

Way of life by Samartha Ramdas

In Maharashtra, the period between 12th and 17th century was the era of the famous saints, like Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Eknath, Namdeo, Samartha Ramdas, and, Meerabi, Kabir etc. in North India.

These saints showed common people easy path to reach God, which is called Bhaktiyog. That path was Namasmaran, which ultimately merges into transcendental meditation! The continuous 'Namasmaran' leads you to the state of pure consciousness. The 'Nama' melts into your soul gradually and your mind becomes thoughtless. The regular practice of 'Namasmaran' prepares your mind to overcome the difficult situations, in your life and gives you courage and peace of mind. Actually, peace of mind is the true aim of our life. Isn't it! That is according to Ramdas, 'Moksha' – salvation from worldly pains.

For the attainment of this kind of salvation, you need not get rid of your five senses; because the body and the mind go hand in hand. You are very well supposed to fulfill the wishes of your five senses i.e. to see, listen, smell, test, and touch. You need not lead a life of an ascetic

Samartha Ramdas (1608-1682) has written approximately 40,000 verses, a verse of four lines each, in different books.

Karunshtake

Ramdas left home when he was only twelve years old. Although he had strong control over his emotions, it was not easy to lead lonesome and hard life, during his self-training period.

In that restless state of mind, Ramdas wrote Karunashtake. These are the prayers full of pathos or "Karuna rasa". So these are called Karunshtake.

Ramdas says,

अनुदिन अनुतापे तापलो देवराया । परमदिनदयाळा नीरसी मोहमाया ।
अचपळ मन माझे नावरे आवरीता । तुजविण सिण होतो धाव रे धाव आता ॥१॥
भजनरहित रामा सर्व ही जन्म गेला । स्वजनजनधनाचा वेर्थ म्यां स्वार्थ केला ।
रघुपति मति माझी आपुलीसी करावी । सकळ तजुनि भावे कास तूझी धरावी ॥२॥

“O God keep me away from the burning flame of worldly temptations. I indeed cannot keep my mind balanced, in the state of equanimity.

The life is being hard without you. Up till now, I was too much attached to my close relatives. Now, I want to learn detachment. Take me O God in your shelter. I am determined to avoid temptations and to follow the serene path which leads to you.”

सुख सुख म्हणतां हें दुःख टाकूनि आलें ।
भजन सकळ गेलें चित्त दुश्चित्त जालें ॥
भ्रमित मन कळेना हीत तें आकळेना ।
परम कठिण देहीं देहबुद्धी वळेना ॥ १३. करुणाष्टक

“I am constantly in search of happiness. But what I often experience is only sorrow and misery. My confused mind can neither concentrate on Meditation nor in bhajan puja. I know that I am still running after the bodily happiness, the materialistic enjoyment and I fail to search for inner joy”.

अत्र नाहीं वस्त्र नाहीं सुख नाहीं जनांमधे ।
आश्रयो पाहतां नाहीं बुद्धि दे रघुनायका ॥ करुणाष्टक
बोलतां चालतां येना कार्यभाग कळेचिना ।
बहू मी पीडलों लोकीं बुद्धि दे रघुनायका ॥ करुणाष्टक

“While leading my lonesome life here far away from my house and family, I don’t get enough food, enough clothes. I cannot mix with the people. I feel myself like a refugee. I don’t have close relationship with anybody. I am just thrown away. O God, help me, to change my attitude and show me the right path.”

Manache Shlok

His most popular book 'Manache Shlok or Manobodh' includes 205 schlok with 4 lines each. Since the 17th century, 'Manache Schlok are being recited by common people in Maharashtra. Many have learnt them by heart, since the style of schlokas is unique, easy, beautiful and simple, though artistic and meaningful.

The great saint Samartha Ramdas teaches us to have dialogue with our own mind. Your own mind is your friend, your enemy and your own mind can be also your Guru.

205 verses of Manache Shlok are translated into several Indian languages, including Urdu. A Muslim Saint Shahsuraj Ali has translated it into Urdu, which is called " Manasamazavana ". His Guru was Ramdas. The handwritten copy of "Manasamzavana "still exists in the Jama Masjid of Delhi.

Atmaram, Karunatake, Abhanga and Arti are his other books. All popular Marathi Artis e.g. 'Sukhakarta Dukhhartha, Durge durghata bhari, Shivaarti, Maruti Stotra and many others are written by Ramdas.

Ramdas thought, the best guide to advise the human being is his own mind.

Manache Shlok teaches your mind to change yourself gradually.

Find out the reasons of your anger, jealousy, greed, sorrow, depression, fear, because these are the negative emotions, which you have to face constantly in your life. Convince your mind with Ramdas's words as he says,

भवाच्या भयें काय भीतोस लंडी ।
घरी रे मना धीर धाकासि सांडी ।

“O you, my coward mind, why are you afraid of worldly sorrows? Get rid of fear and hold courage”.

Dasbodh

Dasbodh is the most important book by Ramdas. The book consists of 7,751 verses. “Das” means servant i.e. a devotee. Ramdas was a devotee of Ram. “Bodh” means “teaching”.

In ‘Dasbodh’, Ramdas touches multiple topics connected to human life. The book is a beautiful guide for the ideal human life. It teaches us how to shape our life through Ramdas’ excellent practical and spiritual principles.

Dasbodh also explains multiple facets of the Universe. It really covers the whole cosmos. Ramdas, however, emphasizes the existence of God very strongly and shows common people the easy way to reach God, namely, ‘Bhaktimarg’. This, according to him, is a sure path to achieve peace of mind in life.

Samartha realized that the base of a firm and healthy society is a harmonious family. One should not neglect his family. He should fulfill his duties first; otherwise, he is not fit for devoting himself to God. He says,

आधी प्रपंच करावा नेटका। मग घ्यावे परमार्थ विवेका।
येथे आळस करू नका। विवेकी हो ॥
प्रपंच करावा नेमक। पहावा परमार्थ विवेक।
जेणेकरिता उभयलोक। संतुष्ट होती ॥
प्रपंची जो सावधान। तोच परमार्थ करिल जाण।
प्रपंची जो अप्रमाण। तो परमार्थ खोटा ॥
प्रपंच सुखेनैव करावा। परि काही परमार्थ वाढवावा।
परमार्थ अवघाचि बुडवावा। हे बरे नव्हे ॥

“You should fulfill your duties first. Then you are only fit to think about spirituality. Make the people around you happy. The one who fulfills his duties cautiously, is able to practice spirituality; otherwise he is not supposed to be a real devotee. Your life should be a good combination of family life and spiritual life.”

Samartha handles in “Dasbodh” varied themes, for example, family planning, health, body facts, architecture, construction of buildings, administration, politics, time management, personal development, how to train managers and leaders, management of your own mind and spiritual thoughts.

The great souls like Gandhi, and Vivekananda had read Dasbodh and had written words of praise on “Dasbodh”.

Atmaram

Samartha Ramdas noticed that in spite of listening, reading and meditation, the desired expected change in the attitude of human beings was not witnessed; therefore, he guides them through the medium of conversation.

In “Atmaram”, Ramdas has presented a transparent fundamental thought. Samartha has guided his disciples through “Atmaram”, to practice their search for self realization. The verses in Atmaram are purely philosophical. “Atma” means soul, “Ram” means here “Supreme Being.” The idea is: an individual soul of each and every being in the universe is a part of the “Supreme Being”.

Atmaram consists of 183 verses. These verses are like deep Spiritual Ocean, wherein you learn to dive and find out shells full of radiant pearls. Let us see a few verses.

प्राप्त झालें अद्वैतज्ञान । अभिन्नषणें जें विज्ञान ।
तेंचि जाण आत्मनिवेदन । जेथें मी तूं नाहीं ॥ ४.३२
ऐसी स्थिती जया पुरुषाची । तया पुनरावृत्ती कैची ।
जाणोनि भक्ति केली दास्याची । देवासी अनंत ॥ ४.३३ आत्माराम

Ramdas explains to his disciples, “I am the supreme universe, the inspiration of energy. The same inspiration of energy is manifested in various forms in the universe. This is the awareness of equanimity and equality i.e. Atmanivedan.

This is the state of enlightenment, which does not allow unhappiness to enter your mind. The feeling of you and me vanishes from your mind. This is called Adwait.

In this era scientists have successfully tried to explore space. Samartha Ramdas advises through his valuable work, to find out the space in your deep inner mind. He wants you to design your life more beautifully in an artistic way, filling it with pure happiness and peace!

ऐक ज्ञानाचें लक्षण । ज्ञान म्हणिजे आत्मज्ञान ।
पाहावें आपणासि आपण । या नाच ज्ञान ॥ १ ॥

“To know yourself. To find out your hidden self is knowledge”