

ZERO(ness)

- Dr. S. V. Raghavan

(Great Master Revered Babuji Maharaj presented to the humanity Sri Ramchandra's Raja Yoga to realise the real goal of human life as Nothingness and the author in his article has looked at this from Sadhaka's angle as zeroness or fana-e-fana. -- Editor.)

The conception of the Ultimate or Goal as Zero in the Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga is truly revolutionary. We normally refer to God as almighty, omnipotent, omniscient and cannot in the first instance come to terms with the idea of zero in this regard. The God of religion, in all varieties of religion, has not been conceived in terms other than creator, sustainer and destroyer. God in certain religions has been even described as the most jealous demanding total obedience and subservience and prepared to send down His holy wrath upon the hapless victim who chooses to disobey or disregard His commands. Another religion says that one should have his heart filled with fear the moment the idea of God arises in it. The punitive, retributive nature is attributed to God perhaps to bring order into the societies totally lacking it. If we reflect a while it will be clear that the

ideas regarding God have evolved over a period of time starting from the most primitive ideas formed in the societies of barbaric people to the really sublime ones we find in the Upanishads, for instance, It is neither Sat nor Asat but beyond, transcending the very idea of existence. It is to be described only in terms of 'not this, not this'; God exhausts all definitions and is truly beyond any of them.

Also for those of us who have been practicing Sri Ramchandra's Rajayoga, it has become abundantly clear that no amount of theorizing, mouthing the choicest words descriptors or indulging in philosophical sophistication on this sacred subject is of no avail. Referring to God as Absolute, Ultimate or Zero ends up in making Him an abstraction, no doubt a very attractive one at that. But it is of no practical help to dwell on such abstractions.

The great Master, revered Babuji Maharaj has repeatedly stressed the importance of having a guide who has practically experienced God in His ultimate status for any meaningful progress in the field of spirituality. He himself was such an exalted person who exemplified the dictum that an ounce of practicality is worth gallons of theory. He described himself disarmingly that he is no

scholar but a practical person who has come out boldly in the field prepared to connect any willing aspirant to God. He has proclaimed that he has been able to do all that he has been doing only because of his supreme faith in his Lord and Master, revered Lalaji Maharaj, who had taken him through all the stages open to man and launched him as an expert swimmer in the vast stretches of the Infinite Ocean. As the practicers of the Ramchandra's Rajayoga we are infilled by His consciousness day in and day out and it is no surprise that by and by we get soaked in it. The strengthening of this practical orientation towards realization is itself an indicator of the fact that when the guide/Master is such a person the followers have to become likewise:

Let us now see how the goal of Zero we have set for ourselves may be entered into. The Master while talking of zero, says we are all zeroes God is the only number one, the Uniquely great One. Thus it is clear that zero here is used to denote our utter insignificance before the great One. When we think about our own existence, we find that we become aware of it only through the 'I' consciousness which seems to arise from a base of nothingness. It may be thought of as wave arising in the ocean of nothingness so to speak. We affirm our individual existence by affirming the "I" and saying it is I which at one level of identification is the body at the

second level is the mind, at a third level consciousness, bliss, existence and at the final level attains a state wherein it is and it is not. The Master would say it is the individuality which is lost, meaning the identification with the particularized existence encased within the body having an individualized mind is lost or transcended when the state of no-consciousness consciousness is entered into. Put differently, as the entry is gained into the rings of splendour it is transformed into identity. Even here there are grosser forms of the same which are to be experienced, transcended before one assumes the naked form and becomes fit to present himself before his Maker.

All are familiar with the concept in elementary number theory namely that we can get as big a number as possible by adding zeroes on the right of the number one; this would indicate 'mahato maheeyan' or greater than the greatest or God when He has expressed Himself as this infinite universe. We may also say that it is we zeroes who are helping God to display His stature as God. Without us He cannot be traced out. If He did not have any conscious creation, there would be none to extol His praises or broadcast His glory. It follows also that unless each one of us transforms the individual ego to the superfine identity we cannot express Him truly. That also becomes our great duty and the only way We can show

our gratitude to the One to whom we owe our very existence, the One by whom we live and breathe.

Now think of placing the zeroes to the left of the number one and add the decimal point, more the zeroes to the left, it becomes smaller than the smallest number. This is 'anoraniyan' and represents the effect of sadhana we put in. Each day we should grow smaller in the sense that ideas of our self importance, self righteousness, self worth gradually fade away when we take into account the Master's greatness, His glory, His perfection and the transforming power of His grace. Further we also start recognizing our undeservingness, our helplessness, our shortcomings and reach the conclusion that we have to totally surrender ourselves at His feet. The steps in surrender happen to be feeling our worthlessness, His perfection, accepting that He is the saviour developing the confidence that He will save, praying for His succour and a total self offering to Him. We of course start with obedience and cooperation. Slowly we start yielding to His noble influence on our hearts through the infusion of the divine grace. This starts the process of negation or fana or forgetting our egoistic self at least to some extent. The whole of sadhana only aims at developing and perfecting the fana which leads to fana ul fana or negation of negation. We experience the negation in its various shades as we go through the process of laya and

mergence in each of the knots and finally when we cross over to the region which is beyond the knots or points.

The Master exhorts every one to nullify the self. The word 'nullify' indicates that we shall strive to attenuate the ego to its last possible extent till it becomes virtually non-existent. A practical check to see whether it is achieved or not has been nicely illustrated by the Master, when He says that the third level assumed by the ego is like that of a man who in the state of deep sleep automatically reaches for and strikes at the mosquito which has bitten him without being aware at the beginning, during the act and at the end of it that it is he indeed who had been bitten and who had struck at the insect. When the last possible limit of negation has been reached as in the case of the Master, you are unable to say whether it is you, Master or God when queried 'who are you'. He has also said negation is the goal in practical terms; because, as we said in the beginning, God in His ultimate transcendence is unknowable, beyond grasp when we try to know Him with deliberate effort. However, if we form the will to dissolve ourselves in Him, we become capable of entering His body as it were and there is a chance that He may on His own reveal Himself to the sincere devotee who had succeeded in the process of self dissolution. Needless to say that this does not fall to the lot of each and everyone. The

indispensable requirement is to have the grace of the Master and not only that, the sadhaka should have made it the supreme object of his life to attain the state of complete negation and formed an unflinching will to achieve it. There must be a restless impatience and insatiable craving to reach the goal, the goal being constantly in view. This paves the way for setting in motion the grace of God through which alone the realization of Him as He is in Himself is possible.

But we can be rest assured that this indeed is a very engaging pursuit with not a single dull moment. It is a wonderful game of hide and seek, the only paradox being who has hidden himself is the seeker. There is no end to the play also as during the course of the play the player himself disappears! Should we not be grateful to the great Master, Babuji Maharaj and nature's prodigy Rev. Lalaji Maharaj for having started us on this game, are motivating us every moment, energizing and rewarding us so that we may continue and ultimately will absorb us into them when they see that their children have become exhausted and need the comforting rest in their bosom? Let us all pray that we become indeed deserving of His grace and fulfil His expectations from us. Amen.

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"A realised soul is a most insignificant being or rather a neglected figure beyond all feelings of greatness, pride and egoism dwelling permanently in a state of complete self negation."

- Revered Babuji Maharaj