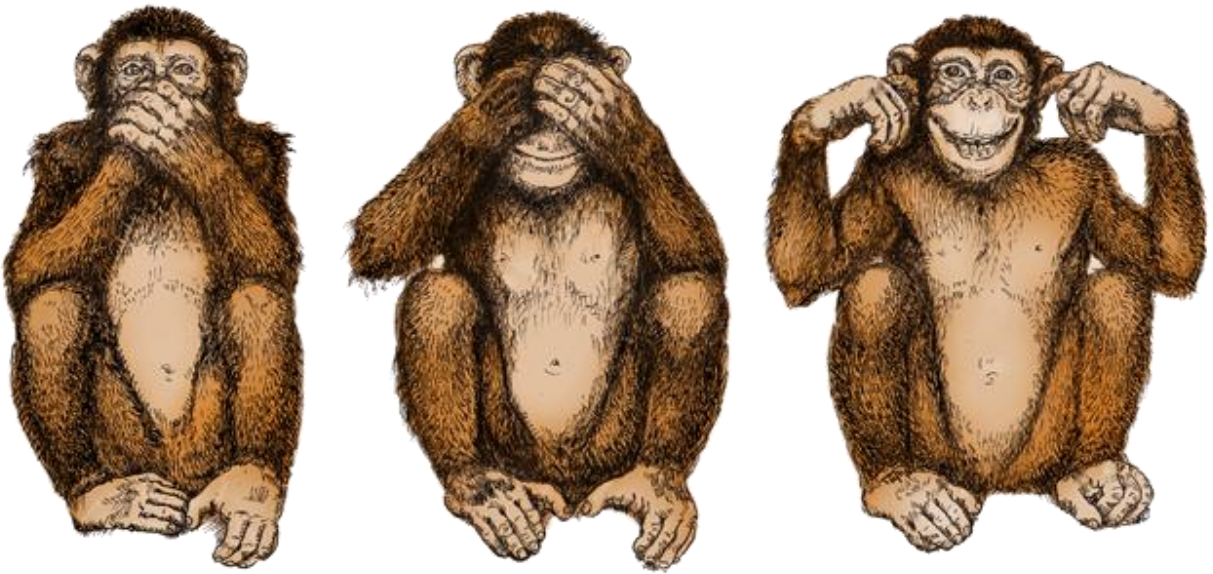


Sense Control



Compiled from the speeches of
Sadguru Sri Nannagaru



A person need not possess flaws in all the five senses. If he possesses in one single sense (say sight) it is enough for him to ruin. If he possesses flaws in all the five senses then it need not be mentioned specially that he will be totally ruined.

-Sadguru Sri Nannagaru

An Introduction to Sense Control

Our eyes automatically turn aside when we see a decayed carcass of a dog. Similarly when our senses naturally turn away from the sensory objects, it is called as sense control.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna mentioned Sense Control (ie Dama) as one of the Divine qualities. One cannot enhance their moral status without controlling their



senses. Sense control is the foundation for spiritual evolution. One cannot travel in the direction towards God without possessing sense control. Without travelling in the right direction, one cannot attain the Ultimate state. The Self Knowledge is not sustained if one does not possess sense control. The wavering of senses is

only the root cause of one's restlessness. The senses must be punished, conquered and driven in a disciplined manner. Lacking sense control leads to mental ill-health. Self control and sense control nurture the foundation for Self Realization.

One cannot look at his reflection without a mirror. Similarly one cannot 'Know Himself' without controlling the senses. Conquering the senses is much more difficult than conquering the world. The world does not vanish until and unless the senses are controlled and the Divinity is not revealed until and unless the world disappears.

The senses represent domestic horses. Humbling them and thereby befriending them not only requires effort from our end but also requires the Grace of God.



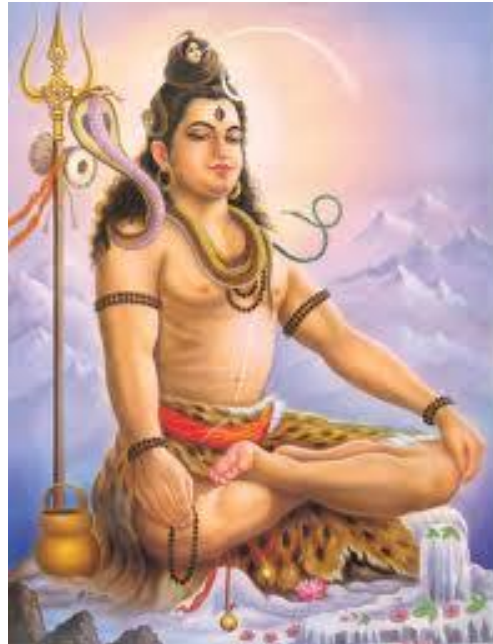
Thyagaraja said: "However great one may be, they are but slaves to desire and gold." One cannot control the senses while contemplating upon the sensory objects. Sense control can be



achieved only by contemplating upon the Self. The senses controlled beget good and the senses uncontrolled beget bad. If the senses are under one's control, they will not be disturbed even if the entire world rebels against them. The secrets of nature are revealed to them whose senses are under their control.

We think that our enemies exist somewhere externally. But our senses are only our real enemies. We think that the snakes reside somewhere in the anthills. But our senses are much more dangerous than the snakes. When a snake bites, we merely lose our body. But

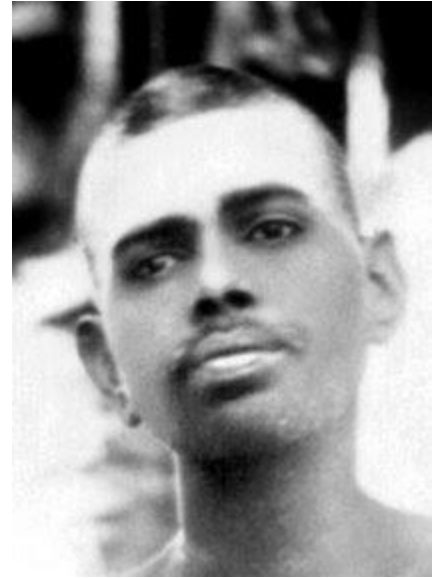
uncontrolled senses lead us towards several filthy births.



What does Lord Shiva indicate by decorating Himself with the snakes? It is only to indicate us that He has decorated Himself with the ornaments called controlled senses. This world does not ask us to get deluded. We get deluded only because of our senses. It is only our senses that provoke us to look into the world and thereby delude us.

Of all the Spiritual practices, Sense Control is most difficult

Our body is one but God has put several sense organs in it. A separate attraction exists for each and every sense organ. Once, a devotee belonging to the kitchen cabinet of Bhagavan Ramana, asked Him: "Of all the spiritual practices (sadhanas), which is the most difficult one?" When posed with such questions, Bhagavan would usually advise: 'Know Thyself' (or find the source of the 'i' that you are referring to) However, in this context Bhagavan replied:" Every sense organ is dragged towards a particular sensory object. To withdraw the senses from the sensory objects towards which they are attracted, is the most difficult form of spiritual practice (sadhana)."



The Bigger desire to attain God will drive away the petty desire to enjoy sensual pleasures

Controlling the senses is referred to as physical penance. No one in this world has ever transcended their senses by the gratification of their senses and thereby fulfilling their desires. When one pours ghee into the fire, the fire increases. Similarly as one fulfills their desires, their desires will only increase. Therefore Lord Krishna called the desires as Mahashani (the great planet of Saturn) in the Bhagavad Gita. If one fulfills their desires, they will ruin in the source. Conquering a desire gives more joy than in satisfying it. The joy attained by controlling a desire is much greater than the joy attained in fulfilling it. That peace and joy is indescribable, the effect of which is not known immediately. It takes some time to know their effect. One cannot transcend their desires merely by fighting against

them. If one's yearning to attain God increases, their petty desires will diminish. This great desire to attain God will drive off the nature related petty desires. Suppose you are planning to visit a cinema theatre to watch a film but you are advised by someone that you need to visit a hospital immediately as you are suffering from a heart related ailment, you then rush towards a hospital and not towards a cinema theatre. The petty desire to watch a film will be driven away in this process.

The State of Samadhi cannot be attained without controlling the senses

What did Lord Krishna narrate while mentioning the attributes of a person with steadfast wisdom? He insisted on controlling the senses. What does one achieve by controlling



the senses? One cannot achieve Self Realization without sense control. One cannot achieve the state of Samadhi without controlling the senses. One may possess 90 qualifications or 90 Phds or 90 doctorates. One may even inherit a huge amount of wealth or become the king of their nation. Irrespective of whatever one may possess, without controlling the senses one cannot achieve the state of Samadhi.

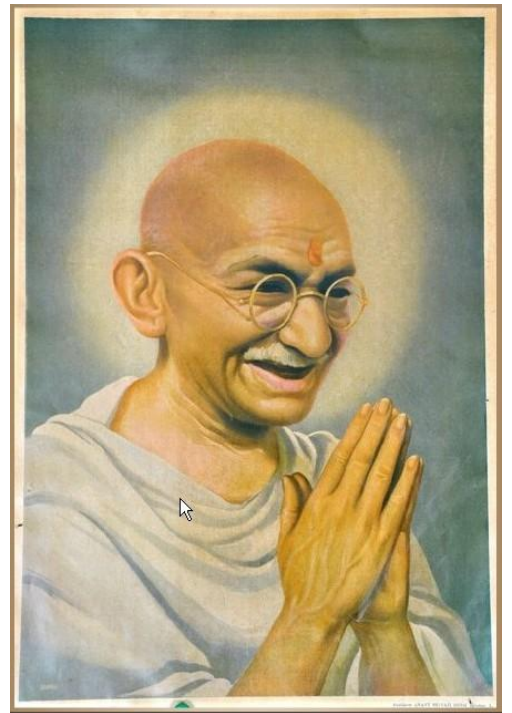
Contemplation helps in transcending the desires

Our senses are the thieves. They are the demons. It is only our senses which deprive us of our peace. It is our senses alone which bring us sorrow. Some people listen to these (spiritual) sermons very attentively. But after 9 O'clock in the night, they cannot stop themselves from visiting a cinema theatre to watch the second show of a film. If one sincerely contemplates upon the words that they hear, the desire to watch a film itself doesn't arise. Constructing temples is not relevant. What is most relevant is listening to the subject (spirituality related topics) and contemplating upon the same. The ignorance is lost only in this process and not by installing any idol in a temple.

Whatever we intake through the senses also constitutes food

Whatever we intake from our mouth, we consider only that to be our food. Whatever we listen to, irrespective of whether it is good or bad also constitute our food; whatever we watch with our eyes, irrespective of whether it is good or bad, also constitutes our food.

Therefore Gandhiji possessed a toy relating to the three monkeys (which closed their mouth, eyes and ears). What does the monkey closing its mouth indicate? It indicates that one should not speak the bad. What does the monkey closing its eyes indicate? It indicates that one should not see



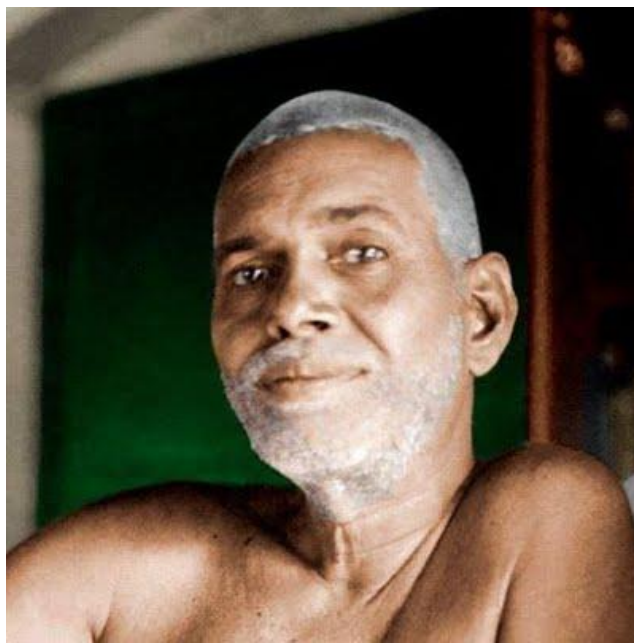


bad. What does the monkey closing its ears indicate? It indicates that one should not listen bad. Why is it so? Whatever we watch with the eyes or whatever we hear through the ears or whatever we speak with the mouth also constitute our food. Hence Gandhiji always possessed that toy pertaining to the three monkeys.

**Without being Jitendriya, one cannot
become Ateendriya**



In Ramayana, Lakshmana is called as Jitendriya ie., the one who has controlled his senses whereas Rama is called as Ateendriya ie the one who has transcended his senses ie he has no senses to control and is beyond them (Supreme Self).



When Bhagavan Ramana was suffering from sarcoma (a cancerous abscess) on hand, one of the devotees asked him: “Bhagavan, how are you able to bear the pain?” Bhagavan replied: "It is only when you tell me that I become aware that I possess a body, which has two hands, one of which is inflicted with abscess." It is the Ultimate state. When the body itself does not exist for Bhagavan, how can the destiny or the world or the senses ever affect Him?

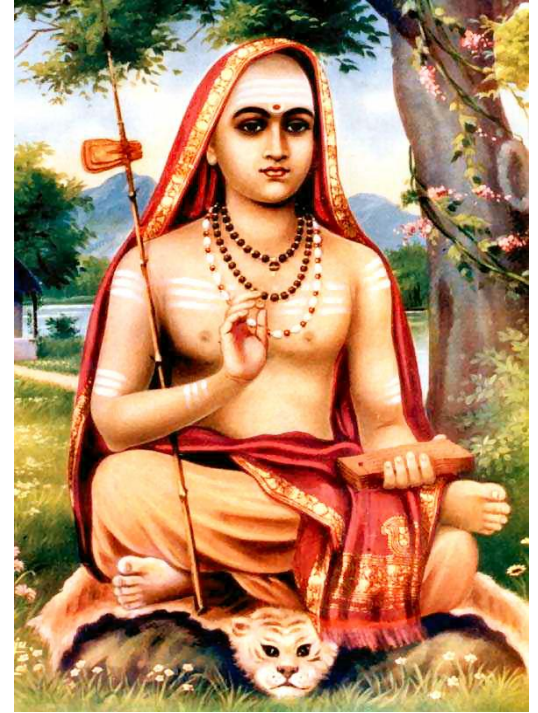
Your senses have killed you, Oh! Ravana



In Ramayana, after Ravana was killed by Lord Rama, Mandodari, the wife of Ravana, approached the corpse of Ravana and said: "Oh! Ravana, you have not been killed by Rama but You have been killed by your senses."

Do not try to cross an ocean sitting on the back of a crocodile

Adi Shankara said: "If one tries to attain liberation by leading a sensual life (enjoying the sensual pleasures), it is as good as attempting to cross an ocean on the back of a crocodile." He further said: "A person consuming porridge



ensures that the same remains on his tongue for a longer period of time. It is because once the food crosses the tongue, one cannot cherish its taste. However one who consumes castor oil tries to gulp it down immediately. Sense control is possible only when one enjoys controlling the senses as one enjoys eating porridge."

What is meant by true sense control?



Kalidasa said: "Avoiding the sensual pleasures doesn't constitute self control. The true self control lies in not being tempted when the object of temptation is in front of you. "

Regulation of the tongue

Regulating the tongue involves two aspects: Firstly, regulating the food we take and secondly, regulating the words that we speak out. We are always very careful regarding what goes inside (ie food) but not at all concerned regarding what comes out ie., the words that we speak out. We must be very careful regarding the words that we speak out. It is also equivalent to a penance. Being aware as to what to speak out and what not to speak out also constitutes a penance. If one falls down, they may get up again but any unwarranted words spoken out cannot be taken back.

Regulation of Food



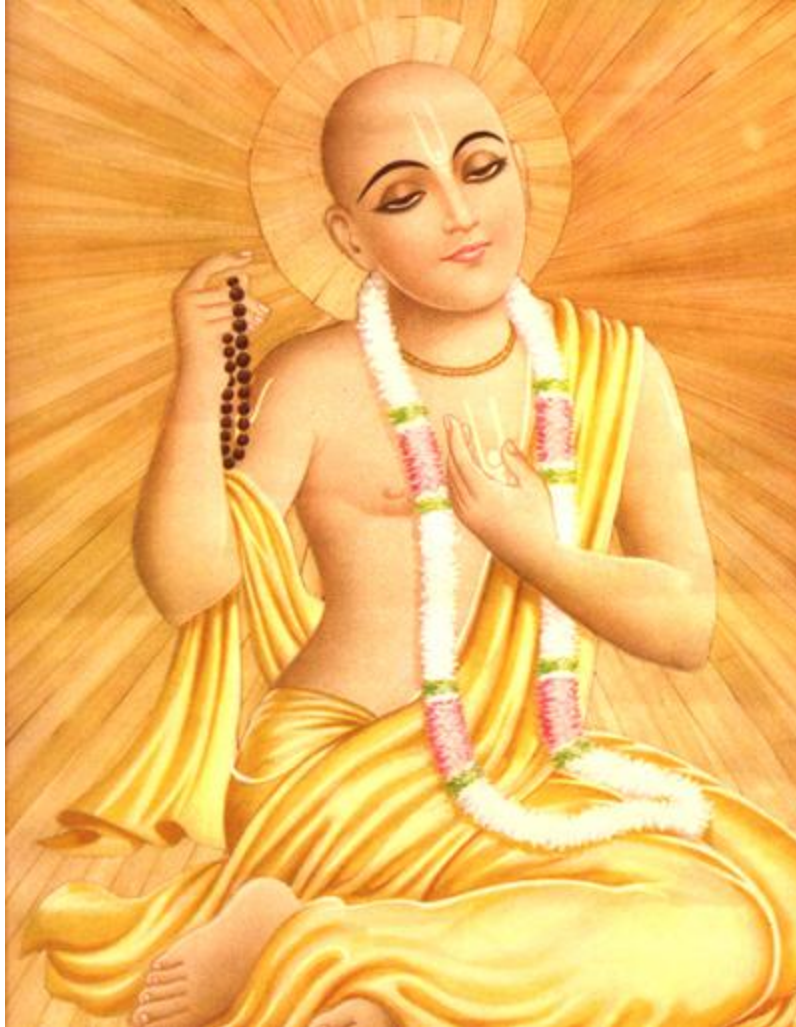
Of all the regulations, the regulation of food is most important. Bhagavan Ramana (who always declared that Self alone exists) said: "Regulation of food and Holy Company are enough to get liberated." Even in the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna said: 'Yuktaahara viharasya'. It implies that one should intake right food, suitable to their body in appropriate quantities. Even the body is our Guru as it specifies the quantity that can be consumed. Bhagavan Ramana said: "Once one finishes eating their meals, one should be able to get up as hastily

as one comes running and sits down to take their meals." One should not eat more for the sake of taste ie One should respect their stomach and not their tongue while taking their food. The food regulation not only bestows the physical health but also controls the mind.

The following have to be followed with regard to food regulation:

- a) Offer your food to God and then eat.
- b) Eat Sattvic food.
- c) Eat Moderately.
- d) Eat with the money, which has been earned righteously.
- e) Take your food on time.

An Ayurvedic book states: "Even if you have a 100 tasks, keep them aside. Take your food on time and then carry on your work."



The sense control of Sri Krishna Chaitanya was such that even if sugar was put on his tongue, not even a particle of sugar got wet due to saliva. One could take back the sugar.



With regard to food habits, Gandhiji can be taken as a role model. Once, Gandhiji was invited by Rabindranath Tagore for dinner. Gandhiji followed a very simple diet. However, when Gandhiji saw several delicious items placed in his plate that he wouldn't eat, he simply asked: "Where is my plate?"

Regulation of touch

Jnaneshwar said: "As long as a person craves to enjoy the physical or mental pleasures, he cannot transcend his desire and anger. As he is craving for pleasures, he is searching for enjoyments in



the market. The Fancy shops and shopping malls emerged only due to this. Only for the sake of his enjoyment, a person buys the body of a woman in the market in the name of marriage. That body bestows him with the greatest enjoyment in the world. Gradually he gets distanced from his parents as he craves for that enjoyment."

Swami Vivekananda said: "Marriage is merely a nervous satisfaction."



Once, a devotee wanted to ask Sri Ramakrishna: "How can I overcome the desire relating to sex?" The devotee feared that Sri Ramakrishna would suggest him very tough spiritual practices or penance. However, he finally took the courage to pose the question. Sri Ramakrishna replied smilingly: "Surrender unto Divine Mother whole-heartedly. Pray Her to bestow you with the strength to transcend this desire. With the Grace of the Divine Mother, you can completely transcend the desire for sex very easily."

Regulation of Sight



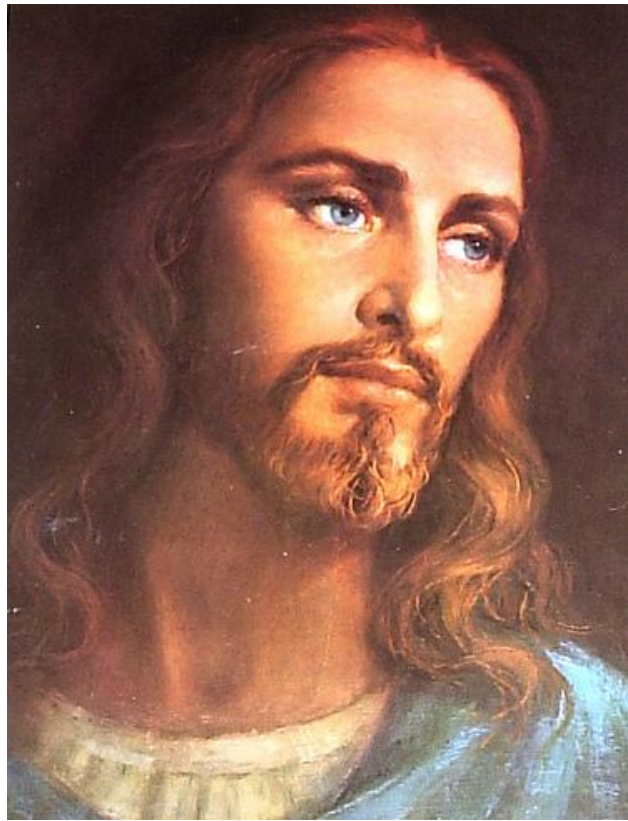
Bhagavan Ramana said in the Upadesa Saram:

drisya-varitam chitta-matmanaha

chitva-darsanam tattva darshanam

It is true wisdom for the mind to turn away

From outer objects and behold its own effulgent form.



Jesus said: "If your eyes are deceiving you, if they are causing you an endless harm, if they are the cause for your hell, pull them and throw aside."

Watching Television is equivalent to slow poisoning.

Regulation of the hearing and the smell

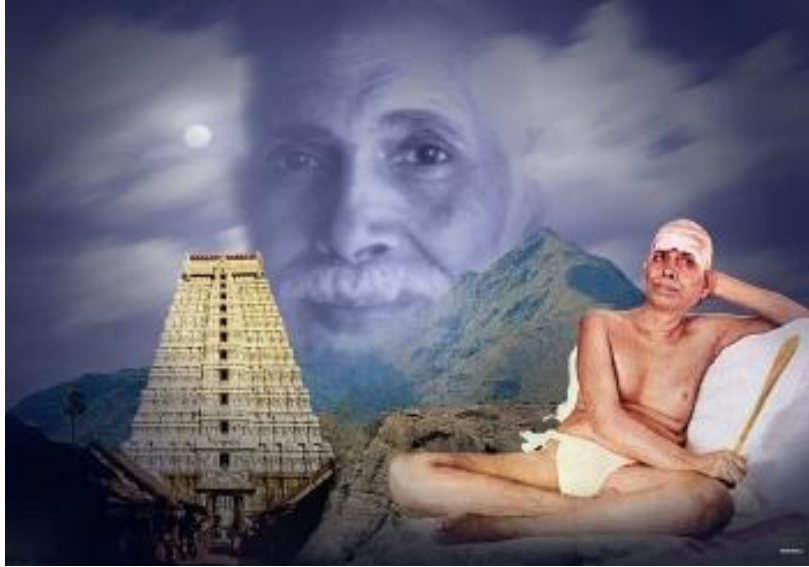
Abusing others alone does not constitute a sin. It is also a sin if one listens to a person abusing another. Even they constitute the food consumed through the senses. When one is bound to listen about the bad or unpleasant pertaining to others, even if they utter a lie to move away from that place, God would ensure that they will not incur any sin of having told that lies. Become a deaf man when you need to listen about the bad in others.

There was a dog which did not even smell the food placed in front of it until and unless Bhagavan Ramana signaled it to eat. Such was its sense control in spite of being an animal. The great saints visited Bhagavan Ramana in the form of animals.

Self Control leads to Sense Control

Why is a body required? It is because the body constitutes of senses. As one possesses the desire to enjoy the sensual pleasures, they need a body. However it is not the body which enjoys the sensual pleasures. It is the mind which enjoys the sensual pleasures through the senses. Therefore Bhagavan said: "By regulating the mind, the senses are regulated automatically."The snake called mind comes out from the anthills (or burrows) called senses, takes its food and then goes back. Suppose one acts vigilantly by holding a stick and ensures that the snake doesn't come out, the snake expires in the anthill itself. Similarly by being vigilant, if one ensures that the mind does not emerge out in the form of thought, the mind gets weakened and then dies. Either the path of Self enquiry or the path of Surrender helps us in this process.

A Prayer from Marital Garland of Letters



Bhagavan Ramana said in 'The Marital Garland of Letters': "Why dost Thou sleep (Does it become Thee thus to sleep) when I am dragged (outraged) by others, O Arunachala? Even when the thieves of the five senses break in upon me (enter my heart), art Thou not still in my heart, O Arunachala?"

Though the senses belong to our body, why did Bhagavan Ramana refer to them as thieves? The Jiva or the ego does not belong to the body but belongs to the Supreme Consciousness ie Self or the Supreme Lord ie God. As the senses are distancing the Jiva from its very nature ie Self, Bhagavan referred to the senses as the thieves.

Sri Ramana questions: When the senses and sensory objects enter the Heart, are you not still (Silent, without doing anything) within the Heart, Oh! Arunachala? Where else can Arunachala go? Is He frightened by the senses and sensory objects to go elsewhere? If He (Arunachala or His Power) is recognized, the sensory objects cannot enter the heart. As long as He is not recognized, the sensory objects keep entering the Heart. God cannot leave us and go elsewhere.

Sense Control is possible only through devotion and surrender

If we can control our senses we need neither a temple nor a school nor an ashram. The entire secret lies here. What are we doing? We leave the senses free and try to do bhajans, meditation and visit temples and thereby expect liberation in return. Neither this temple nor this school nor this ashram nor our riches nor our education accompany us after death. It is only our senses that accompany us after death. They are not burnt even if we burn them. Remember this: "Without controlling these senses even if you have earned a lot of riches or have attained great educational qualifications or have attained great fame, all these represent zeroes without one (on the left hand side). These are of no use in the other worlds (that we reach after death). All of us

are being deluded by the world. Why is it so? It is only because of our senses. Who is the greatest one among all? It is God. God implies the Self within. But are we giving the same importance to God that we give to sensory objects enjoyed through our senses? No. The importance being given to a lie (ie senses) is not being given to the Truth (ie Self). Therefore our mind is getting extroverted. All of us want to earn money. Why? It is because we crave for happiness. We need money to enjoy pleasures. The importance given to the visible sensory objects is not being given to Self. Then who would desire to attain Self Knowledge? What did Gautama Buddha do? Even He craved for happiness. He sacrificed his kingdom, his wife as well as his child. Why is it so? It is only because He realized that all the visible sensory pleasures are transient and are false. Therefore

he sacrificed all these sensory pleasures and became an ascetic in order to attain the permanent happiness pertaining to Self. Why are we being deluded? We are being deluded only due to the pleasures that we have enjoyed with our senses in our past births. We are not being deluded due to our friends or relatives or society. We are being deluded only due to our senses. A deluded person possesses neither peace nor happiness.

One may earn a lot of money and thereby do great charity or attain great power and authority or attain a great fame that there is none equivalent to them in this world. Whatever one may do, if their senses are not within their control, if their senses do not act as per their direction, they can never understand the existence and nature of God even if they take birth for crores of times. In spite of living

for a long duration, we forget to ensure how far we have been able to control our senses. Leaving out our senses and mind which are very near to us, we try to attain something in the world. This is only called as Maya (Cosmic Illusion). Lord Krishna said in the Gita: "None can transcend My Maya. Suppose there is no crookedness within us and we whole-heartedly try to attain Self, though our attempt is genuine, if our mind and senses are not co-operative, we can never attain Self. If our senses and mind are within our control, even if the entire world turns against us or becomes our enemy, they cannot harm us. At least for the sake of our happiness, we must conquer our senses and mind. That happiness doesn't arise out of education or wealth; it emerges only from sense control.

We enjoy certain pleasures with our senses. Such happiness remains hidden with our Heart. What is the centre of everything? It is but Heart. Hence everything is hidden within our Heart. They can neither be drenched by water nor burnt by fire. Our body gets burnt upon our death and not our senses. They are but outlets. Suppose if we take the example of the eyes, the eyes are not the senses, they are merely an outlet. The tendency to look with the eyes can be considered as the senses. Suppose if we take the instance of ears, the ears are not the senses. We can hear with the ears but they are merely an outlet. The tendency to hear with the ears can be considered as senses. We are able to taste with our tongue. But the tongue of two different people does not crave for the same taste. If a person's tongue craves for fish, another's tongue craves for meat. Though the

tongue is same, the sense pertaining to taste within them is different. When we die our eyes, ears, nose and tongue get burnt; however the senses pertaining to them do not get burnt. Even after death, the body consciousness remains within us for a long duration. But we don't have the chance to come back. What do we do then? We keep searching for a place which we like the most. Also we have very big desires. Suppose we have a great craving for power and authority, we desire to take birth in a place where we can easily attain the power. But God does not give us birth in the place that we desire. He decides our Mother based upon our destiny (result of past actions) but not according to our desire. Therefore taking birth is not within our control. No Jiva is independent. Every Jiva is bound. God alone is independent. God is the absolute dictator. We

have to take birth from the womb of that Mother whomever God selects as we have no choice and freedom in that regard. The Maya (Cosmic Illusion) is not within our control. If the Maya is within the control of God, we are all within the control of Maya. Therefore God is dictating all the Jivas on the basis of His Maya. So how can we transcend our senses? How can we conquer our mind? How can we gain spiritual strength? If we have to transcend the senses and mind, we need to be more powerful than them. Then how can we gain such strength? It is possible only through devotion. By surrendering to God, by requesting Him, by praying Him, by unbroken devotion, perpetual selfless work and continuous meditation, we can gain immense spiritual strength. We can conquer the senses only with that strength. Strength is derived only from devotion.

Devotion itself is the true strength. How much time does a tiger take to eat a sheep? It takes very less time. Similarly if the tiger called devotion is cultivated within us, it will eat away the goats namely tendencies within us.



Food regulation, Holy Company and reading Holy books facilitate in controlling the senses.

- Sadguru Sri Nannagaru