

METHOD OF ŚARANĀGATI

Śaranāgati has been acclaimed as the direct means to liberation needing no other yoga to help it, Nyāsa yoga, is said to be capable of one relating oneself to God directly so that God Himself leads the soul to the final liberation, proved of course the individual has sought that Ultimate Liberation or Ultimate Surrender of God as His only purpose in seeking refuge in God. In the world thanks to the constant presence of sorrow, fear and sin, and opportunities for wickedness man is compelled to seek refuge for small things as well as the Ultimate. The mind has to recoil from all lesser ends and lesser men who could not help at all though they promise all things to all men. That is why man through several lives learns to distrust one and all – even the wisest of gurus or teachers and philosophies and seeks God in the wilderness of his very being escaping from all these men and rites and rituals. Thus does he become a jñāna a knower bahūmam janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate seeking God alone. Thus the search for God ensues directly. This means that the individual seeks out God and surrenders to Him alone, depending on His Mercy and Kindness (karuṇa), and in His words that have been recorded in the sacred literature devoted to this subject of Surrender.

It is however also true that there are some sacred institutions and sages who have specialized in this art and science of making the individual in distress get God's help and refuge. They seem to be the hospitals of spiritual accidents and disease, and the expert doctors of spirituality undertake to link up God with the sufferer. This is done by presenting the seeker after refuge to God and making the individual seek speak out his desire to be saved or liberated or rescued from his dire condition. This is called Ukti: speech spoken to God of course with the help of the proper words of the Guru. The Guru is one who of course must be in touch with God, through his devotion and attainment – one

who is an ācārya-whose conduct is divinely imbued, who himself has been given total refuge and is a confident of God, his integral servant and preceptor. The traditional discipline of the preceptors is an important element. The God – knower (n) alone could undertake this. It is devoutly held that they are in constant remembrance of God and are living and moving in God.

The āchārya - niṣṭa is a further development. The individual seeks the ācārya and he in turn speaks to God and comes and tells the individual that he has been granted Refuge by God. The responsibility of seeing the soul through to Liberation śeṣi that of the Master (Ācārya.) The individual however in all cases must strictly abide by the basic principles of this Yoga of total surrender, seeking none other than God for refuge and treading no other path than that prescribed. Thus 'willing the helpful' abandoning the injurious, having fullest faith in the ability of the Master or Guru a steady pursuit of the goal, of liberation, these are here also necessary. The work of the Ācārya is its very great and highly responsible. The Ācārya is one who is integrated with the Divine, in whom the Divine Lord has taken residence so to speak, and who is in fact the embodiment God Himself.

The difficulty of having such faith in any one is great enough. To find one of such supreme caliber is also difficult. Such men are exceedingly rare – they have been rare even when spiraled had a following and today spirituality is in bad grace. The traditionalists have of course provided all the opportunities of getting succour and many do indeed follow it. But a few do see in all this paraphernalia nothing but realisation of the entire process of liberation. But then every religion got institutionalized and spontaneously has gone to the winds, replaced by ritualism – from the most vulgar and gross to the most subtle. Further liberation itself is a long distance solution for coupled with the having of it after death – its proof is far off indeed and elsewhere. The need is for the immediate respect and escape from this world of tremendous conflicts and misery where man delights in wickedness to put to shame even the most brutal of animals.

So the three methods are prescribed and even if one starts with one it is found that he is led to the others. A direct cry to God made in all sincerity brings to one's door the Ācārya, or Guru who tries him into his shade and slowly lifts him up and offers him to God with him by his side and makes God speak to him and take him to himself and indeed the soul is likened to the return of the Prince to his Father and king. This is of course as in the other case of the six limbs of Śaraṅāgati, an integral continuing work. If one goes to the traditional Ācārya even after he has given His assurance, he has to be vigilant about his own conduct, abjuring all wrong doing and doing the prescribed work of worship, devotion, meditation and constant remembrance. He has to offer his prayers to the Deity directly and perform his five-period duties (*pañcakāla-vidhi*) He has to be devoted to the final attainment of direct connection, the yoga with God which is *Paramātmānu-bhāva-Ānandānubhava* of the Paripūrṇa. Thus it becomes the means to realisation.

Thus in a single unique act of self surrender one could do all that one wants – he can renounce or place at God's feet which is what is meant by real renunciation – one's burden of life (*bhara*), one's fruit of one's duties (*phala-bhara*) and also oneself (*ātma-bhara*) burden of the 'I' itself. These three may integrally be placed or one may move from one to that other as one realises the benefits of such a placing of one's burden on God's feet or on God, of course this has to be done in a spirit of absolute submission, knowing one's worthlessness without any condition, and how this worthlessness is precisely the cause of the incidence of God's grace which makes the individual realise his true spiritual stature, as God's own heir and so on to all that is God's beyond even the limit of one's knowing – the *Tamasah parastāt*.

Sri Aurobindo affirmed that his self – surrender is naturally followed by self – offering and that is precisely what happens when faith develops or grows or waxes by the grace of God being felt continuously. Self – offering of God alone, without any reservation or condition. Even the condition of getting emancipation is renounced in self – offering.

Sri Ramchandra affirms that self-surrender has a natural movement:

“A man begins his work dedicating everything to his Master. He starts with the idea that he does everything for the Master, nay the Master within him, is himself doing that. He gives life to his suppositions and the object becomes animate. He starts with his day’s work, attends to his morning ablution, then takes his breakfast thinking that his master is doing all that..”

The act of surrender though perhaps consciously made must finally involve or forgetting that we have surrendered this idea that we have surrendered must also pass away. This is the reason perhaps why the ancients counseled the process doing it once (sakṛt) and then leave it all to God without once think again of what we had done. The natural process when one feels more and more God or Master living and moving and acting within oneself, one’s heart and body. Once it is done one should not think about either the results of that surrender (which makes one think that one must get its deserts or expect fruits of it) or think that one has anything to be done except perhaps to try to live and more as God wills.

As the lord in the Gītā has stated the individual who has dedicated himself to God for the sake of realizing Him alone, will soon discover that God has begun to do all within him. the wise-man sees this: the unwise do not: paśyantyāmanyavastthitam | yatanto pyakṛtātmano nainam paśyantyacetasha ||

Those with eyes of wisdom perceive. Through effort the Yogis perceive this established in the ātman, but even with effort the non – yoga cannot perceive this fact (the Divine acting within one’s body).

Therefore a dedicated soul is in constant condition of giving up his burden of being to the Divine with love and resignation. He begins to watch how the Divine acts within oneself; disinterestedness develops on his part, and wonder constantly at the exquisite wisdom of the Divine in all doings. This is the bliss of being the body of God.

Thus surrender has to be followed up in the manner set forth. Firstly to surrender to the Divine, one needs the utter humility of being which makes him seek God's refuge. Secondly, this may be itself taken to be the *sva-niṣṭa*. the individual repairs to one whom he considers as capable of helping him or is near at hand who introduces him to the Divine – in temple or home or yoga, of devotion or refuge. Thirdly if the person to whom he had gone is of a high caliber he would guide him to d by offering the soul to God Himself for father rescue and liberation. Thus one finds refuge in God, then devotion increases and adoration of one's savioru takes place. This process is that makes for the speediest movement towards God.

The *śaraṇāgati* thus I an independtn and in fact common means for all. This peculiar feature it is that make almost all religions and teachers accept this as the path of all since distresses manna misery and death and etc are the to all persons. Nor is there any other condition except that one is in distress, or misery. Learning and other gifts of life are incapable of avoiding the crises of misery: they are the most important impediment if at all. The poor, the lonely and the host are the persons who are fit for the path of surrender, in them is the cry of despair and seeking for relief. Almost all cases of nonsuccess of *śaraṇāgati* are but to the same having been undertaken when one is not reap for it and ripeness is the experience of *viśāda*, sorrow, dilemma of being, distress of dharma or its confusion and so many others.

The *śaraṇāgati* can also help or become a step and necessary or inevitable step on the path of all kinds of liberation or accessory to all type so yoga is also granted by knower.

The individual soul is finite and on every path towards the infinite it meets with obstacles and trials the most poignant. Thus in the performance of duty. However disinterestedly, the union with God becomes difficult and even duty difficult of performance. There always occur deviations and faults inherent in all finite work. Flaws in performance in details are as terrible as faults in character.

Therefore the human being cries out for help and for this purpose the surrender to God is done firstly of the individual who performs the duty or rite, and secondly of the fruits for results of such a successful Performa.

Similarly the transience of the human in jñāna yoga, is by no means so very simple. The finite cannot and in fact resists all initiation of it and the infinite is incapable of flowing into and absorbing the finite. This is the crisis of inner being and it śeṣi only when the individual yields up its very being and is prepared for that exitnighsmen of itself and all that it means in terms of life, being existence, consciousness and delight, by surrender or offering or both, the individual realises the Selfness of God and God only. Without surrender there does not happen the transformation of idea into existence. If idea hs to become existence, that is if it has to be realised then surrender of the idea as idea must be done and one must no longer think of itself attaining existence but become as such. thus surrender is the ievitable step towards fulfillment in jñāna or knowledge.

The important aspect of loving god admiring and adoring him śeṣi very much the nature of bhakti. One praises, and sings, changes and lauds the Divine Godhead in all His aspects and exploits in relation to Nature and the souls. Service of God is an act of worship, adoration and love. But its completeness comes only when one surrenders oneself to God not because God is love but because the individual cannot have that fee intercourse with Him unless he yields himself to the Divine wholly. Not to love God becomes a pathetic climax but not to be loved is worse. Pity is that stirs the depts. of god, the need for pity is the soul's sole appeal to God. Surrender comes then as a step towards breaking the gulf that separates the human and Divine, and one is fathered into the Divine by the Divine Himself.

Thus surrender is necessary even for cusses of the other yoga. Recently I had an experience or encounter with a very good man. He asked me almost immediately after I met him as to whether I had performed śaraṇāgait (bhara – Nyāsa)-and who did it for me. When I replied that I had done it and to God, he

was impatient and wanted the tradition ācārya under whom or through whom I had done it. He was eloquent about the virtues of bhāraṇyāsa and felt that it was by placing one's burden on the ācārya and that was all that needs to be done. The question about the competency of the ācārya to mediate or bring about a reunion with God or his ability were matters of no concern to the Nyāsin (the surrenderer). This reveals a full sense of faith in the efficacy of the master of ācārya. Such individuals dismiss as fantastic the possibility of direct approach to God or direct surrender and direct guidance by God of the path of ascent. The burden is taken away from the individual on the ācārya accepting the bhāra, or burden. It is thereafter the Guru's work for Duty, this being the duty cast of the Guru as Guru. But the ancients knew of this possibility of God directly becoming the Guru. The guru is whoever exalted to the position of God in ācārya - niṣṭa whereas in sva niṣṭa-the Divine is directly accepted as Guru and god.

To our ordinary consciousness it is clear that any amount of adulation and veneration will not convert the human Guru into God. The attempts to substitute in the place of God the Guru by such terms as avatar, descent, advent and so on or bhagavān will only evoke simple sneers ultimately. The constant remembrance of the good work done by the Guru to the devotee in taking upon himself the devotees' burden is all an act of piety and thankfulness, but it cannot be transformed into a faith in the divinity of the Guru. For most the act of divine compassion on the guru is a human act or rather an act of the divine through a human agency. So is it in the case of all cosmic works and even individual acts of gratitude and compassion.

It is true that the ācārya in taking up the burden of the prapanna on himself and transferring it to God also insists on the prapanna to do certain daily duties, such as the due observance of the fivefold meditations or services to God at the five times. These show the necessity to do something to help the Guru in his work of salvation or granting refuge. Work is much more important than praises and chants.

Śaraṇāgati understood in spirit is natural but when developed as a technique became a routine and trends to lose significant unless the crises of helplessness is minted. It is perhaps too much to hold is maintained. It is perhaps too much to hold that it is necessary to develop the art of 'brinkmanship' or 'sinfulness' or 'helplessness' incident on such rears either real or simulated.

The most important thing in higher evolution and ascent by the transcendental path (*paramapadasopāna*) or ladder is the feel the inward psychological growth and consciousness of higher levels of being which are deemed to be more real and valuable and intrinsic to the soul's freedom.

There are always three major theaters of being, the outer gross (*ādhibhautika*), the inner psychological and subtle (*ādhyātmika*) and the higher divine or luminous (*ādhidāivika*). Śaraṇāgati follows the divine goal through the total or integral surrender of all the three theatres of being to the Divine, and yokes the *ādhyātmika ātma nikṣepa* or *Nyāsa* or *bhara – Nyāsa*, and the *ādhibhautika ānukūla samkalpa* and *prātikūla – varjna*, willing the helpful and the rejection of the obstructive.

The dharma which thus becomes most necessary for the performance of continuous surrender and offering without ceasing to be is definitely lined up with the devoted pursuit of the five disciplines – *stays, ahimsa, āsteya, aparigraha* and *brahmacarya*. These are the offering that one makes to the Divine in Surrender (*Īśvara -prāṇidhāna-niyama*) and this verily is *śauca* (cleanliness). But these follow rather than produce surrender and offering. The distinction between the nature process and the artificial one lies precisely in the divine activity being natural and spontaneous whereas the human activity is artificial and effortful. What is natural to the divine (*ādhidaivika*) is artificial (*ādhyātmika* or *ādhi – samkalpa*) to the human. ¹

In the higher consciousness then dharm becomes a natural divine activity or activity of the Divine Lord within the form of individual psychology and mechanical physics. (*ādhibhautika*).

¹ It is perhaps pertinent to remark that the five virtues (yamās(or disciplines refer to five types: the brāhmaṇa's virtue should be truth, kṣatriyas ahimsa, viśvās āsteya, śūdras aparigraha, and of women brahmacarya. These would be the svadharma, of course the brahmana should have all the five , the Kṣatriya the four, Vaisya the three Śūdra the two and Woman one as their differentiation excellences.
