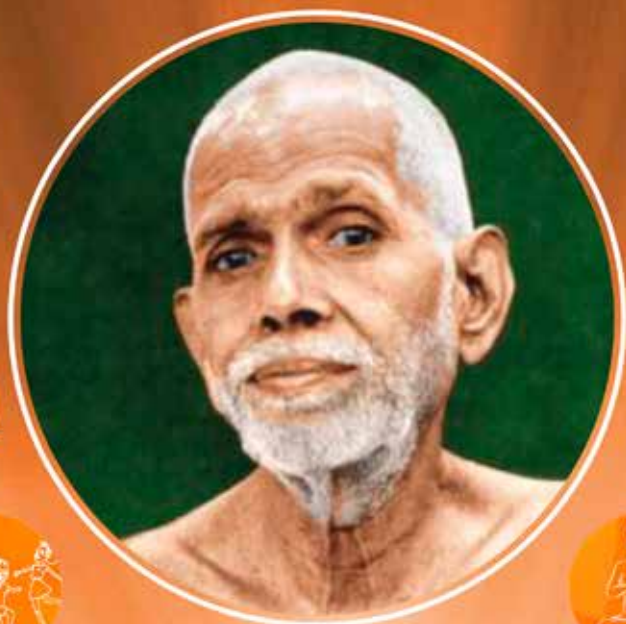


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The Ramana way



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for Learning
Bengaluru

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THE RAMANA WAY

A Monthly Journal since 1981

*Celebrating
Ramana Rasa
Anubhava*



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*Brotherhood based on equality is the supreme
goal to be attained by human society*

- Ramana Gita X, 10

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RMCL – Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning

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Editorial*Dr. Sarada*

I am constantly playing hide and seek with myself. I am the one who hides and I am the one who is seeking. Why do I seek myself? I seek myself because I feel that I do not know myself. There are so many things about me that are mysterious to me. So I ask myself, 'Who am I?' But who is to seek the unknown 'I' other than I myself? And how can 'I' seek anything unless I am aware of my own existence? So we assume there is a known 'I' who is seeking the unknown 'I'. The question would therefore arise as to who is the 'I' who seeks. This would take us deeper into the question 'Who am I?' Am I the one who seeks? Am I the one who is sought? As Ramana points out, 'Can there be two 'I's?'

These questions would arise for us only when the spirit of self-enquiry has caught hold of us. For, until we enquire we take so many things for granted. We hardly pay attention to the millions of fallacies with which we are living from moment to moment. Even if we do notice, we prefer to allow ourselves to get carried away by these. 'I know this is my ego tricking me', we say. We do not pause to enquire, 'Who is the 'I' and who is the ego? Are the two different from each other for us to say that 'the ego is tricking me'? By blaming something on the 'ego' are we not hiding behind the so called 'ego'? 'I don't want to think about it but the thoughts overpower me', we say. Are our thoughts apart from us? Can thoughts arise unless 'I' rise? Thus by blaming our thoughts are we not hiding behind them?

Surely, we are constantly hiding somewhere or the other. The 'I' apparently seeks to remain hidden and succeeds in doing so as well until it is enquired into, although by the very same I. When the I tries to turn the torchlight of attention upon itself, its true nature is revealed. Have I ever seen myself face to face? Can I do so? I may see myself in the mirror, but that is only an image of me. Besides, it is a reverse image, it is not how I really look. I may see myself in a photograph, but that again is only an image of me. Seeing a photograph is not seeing myself.

So, I have never ever seen myself and will not ever see myself either. Yet I am not curious to come face to face with myself. I prefer to pretend that I have seen myself although I have only seen objects. I prefer never to show my face to myself. Why is it so? Is it because I am worried that I have such a horrendous face? Or it because I know deep down inside that I don't have any face at all?

I see many lovely sights but do I pause to wonder who sees? If by some grace I do pause, before I can pause too long I am lost in another movement. The I hides behind another thought, another sensation. I may see other sights, good or bad. Or else, I may hear some sounds. Do I pause to wonder who hears? Most probably not. Yet, by grace if I do pause, the pause is not for long. Once more I have moved, once more I am hiding behind some other experience, some other sounds or some smells, fragrances or odours.

Is there a chance that I may wonder as to who it is that smells these odours? The chances are slim but in case grace allows the question to rise from within how long do I allow myself to stay with it? Probably momentarily before shifting fast to yet another sensation, taste, touch... the possibilities are endless. Millions of things to see, to hear, to touch, to taste, to smell ... but only one question regarding all these millions of experiences, 'Whose are these experiences? Who am I?'

Does it not seem far more attractive to move with the experience? A panorama of the beautiful and the ugly sights, the melodies and the cacophonies, the delicious and the nauseous dishes, the fragrances and the bad odours, the soft and the hard, the smooth and the rough sensations, is available for us. And so we are busy doing what Ramana asks us not to do, 'running with the running mind'.

We do not stop with noting what a particular sensation is. We are experts in classifying, analysing and labelling every experience. It is not just 'I see a flower'. Further it is, 'That is a rose, it is red in colour. This red is a crimson red. It is different from blood red and tomato red. Red roses are for love, while white roses denote friendship. The amazing variety of roses at the Lalbagh

flower show is mind boggling. The rose is likened to a cactus variety because it has thorns. Some people say that it should not be planted in one's garden as it may lead to some prickly experiences in life. Yet so many prickly plants have medicinal value and the bilva tree that is full of thorns is most auspicious to have in the garden. Anyhow, the philosophical approach to life would be to accept the ups and downs like the rose with its thorns.' Thus run our minds from thought to thought. Where then is the need or the time to ask, 'For whom are all these thoughts? Who am I?'

If we are not hiding behind sensations, we are busy hiding behind the train of ideas that sensations bring. We are busy hiding behind our emotions, our apparent joys and our passing sorrows, our fears and agitations or our courage and faith. If one moment we are disgusted by the world, the very next we may be amazed by it. We may revel in wild anger or in deep love. Or we may simply remain calm, unperturbed. No matter what emotion we choose to identify with at a particular moment, it is only an emotion, a thought like any other. And so long as attention is on the thought, attention is not on the 'I', it remains hidden behind the emotion. Do we care to trace it out?

Do we care to try and peep behind each thought to see whose thought it is? How long have I chased one emotion after another, how long have I gone back and forth, up and down, is it not enough? And all this without even knowing who I am! Each emotion is only a passing thought that moves on sooner or later. Who am I who experiences each emotion? Who is the I who precedes the coming of an emotion, the rising of the thought? Who is the I who embraces the emotion and says it is mine? Who is the I who remains after the emotion has passed away, after the thought has set? Who am I?

We tend to think that some emotions are good and others are bad. We may feel that sorrow is unwanted but joy is welcome. Or else we may think that sorrow too has its place by making us feel compassion for others who sorrow or by making us want to go beyond sorrow to the true joy of the Self. We may believe that anger is bad or we may argue that anger is necessary at times. We

may think it is good to have a sense of wonderment, to be amazed by the Grace and Love of the Supreme. On the other hand we may think that if we are amazed by the world we would tend to be engaged in it more and more, so it is better to be disgusted with all things. We may wish to overcome fear, we may look upon courage as a desirable quality. Above all, we may seek equanimity, a sense of unruffled calm.

By making choices, by discriminating between experiences as wanted and unwanted, good and bad, right and wrong, we hide behind our faculty of discrimination which is called the intellect. We are happy honing the 'I' to be better, stronger, truer, without pondering on the question of who this I is in the first place. Self-enquiry is not about improving the I, it is not about developing a 'better I' or even the 'best I' for that matter. Self-enquiry is about questioning the very basis of the I.

Every experience is potentially an opportunity for us to hide behind it. Equally it is an opportunity for us to enquire 'For whom is this experience? Who am I?' When thoughts about sensations arise one can enquire 'For whom is this? Who sees? Who hears? Who smells? Who touches? Who tastes? Who am I?' When thoughts about emotions arise one can enquire 'Who is happy? Who is sad? Who is angry? Who is afraid? Who is amazed? Who is brave? Who is disgusted? Who loves? Who is peaceful?' When thoughts about right and wrong arise one can enquire 'Who is right? Who is wrong? Who is good? Who is bad? Who is capable? Who is incapable? Who knows? Who does not know? Who am I?'

And even 'Who is keen on being dutiful? Who fails in fulfilling duty? Who is righteous? Who is unrighteous? Who is diligent? Who is indolent? Who is ready to offer all to God? Who is lazy and forgetful and caught up in doership? Who loves God? Who is lacking in love? Who has devotion? Who fails to have devotion? Who does diligent self-enquiry? Whose self-enquiry is lacking?' 'Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?'

Unless one is vigilant from moment to moment the 'I' will happily continue seeming to remain hidden behind multitudes of veils. But if one diligently removes one veil after another, unflaggingly, what would one find ultimately? Who asks? And who will know? One can only say that the truth will reveal itself.

As Sri A.R.Natarajan writes, "The entry of Ramana into one's life is like the dazzling sun brightening a cave which had been shrouded in darkness for ages. The dense darkness of ignorance of one's true nature cannot stand the searchlight of Ramana's radiant entry. One cannot dare to ask why one so unworthy has been blessed. What matters is his entry. That alone matters, all else really adds up to nothing."

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sarada Natarajan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

THE NEW DAWN**A. R. Natarajan***SHUTTING OFF THE SUN**

The joy and wonder of basking in the sun, of merging with the daylight and the dawn, the sunrise, the beauty of twilight and the setting sun is lost on the vast multitude. Theirs is a life in which most of their working hours are spent under artificial light, in air-conditioned rooms when all windows are shut. They leave their working places long after sunset. Even on Sundays they would rather not be disturbed by the bright sun. They ward it off through thick curtains whose only purpose is precisely that. People travel in Air-Conditioned cars with darkened glasses, sun visors in the front and venetian blinds for the rear glass. If they travel by train they would not leave the comfortable darkness of their Air-Conditioned cabins. Not for them the changing moods of the evening sun when the door is open and the breeze keeps caressing.

In our spiritual endeavours too we do not even know that the splendour of the sun, the light of lights, even exists. For, Self-awareness and its significance are totally lost on us. One is content to live and die without caring to know the immensity of his own true self and its dancing splendour in the heart. The smug satisfaction of many is appalling. Content to live with splintered minds, putting their faith exclusively in objective pleasure, clinging to their possessions, to power, to ideas and relationships many allow life to move on in its endless monotony. Alas the lives of the vast multitude is lived unquestioningly, unaware of one's own true nature, totally missing out on the inherent joy of the natural state. The entry of Ramana into one's life is like the dazzling sun brightening a cave which had been shrouded in darkness for ages. The dense darkness of ignorance of one's true nature cannot stand the searchlight of Ramana's radiant entry. One cannot dare to ask why one so unworthy has been blessed. What matters is his entry. That alone matters, all else really adds up to nothing.

The sun of suns, the radiant Self is ever shining in the heart. It is the source of the mind. As long as the mind is merged at

*An excerpt from the Publication of RMCL of the same title.

this place of its origin it will be illumined by the Self. Its nature as pure consciousness would enable the performance of the divinely allotted actions perfectly and undistractedly. The mind would be silent, non-seeking and joyous. This merger is brought about only by self-enquiry, an enquiry about the true nature of the subject 'I'. There are fleeting moments of this knowledge immediately on waking, just prior to the first identification with name and form, and between thoughts. The mind moves away from its source compelled by habit, by false knowledge of locating happiness outside in objects which are assumed to be independent of the subject.

Effort is needed to get back to the source, to experience natural joy and for an integral, pure mind. But there are few takers. Even the followers of Ramana seem to be content with surface dalliance, content with a few preliminary skirmishes with the massive thought flow. They seem only too ready to give up clinging to the core of the mind and the search for its source. The counter habit necessary for sustained inner movement is not developed.

By doing so they have shut off the constant glow of an illumined mind, merged totally in the Sun-Self. They do not even live in the reflected glory of the moonlight of a mind which is free from thoughts. The darkness of ignorance of the subject overpowers them. But they couldn't care less. Should one perish so? That too after the gracious entry of Ramana into our lives?

With so much at stake, so much to lose and so little to gain by the mind's external movement, why is it that one is unable or unwilling even to try, let alone go the whole hog, for the inward search? What prevents the inner dive from the ego-centric mind towards its source, the ever conscious spiritual heart? One finds two crucial reasons for this. The first has been discussed threadbare in a few long question and answer sessions which B.V. Narasimha Swami (the first biographer of Ramana) had with Ramana. This relates to the question of the location of happiness, the chasm between one's current experience and the truth.

Through long ingrained habit and the storehouse of memories of pain and pleasure carried forward from past action, the mind is outward bound. It is always searching, seeking happiness outside in objects, relationships, ideas and so on. The winter of discontent is bound to dog one unless one roots

out the false notion about the subject, which arises by wrongly identifying it with 'this' or 'that', beginning with body and name. Ramana convinces Narasimha Swami, and through him all, that this situation is brought about because "we have never really cared to face our 'I'". In the never ending thought mix-up the individual, the perceiver, the enjoyer is forgotten.

Hence Ramana declares that self-enquiry alone, an enquiry into the true nature of the subject, can free one from his bonded existence; his bondage to thoughts and dependence on them. Self-enquiry is the panacea.

The second significant stumbling block is discussed in another conversation. Viswanatha Swami was hardly out of his teens when he decided early in 1923 to stay permanently at the feet of Ramana, in his physical presence at Sri Ramanasramam. Understandably in his youthful mind, body centered thoughts would arise. When he sought guidance Ramana advised that the only way out was to nurture the inner experience. "It is only by awakening a power mightier than the senses and the mind that they can be subdued. If you awaken and sustain the growth of the power within you, everything else will be conquered." For this one has to mentally give it a pride of place and give it a whole-hearted trial. One would become aware, gradually, how immense is the loss when one is out of touch with the subject 'I' and its source. Little tit bits of the experience of inherent joy would start doing their work. Having put our faith in the inward search the backup has to be continuous in the form of vigilance, constant attention to the birth and proliferation of thoughts. The breakthrough, subsidence of ceaseless thought movements, will be accompanied by the peace of a mind focused on itself, on the subject 'I'. One has to sustain this uni-focussed attention by continuing the search, by enquiring about the source of the subject of the waking state, 'Where from did it arise?' This intense questioning would result in the mind being merged in its source, the abode of bliss. Nurturing this experience is what Ramana has counseled. It means vigilance to the birth of the first person 'I' thought. This would enable the steadying of the Self-experience. As one discovers the immensity of natural joy, a wholly new life blossoms. The wonder of timeless, spaceless, existence while in the body would have been discovered and made one's own.

The 'Talks' as a Guidance to Self Enquiry

N.Nandakumar

Talk 61.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: How is dhyana practised - with eyes open or closed?

M.: It may be done either way. The point is that the mind must be introverted and kept active in its pursuit. Sometimes it happens that when the eyes are closed the latent thoughts rush forth with great vigour. It may also be difficult to introvert the mind with the eyes open. It requires strength of mind to do so. The mind is contaminated when it takes in objects. Otherwise, it is pure. The main factor in dhyana is to keep the mind active in its own pursuit without taking in external impressions or thinking of other matters.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Inside every limited object and within every thought there is the infinite. The mind cannot see this by using the eye. So, it does not matter whether the eyes are open or closed in Dhyana. The mind cannot see this 'infinite within each thought' by the "I" analysing that "thought". To see the 'infinite within everything', the mind has to let go of the object, eye and thought and enquire "Who am I?" till the infinite Self from within consumes everything finite.

Talk 62. (SPHURANA)

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: What is sphurana (a kind of indescribable but palpable sensation in the heart centre)?

M.: Sphurana is felt on several occasions, such as in fear, excitement, etc. Although it is always and all over, yet it is felt at a particular centre and on particular occasions. It is also associated with antecedent causes and confounded with the body. Whereas, it is all alone and pure; it is the Self. If the mind be fixed on the sphurana and one senses it continuously and automatically it is realisation.

Again sphurana is the foretaste of Realisation. It is pure. The subject and object proceed from it. If the man mistakes himself for the subject, objects must necessarily appear different from him. They are periodically withdrawn and projected, creating the world and the subject's enjoyment of the same. If, on the

other hand, the man feels himself to be the screen on which the subject and object are projected there can be no confusion, he can remain watching their appearance and disappearance without any perturbation to the Self.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: From the subject-object experience of bondage, one has to realise the ever-present, everywhere-present subject-subject of "I-I" as Sphurana. When one senses it "continuously and automatically" that is realisation. Next, Bhagavan affirms the position as "Ishwara is the Saakshi" or "Witness" by saying that when, "the man (Sphurana) feels himself to be the screen on which the subject and object are projected there can be no confusion, he can remain watching their appearance and disappearance without any perturbation to the Self." In the work "Day by Day with Bhagavan", Bhagavan points out that "the Self is even beyond the Sphurana". For whom is this Sphurana which has consumed the individual-world duality?

Q: I have a legitimate desire for an object. It is the Sphurana which is giving me this desire and it is alright for me to enjoy it, is it not?

S: This is how the mind deceives. One should not justify a desire but relentlessly enquire, "For whom?" and hold the Sphurana. The Sphurana consumes the "desire" and the "desirer".

Talk 63.

A high officer asked: If juniors are promoted over oneself the mind is perturbed. Will the enquiry, 'Who am I?' help the man to soothe the mind under such circumstances?

M.: Yes. Quite so. The enquiry 'Who am I?' turns the mind inward and makes it calm.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Self Enquiry removes all discontent and makes one fulfilled.

Talk 63. (Excerpt)

D.: I have faith in murti dhyana (worship of form). Will it not help me to gain jnana?

M.: Surely it will. Upasana helps concentration of mind. Then the mind is free from other thoughts and is full of the meditated form. The mind becomes it - and thus quite pure. Then think who is the worshipper. The answer is 'I', i.e., the Self. So the Self is gained ultimately.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: In the hymn 'Ramana Sadguru', the last of the five hymns on Ramana – 'Ramana Stuti Panchakam', the holy work ends with "Potri Un Mugam, Potri Un Manam, Potri Un Padam Iyyane" - praise be to your Form, praise be to your Mind (Nama), praise be to your state/Self. Love of Bhagavan's Face, Form, the words that have been printed all can be loved. The arrival of the book "Who am I?" is worship of his form. This slowly develops love within. The mind loves Bhagavan's Face, or Ulladu Naarpadu, or "Who am I?" till the mind becomes it. Enquire "Who loves self enquiry?" Then the mind resolves into the Formless and Nameless Padam - the Self.

Talk 63. (Excerpt).

Bhagavan: The present difficulty is that the man thinks that he is the doer. But it is a mistake. It is the Higher Power which does everything and the man is only a tool. If he accepts that position he is free from troubles; otherwise he courts them. Take for instance, the figure in a gopuram (temple tower), where it is made to appear to bear the burden of the tower on its shoulders. Its posture and look are a picture of great strain while bearing the very heavy burden of the tower. But think. The tower is built on the earth and it rests on its foundations. The figure (like Atlas bearing the earth) is a part of the tower, but is made to look as if it bore the tower. Is it not funny? So is the man who takes on himself the sense of doing.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Self enquiry is the direct path to remove doership. That all creation or non-self is one flow in which the individual has absolutely no self-importance and consequent sufferings/false claims is embedded in the practice of Self Enquiry.

Q: Does that mean that man can do anything and get away with it?

S: How so? The man who claims no self-importance in doing something has to suffer the consequences common to all in the one flow without self-importance.

Q: Any example where you have seen one bear a personal pain thinking of the common-for-all feeling of removing self-importance?

S: Any pregnant lady uses this to overcome the fear of child-birth. She constantly reminds herself that what happens to the rest will happen to her.

Q: Can such fears be quelled by self enquiry?

S: That is what Bhagavan assures at the beginning of the talk when saying that a disturbance of mind due to a junior being promoted can be quelled by self enquiry.

Talk 63. (Excerpt).

Then the Malayalam version of Ulladu Narpadu was read out by a devotee for the benefit of the visitor.

After hearing it, he asked: What about the reference to duality in practice and unity at the end?

M.: Some people think that one must begin practice with dualistic idea. It refers to them. They say that there is God; the man must worship and meditate; ultimately the jiva merges into God. Others say that the Supreme Being and the jiva are always apart and never merge into each other. Howsoever it may be at the end, let us not trouble ourselves about it now. All are agreed that the jiva IS. Let the man find out the jiva, i.e., his Self. Then there will be time to find out if the Self should merge in the Supreme, is a part thereof, or remains different from it. Let us not forestall the conclusion. Keep an open mind, dive within and find out the Self. The truth will itself dawn upon you. Why should you determine beforehand if the finality is unity absolute or qualified, or duality. There is no meaning in it. The ascertainment is now made by logic and by intellect. The intellect derives light from the Self (the Higher Power). How can the reflected and partial light of the intellect envisage the whole and the original Light? The intellect cannot reach the Self and how can it ascertain its nature?

Such is the significance of the reference.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Self Enquiry can be started irrespective of what philosophy about final truth one holds. It only asks the seeker to find his or her own truth.

Q: Is it true only of what philosophy one holds or is it true of all problems - that self enquiry resolves the problem without reference to the outcome?

S: Absolutely. It undermines the falsity of goal. It takes one to the Source beyond birth of problem, perception and perceiver.

Saddarshanam*Master Nome*

*deho na jAnAti sato na janma
deha-pramANonya udeti madhye |
ahamkrti-granthi-vibandha-sUkshmarsharIra-
ceto-bhava-jIva-nAmA || 24 ||*

**The body does not know. Being (Existence), is not born.
The body measured (limited to the body)
another arises in the midst (between, in the middle),
Ego, knot, bondage, subtle body, Mind, bhava
(mundane existence, samsara), jiva (the individual) named.**

N.: An inert body does not know. The body is not Consciousness. It is dead matter. Something seems to be between the body and Being, which is not born. "Satah," Being, or the Truth or Existence, is eternal. It has no beginning. There never was a time when it was not. There never is a time when it ceases to be. It never becomes anything, which would be a kind of birth. It is never transformed. It never gives rise to itself or to anything else. It just is as it is. Such is Being. That is your Being, your only true identity. The body is inert, so it "does not know." You are the knower and cannot be the body. The knower is Consciousness, which is identical with Being. You are Being, and you are not the body. It is an illusion when something seems to come between.

Sri Ramana says, "measured or limited to the body." This means that this other one becomes the occupant of the body, seems to fill the body, and to be sustained, in illusion, as some kind of individual being. It is something that seems to borrow the Reality and the Consciousness of the Self and to tie these with the limitations of the body. That something is called "the ego." That something is the knot tying together the Real and the unreal. That something is bondage. If the bondage is cut, Liberation is realized to be your nature, which is egoless and has no knot. That something is called the "subtle body," in reference to a transmigrating entity that goes from birth to birth. That something between is called a "mind," while really there is just pure Consciousness. That something between is the bhava, the mundane existence or the samsara. That something between is the individual. However

we name it, that something should be traced and its supposed birthplace determined, and, thus, we find that it does not exist. We should look squarely at this ego. No one has ever seen a real ego. Whoever attempts to see it finds it utterly missing, and with this truth being found, all of the ego's troubles are over.

The body has no Consciousness of its own. There is another that is the Consciousness. The body is inert. "The body does not know. Being is not born." The implication is that Being is identical with Consciousness. Being-Consciousness is the Truth of Existence. "Is not born" means that it has no form, it does not rise, it is not produced, and it does not start at any time.

Only that which is unborn is imperishable. Only that which has no beginning has no end. Anything with a beginning, or a birth, has a death, or an end. Being is not born. There never was a time when you were not. There never will be a time when you cease to be. You cannot even imagine a time when you are not. In the attempt to conceive of such, you automatically assume your own existence to be present in order to view your so-called nonexistence. There is no parting from Being, and Being is unborn. The body does not know. It is not the Consciousness. Being, which is your Existence, is not born. This means that Consciousness is not born and has no beginning or end.

"Limited to the body, measured by the body, another arises in the midst," that is, between Being, which is pure Consciousness, and the body. Something seems to come between and tie the two together, as it were, borrowing the identity and the reality of Being and the form and limitation of the body. Something seems to rise up. It is not the true "I," which is unborn and has no arising. That something is named the "ego." It is also referred to as the "knot," because it ties together, through illusion only, the Real and the unreal, the Self and the not-Self. It is called the "subtle body." It is of the form of an experiencer, but not the gross body, so it is called a subtle body and it is this which seems to go from dream to dream, from life to life. It is not the ever-existent Self, which is without birth and without form and it is not the physical body, which obviously perishes at death. It is called the "mind," the supposed separate knower that supposedly exists in addition to the innate Consciousness. It is that one who stands apart and thinks that it can know the Truth, but now doesn't know the Truth, wonders if

it can know Consciousness, thinks that it knows the world, and generates other such ideas. It is called “bhava.” “Bhava” means mundane existence and is identical in meaning with “samsara,” the existence of repetitive birth, death, and illusion. It is called jiva. Jiva can mean “life,” or “a life,” but it also means the individual. The latter meaning is more pertinent in this case. Ego, knot, bondage, subtle body, mind, mundane existence, jiva or individual, however named, is the assumption that there is someone apart from the Self who also inhabits the body. The aim of inquiry is to destroy that assumed connection or to unravel that knot.

Q.: When I really try to find it, I find myself asking, “For what was I looking?” It is hard to remember what the thing is that I thought was there.

N.: Its seeming solidity is only supposed, and, when one inquires, one does not find anything of it. If you deeply inquire, it is not only that you do not remember what you were looking for, but you do not remember how to be an ego.

Another Q.: The ego is not even a subtle object, is it?

N.: The ego is just a case of make-believe. The Maharshi's reference to “subtle body” in the verse should be understood to pertain to that which is said to transmigrate from birth to birth, carrying with it the seeds of the tendencies for a new life. It is the same as the idea of a continuing individual entity, an ego, and continuing bondage. It does not exist. It is an imaginary knot assumed to connect the Reality of Absolute Being and the manifestation of an inert body. Something supposedly sneaks between, rises up, fills the body, as it were, and says that it is here, but it is not here.

Q.: This is a relief.

N.: Oh, yes, it is a great relief, for you recover your happiness.

Another Q.: In the verses read last night from Ribhu Gita, chapter 26, verse 24, there is a statement to the effect that, when the Liberation from the imagined bondage takes place, many, many jivas attain Liberation. Is that declaration similar to saying the dream characters in a nighttime dream are liberated upon awakening? Is it the same sense as, if the jiva is Siva, there are no bound jiva-s to be awakened?

N.: There are two ways of understanding “all kinds of jiva-s will gain Liberation.” The primary way of understanding is that, no matter what kind of jiva it is that practices this devotion to Siva and Knowledge of the Self, when he plunges inward and realizes the Truth, he undoubtedly gains Liberation. This is so, no matter whether he appeared to be a lofty jiva or a lowly jiva. The other way of understanding is: all the perception of all jiva-s is dependent on the jivahood of oneself. When you attain Liberation from individuality for yourself, all kinds of individuals, at that moment, cease to exist, for only real Being exists everywhere, with neither a self nor others. This real Being is Siva.

Q.: That is like awakening from a dream. All the jiva-s in the dream depend upon one jiva, who is actually Siva, apart from which they are nonexistent.

N.: From that perspective, everyone is depending upon you to realize. (laughter) You have the responsibility. (laughter)

Q.: It is a tad overwhelming. (laughter)

N.: That everyone is counting on you is equivalent to everybody in the dream saying, “We are caught in this dream, because this fellow keeps dreaming of us.” (laughter) We should not forget, though, those who came before us. When the Maharshi realized, all kinds of jiva-s became liberated. Therefore, since the “time” of his Realization, “you” haven’t existed. (silence, then laughter)

Q.: That is true.

N.: If we realize just how true this is, it is the end of illusion.

Shri Arunachala Ashtakam

G Kameshwar

Continuing the exploration of the second verse of Arunachala Ashtakam...

Verse-2

kaNTava nevanenak karuttinu NATak
kaNTava ninRiTā ninRatu kaNTEn
kaNTana nenRiTak karuttezha villai
kaNTila nenRiTak karuttezha mARen
viNTitu viLakkiTu viRaluRu vOnAr
viNTilai paNTunee viLakkinai yenRAI
viNTiTā tunnilai viLakkiTā venRE
viNTāla macalamA viLankiTā ninRAi

Verse rendering:

Seeking the seer
Within the mind;
Finding no seer
I saw 'That'
Which remained, standing;

To say that 'I saw',
The thought arose not.
Then, to say that 'I saw not',
Wherefrom would arise the thought?

Who, indeed,
Can explain
'That', with words;
Since even you
In days of yore
Explained 'That'
Only without words?

*And so,
Just in order to explain
Without speech,
Your (real) state;
You stood, shining,
Earth to sky
As the hill, so still.*

Prose rendering:

“(Upon seeing the Arunachala hill) When I searched inside my mind, seeking the seer, I saw no seer; and saw only ‘That’ (the Self) which remained, standing. Now, (there being no one within), there arises no thought that says that I saw (the Self). Therefore, how can there arise a thought that says that I did not see (the Self)? Who can express this state of Self-existence by words, when even you (O Arunachala), in olden times, explained that only by silence? It is only to reveal your real state without speaking a word that you stood, resplendent, extending from earth to sky, unmoving, as the hill.”

Notes:

In the previous article of this series, we saw that in the first part of this verse, Bhagavan has described the entire process of self-inquiry, from start to fruition - viz., seeking the seer-self inside the mind; the individual-self not found to exist; and the real Self, Arunachala, remaining.

About this state of fruition, in the next part of the verse, Bhagavan says:

*To say that ‘I saw’,
The thought arose not.
Then, to say that ‘I saw not’,
Wherefrom would arise the thought?*

This is an expression of direct experience of the Self, where the knowing-mind has disappeared, and so there is neither ‘knowing’ nor ‘ignorance’.

In Guru Vachaka Kovai, Bhagavan says¹:

*anniyatthait tAnaRiva tAninaikkun kARumE
enniyalpai yAnaRiyE nennumayal - tanniyalpin
nithApa rOkatthA neenkinA lanninaivu
poytthozhiyu mantap pulampu.*

*Only so long as one thinks that one knows
Objects, one fancies that one does not
Know oneself. When by direct,
Constant experience of the Self
The thought of 'knowing' vanishes
Then with it vanishes all talk
Of 'ignorance' too.*

Similarly, in Upadesha Saram, Bhagavan says:

*jnAnavarjitA ajnAnaheenacit
jnAnamasti kim jnAtumantaram*

*Consciousness devoid of
Knowledge and ignorance;
Is true omniscience,
What is apart to sense?²*

How is one to describe this state?

Bhagavan, addressing Arunachala, says:

*Who, indeed,
Can explain
'That', with words;
Since even you
In days of yore
Explained 'That'
Only without words?*

The reference, here, is to Arunachala Shiva as the primal Guru, Sri Dakshinamurthi. In the Dakshinamurthi Stotram, Shankara

1 Guru Vachaka Kovai, verse 548; English translation from the book 'The Garland of Guru's Sayings', by Prof K Swaminathan, published by Sri Ramanasramam, 1996

2 English verse rendering of Upadesha Saram, adapted from the book 'Ramana Darshana Trayi', written by this translator, and published by RMCL, Bengaluru in 2016.

Bhagavatpada describes Him as a youth, sitting on a rock under a banyan tree, teaching Self-Knowledge to his disciples. The amazing aspect is that these disciples (Sanaka and others) are all very aged, while the teacher, Shiva, is a youth. And even more amazing thing is the fact that the teacher conveying supreme-knowledge in absolute silence. His teaching is *mouna-vyAkhyA* – exposition through profound silence. His right hand is showing the ‘*cinmudra*’ pose – thumb touching forefinger – indicating the Oneness of the Individual-Self and Brahman, the Supreme/Universal Self.

In Ashtakam, in the case of Sri Ramana, there appears to be an interesting difference. The disciple, Ramana, is not an aged Rshi. He is a youth – a sixteen-year-old. It is almost as if He is the very reflection of the preceptor, young Shiva, Dakshinamurthi. And the preceptor’s presence makes Ramana turn his attention inward. And instantaneously, Dakshinamurthi establishes him as One with his own Self, in a flash of Ramana’s self-inquiry.

That this self-inquiry was at the instance of Lord Arunachala himself is conveyed by Bhagavan in Aksharamanamalai³:

tirumpi yakantanait tinamakak kaNkAN
Teriyumen Ranaiyen naruNAcala

*Turning back the mind’s eye, constantly see ‘who am I’,
 ‘Will be seen’, so you said, Arunachala!*

All this is Shiva’s Leela... It is Arunachala’s big-game hunting, where He shall slay his prey, the ‘I-notion’ of the disciple. When young Ramana turns back his mind’s eye, and seeks the seer within his mind, he becomes prey to Arunachala, the hunter. In one gulp, Arunachala swallows his prey. And then, the prey finds now that he has become One with the hunter – Arunachala; who, he finds to be of the form of absolute-silence, earth-to-sky resplendence.

In the first verse of Ashtakam, Ramana has said of Arunachala:

I saw it then
As Stillness Absolute –
A hill so still.

³ Aksharamanamalai verse 44; English translation from the book ‘Ramana Darshana Trayi’, written by this translator, and published by RMCL, Bengaluru in 2016.

In this second verse, he finds that Stillness-Absolute to be his own Self; who is also in front of him as Arunachala Shiva, the Silent-teacher Dakshinamurthi. Ramana is Arunachala, is Dakshinamurthi, is Absolute-Silence, is earth-to-sky resplendence-Self.

Concluding the verse, Bhagavan says:

*And so,
Just in order to explain
Without speech,
Your (real) state;
You stood, shining,
Earth to sky
As the hill, so still.*

Ramana's oneness with this mountain of resplendence is also brought in the Ramana Ashtottara, in the name – *viRajadacalAkRti* (*Om viRajadacalAkRtiayE namaH*) – meaning 'one whose form is radiant stillness/mountain'. In the explanation of this name, the commentary says – '*Arunachala is "frozen-fire"; "Light-Mountain" and people saw in Bhagavan a human embodiment of this blend of brightness and stillness*'.⁴

The Ashtottara also expresses Ramana's oneness with Dakshinamurthi, in different names:

- *dakshiNAsyanibha* (*Om dakshiNAsya nibhAya namaH*)
– The equal of Dakshinamurthi
- *dakshiNAbhimukha* (*Om dakshiNAbhimukhAya namaH*)
– One facing south
- *mounEna svAtmabOdhaka* (*Om mounEna svAtmabOdhakAya namaH*)
– One who through silence reveals the Self. (For this name, the commentary says: 'The ultimate Truth transcends thought and speech and cannot be "taught". Like Dakshinamurthi of old, Bhagavan reveals the ineffable Truth in silence.')

Om paramAchAryAya namaH! Om namO bhagavatE srl ramaNaya!

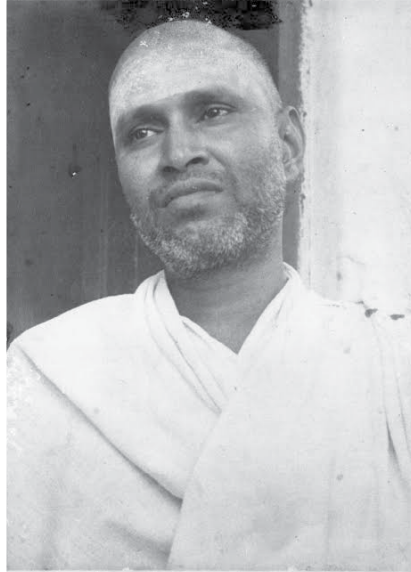
** To be continued **

⁴ 'The 108 Names of Sri Bhagavan – Ramana Ashtottara' – English translation and commentary by Prof K Swaminathan, published by Sri Ramanasramam, 2008

The Inspiring Life of Sri Viswanatha Swami

V.Ganesan

Very sincerely I had taken care of Vishwanatha Swami. When we meet a mahatma, we have to give everything to them. They are the embodiment of truth, that is why I took care of the mahatmas whom I had the good fortune to serve. One day he went outside and came back with heat stroke. He came to my office and said he was not feeling well. He called me to his room. I held him, sat on the bench. He was in pain; he would get up and sit down continuously. I was shocked.



Vishwanatha Swami said, “Do not look at my body, I am very well”. As I had urgent work in the office, I left him under the care of a friend and went away. He would speak very well. But he continued his state of sitting down and standing up throughout the night. The next morning my friend called me and explained the whole night’s episode. Being a very emotional person, I started crying. Swami said, “Why do you look at my body. It is perhaps affected. My mind is also affected. But my spirit is unaffected. And my heart is now speaking to you.”

Whenever I went there, he would repeat that he was one with Bhagavan and he was in peace. But he saw me sad and said that he will not trouble me, only two more days. He mentioned a particular day and date and said ‘evening 5:30’. ‘But you should be with me’ he said, ‘Bhagavan has called me. You come at 4:00’. See how ignorant we are all, Vishwanatha Swami sent an attendant at 1:00 to remind me about being there at 4 p.m.

When I went there at 4 in the evening, he again said, 'My body is perhaps affected. My mind is also affected. But my spirit is unaffected. And my heart is now speaking to you. Though there is so much of confusion, turbulence, misery in the manifestation, all of that belongs to the realm of mind only. The ignorant mind is split as object and subject.' He gave me detailed upadesa, 'All experiences of life are related to the experiences of the ego, who is nothing but a shadow having no intrinsic reality of his own. The reality in every person is ultimate pure existence which is the spiritual state of 'I am', awareness absolute which does not split into object and subject. It is the only thing that matters. If the ego and all its experiences are dismissed as passing shadows, the ever-present ultimate reality alone will be self-evident. If one is even intellectually convinced of this truth one will gain detachment and mental peace. We should now and then stop for a while, stand aloof and experience this immutable and immaculate awareness absolute, the silent 'I am' - which alone matters, which alone 'is' despite the manifestation of endless varieties of experiences. The Buddha. Jesus Christ, Adi Shankara, our beloved Bhagavan are few standing monuments affirming the reality, which is also one's own being. The very sight or proximity of these pillars of light reminds one of this reality within oneself and that spontaneously brings about bliss and peace. Only the finite mind, the 'me' has to be relinquished to merge and dissolve in the ever-present infinite reality of I am'.

Then Vishwanatha Swami stopped and looked at me with the greatest compassion I have ever experienced, touched my forehead and blessed me. I prostrated before this illustrious devotee who chose to be with Sadhguru Ramana, stayed under his spiritual umbrella, enjoying the protection and guidance. He attained the infinite reality of I am, the greatest lesson. Vishwanatha Swami imparted to me in his silence which was more eloquent than his speaking that it was not enough if one just read some spiritual books and got convinced intellectually, that one should experience the teachings as states of one's own inner peace, quietude and bliss.

He blessed me again and again. It was my good fortune that I could be with him.

He gave me a personal instruction which will be helpful to anyone in the world. It is spiritual yet physical. It is not merely theoretical. He asked 'Do you know chinmudra?' He said, 'Keep chanting a japa. Otherwise the mind will wander away, even while cooking, while doing office work, any serious work one should keep chanting. The mind will naturally protest. Bhagavan once told Paul Brunton there is no difference between work and wisdom. Chinmudra is God's gift to us, very helpful. Whatever is the mantra. It will get dissolved into you. Whatever your state it will stay with you.'

'Chanting is like being in contact, being in touch. It is very close to the Self' Swami guided me, 'When you chant a mantra you come in contact with the Self. It is like two wires in touch with each other. The spiritual experience will come. So always have chinmudra.'

Even when I was in the ICU, unconscious for 6 days, I held my hand in chinmudra. The nurse asked me about it. It had become so natural to me.

Second thing Viswanatha Swami told me was 'whether your eyes are opened or closed (sleeping), the eyeballs go up when one is thinking'. We would have observed that when ever we think our eyeballs go up. But when we look down peace comes. If you have observed Swami Vivekananda meditating you can see the lower part of his eyes and the lowered eyeballs. Swami told me, 'Bhagavan said focus your attention inward, looking at the right side of the chest, at the spiritual heart within. We cannot force our eyes to look down. Just by closing eyes thoughts rush in, distractions come. Yet if we focus and look down thoughts will subside. That is why Bhagavan said look to the right side of the chest. Your meditation will be blessed by Bhagavan. Bhagavan said do meditation uninterrupted.'

Ramana is the Way of Ramana

Shyam Sunder

If I am too extroverted and unable to reach the heart, I may pray - "O Arunachala! Like a magnet attracts iron and cannot release it, attract me and without leaving me, be ever in union with me."

Devotee of Ramana may pray – 'O Ramana! Like a magnet attracts iron and...'

"Prostration means subsidence of the ego."

What is subsidence?

"To merge into the source of its origin."

"You are the Inner Self, who dances in the heart as 'I'. Heart is your name, O Lord."

- Sri Ramana Maharshi

Being is not becoming (this or that). Becoming is not being.

"Your duty is to be and not to be this or that."

The method is summarized in 'Be still'."

"The Self is simple being. Be."

"Knowing the Self means being the Self."

- Sri Ramana Maharshi

Forgetting "others", every one can practise and live as Self, otherwise ego problem creates hurdles. This too is play of mind and nothing else.

This is the habit of becoming this or that, escape from simple being.

Ego is mind, ego is I-thought so ego is non-existent. Heart is existent or existence.

Existence of ego should never be justified or proved. Existence feeling is alright, it leads to Self.

"Bondage and liberation are both mere thoughts and hence they can exist only in the state of ignorance and not in the state of Self-abidance."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

If we can recognize our own wrong beliefs, we can simply live as the heart itself. There is no "I-thought" justifying liberation and condemning bondage.

"Ever abiding as the absolute Self, devoid of the sense of otherness, the jnani alone stands above praise and abuse."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

Mind becomes "I and others" and creates problem of praise and abuse. This problem disappears in sincere Self-abidance practice.

Where can we go avoiding the heart which exists as the source?

"The "I" is only the ego or the "I"-thought. After rising up of this "I"-thought, all other thoughts arise. The "I"-thought is therefore the root-thought. If the root is pulled out all others are at the same time uprooted. Therefore seek the root "I", question yourself "Who am I?" Find out its source, and then all these other ideas will vanish and the pure Self will remain."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

We are I-thought. If we feel difficulty in self-enquiry, we should unconditionally surrender to the heart. We should give ourselves to it.

Heart is source of I-thought and we ourselves live as I-thought, forgetting the truth, the source, the heart.

"Be as you are."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

Accept yourself totally. When you completely accept yourself, you are in the heart, as the heart. When you are as your own heart (not as your mind) you are as you are. It is enough.

Ramana My Light - II

Charumathi Neelkanth (Challimma)

Having got into the mood of joyous remembrance of her first darshan of Bhagavan as a girl of nine in 1942, Charumathi amma continues, 'The next time I saw Bhagavan was in the Jayanthi of 1945. My father had moved to Madras by then and I went with him for Bhagavan's Jayanthi. I think my father had been frequently visiting Bhagavan in the intervening years but I was not aware of his going and coming. It was only in 1945 that I wanted to have Bhagavan's darshan and accompanied my father on his visit for Bhagavan's Jayanthi.

'Another occasion I remember is when I had gone during Deepam. On that occasion I was seated right at Bhagavan's feet and I kept on gazing at him. He was looking intently at the peak of Arunachala. I was a young girl still and wondering what he was gazing at, I too looked up and saw the Deepam' she chuckles. She finds it amusing that she was more curious about what Bhagavan was looking at and not completely absorbed in Bhagavan Himself. 'I would go for Bhagavan's darshan every year. In 1948 I was seated in Bhagavan's hall with my eyes closed in 'meditation' because my father would tell me 'anda mayilu inda kuyilunnu poyda koodaadu, dhyanam pannanom' 'don't go away getting distracted by that peacock and this cuckoo bird, sit and meditate'. Yet, though I sat in this manner I wondered what people actually do when they sit for meditation. 'What do they see when they close their eyes? What do they think of?' I pondered. Then I felt a voice within me, as if someone was saying to me, 'If you think of one God and keep repeating His name, that is meditation, dhyana'. I thought to myself, 'Yes, appa keeps saying the name 'Rama' from time to time, let me also say 'Rama'.' That is how I started doing meditation.'

'In 1949 my marriage was finalised.' She laughs again. 'My father did not give out my horoscope to friends for finding a suitable groom as is the usual process. One of the girls in our family, a close relative, had 'run away', eloped to get married. This was thought to be sacrilege and my father was worried that people would not like to take a girl in marriage from our family on account of the 'black mark' that the episode had brought to our

family. So, although I was just 15 years old, my father was keen on getting me married at the first good prospect.'

'My parents-in-law were devoted to Bhagavan. My father-in-law's elder brother and his wife had visited Bhagavan often when He was in Virupaksha Cave and have even cooked food for Bhagavan there. They had no children. My father-in-law had twelve children. My husband was the eighth child. When my parents-in-law went to see Bhagavan they had taken my father with them. In fact I did not know for very long that my father was introduced to Bhagavan only by my parents-in-law.'

'Actually my father-in-law, his brother and sister were orphans. They were distantly related to us and growing up in another relatives house. Visalakshi amma, the wife of Ganapathi Muni had divine guidance through a dream to adopt these children. Ganapathi Muni was a teacher in Vellore at that time and they adopted these children. So they were like Muni's children. They would be with Muni wherever he went. Later my father-in-law's elder brother, after working in Hyderabad for some years, came and settled down in Tiruvannamalai and spent all his time with Bhagavan.'

'On the basis of this divine background my father decided to give me in marriage to my husband. As I said he did not match our horoscopes. I believe he simply went up to Bhagavan and said, 'I intend to give my daughter in marriage to Neelkanth'. I was told that Bhagavan nodded assent and indicated his hand in blessing. That was it. My father decided to give me in marriage accordingly. There were many voices of dissent in our family that being an only daughter I was to be given in marriage into a family where there were no daughters, only twelve sons.'

She smiles and says, 'Oppositions do come in every endeavour in life, do they not? But my father would not pay heed to any of them. In fact I heard later that there was a total mismatch of horoscopes. But my father was insistent that nothing mattered when Bhagavan had blessed the alliance. My mother too objected saying, 'For everything you are simply repeating 'Bhagavan has said okay, Bhagavan has said okay' should you not consider whether the family is suitable for our daughter'. Yet my father was adamant. Hence despite the voices of dissent the marriage happened...'

*** to be continued***

Ramananjali – 40 years

On the 3rd of January 1980 the curtain opened for the first time on a troupe fully dedicated to performing songs by and on Bhagavan Ramana, the troupe was called 'Ramananjali'. The sacred occasion was the 100th Jayanthi of Bhagavan, the magnificent Birth Centenary



Celebrations. Thousands of eager devotees had gathered at Sri Ramanasramam for the event. And the concert was underway with a prayer to Lord Ganesa.

Four decades have passed by and in these years Ramananjali crossed the landmark of 500 live programs in 2014 under the leadership of Smt.Sulochana Natarajan. We are now blessed with a repertoire of more than 2000 songs in various languages. It was Smt.Sulochana Natarajan's life mission to initiate this Ramana Music movement, to herself compose the music for all of Bhagavan Ramana's and Ganapati Muni's original compositions and to document the vast repertoire of songs set to music by other leading music directors as well. She systematically covered all the titles from Muruganar's 'Ramana Sannidhi Murai' and Sadhu Om's 'Ramana Geetham' as well. Every composer on Ramana that she could trace was included in this body of music now called 'Ramananjali Sangeetham'.

This year we are carrying a tribute to Ramananjali every month in the 'Ramana Way'. We begin with a 'chance' memoir that came of its own accord right in time for this issue, a memoir that takes Ramananjali's story back by a further two years when the very first Ramananjali cassette was produced.

A small story! The beginning of a huge story of Grace!**V.Arunachalam**

In 1978 just before Bhagavan's Jayanthi, Somu mama (P V Somasundaram also known as Bombay Somasundaram) called me to ask whether I'm free to go to Tiruvannamalai and that he would bear the train ticket charges. I was finishing my MSc in Biophysics and still a student. An offer like this was unbelievable and I said 'Of course,yes'

He gave me a train ticket in the Bombay- Madras Janata Express in 3 Tier. The train took 25 hours to reach Madras. Mama had come to the station at Dadar with 2 coolies carrying a big carton. He told me that this heavy carton had a 1000 or so audio cassettes which were to be released on Jayanthi day. These were called Ramananjali cassettes.

So I enjoyed the train journey though I was alone. There's always a sense of great expectation when I travel to Ramanasramam, as if some big revelation is awaiting me. The train reached Madras. I needed help to lug the big carton! I went to my athai's (paternal aunt) house for a bath and lunch. Kept the auto rickshaw waiting with the heavy carton. And then took him to 'Parrys Corner' to take a bus to Tiruvannamalai.

The carton was kept on top of the bus by 3 people. I reached Tiruvannamalai at 11.45 pm. And took a jutka – a horse cart (rickshaws were still not so common) and reached Ramanasramam exactly at midnight. Some 2-3 people were anxiously waiting and were thrilled that the 'cassettes' had arrived for the next day's Jayanthi.

I got a room opposite the Dining Hall. Next morning, I had a bath in the common bathroom and attended the full Abhishekam and saw the release of Ramananjali from next to Bhagavan's samadhi. Bhagavan's Grace indeed.

Ramana's Song of Grace - 35

Revathi Sankar

Self – Knowledge through Self Enquiry is Bhagavan Ramana's teachings. And it is the best thing for any problem in life, Physical, mental, and any other kind of problem, whatever it may be can be simply and directly solved through self-enquiry. Bhagavan gives this path to everybody without any restriction to anybody.

The first instructions given to Siva Prakasam Pillai about self-enquiry in 1901 was documented in the famous text entitled 'Who am I?' Later, Pillai composed a poem called 'Ramana Pada Malai' in gratitude and devotion to the Sadguru. This has been set to music as Ramana Pada Pancharatnam – a unique musical piece which has been composed by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan on the lines of Saint Tyagaraja's Pancharatna Kritis. Smt. Sulochana Natarajan has very carefully selected the verses from Pada Malai and set the ragas of Nattai, Goula, Arabhi, Varali and Sri which are the same as Pancharatnam. We will be meditating now on the second kriti which is the Goula raga. The first charana of the song goes like this

Anma vichaaram ayanndu vidElendru araivOn paadam vazhghavE
Anma swarUpam aDaiyum varai endru aruLvOn paadam vazhghavE
 Tamil

Atma vichaara bidade hidi endu pELvavana paada hoLeyali
Atma swaroopa padeyuvavaregendu karuNisuva paada jayisali
 Kannada

Meaning –

Blessed be the Feet of the One who says 'Do not slacken in self-enquiry but continue it till you achieve abidance in the Self'.

Bhagavan Ramana's journey to Arunachala itself shows us how we should practice the above verse. Bhagavan Ramana left his house for Arunachala as a boy of 16. He had never been outside Madurai on his own. He had no clue as to how to travel by train or as to what the correct route to Arunachala was. Nothing

deterred him. His supreme love for Arunachala simply took him forward at every step, in the heat, walking part of the way, with little food to eat for most of the part. Yet he never thought about stopping or going back until he reached his goal, Arunachala. What to say of his thinking of stopping? He had no thought at all except of Arunachala. If only our self-enquiry would be practiced with such love!

Why should we not love self-enquiry when it can rid us of all our troubles? When there is a physical problem, how does enquiry help? When there is physical pain, if we ask ourselves 'for whom is the pain?' We get an answer 'for me'. Then we ask ourselves 'Who am I?' What happens after that? The attention is shifted from pain to the one who has pain that is me. And once that is also questioned, the attention moves to the Source. When it goes to the source, then there is a chance to become natural. So, enquiry makes us remain in our natural state.

When there is a psychological problem also, when we ask 'For whom is this problem?' then the answer is 'for me'. Then question 'Who am I?' What happens? The attention from the problem will shift to the person who has the problem and when that is questioned the attention shifts to the Source. When it goes to the source, then there is a chance to become natural. So, enquiry makes us remain in our natural state.

I remember a story told by Bhagavan of a bird's egg that had fallen into the ocean. The father bird feels so bad that he decides to clear the ocean to get his egg back. He works hard to take out the ocean's water drop by drop. He never stops even though he is tired. Ultimately, seeing this extraordinary effort, the mighty Garuda comes and flaps his big wings and clears the ocean for that small bird.

This shows that if we hold on to the path which leads us to the Ultimate, when we work hard for it, with complete faith and surrender, then we will surely reach the Ultimate. When we hold on to enquiry, then it will surely lead us to Self-Knowledge. Bhagavan says the same to us. Enquire whenever there arises a thought and

get the mind back to the Self, to avoid any issues. If we allow one thought to move out, if we indulge in one thought, then we are finished. So Bhagavan warns us that we must be attentive even as a thought arises and take it back to the source.

I pray to Bhagavan to allow me to be Silent from inside and allow me to do enquiry all the time so that I may reach the Ultimate and attain Self-Knowledge. Rather Be it, than not to Be.

Lord Ramana

Thank you Bhagavan
Your attention seeking Child :)



How Bhagavan Captured Us

By Smt. Sulochana Natarajan

Then I completed the Rashtra Bhasha, the National board examination for Hindi with flying colours securing the 1st Rank in the state. How I used to study is, I used to take every word in a sentence and analyse it fully with annotations, make columns and classify the word gender-wise, meaning-wise, reference-wise, etc. Likewise I would work on every paragraph. Thus I would make myself thorough with the entire lesson. All that has helped in great measure in documenting Ramananjali Music today. I believe that for many many years, even until recently, Smt.Saraswati Ramanathan my Hindi teacher used to refer to me as an ideal student and as an example for other students. Whatever study I was made to undertake in the course of my life in any field had helped me in Ramananjali Music till today. That is Ramana!

In 1955 I went on an India Circular Tour with my parents, brother and Chitti Patti (my father's step-mother). The entire tour was a unique experience. Our Chitta Amma (as we would call our grandmother) would cook food in the bathroom of the First Class Compartments in which we travelled. My father who was strict in adherence of dharma (he was also wedded to Dharma – my mother's name) was not aware that cooking was not allowed in the train. Neither did it strike any one of us that this could be a potential hazard to us and all the travellers. Ramana saved us without even our being aware of it. On our part, we simply enjoyed the extremely delicious cooking of my grandmother and ate luxuriously in the first class compartment as the train chugged through different parts of glorious India. My grandmother's perfect cooking has made me a connoisseur in culinary skills and has also complemented my own tendency to strive for perfection in every work that is taken up.

Our first stops were Agra, Mathura and Delhi. I had no inkling then that these places would be visited by me many times over in the future and that Delhi was to be our home for more than

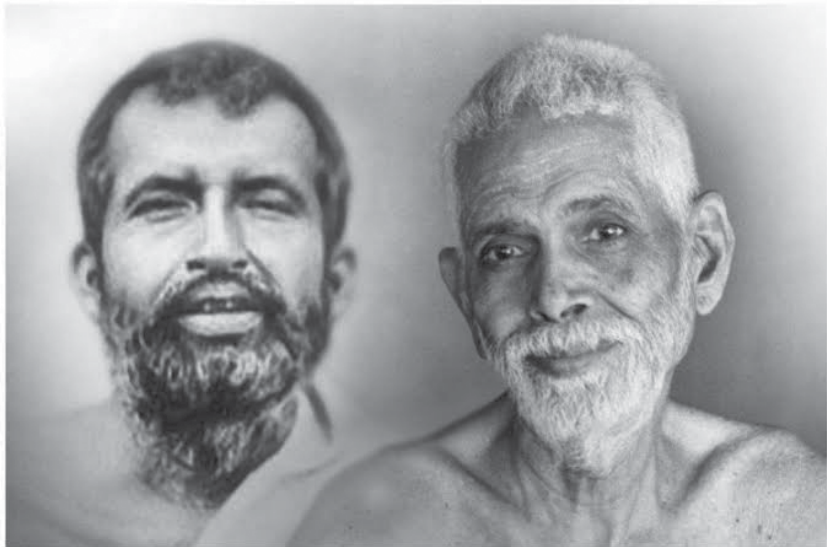
a decade. Memorable for me was our visit to Haridwar, Harikipairi, the Ganges bath and witnessing Ganga Matha Arathi for the first time. The dance like waving of lamps by the many priests as an offering to Mother Ganga at sunset time is till date a sight for the Gods and it was a joyous experience for me. Our visit to Sri Sivananda Asram is deeply imbedded in my memory.

Before my marriage when my father was the District Judge at Tirunelveli, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj had come on a South India tour. My father was in charge of many of the arrangements during his visit to Tirunelveli. We attended all his meetings in that trip and my mother and I sang bhajans and got Swamiji's blessings. All that paved the way for Ramananjali.

At Rishikesh, my parents, brother and I went in for Swamiji's darshan. Chitti Patti being a widow was hesitant to come inside not being aware about whether the Asram observed orthodox rules. In those days widows and especially in Brahmin circles widows who had not shaven their heads and worn the traditional 'narmadi' sari were not allowed for religious events in many of the Maths. My father mentioned to Sivanandaji Maharaj that Chitti was outside and asked whether she may come in. Immediately Maharaj himself called out in the most beautiful voice, 'Chitti! Ulle Vaango! Come in!' We were thrilled to hear him. I now know that such words from a sage have great significance in the spiritual journey of an individual. I am certain that these words will bear fruit at the right time in Chitti Amma's spiritual journey and literally call her 'within'. All of us were treated with great affection by Maharaj and in the Asram.

Our next halt was Benaras, Kashi. It was a special experience to wend our way to the Viswanatha Temple in the little lane criss-crossing between the many cows that simply stood or sat there. It was a new experience to be able to perform the abhisheka to the Linga ourselves, we could pour Ganga water on Sri Viswanatha and offer flowers and bilva leaves in worship. Then at Calcutta we visited Dakshineswar and saw all the places connected with Sri Ramakrishna. These were very thrilling experiences for me.

At that time ARN and I had not been introduced to the life and teachings of Guru Maharaj as Sri Ramakrishna would be endearingly known to us in years to come. In fact, apart from my glimpse of spirituality with Swami Ram Tirtha's books that I had read a few years earlier I did not have any inkling about the spiritual life. My parents were good and pious people and had given me a strong foundation in my faith in God. It was as if this 'India Tour' was in fact a sacred pilgrimage for me, a 'Tirtha yatra' as described in our scriptures, taking me to the holy pilgrim centres and rivers of India, preparing me to dive within into the great Ocean of Self-knowledge through Ramakrishna and Ramana in the years to come. The stage was set and readied by Ramana for the transformation that was awaiting ARN and my life.



Sri Ramana Sahasranama Stuti¹

351. NISHREYASA PRADAH

One who liberates.

The very thought of Ramana liberates one from bondage to the karmic cycle. Attachment to the one like Ramana, who is free of all attachments, is itself the means to liberation.

Om nishreyasa pradAya namaha

352. NIRYATNA SIDDHA NITYA SRIH

Spontaneously Self-aware

In Ramana Gita (Chapter XI, Verse 18) Bhagavan points out that the one who is firmly established in the natural state performs the most difficult tapas spontaneously. Why effortless? Because the sense of doership, the thought that one is the doer, is lost when the mind is merged in its source. The Self-awareness is not achieved by any mental effort but naturally.

Om niryatna siddha nitya Sriye namaha

353. NITYA SIDDHA SVARUPADRK

One who is aware of the eternal Self.

After his death-experience in July 1896, the knowledge that one is the deathless spirit was the constant sruthi, undercurrent, of Ramana's life. His wisdom was steady and unwavering.

Om nitya siddha svarUpa drSe namaha

354. NIRMAMAH

One without the feeling of 'I' and 'Mine'

When the mind is withdrawn from sense objects, and turned inward, it is silent. The attachments of the mind, based on the sense of 'I' and 'mine' cease. One is free from the shackles of possessiveness.

Om nirmamAya namaha

¹ Thousand (1000) Names in Praise of Ramana- Sanskrit composition by Sri Jagadeeswara Shastri. English Translation and Commentary by Sri A.R.Natarajan

355. NIRAHANKARAH

Free of ego

Ego is only the first thought, the primal thought. 'I am so-and-so' thought. It has no locus-standi of its own. It is associated with other thoughts. When this association is cut through self-enquiry, it falls back to the conscious source from which it has arisen. Only when the ego is merged in the source, firmly, can one be free of the ego.

Om nirahankArAya namaha

356. NIRAVADYAH

Blemishless

By nature the mind is pure, blemishless. It is only when the mind is externalized, through the sense of 'I' and 'Mine', that blemishes are added on the the mind. If through self-enquiry the mind is pushed back to its source, then it is rid of accretions, the blemishes, which colour it. The mind then shines in its pristine purity.

Om niravadyAya namaha

357. NIRASRAYAH

Not dependent.

It is only a gnani who is truly independent, He needs nothing and is ever aware of his fullness. Dependence comes from needs and desires. When one is totally without any need, or desire, he becomes truly Self-dependent.

Om nirASrayAya namaha

358. NITYANANDAH

Ever happy.

Happiness is natural. One has lost this by seeking it through objects, through senses. When self-enquiry puts the mind back into the source, one experiences the lost natural happiness. This intermittent experiencing of natural happiness becomes steady by practice. Then one is ever happy.

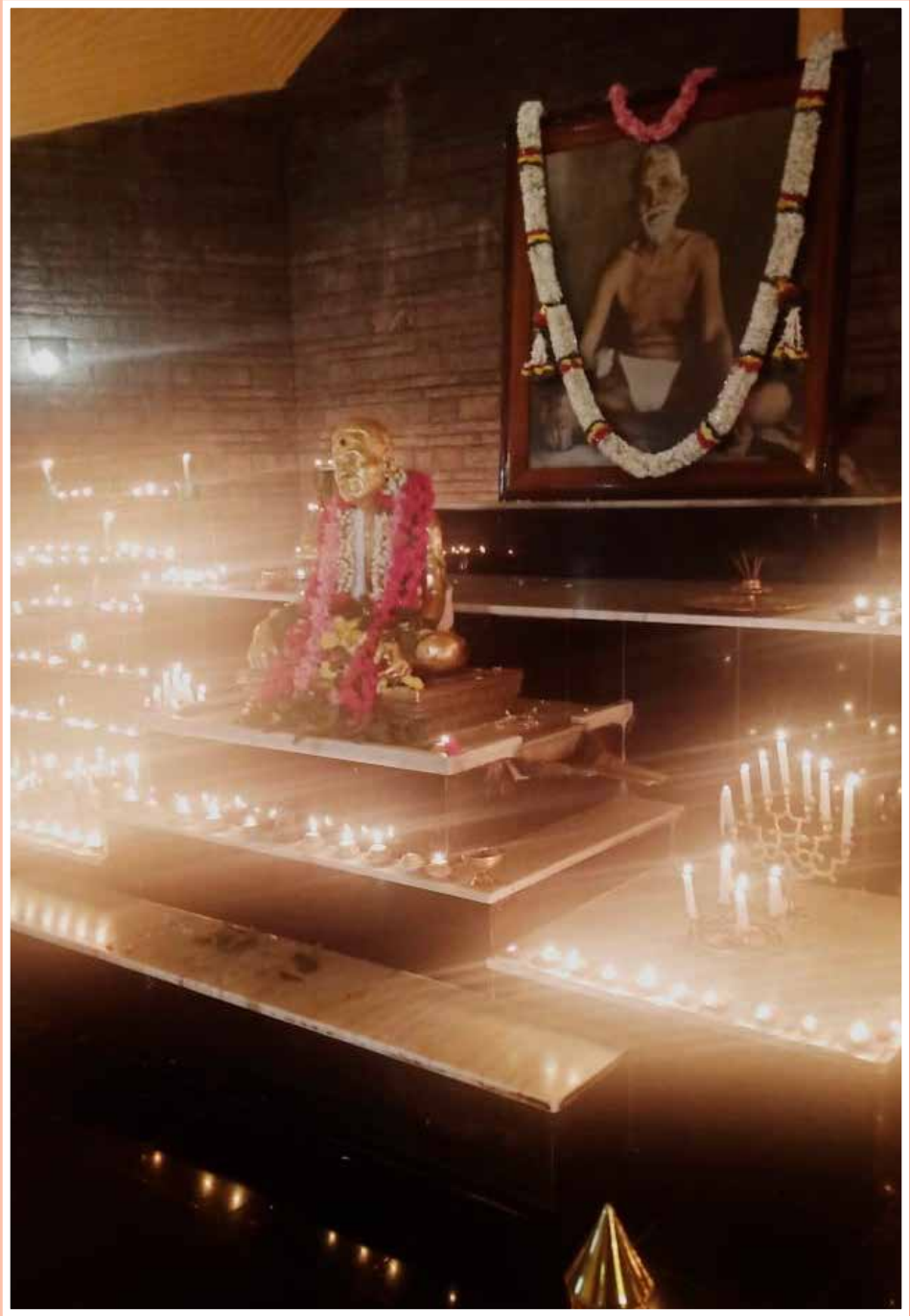
Om nityAnanDAYa namaha.

News & Events*Revathi Sankar*

The anniversary of the opening of the Shrine is celebrated every year with Sahasra Deepotsavam. This year Dr.Ambika Kameshwar presented a devotional music feature of Ramananjali songs on a theme based on Auvaiyaar's song 'Onranavan..' Ramana from 'one' to 'infinity'.



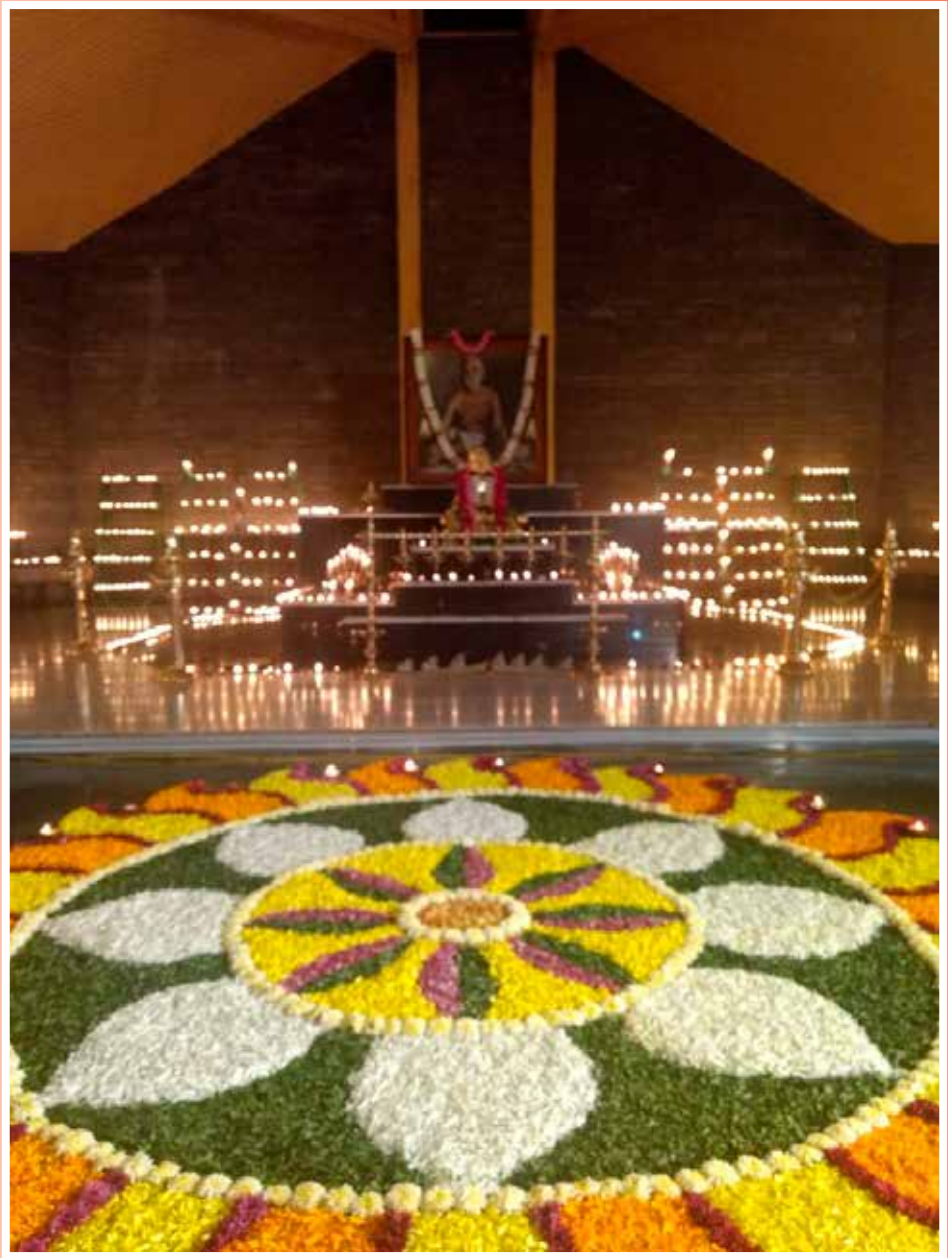




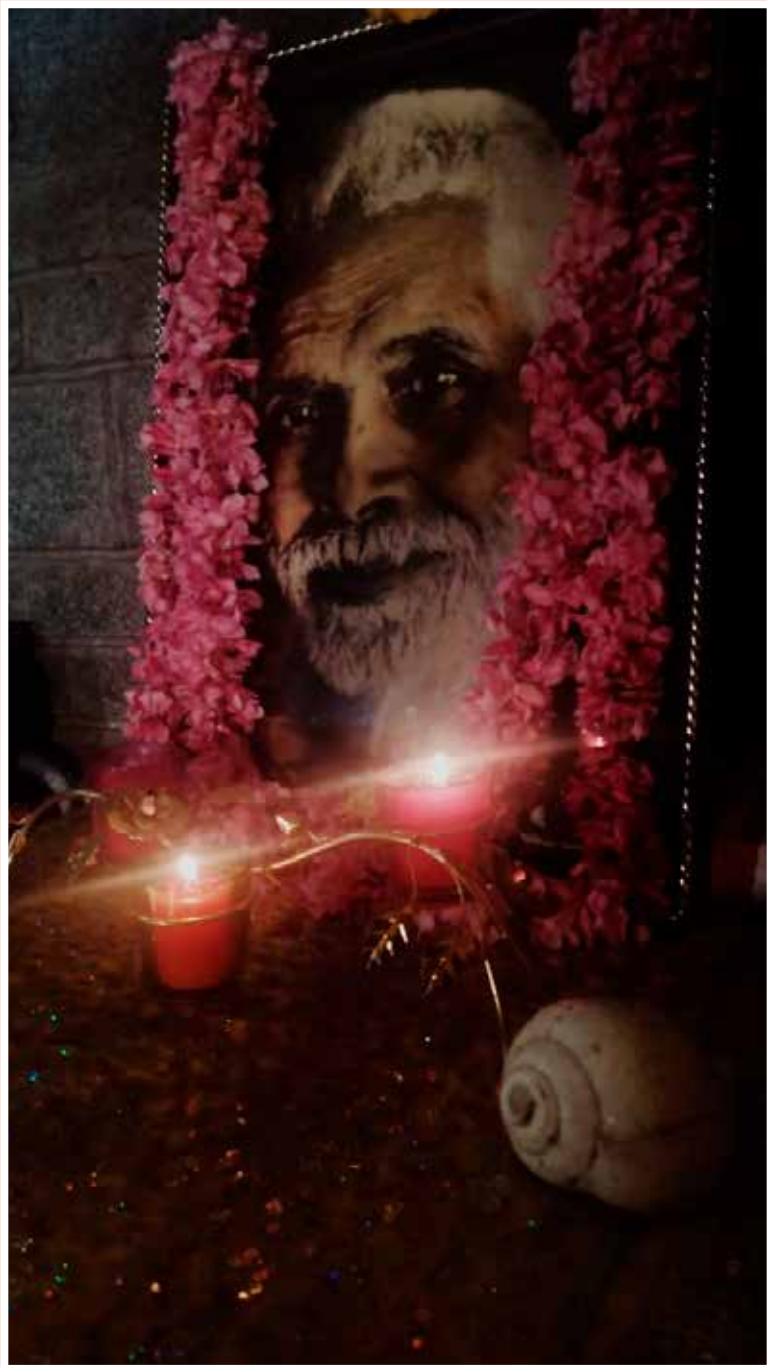








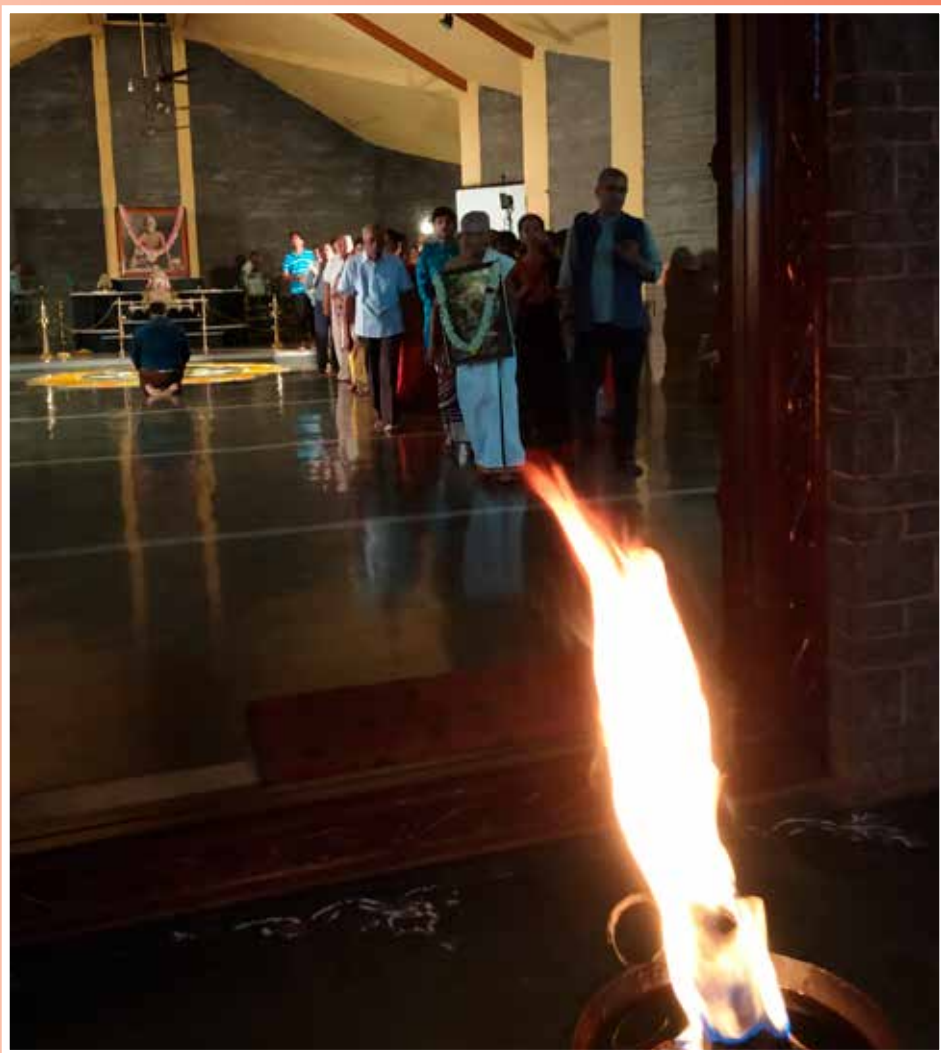


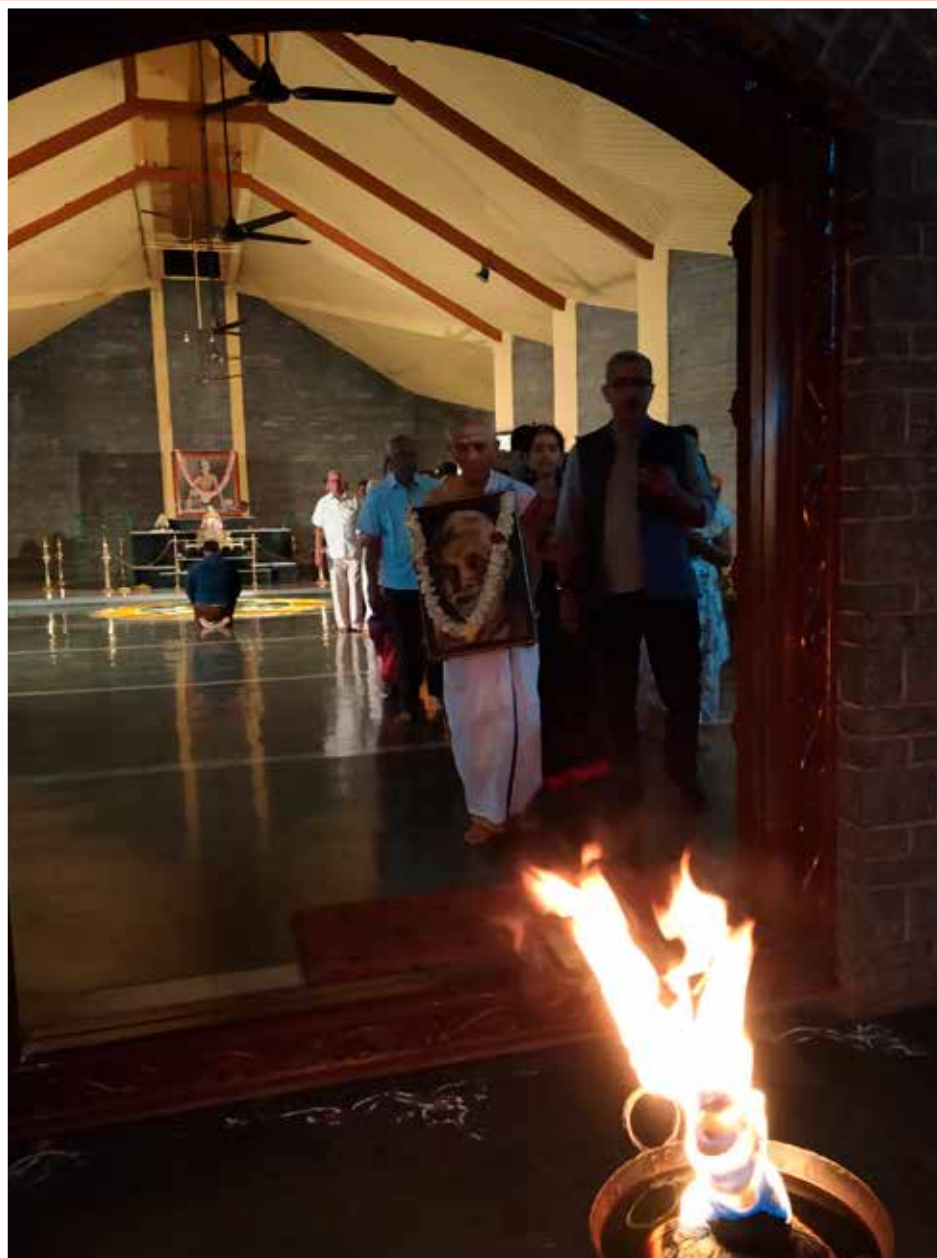




Karthigai Deepam at the Ramana Shrine







Siva Sameeksha Samiti at Rameswaram had organised a saptaaham on Rama Katha Sudha by Sri Nochur Venkataraman. They invited RMCL's team to perform Bala Kaandam and Gnana Kaandam.

Here is a sharing of some pictures from the live webcast and of some members of the team who travelled.











January Ramana Dates with RMCL

05 Sunday Ramana Jayanthi Celebrations at RMCL West Bangalore
06.00 pm at Nimishamba Temple, Rajarajeswari Nagar

10 Friday Pournami
06.45 pm at Ramana Shrine, Mekhri Circle

11 Saturday
07.15 pm Arunachala Ramana – Gnana Kaandam at Mylapore Fine Arts, Chennai

12 Sunday Arunachala Ramana – Yaathirai Kaandam at Chennai

23 Thursday Founder's Day RAISE for Govt. School Children
10.00 am at Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium, Sanjaynagar

25 Saturday, 26 Sunday (Details Overleaf) National Seminar and Cultural Festival
10.30 am onwards at Ramana Maharshi Shrine, Mekhri Circle

28 Tuesday RAISE for Vinayaka Education Society School Children
06.30 pm at Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium, Sanjaynagar

February Ramana Dates with RMCL

02 Sunday Nadopasana
11.30 am at Ramana Shrine, Mekhri Circle

08 Pournami
06.45 pm at Ramana Maharshi Shrine, Mekhri Circle

08 Saturday ARN Day – Thai Poosam
06.30 pm Ramana Kendra, Alamelumangapuram, Chennai

16 Nityopasana
06.30 pm at Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium, Sanjaynagar

21 Friday Maha Sivaratri
07.00 pm to 06.00 am at Ramana Shrine, Mekhri Circle

23 Sunday Father's Day – Homage to Sundaram Iyer
11.00 am at Ramana Shrine, Mekhri Circle

National Seminar and Cultural Festival**25 January, Saturday - Swami Virajananda Saraswati Endowment**

5.00 pm Talk by Sri Dileep Simha

5.45 pm Benedictory address by Mata Amritamayi

Cultural Festival Ramananjali Nritya Classical

6.45 pm Sri Ujwal Jagadeesh

7.30 pm Kum. Revathi Sankar

26 January, Sunday

10.30 am Prayer

Talks by

10.45 am Smt.Vani Vasudev

11.30 am Sri Venkatesh Deshpande

12.15 pm Dr. Ambika Kameshwar - Krishna Prasad Memorial Lecture

01.00 pm Dr. P. Natarajan

01.45 pm Lunch

02.45 pm Dr. Kala Rani Rengaswamy

03.30 pm Dr. Sarada Natarajan - Ramapriya Memorial Lecture

04.15 pm Tea

04.45 pm G.Kameshwar

05.30 pm K.G.Subraya Sharma - Seshappa Byndoor Memorial Lecture

Cultural Festival

Ramananjali Sangeetham Devotional

6.45 pm Smt. Poorna Sooraj

7.30 pm Smt. V. Radha

Ramana Every Day

RMHC - Ramana Maharshi Heritage Centre - Sanjaynagar

RMS - Ramana Maharshi Shrine - Mekhri Circle

RSCS - RMCL Satsang Centre at South Bangalore

RSCR - RMCL Satsang Centre at Rajarajeshwari Nagar

Self Enquiry session - English by Sri. Nandakumarji (080-42094073)

Thursday: 6:00pm at RSCS

Friday: 6:30pm - 7:30pm at RMHC

Saturday: 6:00pm at RSCS (Special Talk by K.G. Subraya Sharma)

Saturday: 11:00am at RMS

Sunday: 10:30am at RMS

Everyday: 6:00am at RSCS (Chanting, Meditation and Walk)

Self Enquiry session - Kannada by Sri. Dileep Simha (9448374818)

Tuesday: 6:30pm - 7:30pm at RMHC

Music and Dance classes [Contact - Uma (9538472026)]

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 5:00pm - 7:00pm at RMHC.

Yoga classes [Contact - Uma (9538472026)]

Monday - Wednesday - Friday: 6:30am & 6:00pm at RMHC

Talks - Kannada by Sri. Sridhar Sarma, disciple of Sri Nochur

Saturday 4:00pm - 5:30pm at RMS. [Contact Usha Sankar (9663284111)]

Talks - English by Dr. Sarada Natarajan/Venkatesh Deshpande/Dileep Simha

Sunday: 11:30am at RMS

Bhajans - by Smt. Radha, Revathi, Uma and Ujwal

Sunday: 10:30am at RMS

Parayana of Bhagavans Sanskrit Composition by Ms. Savithri and Smt. Ratnamma

Saturday: 11:00am - 12:00pm at RMS

Talks, Parayana and Puja by Sri Chandrashekar (9448839594)

Thursday 6:30pm at RSCR

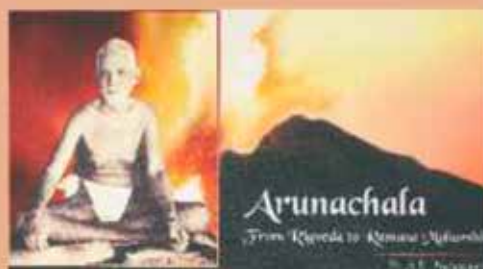
Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

98. It is only when you live your life by taking the body alone to be 'I' that the external world, consisting of moving and unmoving objects, will manifest itself. Since, for the Self, there is a complete absence of external objects, whether far or near, it is therefore wrong to say that it is an unaffected witness.
99. The world does not exist without the body; the body never at any time without the mind; the mind does not exist at all apart from consciousness; and consciousness too does not exist apart from being.



ARUNACHALA FROM RIGVEDA TO RAMANA MAHARSHI

This book covers a vast panorama of over four thousand years from the Rigvedic seers to Ramana Maharshi. Arunachala, the seemingly insentient hill, and the golden hued Ramana are embodied fire of Knowledge. The purpose of this book is to rekindle in every human heart this smouldering fire now doused by ignorance.