots of poison; the paint of honey is just a thin coating, a mere show. Their hearts know no peace; they are as miserable as you, if not more.

Believe that Dharma or Moral Rectitude will never play false; it will ensure greater joy than can be gained through all other means. Raama destroyed Raavana; it was a victory of one head over ten; concentration over distraction. Raavana craved for *Prakrithi* (Seetha) discarding the *Purusha* (Spirit) which gave it values and meaning, viz., Raama. If you crave for *Prakrithi*, the objective world, you degrade yourself, you deny your reality, and you join Raavana's brood. Do not also imagine that the Lord is outside *Prakrithi*, or even of you, who are really a part of the objective world. He is in you, behind you, beside you, before you. He is the eye of your eye; the I of your I. Yearn for the *yoga* or union with Him, through the unwavering awareness of His being the real You. Yearn for *yoga*; and whatever *bhoga* (pleasure) you really need will be offered to you in due course. If on the other hand, you yearn for *bhoga* itself, you are gone! You are blessed only with *toga* (disease), remember!

Live in the consuming conviction that you are the *Aathman*. That is the hard core of the Eternal Teaching. The *Aathma* it is that sees through the eyes, hears through the ears, handles through the fingers, moves through the feet. That is the basic 'you.' That 'you' is not elated by praise or deflated by blame. When some one carps at you, reason out thus within yourself: 'Is he casting aspersions on my body? Well. Why should I be worried? He is doing just what I should myself do, casting out the attachment to the flesh, to this paltry prison. Or, is he throwing them at the *Aathma*? Nothing can affect its purist, or tarnish its glory. So remain calm and unperturbed.' You may ask, what happens then to the strings of abuse? Like the letter sent by post and refused by the addressee, it returns to the sender!

I enjoin you to go home and ruminate over these suggestions and ideas. Reflect upon what you have heard, especially from these who convey to you the gems contained in the ancient scriptures, tested on the touch-stone of experience all along the centuries. *Sanaathana Dharma* recommends the three-fold course of listening, recapitulating, concentrating. Listening makes you learned only. Concentrated meditation on the meaning of the thing heard gives you the fruit of the teaching as intended by the Teacher.

Venkatagiri, 19-2-1964