

रमणगीतम्

उपदेशसारम्
UPADESHASAARAM

Translation and Explanation

By

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उपदेशसारम्

कर्तुराजया प्राप्यते फलम्
कर्म किं परं कर्म तज्जडम् ॥१॥

*Result of the action is obtained as ordained by Brahma, the Creator.
Is Karma Supreme? It is inert (after all)!*

(The word Karma has many meanings.

In the scriptures it means the sacrificial rites performed with the intention of getting some desired fruit like heaven, or progeny or any such thing. It was an ordained rule of the Vedas that such and such a rite performed in such and such a way will surely get the result required. That is how Dasharatha got Rama as his son. Usually heaven-life also becomes a possibility by such Karmas.

In this century those rites are far from our reach. We do not even have the complete knowledge of Vedas.

Ramana would not have meant the ordinary day to day actions of the world which are mostly routine works and are mechanical in nature.

Since he was an adorer of his father Arunaachala, he is referring to the religious actions done by the devotees.

Whether it is a worship of a God or going round the hill for getting merit, unless the mind is completely absorbed in the deity with love, the religious actions will not bear fruit as ordained by Brahma. Of course all actions carry merit or de-merit. But what meaning do the mechanical acts of worship have, if the mind has no love?

Action is inert. You can go round the temple a thousand times; but that is not going to add to your merit-store and you will not gain any true knowledge also.

The result ordained by the creator for actions of worship and other religious actions will arise only if the devotion is in the heart.)

कृतिमहिदधौ पतनकारणं
फलमशाश्वतं गतिनिरोधकम् ॥२॥

*It is the cause of drowning a man in the huge ocean of actions.
The result is temporary.
It is a blockage to the attainment of liberation.*

(Performance of austerities and deity worship will only bind a man to these actions. He will never get out of them. A man builds a cocoon around him by these meaningless routine austerities.

May be you pray for something connected to your life in the world and it gets solved maybe by that particular austerity.

Then what? Nothing more!

No knowledge! No liberation!

What is the use of a human life if liberation does not become the goal of a person?

But these bundle of actions expecting or not expecting results – is a blockage to the path of liberation.

Wearing religious symbols; getting up at Brahma Muhurta; meditation and Praanaayaama; reciting hymns; visiting temples; going to pilgrimage centers; performing all God festivals every year without fail; falling at the feet of any one who parades as a saint or in front of statues, trees, and stones; so regular that regularity learns a lesson from you! But what did you get by all these? Nothing!

When death comes knocking at your door, these things will not help in the least.)

ईश्वरार्पितं नेच्छया कृतम्
चित्तशोधकं मुक्तिसाधकम् ॥३॥

*The action which is offered to the Lord,
which is done without the desire-factor,
purifies the mind and
leads to the liberation-state.*

(How does a man get into the path of liberation?)

Do all actions, including your austerities and worships without the least desire, without any attachment. Do not be bound to the action.

Whether you worship or recite hymns or walk around the hill – all are actions – inert!

There is no good or bad action. Actions do not carry any character; you alone superimpose these characters on the inert actions.

When you understand this simple principle, that all actions you do – from brushing your teeth to the regular work of the world – all become one continuous stretch of actions which you keep on watching like a witness – like a Sun watching over the world.

Nothing good or bad; no attachment to the result with anxiety and apprehension; concentration only in the performance of action; that is all that is needed!

Result will come anyhow; that is the ordained rule of the world; but why should you break your head about it and ruin the work you are doing?

Such detachment in work is known as Karma Yoga.

It purifies the mind. That means you will be allowing the poor mind to experience some peace. The anxieties, worries, apprehensions, doubts, all will vanish. The mind will slowly stop having so many thoughts. The mind will become pure.

‘ChittaVrttiNirodha’ will naturally happen through the Yoga of not attachment to the results of the action. And offer the action to the God!

In the beginning, if you are a devotee of a particular God with form, practice offering the action to him.

Think that every action is a flower reaching his feet and do the action to the best of your ability. You cannot offer your God a dirty wrinkled flower; but only a perfect flower. So action has to be perfect.

Yoga is skill in action – says Krishna.

Slowly as you understand that the essence inside ‘your deity with form’ and ‘you’ are the same.

Then ‘Ishvaraarpana’ will become a ‘No doership’ attitude; a witness state for all actions done by the body, mind or intellect.)

कायवाङ्मनःकार्यमुत्तमम्
पूजनं जपश्चिन्तनं क्रमात् ॥४॥

*The actions of body, speech, and mind are excellent;
like worship; recitation of a Mantra; and thinking.*

(Actions belong to three categories.

Actions done by the body; speech; and mind!

All the actions done by the Karmendriyas are covered up by body-actions and the speech.

All actions done by Jnaanendriyas are covered up by the mind.

Mind alone acts through these senses of knowledge and perceives the world.

With the body, what action do you do please the God?

Worship! All the ceremonious worship demanded by that God! (?)

With the mouth what can you do to please the God?

Chanting his name; repeating all the hymns and so on.

With the mind what do you do please your God?

You will think of his form from top to bottom and meditate on him or her.)

जगत ईशधीयुक्तसेवनम्
अष्टमूर्तिभृद्देवपूजनम् ॥५॥

*Thinking of the entire world as an expression of God and serving it,
is the worship of the God with his eightfold form.*

(Shiva is the Supreme Lord with eightfold form as Bhava, Sharva etc.

But he is not just that- he is the entire world with form and name.

Jagat is a synonymous name of Ishvara – Excellent Lord.

This world-form of Ishvara is also eightfold!

Consciousness, ego, Intellect, mind, five Praanas, five Jnaanendriyas, five Karmendriyas and the world of five elements! Why not worship this big huge Shiva who is all around you?)

उत्तमस्तवादुच्छमन्दतः
चित्तजं जपध्यानमुत्तमम् ॥६॥

*Better than recitation of hymns is the repetition of a name or Mantra loudly;
better than that is soft repetition;
better than that is mentally repeating it; (Dhaarana)
better than that is meditation. (Dhyaana)*

(The starting of the spiritual journey of a man begins with reciting all the shlokas or hymns of his favorite deity or all the deities. That is how you tie the unruly mind-cow to a stake.

The mind at least at that time of reciting shlokas has to concentrate only on reading those shlokas without any fault.

After a few days of practice, the deceitful mind will learn to recite all shlokas mechanically and be thinking about something else.

Then cut the rope and make it shorter. Recite only one Mantra loudly so that you are awake all the time and are aware of your chanting.

Then slowly learn to repeat it softly just to your own hearing.

Then do it only in the mind.

All your thoughts should be replaced by this chanting.

Only chant should go on. No other thoughts.

But in the next level stop such chanting practices and practice meditation.

Meditation is not sitting comfortably and falling asleep sitting in Padmaasana.

You should learn to concentrate; alert always that no other thought peeps in.

Start with the meditation of a deity with form and then evolve your mind to think about more profound questions like 'Who am I?'

Think; analyze; understand!

Probe inside.

Who am I? Am I the body? Am I the mind?...?

Think; think; till you find the answer. This is known as Vichaara – Rational enquiry.)

आज्यधारया स्रोतसा समम्
सरलचिन्तनं विरलतः परम् ॥७॥

*Equal to the flow of oil-stream,
continuous thinking is better than the interrupted one.*

(When you pour water it will not be a continuous flow. When you pour oil, the stream is continuous. When you meditate on any truth or when you do Vichaara- the flow of thoughts should be continuous. You cannot do it in piecemeal.

The answer for the question 'Who am I' should be like finding air when drowning in water. That is the only thing that will kill death. So you have to somehow understand who you are. Do it at a stretch. Do not stop anywhere in the middle to think about anything else. This is known as contemplation; a level higher than meditation or concentration.)

भेदभावनात्सोहमित्यसौ

भावनाभिदा पावनी मता ॥८॥

*Better than the idea of separation is the contemplation 'I am that'.
The idea of non-separation
is the most sacred thought of all.*

(Though at first, the spiritual aspirant has to practice concentrating on a deity with form, later he should slowly change it into Self-contemplation.

Better than thinking of a God with form who is separate and higher than him, he should think of them as one.

How? How can the Supreme lord be equal to me? - is the problem faced by a devotee.

The essence of any God and an embodied man is the same.

If one contemplates on the essence which is the same in both the God and devotee, than that is the most sacred meditation.)

भावशून्यसद्भावसुस्थितिः

भावनाबलाद्भक्तिरुत्तमा ॥९॥

*Then is attained the stable state of contemplation,
where there rise no mental vibrations at all.
That alone is the excellent devotion
which is based on the strength of such a contemplation.*

(When the aspirant contemplates on the essence of all, his mind almost becomes silent; thoughts stop; breathing becomes shallow; and a quiescent state arises.

In this sacred state where the devotee and the God are one in essence and are merged as the single Self, then that is the excellent devotion which pleases any God.)

हृत्स्थले मनः स्वस्थता क्रिया

भक्तियोगबोधाश्च निश्चितम् ॥१०॥

*If the mind is made to get established in the heart-space,
it is indeed the fulfillment reached by all the three paths of
'Bhakti, Karma and Knowledge'.*

(Heart in scriptural language means the 'Brahman-space' – which is the source-essence of all that exist as the perceived and perceiver.

Mind has to merge into it and vanish once for all. Only the true essence of the Self should be left over.

If you follow the path of devotion to a God with form, you have to slowly evolve yourself to contemplate on the essence of the God and yourself. That is Self-realization in the end. If you follow the path of Karma and do actions without the idea of doer-ship and without the anxiety about the result of the action, even then, you have to act from the level of the witness self. That is also self-realization in the end.

If you follow the path of knowledge, you have to practice the discriminative thought process of separating permanent from the impermanent; and do enquiry of the Self. That also ends in self-realization.)

वायुरोधनाल्लीयते मनः

जालपक्षिवद्रोधसाधनम् ॥११॥

The mind melts by the control of Praana.

That is the method of controlling it like catching the bird with the net.

(Whatever path you choose, the main problem seems to be the mind and its overflowing mad uncontrollable torrent of thoughts.

Maybe if the devotion is as high in the level as a Meera, or AAndaal or RamaKrishna, where they had only one single thought ruling their mind- their beloved deity – then, then and then only is it possible to kill the mind.

But ordinary surface devotion where you want to leave the mind free to do anything with the mask of a religious person like visiting temples and singing songs on your deity – well it has no value in the path to self-realization.

If Karma Yoga is the path you choose, then you have to be like a Basavanna or Bhaaratiaar. Quoting Geetaa alone will not help in any way.

If it is path of knowledge, then you have to be like a Mahaadevi who never even knew the existence of her physical attire. She had burnt everything connected to the world through devotion mixed with knowledge. Or you should be like the author of these poems Ramana who killed the ego just by a thought process; or a Vivekananda who shook the world with his knowledge.

In the path of liberation - no penance, no temple, no scripture, no charity, no pretence will help you in destroying the mind; not even a Guru. He will show the way. Only you have to commit the murder of your own mind.

Here is a trick taught by Ramana.)

चित्तवायवश्चित्क्रियायुताः
शाखयोर्द्वयी शक्तिमूलका ॥१२॥

*Mind and Praanas have the function of thought and action.
For these two branches, the power is a single root.*

(Mind as such is difficult to control for ordinary people who cannot excel in devotion, or knowledge, or detached action.

Mind is just a name given to the continuous flow of thoughts. Thought is the function allotted to the mind, we can say; like flow of water is known as a river and the river's function is water-flow.

An individual does not exist just by thoughts. He has various functions going on inside the body. These inside functions of the body and the functions done by body, all are possible because of the vibrating Praana – the Vital energy. Breathing is also known as Praana/Apaana; but the word Praanaayaama does not mean just breath control; but controlling the source of all these Praana functions.

Mind and Praana are the two things that make a living, thinking man.

They are two branches raising from the same Chit or the 'Pure consciousness'.

When one practices Praana-control, the mind is silenced. Thoughts stop rising in a torrent; and a quiet state rises. That is Laya – a mind in a peaceful state.)

लयविनाशने उभयरोधने
लयगतं पुनर्भवति नोऽमृतम् ॥१३॥

*Of the two types of cessations– Laya and destruction,
the melted mind rises again; not the dead.*

(By practicing Praanaayaama, mind is silenced; but is not completely destroyed.

So after the practice is over, like a Kaalinga serpent it will raise its hoods once again.

This is like anesthetizing the monkey for a few minutes only. It is going to be the same old wicked menace it was, after waking up.)

प्राणबन्धनाल्लीनमानसम्
एकचिन्तनान्नाशमेत्यदः ॥१४॥

*The mind which has melted by the Praana-control,
perishes by a single thought and fades away.*

(The trick is to kill the monkey when it is in the anesthetized state.

Kill with what?

By maintaining a single thought!

To kill the mind which is a fountain of ever-flowing thoughts, we have to practice maintaining one single thought continuously when practicing Praana-control.

What single thought?

Keep enquiring 'Who am I' and as you try to hold on to that one thought of 'I am Brahman', not just a repetition; but feel it also- then the mind dies completely and never ever rises its hoods.)

नष्टमानसोत्कृष्टयोगिनः
कृत्यमस्ति किं स्वस्थितिं यतः ॥१५॥

*For that excellent Yogi, who has a dead mind,
and who has gained his true state,
is there any work that needs to be performed?*

(After the mind is destroyed, the Yogi is always in the Self-state. He has a shadow of a mind-stuff; empty of thoughts but with perceiving function only. His mind will be like a burnt rope or a crushed seed. It will not again be the ignorant idiot.

After this realization, the Yogi is free to live as he likes; yet he keeps doing what he was doing without the idea of doer-ship like a Rama or Krishna.)

दृश्यवारितं चित्तमात्मनः
चित्त्वदर्शनं तत्त्वदर्शनम् ॥१६॥

*Turning away the mind from the perceived world,
and visualizing the state of the Self, is the vision of Truth.*

(It is just a simple process; turn the mind inwards; have single minded contemplation on the Self; and lo, you are established in the Self state.

But is it still a difficult process you feel.

Ramana gives a helping hand.)

मानसं तु किं मार्गणे कृते
नैव मानसं मार्ग आर्जवात् ॥१७॥

*If one enquires what the mind-stuff is,
then there is no mind at all.
This is the direct path (towards realization).*

(You have to do just one simple thing.
Try to find out what this mind is.
Try to see where the thought rises from.
As you completely absorb yourself in the single minded enquiry of the mind, the culprit vanishes. There is only silence left back.
Hold on to that silent state. (a state in-between two thoughts)
It is like a ghost you see in the empty corner of the house.
Start searching for the ghost- it will be no more; so is the case with the mind.
What can be simpler than this process?)

वृत्तयस्त्वहं वृत्तिमाश्रिताः
वृत्तयो मनो विद्द्यहं मनः ॥१८॥

*All the thoughts are supported by the 'I' thought.
Mind means thoughts.
'I' is the Mind' – understand that.*

(How do you search for the source of this mind?
Mind is what? A continuous flow of thoughts!
All these thoughts are connected to one single 'I' thought –your ego.
What is 'ego'?
The idea you have about yourself based on the identity of the body!
'I am born to these parents; I have this name; I look ugly / beautiful; I like this; I do not like this; I am good; I know everything; I own a house; I am rich; I want this...so on and on – all these thoughts you have built around yourself is the ego.
In fact mind is the ego; or vice versa!)

अहमयं कुतो भवति चिन्वतः
अयि पतत्यहं निजविचारणम् ॥१९॥

*From where does this 'I' appear –
if the answer is searched for,
then this 'I' falls down in the enquiry of Self.*

(So we have found out that the mind means ego or the 'I' idea.
Let us start finding out what this 'I' is.
Am I the body? Am I the thoughts... and so on.
Suddenly you find that your 'I' is made of only 'my' my' – my body, my name, my happiness, my family, my mind, my Guru and so on.
So in the end, after peeling all the 'my' you find that there is no 'I' at all and remain in the silence of the Self.)

अहमि नाशभाज्यमहमहन्तया
स्फुरति हृत्स्वयं परमपूर्णसत् ॥२०॥

*When this 'I' dies,
then the Pure Chit raises as the 'I' 'I';
and it is the Supreme principle of existence which is complete in itself.*

(What is left back, after your ego the sand castle falls down, is the real 'I'!
You will not see it like another object. You will not get it like another object.
You will remain as yourself; silent and quiet; with the mind-enemy completely
destroyed.)

इदमहंपदाभिख्यमन्वहम्
अहमिलीनकेप्यलयसत्तया ॥२१॥

*This thing called 'I' never ceases to exist each and every day,
even when the 'I' thought is in a dissolved condition.*

(Are there two 'I's?
If one goes off, does another come?
Which is the real 'I'?
That which is always there is the real 'I' and that which comes and goes is not the real 'I'.
One must be an imposter for sure and deserves to be executed.
We can divide our mind-states as waking, dream and deep sleep.
In the waking and dream states, this 'I'- the ego constructed by the mind, exists.
May be in the dream, I may see myself as a king of three worlds; but even there the mind
alone has created that 'I'.
What happens in deep sleep state?
What do you see there?
Nothing!
World? No!
'I' as some shape and name? No!
Complete blankness! Nothing!
Emptiness!
Who saw the emptiness?
If 'you' did not see emptiness, how do you remember it?
So there is another 'I' which continuously exists as the 'I' in all the three states watching
everything!
This is real and the other which pops up in only two states is not the real one!)

विग्रहेन्द्रियप्राणधीतमः
नाहमेकसत्तज्जडं ह्यसत् ॥२२॥

*Body, senses, Praana, intellect, ignorance-
I am none of these!
All these are inert and not real.*

(I who was seeing 'nothing' in deep sleep state am just pure awareness shining forth at all times.

Then all these things that I call myself as 'I' –

I am fat or thin (body); I touch, taste etc (senses); I am alive (Praana); I think and understand (intellect); I do not know the Self (ignorance) – all these are wrong ideas.

I am none of these.

They are inert! Why? They need some one else to make them function; they are like tools which need a person to use them.

I am not these tools which are used for perceiving the world.

I am something different!)

सत्त्वभासिका चित्क्ववेतरा
सत्तया हि चित् चित्तयाह्यहम् ॥२३॥

*For knowing 'that' which shines forth as the real,
there is no other second person to be aware of it.
Existence is Chit. Chit is the 'Self'.*

(This real I is self-shining. It alone exists as real. There is no second person to know it. Self-realization is not a new supreme state you are attaining!

It is what you are!

You just have to be silent as yourself.

You cannot even say 'I' I'!

Just be!)

ईशजीवयोर्वेषधीभिदा
सत्स्वभावतो वस्तु केवलम् ॥२४॥

*God and Jeeva are only different in form and knowledge.
When the true nature is considered, the essence is the same.*

(God is of course different from you.
You do not immediately become a Shiva or Vishnu after self-realization; nor are you going to float in the sky.
God is a God because he has a different form; and has knowledge.
He rises from the Chit-state as a knower of the Self only.
Jeeva also rises from the Chit state through Brahma.
But Jeeva is ignorant.
God does not have to go through births and deaths. He has no Vaasanaas.
A Jeeva is nothing but a Vaasanaa bundle; it has to go through many wombs to exhaust its Vaasanaas.
But in essence, Chit alone is the essence of Jeeva and Shiva!)

वेषहानतः स्वात्मदर्शनम्
ईशदर्शनं स्वात्मरूपतः ॥२५॥

*When the form-idea is destroyed,
Self is seen.
God is seen in the form of the Self.*

आत्मसंस्थितिः स्वात्मदर्शनम्
आत्मनिर्द्वयादात्मनिष्ठता ॥२६॥

*Remaining established in the Self is the seeing of Self.
As the Self is not two,
there is absorption in the Self alone.*

(Seeing the Self is nothing but 'being' the Self.
There are no two selves – one ignorant and another supreme!
There is no second person.)

ज्ञानवर्जिताऽज्ञानहीनचित्
ज्ञानमस्ति किं ज्ञातुमन्तरम् ॥२७॥

*Chit state is beyond knowledge and is without ignorance.
Is there anything more to know?*

(When ignorance is there, knowledge becomes its counterpart, like darkness needs light to get destroyed.
Self is not something you can know as a new thing.
You are always the Self!

There is no knowledge or ignorance in you.
You are just the quiescent state of existence as yourself!)

किंस्वरूपमित्यात्मदर्शने
अव्ययाभवापूर्णचित्सुखम् ॥२८॥

*In the vision of the Self which is attained by enquiring about its nature,
there remains only the bliss of the Chit
which is complete, changeless and forever.*

बन्धमुक्थतीतं परं सुखम्
विन्दतीह जीवस्तु दैविकः ॥२९॥

*That Jeeva who attains that supreme bliss
which is beyond bondage and liberation
is truly divine!*

(Is it not the best devotion to a deity to find the true essence of both and remain as the
essence of that deity also?
Is that not a divine state?)

अहमपेतकं निजविभानकम्
महदिदं तपो रमणवागियम् ॥३०॥

*This penance is indeed the excellent one,
where the ego is destroyed, and
the true nature of the Self is revealed;
so says Ramana!*

AUM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Narayanalakshmi, also known as Tejaswini in her ascetic life spent most of her life in the Himalayan terrain, engaged in the penance of knowledge. She is well-versed in all philosophies and is a scholar in Sanskrit language. Her mission life is to retrieve the lost knowledge of the ancient Rishis and offer it unblemished to all the seekers of the Truth.