

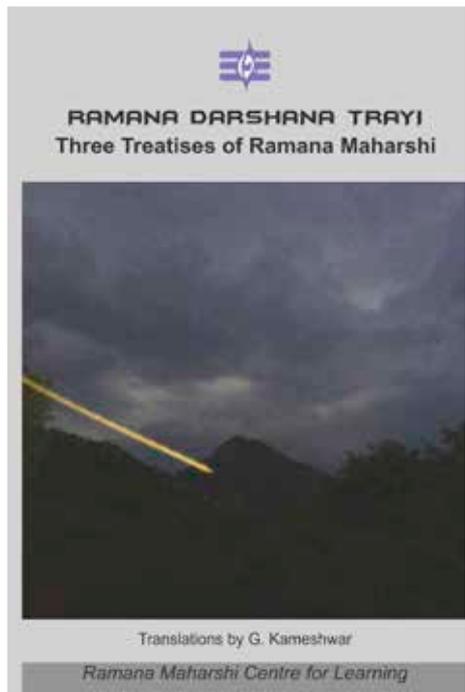
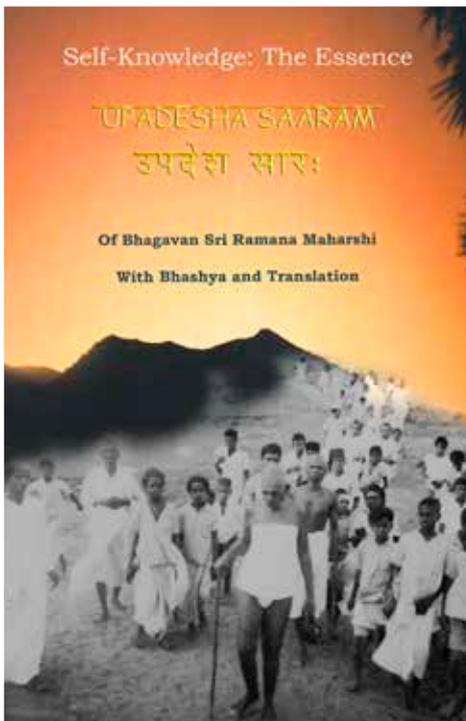
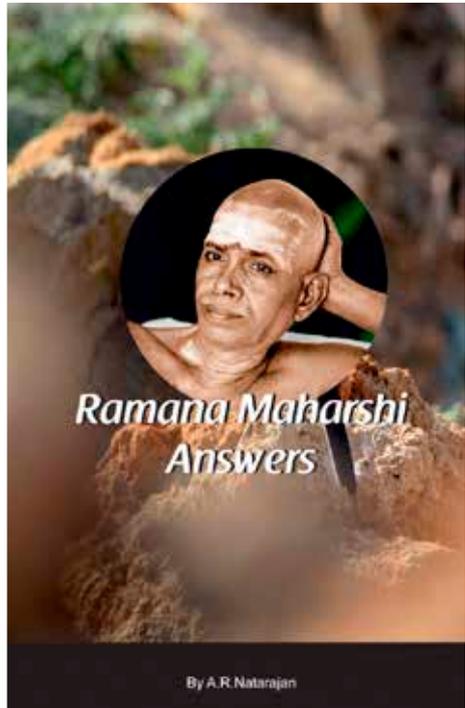
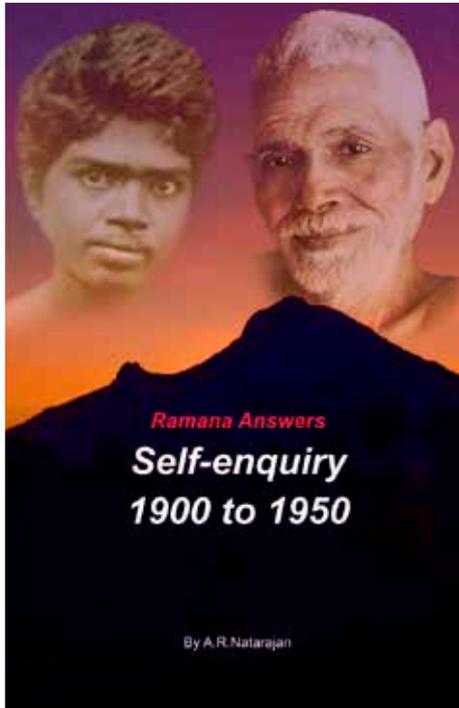
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The Ramana Way

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NEW
Publications



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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Editorial*Dr. Sarada*

Why does Ramana begin the essence of spiritual instruction, his 'Upadesa Saram' by addressing the sense of doer-ship? Why does he tell us at the very outset that action is lifeless, it is incapable of giving us fruits? It is only because of the Divine Law that action yields fruits that are commensurate with the action. Results come to us in proportion to the action because it is the Lord's Law that they should do so. It is not because of the power of the action itself to yield results. To accept this is indeed not easy.

The one great power that we think we wield is the power to act. To some extent we understand that we are not in control of circumstances and events. We cannot help doing so because we see that the universe is immense. It is evident that we are absolutely puny in relation to it. Often we do not have the wherewithal to deal with the events that we are faced with in this puny existence, what to talk of tackling the problems that face the world and further the entire universe. Hence we are ready to assume the attitude of surrender when it comes to events of a larger dimension than we can control. But this is not the case in smaller events. These we believe are under our control and this gives us a great sense of joy.

The truth may well be that we are perhaps less interested in the fruits of the action than in our power to act. If not, how are we so often satisfied with talking about action or even thinking about action rather than actually acting? The need to act rules our lives. And this is the reason Ramana has begun the very essence of Upadesa, the very essence of all Instruction, by declaring the utter futility of action.

He begins by saying action is powerless not just because this is prompted by the context in which the verses came to be written. True, Muruganar had begun to write the Tiru Undiyar in which he described the sports of all the great Gods as the embodiments of Ramana. True that the poem had reached a point where the exploits of Siva had been delineated. True also that the story of the sages of the Daruka forest had been narrated wherein

they were enmeshed in their own sense of power to achieve anything through ritualistic action and Siva had vanquished their pride. They had surrendered to Siva recognising His Omnipotence and prayed to Him for Upadesa. It is this Upadesa that Muruganar prayed to Ramana to give and thereby complete his poetic work. Ramana blessed Muruganar and the entire universe by completing the poem as Upadesa Undiyar in the original Tamil and later himself translating the 30 verses into Sanskrit, Telugu and Malayalam.

Thus, it is often surmised that the instruction in the first few verses is for the sages, the rishis of the Daruka forest, not for us. Who sees how enmeshed we are in our own belief that we have the power to act and to attain the desired fruits of our actions? We fail to recognise that we are indeed no different from those sages of the Daruka forest. We fail to see that we, very much like those sages, believe that it is in our power to create, sustain and destroy. We believe that by our actions we can build our destiny, ensure the results that we seek. Do we not choose to act from moment to moment? Are not all our thoughts spurred by the need to act and the belief in the possibility that we are capable of action and further, that we are capable of ensuring that we will attain the fruits of our actions? If we truly believed that the fruits of actions are not resting with us, why would we still wish to engage in action?

Primarily we seem to act only in order to attain some chosen result. If we are convinced that we may not attain that result, would we still act? If we are certain that we will not gain what we wish to by pursuing a particular course of action, then we would surely not pursue it. And it should be that 'certain'. When there is absolute hopelessness, when all roads are literally and absolutely closed, then we will cease from action for that point of time. Describing his enlightenment as a boy of sixteen when Ramana faced the intense fear of death, he says that the very intensity drove his mind inward. He says that he was certain he was going to die. He did not think there was any escape route open. Hence he had only one option, to face death. He did so valiantly and once and for all dispensed with death.

However, if there is even a minute possibility of gaining the result, then we may not desist from trying. On the other hand

we may even become very excited about the very probability of capturing a goal. Is this not what the gambling instinct is all about? There is the game of hoopla in which rings are thrown from a boundary line at items placed on shelves in front. The aim of the game is to net the items in the ring. There are some whose aim is good and who have the skill to throw the ring with the right velocity. Such persons would surely be able to win some of the items placed on the shelf. Even then they may miss one or two. There are others who are not so skilled in the use of the hoopla rings. They may not net a prize and they are fully aware of this. But this does not stop them from trying. Why do they play? The experts play though they know they may miss one or two because they are sure of a few wins. The non-experts play in the hope that they may have a chance to win something. Just a chance, no doubt, but why not try for that chance?

One may not be deterred by the play of chance because one can always hope for a hit rather than a miss. So long as there is even a glimmer of hope that action might yield a longed for result, till then one would keep on pursuing the path of action. That is why there is a second verse in the 'Upadesa Saram' where Ramana warns us about the danger of pursuing result oriented actions. First of all the result is not guaranteed. That is not all. Even supposing one does get the results of one's actions as per expectations, such results will not lead us to our goal, rather they will obstruct it. This appears to be a strange paradox. How can a result obstruct the goal? Is not the very result the goal of our action? Having got the result what further goal is obstructed? Here our attention is subtly turned to the real goal that we are seeking. We pursue actions to obtain desired results. This is because we believe that those fruits of our actions will bring us happiness. If we know that they will not bring us happiness would we with such great care pursue those goals? Ramana points out that while we labour under the illusion that we are seeking specific results what we are really looking for is happiness. Every goal is sought by us only because we believe that it will give us happiness. We wish to do something only because we believe it will give us happiness. We wish to refrain from doing certain things because we believe that by not doing such things we would be happy.

We wish to do well in various pursuits because we believe that success gives us happiness. We wish to have numerous friends because we believe that friendship gives us happiness. We want to look good because we believe that looking good will make us happy. We want to be good because we expect to be happy by being good. Anything and everything that we do and do not do is only in order to be happy. About this we too are certain. The only problem is that we confuse happiness with the results of action. We hypnotise ourselves into thinking that happiness is springing from those results. We do this to the extent that we even forget what we are really looking for. We begin to believe that we are looking for things and experiences and situations. We lose sight of the fact that happiness is our goal.

If at all we apparently get some taste of joy because of our actions that only adds to our illusion that action is capable of getting us our desired result, which is happiness. We fail to remember that the joy which we seem to get as a result of our action is fleeting. It just creates a craving for more and more. There is an advertisement for a brand of potato wafers which goes 'you can't stop with one'. It is not as if life is not giving us its bounties. It is just that we are never satisfied.

But this is exactly where our pursuit of action takes us. It obstructs our goal, which is happiness, by making us so lost in the action that we forget why we are doing it in the first place. Action creates the need for more and more action. Action only makes us dependent on further action. If we begin a course of action, any course of action, it leads to more and more. If you don't go to school then you remain uneducated but once you start going to school then you practically can't stop till you have graduated. Perhaps you may need to continue with higher studies. And then, since you've studied so much you need to put that to use, so you need to take up a job. Once you take up a job you need to go up the ladder in that job.

So what happens to life? It is bound by the chain of actions that one starts. Can we cry a halt to it at some point? Is it easy to do so? One of 1008 names in 'Ramana Sahasranama' composed on Ramana by Jagadeeswara Sastry is 'Sarvaarambha parityaagi'

'One who has renounced all beginnings'. Rangan, his schoolmate and dear friend asked Ramana in later years as to why he did not share the secret of leaving home even with him. Ramana replied, 'Ranga, did I leave home like any other traveller with a plan of travel? I was just dragged here by some extraordinary current'. He never planned to do anything. Things happened and he participated in the happenings without objecting to them. When a barber asked him whether he would have his head shaven, he conceded. When Uddandi Nayanar and Annamalai Tambiran asked him to move to Gurumurtham, he did not object and went with them. Every event manifested in the very same manner. When he was questioned as to why he moved from Skandasramam to Ramanasramam, his answer was simple, 'The same force that brought me to Arunachala brought me from there to here.'

The one occasion on which Ramana actually made a plan of action, Arunachala foiled it completely. Once, Ramana decided to escape from the multiple food offerings, the bhikshas that he had been receiving continuously. He slipped away quietly from Skandasramam without informing anyone and went on a girivalam, circumambulation of Arunachala. He was somewhere past Yama Lingam, walking on the inner path, when he was suddenly accosted by a group of seven tribal women who wanted to know where they could find some water source. He guided them to a nearby stream whereupon they insisted that he should join them for breakfast. They set a leaf-plate before him and served him plentifully, each vying with the other.

The story did not end there. When it was nearing lunch time he again came across the same group of women. Once more they made short shrift of his plea that he was nowhere near hungry. They won his assent by saying that he should treat the food as 'Unnamulai Amman's Prasadam'. Once again they fed him sumptuously. The story did not end even there. Ramana needed to rest awhile because of the heavy meals and did so behind some shrubby undergrowth. Just as he was coming back to the road Manavasi Ramaswami Iyer, coming from the opposite direction, spotted him excitedly. What timing! Had Ramana come out from behind the shrubs a few minutes later, Ramaswami Iyer would have passed by without seeing him. As it happened, he was well

and truly caught by Ramaswami Iyer. And what was Iyer's purpose for having come in the opposite direction? It was to find Ramana and feed him a special meal with mango rasam!

Ramana accepted defeat willingly and joyously. What of us? No matter how many defeats we may face in our efforts, we are still undeterred in our faith in our actions. Our sense of doership is not easily erased. In fact, we are often so addicted to action that we completely lose sight of the reason why we began to act in the first place. The action momentum has us in its grip, one action leading to another and yet another. Do we wish to find a way out of this maze? If we do then there is a guiding light of the Master's words which is bound to lead us out.

The instruction of the Master is clear. And this instruction has not been given to us only at the beginning of the essence of instruction, the 'Upadesa Saram'. It was the very first instruction given to the world by Ramana in the form of a written upadesa to his mother, Azhagamma. 'There is One who is the Doer, the Mover. He, remaining everywhere, makes everyone move, He makes everyone act in accordance with their destiny. That which is not to happen will not happen, despite every effort. That which is to happen cannot be stopped by any obstruction. This is certain. Therefore, the best course is to remain silent.' Here the instruction is to remain silent.

As our faith is not intense enough to make us remain in silence as soon as we hear the Master's instruction, he steps down and gives us a path that will draw us directly into the silence. This is the path of self-enquiry. As Sri A.R.Natarajan writes, "One has to search, enquire about one's true identity, and trace its source. This search for the source is called self-enquiry.... the ego-centric mind originates from the spiritual heart. Spiritual effort is to consciously make it return to this source. For once this is done the individuality, fragmentary consciousness, loses itself in the fullness of consciousness. Then the real 'I' shines forth in all its radiance."

Sarada Natarajan

THE NEW DAWN**A. R. Natarajan***ON THE TRAIL**

To understand Ramana's teachings aright one has to turn to the original sources 'Ulladu Narpadu', 'Upadesa Undiyar', 'Ramana Gita' and 'Garland of Guru's Sayings'. Fortunately for those who are not familiar with Tamil or Sanskrit, we have very good English translations and commentaries. There is need to supplement these sources by studying Ramana's instructions to his disciples, Gambiram Seshier and Sivaprakasam Pillai, covered in 'Self Instruction', and 'Who am 'I'?' respectively. All these works should be read and understood in the backdrop of Ramana's experiences, initially when he was twelve years old and his father's dead body was laid on the floor for the last rites, and the 'death-experience' subsequently when he was sixteen after which he became an Enlightened seer, ever remaining in the state of steady wisdom.

It is also important to remember that in spiritual practice one has to give pride of place to being sensitive to Ramana's guidance. All this is said because there is a tendency to understand the teachings through recorded conversations and replies to doubts of a seeker. A young and ardent seeker from Canada was spending a month at Sri Ramanasramam and he had thought that booklets like 'Sayings', 'Thus Spake', 'Gems' or 'Silent Mind' were sufficient. He is in a way typical, for one might shy away from the original prose works for fear of lack of knowledge of Tamil or Sanskrit. The replies of Ramana in the thirties and later need to be understood keeping in mind the varying intensity of the questioners interest which depends on their backgrounds. They would keep holding on to it.

When his father died the question which gripped Ramana was, 'Why is my father's body declared to be a corpse while his body is still here?' On reflection he came to the conclusion that there is some force in each one, the presence of which alone

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

makes the body alive. The question as to what this force was remained unanswered.

On the 17th July 1896, when Ramana was gripped by the fear of death he began an enquiry which he later labeled as 'Who am 'I'?' enquiry. While his body was stiff and ready for cremation he could feel simultaneously the full force of his personality, as the divine current within, as 'I'. He thus discovered that the 'I' was a force or current working despite the rigidity or activity of the body.

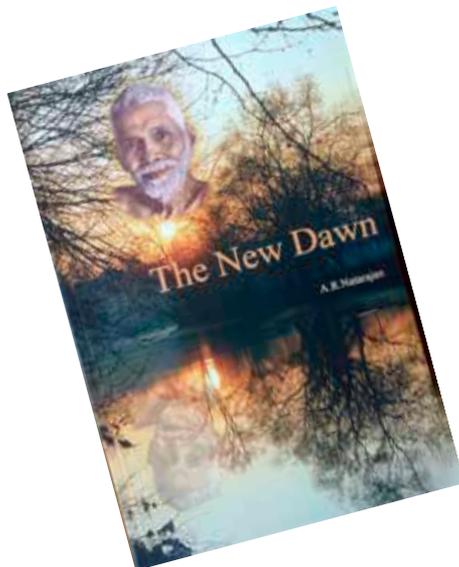
Thereafter Ramana shared this experience with all so that they too could partake of this beatitude. One has to search, enquire about one's true identity, and trace its source. The expressions 'gaveshana' and 'margana' refer to this. This search for the source is called self-enquiry.

To facilitate this enquiry Ramana has repeatedly indicated to the seekers that the search will end in the spiritual heart on the right side of the chest. Ramana tells us that this spiritual heart is the seat of the Self, or what is usually described as the Real 'I'. Even more important is the fact that it is also the source of the ego or the 'I' thought. One might therefore say that the ego-centric mind originates from the spiritual heart. Spiritual effort is to consciously make it return to this source. For once this is done the individuality, fragmentary consciousness, loses itself in the fullness of consciousness. Then the real 'I' shines forth in all its radiance.

The sadhana in the Ramana Way is to discover for oneself one's true nature as the divine deathless, birthless current.

The 'I' 'I' shines without a let in the heart, since it is ever present. Sadhana is directed to remove obstructions to its awareness. This raises the question 'What obstructs this awareness?' The obstruction is the continuous momentum of thoughts. From out of the vast reservoir of thoughts in the heart, which are called the vasanās, the first thought which sprouts is the 'I'-thought and almost simultaneously innumerable thoughts arise on the mental horizon. These thoughts are so great in numbers, and many at cross purposes, so that one is often helpless when an avalanche of thoughts buries one as it were.

According to Ramana, the only way to deal with this thought world is to enquire 'To whom has this thought arisen?' as soon as a thought surfaces. The reason for this is that though there is an army of thoughts they are all dependent on the individual's attention. The Centre of the thought world is the 'I'-thought and therefore the focus of attention needs to be on that centre. Holding on to this centre means vigilance to the rising thought. As a thought arises or at the earliest point of time such steady practice of the enquiry will reduce the mental movements and free the mind's centre from its association with other thoughts. Once this happens the thought centre which had been anchored on the other thoughts will automatically merge into the source from which it has arisen. The source being the spiritual heart, it would be merged back into the heart. This is the conscious effort done in the waking state to achieve the same position which happens unconsciously when sleep overtakes us. The path is direct and simple and enables uni-focusing of the mind and a holistic approach to life. One functions with a mind which is silent, its basic state. Thoughts arise in it as and when required and subside when their purpose is over. All action is done in this vast silence of the mind merged in its source, fullness of consciousness.



The 'Talks' as a Guidance to Self Enquiry

N.Nandakumar

Talk 41. (Excerpt) BOTH PROBLEM AND SOLUTION LIE WITHIN YOU.

D.: When loyal to one Master can you respect others?

M.: Guru is only one. He is not physical. So long as there is weakness the support of strength is needed.

D.: J. Krishnamurti says, "No Guru is necessary"?

M.: How did he know it? One can say so after realising but not before.

D.: You have gained this state by great effort. What shall we poor souls do?

M.: We are in our Self. We are not in the world.

D.: Heaven and hell - what are they?

M.: You carry heaven and hell with you. Your lust, anger, etc., produce these regions. They are like dreams.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: The Supreme Self permeates everything. It is within the "I" thought. The root of all problems arises when the "I" thought imagines itself to be separate from the Self within. The solution is for the "I" thought to BE STILL and merge into the Source. That Supreme Self shines by itself beyond "within" and "outside". If the Supreme Self itself is WITHIN then the SAD-GURU, heaven and hell, all lie within oneself in the most practical sense. They appear outside - in the sensory world and thought world - according to one's inner search. TURN INWARD.

Q: Why does Bhagavan, in one of the rarest instances, criticise J.Krishnamurthy for saying, "No Guru is necessary"?

S: The thought-free and ego-free Self is the support of all sadhana in creation. It is not a blind denial of all other supports, especially of that of a Guru.

Talk 41 (Excerpt).

D.: You have gained this state by great effort. What shall we poor souls do?

M.: We are in our Self. We are not in the world.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: The way to show reverence to the Guru is not to treat him as a great being outside of oneself but to treat Him as not apart from one's Self. Then, self enquiry will reveal that there is nothing that exists apart from the Guru, the Self.

Talk 41 (Excerpt)

D.: The term 'jnana' is realised Wisdom. The same term is used for the method also. Why?

M.: 'Jnana' includes the method also because it ultimately results in realisation.

D.: Is a man to engage in teaching his knowledge however imperfect?

M.: If his prarabdha be that way.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: "Jnana is Realised Wisdom and admits of no differences", is sometimes misunderstood as a blind and verbal denial of all methods. Here, Bhagavan is clarifying that the "Realised Wisdom in which no differences exist", INCLUDES the method. In fact, it does not exclude the "blind-denial" method too outside its ambit as there is no "outside" in Jnana. However, a teacher of Jnana Marga should understand that the efforts he is allowed to make to share the method are merely due to "Prarabdha Karma" common to all and not due to any special ability as this will bring him back to bondage.

Talk 41 (Excerpt)

[Question has been added to give continuity to the previous excerpt.]

(If sharing of Jnana Marga as a teacher, perfect or imperfect, is due to Prarabdha Karma, does it not mean that Karma Marga can be a path to Jnana?)

M.: In the seventh chapter, Arjuna asks if Karma is a method (sadhana). Krishna answers that it is so if done without the sense of doership. So also are Karmas approved by scriptures which deny Karma. The Karma disapproved by them is that which is done with the sense of doership. Do not leave Karma. You cannot do so. Give up the sense of doership. Karma will go on automatically. Or Karma will drop away from you. If Karma be your lot according to prarabdha, it will surely be done whether you will it or not; if Karma

be not your lot, it will not be done even if you intently engage in it. Janaka, Suka, etc., were also in work without ahankara, Karma may be done for fame, or may be done unselfishly and for the public good. Yet even then they want applause. So it is really selfish.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Even if a scripture denies karma, was it not thought of and written? Was it not meant to be read or listened to? How does a Jnani "do" yet "not do"? This cannot be explained. For whom is the doing, not doing, explanation or seeking explanation? Grant Duff gives us a clue. He says that Bhagavan was so sensitive that he could know even the minutest fault in the visitor or seeker. But, instead of expressing the fault and embarrassing the seeker, Bhagavan would be GENTLE and in that GENTLENESS BEYOND ALL GENTLENESS He would absorb the fault felt and be the SELF thus bringing about the highest good to the teacher and the seeker in the POORNA MOWNA.

Q: I am an avid student of the recently deceased scientist Stephen Hawking. In an article, "Is everything determined?" in the book, "Black holes and Baby Universes", he summarises:

"In summary, the title of this essay was a question; is everything determined? The answer is yes, it is. But it might as well not be, because we can never know what is determined". Is he indicating surrender? How does Self Enquiry resolve this?

S: For whom is the knowledge or ignorance about determined fate? This takes consciousness beyond the plane of an individual facing a fate along with many trillion individuals. Self Knowledge transcends predetermined fate and ignorance of how fate will turn out.

Talk 41 (Excerpt).

D.: What is THAT ONE THING, KNOWING WHICH ALL DOUBTS ARE SOLVED?

M.: KNOW THE DOUBTER. If the doubter be held, the doubts will not arise. Here the doubter is transcendent. Again when the doubter ceases to exist, there will be no doubts arising. From where will they arise? All are jnanis, jivanmuktas. Only they are not aware of the fact. Doubts must be uprooted. This means that the doubter must be uprooted. Here the doubter is the mind.

D.: What is the method?

M.: 'Who am I?' is the investigation.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Objects and objective knowledge appear with the arising of ego and set with the sleep of the ego. Objects and objective knowledge are interpreted by the ego. They are best called as "doubts". The question, "What is the source of this Universe?" cannot arise except to a doubter. To know everything beyond a trace of doubt, Bhagavan asks us to hold the doubter. When the doubter is erased in the Source, all objective knowledge, whether theoretical physics or the harsh word of an irritable boss, are both known as the one Self beyond division as subject-object duality, beyond doubt.

Q: Stephen Hawking says, "Whether the language-transmitted sense of responsibility (Human intellectual growth of the last 10000 years) is sufficient to control the DNA-transmitted instinct of aggression (gradual evolution of the animal over a billion years) remains to be seen. If it does not, the human race will have been one of natural selection's dead ends". How can such a finding about the entire future of humanity which explains the current world situation of a small nuclear power and a huge aggressive one threatening our very existence, be dismissed as "doubt"?"

S.: That "Existence" is limited by DNA evolution or evolution of Intellectual Sensitivity is itself the fallacy. For whom is this fear of non-existence?"

Talk 41 (Excerpt) SELF ENQUIRY IS ENOUGH.

D.: What is the method?

M.: 'Who am I?' is the investigation.

D.: May we perform japa?

M.: Why should you think I am this? Investigate and the thoughts cease. What is, namely the Self, will be revealed as the inescapable residue.

D.: Is hatha yoga necessary?

M.: It is one of the aids - not that it is always necessary. It depends upon the person. Vichara surpasses pranayama. In Yoga Vasishtha, Chudala advises investigation (vichara) to Sikhidvaja for killing the ego.

Reality can be reached by holding on to prana or intellect. Hatha yoga is the former; Vichara is the latter.

D.: Is there any individuality for the Jnani after Realization?

M.: How can he retain individuality?

Even ordinarily the elders advise achamana and pranayama before undertaking any work - be it worldly or other-worldly. That means, concentration of mind accomplishes the work.

D.: I meditate neti-neti (not this - not this).

M.: No - that is not meditation. Find the source. You must reach the source without fail. The false 'I' will disappear and the real 'I' will be realised. The former cannot exist apart from the latter.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Self Enquiry is enough.

Q.: I understand that a Scientist like Stephen Hawking is also doing Japa indirectly. What is the Japa he is holding?

S.: Through a terrible, almost life-long illness to the body, he holds the Japa, "I am a Theoretical Physicist and I have to find the grand unified theory about everything". Bhagavan is teaching that the consciousness within need not do the Japa, directly or indirectly, as "I am a Scientist, or I am Rama, or I am Ramana or I am That". It is enough to enquire "Who am I?" and hold the One Source of Aham and Idam.



Saddarshanam

Master Noma

*AtmanamIkShEtaparam prapaSyEt
ityAgamoktau sulabho na bhAvah |
nAtmaiva drSyo yadi kA kathESE
svayam tadannlbhavanam tadIkShA || 21 ||*

See the Self, see the Supreme;

Thus, the Agama (the scripture's) declaration. This is not an easy bhava (state, meditation, contemplation). If the Self is not, indeed, the seen, how can there be talk of the Lord? (how to seek the Lord?) Oneself becoming His food is that seeing (is seeing Him).

N.: The instruction everywhere, in all non-dualistic texts, is: "See the Self, see the Supreme." Each phrase may be taken individually, so the instruction may be understood as, "See God, search for God; see the Self, search for the Self," or the phrases may be understood together as, "If you see the Self, you see the Supreme," or, "If you have seen the Supreme, you have seen your Self." The Maharshi says that this is the declaration of the scriptures, but that it is not an easy state or contemplation. What is the significance of this? It is explained with, "If the Self is not, indeed, the seen, how can there be talk of the Lord, or how can one seek the Lord?" The instruction is difficult only in this manner. You are instructed, "See the Self," but the Self is not an object. So, how are you going to see the Self? Unless you see the Self, you do not see the Supreme. So, how can those scriptures tell you, "See the Self, see the Supreme," knowing full well that you cannot see the Self? This verse says that it "is not easy." The proclamation of the scriptures is not a trick commandment. Sri Bhagavan elaborates, "If the Self is not, indeed, the seen, how can there be talk of the Lord, or how one can seek the Lord?"

The Maharshi comes to the rescue: "Oneself becoming His food is that seeing (seeing Him.)" If you want to see the Absolute, you must be swallowed up, consumed by it, and thoroughly digested.

“See the Self; see the Supreme.” These are the injunctions or commandments of the scriptures. This instruction is given in no uncertain terms. It is sublime instruction and ought to be followed. Sri Ramana says, “Thus, the scripture's declaration.”

“This is not an easy bhava.” “Bhava” has many meanings, and, in this case, it means a state, a meditation, or a contemplation. “See the Self, see the Supreme,” may seem to be a contemplation that is not easy or a rather steep meditation and may appear to be not an easy state. As always, though, the Maharshi is there for the rescue.

“If the Self is not, indeed, the seen, how can there be talk of (how to seek) the Lord?” If the Lord, or God, is not an object, how does one seek God? In the previous verse, Sri Bhagavan said that, if God is an object, it is just mental seeing. Seeing God cannot be that. So, when the ancient scriptures and sages say that one should seek God and see God,” what is this seeing of God? How can you see something that is not objective? You cannot see God with your physical eyes, and you cannot see God with mental vision. So, how to see God? What is the seeing?

The instruction is, “See the Self, see the Supreme.” As long as we treat God, or the Self, as if an object, it will seem impossible, or, at least, rather difficult, to do so. How is one to see that which is nonobjective? As long as you stand as the individual, or as a separate mind, trying to see God, when will this seeing actually occur? Whatever you see will still be objective, and this instruction to see the Self, to see God, will seem to be a very difficult bhava, indeed. There is, in truth, no difficulty in it. The way is nonobjective and consists in swallowing the seer. Bhagavan says, “How to seek the Lord? Oneself becoming His food is that seeing.” To lose one's separate individuality and be consumed, without a trace, in God is the seeing of God.

You cannot know the Self as if it were an object. Once you consider the Self, or God, as an object, the seeing or the knowing seems to be some mysterious way of relation between the subject, yourself, which is unknown, and the known, which is God, the Self, or the Supreme Self. When the individuality is lost, there is nothing mysterious about the seeing, or the knowing, at all.

The individuality is lost. The separate mind is consumed. It is eaten up, with no crumbs left behind. If you would be consumed, with not a crumb left behind, with nothing to call “you” or “yours,” “I” or the “mind,” from what perspective would you be seeing God? Only from God's perspective. God sees God with God's own Eye. The Self knows the Self with its own innate Knowledge. It is that knowledge in which Being is the Knowledge. If you are consumed in this manner, as the Maharshi teaches, nothing remains of you to be called “a separate self.” Your Knowledge of God, then, is God's Knowledge of God. There is nothing more certain or sublime than that.

This is indicated in the Agama-s, the scriptures. “Agama” refers, in a generic sense, to a number of scriptures. This Truth is what is indicated in those ancient scriptures, in which the instruction is, “See the Self, see the Supreme.” Know your Self, and this is Knowledge of God.

Q.: I have this deep, devotional experience with Ramana. It comes as, “Take me. I am yours.” Is that what he is referring to?

N.: Yes. When you eat some food, that food does not exist as such anymore. The matter of the vegetables that you eat becomes your own matter. The broccoli you consume loses its broccoli-hood, and it is gone. There is no broccoli left over after you are done munching and digesting. This is the imagery being employed. The individual should be consumed, utterly losing his identity. The very “particle” of the ego should be utterly absorbed and become the identity of the Absolute, so that no individuality remains at all. “Becoming food” signifies the state of complete absorption.

If you become food for Sri Ramana, you lose your ego. You lose your individuality, just as the broccoli lost its broccoli-hood. Furthermore, you lose the misidentification with the body, just as the broccoli cannot reclaim its shape. You lose your form, and you lose your individuality. Then, all that remains of you is That, and That sees itself perfectly. God, or the Self, has no problem with the injunction to see the Self, to see the Supreme, because the Self is self-luminous. God knows God.

You cannot see the Self, because the Self is not an object. You must see the Self in order to realize the Absolute. If the individuality of the supposed seer disappears, the vision is the seer, himself, and the seer is the Self and no longer an individual.

Q.: It is just God seeing God, at that point, is it not?

N.: So, our spiritual efforts should be aimed at the dissolution of the ego, by whatever means, ensuring it becomes absorbed, and preparing the “food” in whatever way is necessary in order that it becomes consumed.

Another Q.: “By whatever means.” Could you say a little more about this?

N.: It varies according to the aspirant and according to the depth of practice. Anything that brings about ego-dissolution is happy, makes peace shine, is freeing, and is beneficial. The most efficacious means is the inquiry. Knowledge lies at the core of any successful means. Even the smallest activity that is done in the name of spirituality that bears good results has a Knowledge essence. If it were otherwise, it would not spiritually work. In the Maharshi's instruction, all the emphasis is placed on Knowledge, because, whether one is practicing the inquiry or is also doing other things, those other things work for the same reason the inquiry does. The inquiry is pure Knowledge. The other things work because of their essential core.

Q.: One could infuse every task with a spiritual energy?

N.: How are you going to do that?

Q.: I do not know, because the ego is doing that, and I think that way.

N.: If you were focused on knowing your identity, which is not the ego, all of the tasks and all the experiences that would be encountered would be naturally infused with the growing wisdom inside you. Someone supposedly external to you might say of you that you are engaging in these activities in a spiritual manner

and that there are some activities that are purely of spiritual, or symbolic, purposes, but you would know that it is the Knowledge-essence that is entirely responsible. You would be focused entirely on finding your real nature. For one who is diving inward, everything is spiritual.

Q.: So, even while folding clothing, I could be intent on finding “Who am I?”

N.: If you were realizing that you are not the body and never do anything, while you are folding the clothing, would it be a spiritual experience? Perhaps, someone who does not understand would think that the practice consists of folding clothing, and therefore might further consider that there are particular ways of folding the clothing, particular kinds of cloth that need to be folded, and certain times of the day during which to fold, but those who know what is really occurring would comprehend that it is the disidentification from the body—the experience of bodiless Being.



Shri Arunachala Padikam

G Kameshwar

Eleven Verses on Arunachala Of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Verse-7

veLivaLi teeneer maNpala vuyirA
virivuru pUtapau tikagkaL¹
veLiyoli yunnai yanRiyin Rennin
vERuyA nAruLan vimalA
veLiyatA yuLLattu vERRa viLagkin
vERena veLivuru vEnAr
veLivarA yaruNA calavavan Ralaiyil
virimalarp patattinai vaittE.

Word split, and meaning:

veLi vaLi tee neer maN: Space, Air, Fire, Water, Earth (the elements)

pala uyirA: (as) diverse life-forms

virivuru: all pervading, manifest form

pUta pautikagkaL: material objects, (made from) elements

oLi veLi: Radiance Space (cidAkAsha : luminous consciousness)

unnai anRi: Apart from you

inRu ennil: if there exist none

vEru yAn Ar uLan: Who am I that am apart?

vimalA: O taintless one!

veLi atAy: as Space (cid AkAsha)

uLattu: in the heart

vERu aRa viLagkin: as you shine as Non-dual

vEru ena: As a distinct one (separate entity)

veLi varuvEn Ar?: Who am I (who is) coming out?

avan talaiyil: upon his head

viri: vast, all pervading

¹ The transliteration scheme followed is largely according to Tamil Lexicon, Madras 1924-39:

Vowels: a A i I u U e E ai o O au

Consonants: H k g c n^/jn T N t n p m y r l v z L R n_/n2

Grantha: j [C (SRD)] S s h kS

malar patattinai vaittE: by verily placing the lotus feet

aruNAcala: O Arunachala!

veLi varAy: emerge, rise-forth, show yourself, come out

Verse rendering:

The many life-forms
 The physical objects everywhere
 Compositions of elements
 Space, Air, Fire, Water, Earth;
 If (all these are) non-apart
 From You, the Space-Radiance (Luminance-
 Consciousness),
 Then
 O taintless one
 Who, indeed, am I
 As apart (from you)?

As it you who shines
 As that Space (Self, Luminance-Consciousness)
 In the heart,
 As One without any duality
 Who am (this) 'I'
 That am rising as one apart (from you, distinct)?

Placing your spreading Lotus-feet
 On his head
 O Arunachala
 Do come out (rise-forth, shine, show yourself)!

Prose rendering:

O Arunachala!

All these many life-forms and this vast manifestation of material objects everywhere, which are but a composition of the five elements – Space, Air, Fire, Water, Earth...

If all these are not apart from you, who are Space-Radiance (Luminous Consciousness), then who, indeed, am I, as distinct from you?

O Arunachala! As it is you that is resplendent as that 'Space' (Consciousness, Self), as One without duality whatsoever, then who am "I" that am coming out as if I am someone distinct from you?

O Arunachala! Do place your spreading Lotus-feet on the head of this "I" (false self), and come out (as the real Self)!

Notes:

This verse of *Padikam*, brings to mind a verse of *Dakshnimurthy Ashtakam* of *Adi Shankaracharya* where Shiva (as *Dakshinamurthy*) is worshipped as the all pervading reality whose eight-fold form has manifested as this universe of moving and unmoving objects.

*bhUrambhA.nsyanaLo.anilo.ambaramaharnAtho himA.nshuH
pumAn.h
ityAbhAti charAcharAtmakamidaM yasyaiva mUrtyaShTakam .
nAnyatki~nchana vidyate vimR^ishatAM
yasmAtparasmAdvibhoH
tasmai shrIgurumUrtaye nama idaM shrIdakShiNAmUrtaye*

He whose eight-fold form – of Earth, Waters, Fire, Space, Sun, Moon and the Person (Living Consciousness) – it is, which all moving and unmoving objects consist of...

He, who is that All-pervading Being/Lord beyond which (who), nothing apart exists, for those who enquire (contemplate, analyze, reason, deliberate) ...

Unto Him, the South-Facing God, in the form of my Guru, this salutation (of mine)....

From the perspective of the light shown by this verse, we may say that the seventh verse of *Arunachala Padikam* is a prayer to Arunachala, in the form of Guru *Dakshinamurthy* – to crush the false 'I'-notion of the devotee, and to reveal the true Self.

Now let us examine the *Padikam* verse closely...

The verse starts with the list of elements – Space, Air, Fire etc... Interestingly, the order of elements as listed in the verse is in line with the sequence of creation as expressed by the Veda.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says:

*OM brahmavidApnoti param . tadeShA.abhyuktA .
satyaM j~nAnamanantaM brahma .
yo veda nihitaM guhAyAM parame vyoman .
so.ashnute sarvAn kAmAnsaha . brahmaNA vipashchiteti ..
tasmAdvA etasmAdAtmana AkAshaH sambhUtaH .
AkAshAdvAyuH .
vAYoragniH . agnerApaH . ad.hbhyaH pR^ithivI*

Translation:

Om! The knower of Brahman attains the Supreme.

Of that there is a saying - Brahman is Truth, Knowledge and Infinity. He who knows Brahman as hidden in the cave (of the heart), in the supreme space, enjoys all desires and becomes one with Brahman, the omniscient.

From that Brahman, who is this Atman (Self) is Akasa (Ether/Space) born; from Akasa, Vayu (Air); from Vayu, Agni (Fire); from Agni, Apa (Water); from Apa, Prithvi (Earth)...

The *Padikam* verse lists the elements as *veLi vaLi tee neer maN* – *Ether/Space, Air, Fire, Water, Earth...* In line with the sequence listed in the *Upanishad*.

Coming back to the verse of *Dakshinamurthy Ashtakam*...

The verse says that the entire universe of moving and unmoving forms is a manifestation of the eight-fold form of God. The verse goes on to say that for those who enquire, 'not a whit exists apart from that God'.

This is what Bhagavan also expresses in the *Padikam*, where he says – “If this entirety of life-forms and material elemental objects are non-apart from you, then who indeed am ‘I’ as apart from you?”

The *Ashtakam* of *Shankara Bhagavatpada* alludes to those pursuing the *jnana mArga* by using the term “*vimR^ishatAM*” (meaning – To those who enquire). Bhagavan Raman expresses that enquiry, saying : “O Arunachala! As it is you that is resplendent as that ‘Space’ (Consciousness, Self), as One without any duality whatsoever, then who am ‘I’ that am coming out as if I am someone distinct from you?”

Bhagavan rounds up this enquiry with the plea to the Lord, asking to Him to place His spreading feet upon the head of this phantom ‘I’ (of the devotee), which has no reality.

Dakshinamurthy, in iconography is seen crushing a demon under his foot. That demon below His foot is known as *Apasmara* or *Muyalakan*, and represents *Ajnana*. He is the personification of egotism (the false notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine’). With the phantom ‘I’-notion firmly crushed, Shiva is granting Jnana (Knowledge) to *Sanaka* and other Rshi-s who are gathered in front of him, seeking liberation. Liberation is the cessation of the wrong identification of the self as the body-mind.

A similar concept is also seen in Vaishnava tradition. In Vishnu temples, the devotee is blessed by the placing a crown like object on his head. This crown is known as *Sadari* or *Sadagopuram*. This represents the first among *Alwar* sages, *Nammalwar*. In one of his poems, *Nammalwar* has said that he surrendered to Vishnu, and thereupon, he grew to the heavens, in union with the Lotus-feet of the Lord. The reference there is to the *Vamana Avatara* of Lord Vishnu, where He placed his foot on the head of King *Mahabali*. *Mahabali* represents the Ego.

The *Sadari* (crown) has Lord Vishnu-s feet on top. A devotee visiting a Vishnu temple, surrenders to the Lord, and bows to receive the feet of the Lord on top of his head, by the placing of *Sadari*.

Bhagavan Ramana points out the phantom 'I' notion rises as if distinct, although there cannot be any entity apart from Lord Arunachala. He prays to the Lord to place His spreading feet on his head, so that the 'I'-notion may be crushed, and the Lord alone emerge as the One, Non-dual Self.

Overall, the verse describes the whole process of the seeker-devotee 'going back' by enquiry and surrender... From the enquiry about the world of material objects and life forms; to the elements and the individual living-consciousness; to the enquiry into the notion of 'I'; and then to the surrender to the Lord, and the realization of the Self as the Supreme all-pervading Consciousness, Shiva, Brahman, which is '*satyam jnAnam anantam*'.



Ramana is the Way of Ramana

Shyam Sundar

I am eternal.
I am as I am.
I am where I am.
Where can I go?

It is good to meditate- Not outside but constantly I am going inside the heart ...what remains is only the existence. Here I is for existence, not for a thought - I thought.

"The source of everything is one's own Self and if one realises the Self, one will not find anything different from the Self."
-Sri Ramana Maharshi

"To be as the Self in the heart is supreme wisdom. All verbal wrangling about the nature and existence of the Self is but the play of illusion."

I myself am in the brain, this belief is destructive. I myself am in the heart, this feeling is creative.

"The beloved heart alone is the refuge for the rising and subsiding of the 'I'."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

I thought is equal to other thoughts in the brain, then there is peace. If I thought is most important, it must be dedicated to the Self in the heart, then there is end of all conflicts.

"The Self is the greatest of all mantras - it goes on automatically and eternally. If you are not aware of the internal mantra, you should take to it consciously as japa, which is attended with effort, to ward off all other thoughts. By constant attention to it, you will eventually become aware of the internal

mantra which is the state of realisation and is effortless. Firmness in this awareness will keep you continually and effortlessly in the current, however much you may be engaged in other activities. That Self will by itself be repeating always 'aham-aham' 'I-I'."

"As you dance in the heart of all beings as 'Aham,Aham', you are known as heart, O Arunachala."

- Sri Ramana Maharshi

I should only remove ignorance - ignorance of not knowing myself. I am is knowledge of eternal truth. I am this or that is wrong belief.

"Be yourself, and nothing more."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

We remember so called others, we also compare ourselves with them, then how can we simply live as ourselves, as heart itself?

So called others means our own sense of otherness which is not true. Constant thoughtless existence feeling removes wrong belief of otherness.

"Abiding in the Self is state of egolessness."

Abiding in the Self, in the heart we can not act as a thinker, as a doer. Things go on as usual.

Ramana way is not too difficult. It is enough to stop chasing the thoughts which arise continuously.

"Abiding in the Self is solitude because there is nothing alien to the Self. One should therefore abide as that."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

Less existence feeling should be accepted as all-pervading feeling in the heart. Love yourself and allow others to love themselves unconditionally.

A Vision that Remains

T.S.Gopalakrishnan

Editor's note:

We have an account of Sri T.S.Gopalakrishnan about his reminiscences of Bhagavan Ramana. It is touching in its simplicity, narrated just as it happened. He has had the rare privilege of seeing Bhagavan Ramana practically every day for several years in his childhood, of walking with him and going to him for remedying his pain. He has also had the privilege of actually being in the Samadhi pit of Bhagavan to place His body down gently as it was lowered.

A note from Viswabarathy about his father: My father's name is Sri Tiruvannamalai Srinivasan GOPALAKRISHNAN (T.S.Gopalakrishnan). He was born on the 14th of April, 1930, exactly 20 years before the Maha Nirvana of Bhagavan Ramana. His parents were Sri Srinivasa Sastrigal and Smt.Lakshmi Ammal. My father studied in Victoria high school in Tiruvannamalai upto SSLC.

I was about 9 or 10 years old when my parents took me to Bhagavan. We were staying in Thalagiri Iyer Street which is about 3 or 4 kms from Ramanasramam. We used to walk to the Ashram. When I had darshan of Bhagavan for the first time, Bhagavan was seated in Padmasana posture. Very few people around him. He smiled at me and nodded his head. I did namaskaram to him. This image is etched clearly in my memory, a vision that remains.

Daily about 50 people used to visit and have darshan. My parents used to visit and have darshan of Bhagavan regularly. Bhagavan knew both my parents personally.

I have seen Echammal who was a great devotee of Bhagavan and closely associated with Bhagavan's mother too. Notable personalities I remember were - Mr Chadwick a retired British Army Major who had settled in the Ashram. Another foreigner was Mr Darrel Berrigen - an American Journalist for Saturday Evening Post. He used to interview Bhagavan.

Apart from my first darshan of Bhagavan there are a few other memories that are vivid. There is the memory of noticing how Bhagavan received visitors daily for discussions and how he read letters. In the most natural manner Bhagavan used to sit with visitors for breakfast and lunch. Then there is the resounding in the mind of the Veda Parayanam at 7 a.m. and at 5 p.m. daily happening in front of Bhagavan, the magnificence of which has been recorded by many. I can state with joy that my father was also in the Vedam group. Bhagavan used to retire for the night around 8 or 9 p.m. This was the daily routine at the Ashram happening in a simple manner.

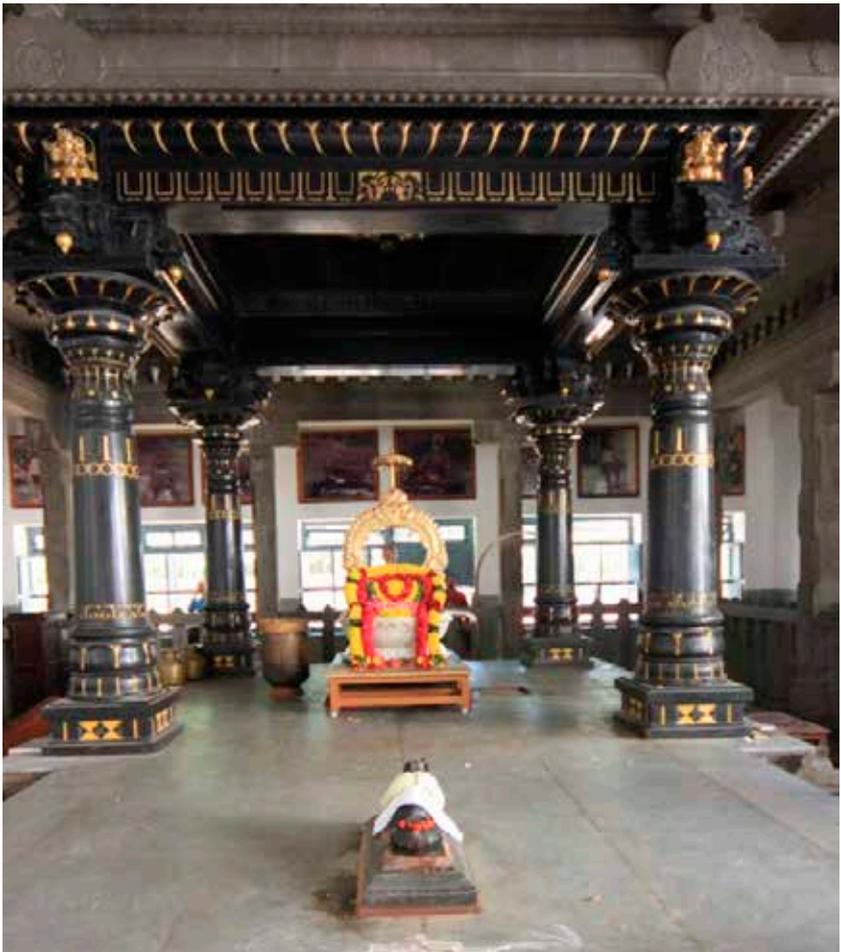
My father once developed non stop hiccups. Bhagavan told him to make Chukku vellam (dry ginger paste with jiggery rolled into a ball) and have one small urundai. The hiccup completely stopped with one urundai. I was a young boy and once had insect bite and the area was swollen and paining. I went and showed it to Bhagavan. He saw it and said 'Don't worry. You will be alright.' Soon the pain and swelling had gone.

As Bhagavan developed arthritic problems later, it was difficult for him to sit in the Padmasanam pose. So he used to sit in the sofa bed reclining with his legs stretched. Sometimes, I used to accompany him when he walked out for nature calls. Though I went as an escort he never took any help. Bhagavan never wished to trouble anyone else for anything at all. I stayed in Ramanasramam full time from April 1949 to November/December. 1950. After that I left to join the Indian Air Force.

Bhagavan's samadhi: It was my 20th birthday on 14th April 1950 when Bhagavan attained Mahasamadhi. I was outside the Nirvana room where he attained Samadhi. Many people including myself have seen the bright star that appeared in the sky. The star was very bright. Later on we realised that the star was Bhagavan's light.

The arrangement were made for Bhagavan's Samadhi included digging a pit about 10 feet deep and about two metres wide. A new white cotton cloth was stitched into a sack. Lot of with Vibhuti, camphor powder and sandalwood powder were put into

it. Bhagavan's body placed in the bag in a seated posture. The bag was closed and two ropes were tied to the top of the bag to lower it inside the Samadhi pit. I simply jumped inside the pit. As the Veda chanting was going on, two parties of people held the two ropes in 180 degrees and slowly lowered Bhagavan's body. I held the body down below when it was being lowered and gently placed it below. Another rope was lowered using which I climbed up. With Veda chanting continuing more Vibhuti, sandalwood powder, flowers and so many other materials were poured in to fill the Samadhi area. Aarathi was performed at end.



Ramana and I

Uma Sriram

Editor's note: We have a poetic narration by this devotee of Ramana's entry into her life and of her first visit to Arunachala and Sri Ramanasramam. This is followed by the transliteration of a Kannada song penned by her daughter Antara Sriram who is all of ten years old, inspired by her visit to the Asram and her first Giripradakshina around Arunachala. Antara is scantily familiar with Kannada and yet was inspired not only to pen the song but also to compose the music for it and sing it. Both Antara and Uma are students and artistes at RMCL.

We met in the fall of the year 2011.

It was only the role of a mother that I had initially adopted wherein I dropped my then 3 and 1/2 year old at the dance school close to the end of the street where I reside. A few months later I was invited to be part of a dance ballet that was being put up at the school.

It was then that I really encountered him. His eyes were deep set but loving. One could not miss the serenity that surrounded him as he seemed to disseminate bliss all around.

The drama taught me some aspects associated with the way we could conduct our lives for a peaceful living. Well, that was just the beginning. There were several more to come and my daughter and I soon became an inherent part of many of the dance ballets conducted by the school.

Each of these led me closer to him and his insights about the Self. As our acquaintances increased so did the need to understand and comprehend his vision of who are we at the deep inner.

The realisation that the full moon meant something special to both of us struck me later in our journey. It was a day dear to his father, a day to celebrate and it was the day when thoughts flowed easily unto me and I would usually pen down small anecdotes and poetries as a hobby.

7 years passed and he suddenly invited my daughter and me home. A home in the harmony of nature. The home which I had only imagined and felt. The journey in itself was a sudden undertaking - unplanned and unexpected. But he appeared to have planned everything about the visit.

Peacocks danced much to the glee of my daughter and calves mooed behind their mothers at his home. The enchanting walk around his father in the father's abode was one of the unforgettable experiences especially for my young daughter. He simply sat along with his parents and distributed from a fountain of euphoria.

Our paths imply to have actually just intertwined and become one.....

Ramana Toro Karuna
(Ramana show your grace)
By Antara Sriram

Ramana Toro Karuna

Ramana Toro Karuna

(Ramana show your grace)

Arunachaladalli neenu sadaa achalavaagi nelesideyaa

(At Arunachala you abide ever, still, motionless)

adE taradalli neenu nanna hridayadali nelesO

(In the same manner abide in my heart)

Ramana! Ramana!

Neene hasu Lakshmime mukti kottidiyaa

(It is you who have given liberation to Cow Lakshmi)

Nimma shAnti prapanchadalli suttuvareyutide

(Your peace is enveloping the whole universe)

Ramana! Ramana!

Ramana's Song of Grace - 29

Revathi Sankar

When we meditate on Bhagavan and we think of his feet, he takes us to the source because he is no different from the source. When we meditate on verses of Ramana Pada Malai by Siva Prakasam Pillai which is brimming with the teachings which Pillai received directly from Bhagavan Ramana himself we realize this very clearly.

Let us pray to Bhagavan and meditate on the Ramana Pada Malai by Siva Prakasam Pillai. Siva Prakasam Pillai's Pada Malai has been set 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 are meditating on the Nattai raga now.

The sixth charana of the song goes like this

*nAneDrezhmedu adu manamenDru navilvOn pAdam vAzhgavE
jnAna drushTi adan layam enDru naDippOn pAdam vAzhgavE*
- Tamil

*nAnendELuvudE adu manavendu nuDivana pAda bALgali
jnAna drushTi adara layavu endu tiLisuva pAda beLagali*
- Kannada

Meaning –

Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches 'That which rises as the 'I' is the mind'.

Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches that the mind is dissolved in the vision of jnana.

Bhagavan Ramana has instructed this to us so that we realize that the mind rises when the 'I' thought rises. He also says when this 'I' thought arises, question that 'I' thought so that it dissolves when questioned

When there are so many thoughts, how do we find the 'I' thought? Hence Bhagavan gives us a clue that at the time of sleeping or at the time of waking up, before the rush of thoughts, this 'I' thought arises. So when this 'I' thought arises, we have to pay attention to that 'I' thought. Our job is just to pay attention at all times.

When we pay attention always, the rush of thoughts reduces and we will get back to the source. As the rush of thought reduces, the 'I' thought reveals itself like the sun behind the cloud. When the clouds clear, the bright sun reveals itself. When this 'I' thought is revealed, that is the time when we need to question. When we question 'Who am I?', then Bhagavan says 'that also will dissolve' and no thought will remain. Then the bliss will be experienced.

Bhagavan teaches this path of self-enquiry to all who come to him. When Jackie, the dog felt disturbed by the dogs outside, Bhagavan instructed him to close his eyes and look within. Bhagavan, even to animals, who we say do not have the 'sixth sense' or discrimination, which human beings have, Bhagavan always used to instruct without having any differentiation as humans, animals, learned, poor, rich or any of these things.

So I believe that I have hope that I will be able to pursue the path of self-enquiry. As Bhagavan in his grace opened out this path to all beings, even to the animals and to people in all walks of life, I think I should try to walk this path. My mind may be weak, but it does not matter, because Natarajan Mama would often say in his talks that Bhagavan helps us to bypass the mind and directly pay attention to the source of the mind. Hence we can attain the Self that is always in us by questioning this 'I' which is covered with thoughts by just paying attention to it and all this will dissolve in the process and the Self will shine forth. Bhagavan let me please practice this and attain the Self.

Lord Ramana

Thank you Bhagavan

Your attention seeking Child :)

How Bhagavan Captured Us

By Smt. Sulochana Natarajan

Smt.Sulochana Natarajan had written a series of articles in this journal in an autobiographical manner also covering the biography of her husband, A.R.Natarajan, the Founder President of RMCL. We are continuing these after a recap.

I had spoken about the most momentous event in my life, the darshan of Bhagavan. I had also noted that the foundation for Ramananjali Music was laid by Bhagavan looking at me. My mind moves back to some more details of my life, each of which was tailor made by Bhagavan way before I had his darshan. Every part of my life He planned and executed to bind me in His net, to bind my husband's family and mine together and to fulfill my life's mission of building the vast repertoire of music which is known today as Ramananjali.

During the first three and a half years of my childhood my father held various positions in the then Andhra. I have a faint memory of being carried in a Doli up the Tirupati Hills and my parents climbing up the Hills on foot and all of us having darshan of Balaji. For both my parents and my in-laws the family deity or 'kula deviam' was said to be Venkataramana and thus we were linked with Bhagavan's family deity. However, for my father and my father-in-law their favourite personal God was Lord Nataraja.

In 1940 after vacation my father was posted as City Magistrate Madurai. At Madurai my father had judicial training under Judge P.Rajagopalan I.C.S who took to my father very much and treated him like his own son till the last. Both our families became like one family and till now, we the next generation also have the same intimate friendship. At Madurai visits to the Meenakshi Amman Temple were of course frequent and Madurai became imbedded in my memory as a city of great joy and love. This image has only grown deeper especially in the recent years when we enjoy the hospitality of devotees at the Ramana Mandiram and Ramana Kendra, Madurai year after year when we go there in the month of July to celebrate Bhagavan's Enlightenment. At that

time we never knew of the Ramana Mandiram where Bhagavan had attained enlightenment. This was perhaps because my parents were initially more involved in the cultural movement and only later were drawn to the spiritual life.

At Madurai the famous Karnatik vocalist Sathur Subrahmanya Iyer started taking classes for my Mother. I had three maternal uncles. Of these, the second eldest R.Sitaraman became an advocate at Madurai at that time. He started a Music Sabha called the Madurai Music Academy. I remember Roshanara Begum's performance in that Sabha. Many musicians of eminence came to perform in the Sabha and they would invariably stay in our home. Thus started my parents support for Karnatik Music and their affectionate friendship with all Karnatik Musicians of the time. Our family's tryst with the musical heritage of India began in this manner. That carried us on the river of Indian music and plunged me at the right time into the blissful ocean that is Ramananjali Sangeetham.

As I had mentioned earlier, my own journey into Karnatik Music, leading me into the Ramananjali Experience, began at the age of 4, with my grandmother, Smt.Valambal. My maternal grandparents were a very rich Mirasdar (Landlord) family in a village in Tanjore District of Tamilnadu. At the turn of the century the whole village was gifted to my grandfather from his childless aunt. He was practically the king of the village and must surely have envisioned that his children would continue to rule over it. Hence, he named the village 'Rajapayyan Savadi' after the birth of his last child, a son called 'Rajam'. A few yards from my grandfather's big bungalow ran the railway line. By his influence he even had a railway station built in the village and ensured that the trains on that line would stop there. The station too was named after my youngest uncle.

He was married to my grandmother Valambal when she was hardly ten years of age. How he understood that she was a musical prodigy is something known only to the divine, but he encouraged her musical genius in full measure. She played the veena and the violin, she had Karnatik music theory at the tip of her fingers. She would also write impeccable music notations. She was my first music guru and an ideal that I still look up to. Perhaps Ramana sowed the seeds of this idealization of my grandmother

in my mind in order to follow in her footsteps, or else He may have made her bless me in full measure to carry forward her legacy for the highest purpose. As some of the most joyous times of my life were spent at Savadi, I automatically strive to follow many of the laudable ideals that I saw and learnt over there. I would be at Savadi invariably during my holidays.

There was no electricity in Savadi, only hurricane lights, petromax and oil lamps. In this context my grandmother once shared an incident about her pet cat. The toilets in those days would be in the backyard some distance from the main bungalow. One night when my grandmother needed to use the toilet her cat simply kept blocking her path. Although she scolded and pleaded he would not let her go near the toilet. She then had a hurricane lamp brought there and was amazed to see a cobra coiled up in a corner of the toilet and ready to strike. In this way her pet cat saved her life.

Bhagavan Himself directly saved my life. My mother would often narrate that as a child of less than two years I had happened to take the stairway down in the Judge's Bungalow where my father was then residing. On waking up and not finding me beside her but hearing my happy laughter, my mother quickly came to the staircase and was horrified to see that there was an enormous python stretched across the bottom. She saw that I was prodding the python with my finger repeatedly. Each time the python would wriggle a bit and I would laugh and clap my hands in glee. These and some other escapades my mother would narrate to prove what a naughty girl I had been. I had stuffed tamarind seeds up my nostrils and become breathless and another time swallowed the lid of a kumkum container that got stuck in my throat. Bhagavan saved me then through my mother's sharp presence of mind and indomitable courage. She herself pulled out the intruding objects without worrying as to the consequence of such a rough action. No doubt my nose and throat bled from the damage at the time, but my life was saved.

Coming back to my grandfather's estate, on one side the bungalow had a huge garden of fruit trees to the extent that the eye could see. Across the road on one side was the river PAMANI which never ran dry. I would go over to the river with my aunts,

have my bath and carry a small brass pot of water back on my hip for water to be used at home through the day. Thus we were involved in the domestic chores in a natural manner and it was a matter of pride too for me as a child that I had my own pot to carry. Is this not the way in which Ramana involves us in so many activities every day inculcating a sense of responsibility until we are ready to be responsible for the highest duty? Throughout the day my grandparents would provide me with two girls who were my age-mates just to play with me on the sand dunes in front of the bungalow. They were called 'SEppi' and 'karuppi' – the fair one and the dark one. Funny that I think of it now, the mind always enjoys playing with the opposites!

But the most exciting part of my stay with my grandparents was the music. The entire family was deeply interested in music and the reading of scriptures in Sanskrit. The whole day the entire family lived and breathed Karnatik Music. Just as all the classical musicians of the time would come to our house at Madurai, practically every musician of that time would come to Savadi and take music lessons from my grandmother. I was always an eager onlooker.

In later years we began to go to the Kodaikanal hills for the summer vacation. Then too we would have music and reading of Sanskrit classics in the evenings. From 1940 December, also my fourth year, our family started attending the Music Season as it was called at the Chennai Music Academy, without fail every year. Till the year 1985, for 45 years continuously I have attended this Music Festival and Seminar from morning till night along with my parents. We would practically camp there for those two weeks, carrying food and snacks that was shared with the many relatives and friends who would attend the event. I would come down from Delhi also to make it every year. After 1985 also, till their last my parents and uncles were attending the event, but by that time Ramananjali Music had taken me over completely and I had no time for any other thing. Yet, I am amazed how Bhagavan brought me into this kind of a musical family, planning three generations ahead. What a Master Planner He is!

***To be continued ***

News & Events*Revathi Sankar***Programs in Chennai**

RMCL artistes presented three dance dramas in the Margazhi Utsavam at Chennai which were led by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar. These were at Bapalal Bhavan in the RASA and Lions Club Festival, at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan under the auspices of Karthik Fine Arts and at Mylapore Fine Arts. The production 'Jagadeesha Ramana'.







Programs in Chennai

The production 'Ramana Bhakta Vijaya'.











Programs in Chennai

Sri ARN Day was celebrated at Ramana Kendra Chennai with a Musical Feature 'Sadguru Mahima' by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar



Programs in Bangalore

Ramana Jayanthi was celebrated at the Ramana Shrine with Sahasranama Puja and the group Ramananjali classical music presentation of 'Ramana Tiruvembavai' led by Smt.V.Radha.



Programs in Bangalore

The Kannada Session of the 42nd National Seminar was conducted at the Ramana Shrine on 26th of January with Sri B.R.Shivaram as the MC and Sri Ramapriya, Swami Virajananda, Sri Krishna Prasad and Sri Seshappa Byndoor Endowment lectures by Sri Shadakshari, Sri Sridhar Guruji, Smt. Vani Vasudev and Sri K.G.Subraya Sharma. Dr.Sarada gave a keynote address. The Cultural Festival presented Ramananjali devotional music led by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar.













Programs in Bangalore

The English Session of the Seminar and Founder's Day commenced with Sri Nochur Venkataraman giving the essence of the essence, 'Upadesa Saram'. Dr.Ram Mohan, Dr.Ambika Kameshwar, Dr.Sarada, Sri Dileep Simha, Sri Venkatesh Deshpande and Sri G.Kameshwar shared their insights on the life and teachings of Ramana Maharshi. The Cultural Festival concluded with 'Arunachala Ramana: Bala Kaanda' – a Kannada Mega-Theatre Production on Ramana's childhood. The occasion was graced by Swami Shivaprakashananda and Sri M.Madan Gopal was the Chief Guest.



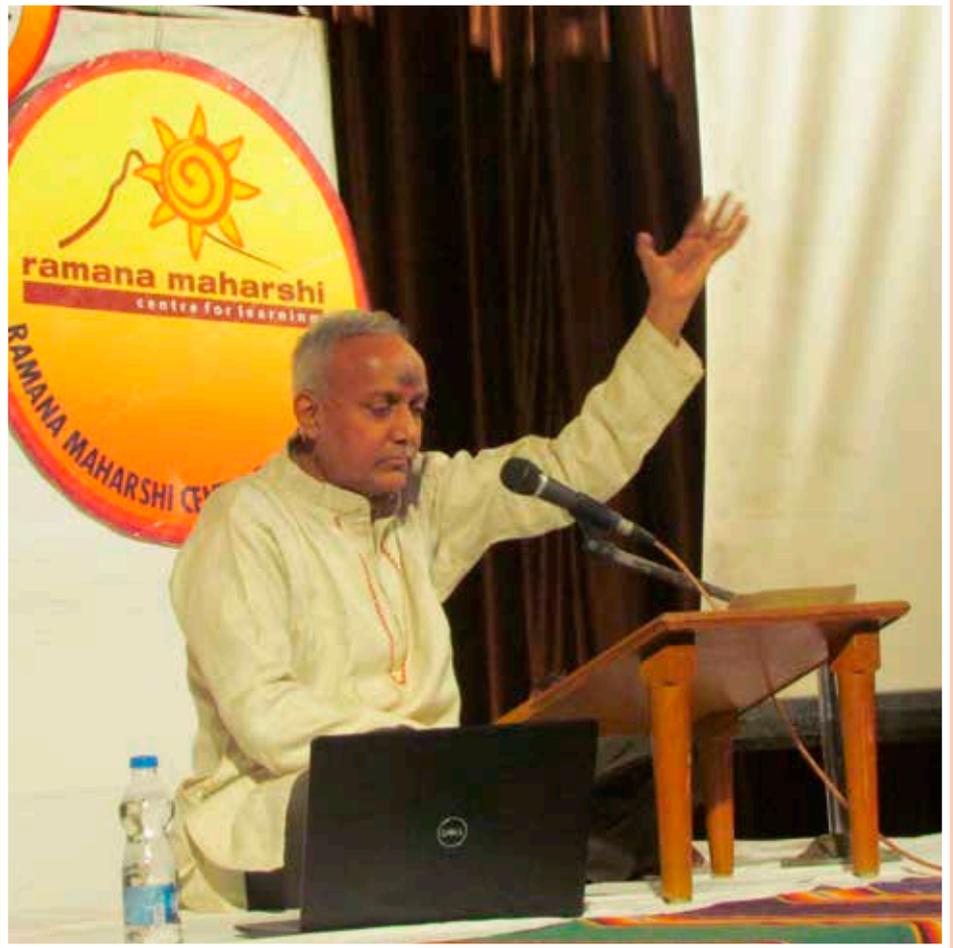














Pictures by the Cheif Guest





Special Programs in February

At the Ramana Shrine

10th, Sunday

10.45 a.m. Father's Day Celebrations
Bharatanatyam Offering by Sri Ujwal Jagadeesh

19th, Tuesday

6.45 p.m. Pournami Celebrations – Nrithya Seva by Vincent Poul,
Anjali Desai and Samhitha Raj
Ashtottara Puja, Aksharamanamalai and Valam

At the Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium

7th, Thursday

05.30 p.m. RAISE, Students of Sri Manjunatha School

21st, Friday

06.45 p.m. Natyopasana 2019 – A dance offering by students of RMCL

26th, Tuesday

06.45 p.m. Nadopasana 2019 – A musical offering by students of RMCL

Special Programs in March

At Ramana Shrine

4th, Monday

7.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. Mahasivaratri Festival
Four kaala pujas with Veda parayana
Sangeetha and Nrithya Seva

10th, Sunday

10.45 a.m. Sthapana Divasa – Ramana Sahasranama Homa
Commencement of Laksharchana
06.00 p.m. Laksharchana

11th and 12th, Monday and Tuesday

11.00 a.m. and 06.00 p.m. Laksharchana
(Concluding on Tuesday, 12th at 06.45 p.m.)

17th, Sunday

10.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. Mani Shadakshari Memorial Day
Lectures by eminent speakers in Kannada
Cultural programs – Ramananjali Music and Dance Drama

20th, Wednesday

06.45 p.m. Pournami Celebrations – Sangeetha Seva
Ashtottara Puja, Aksharamanamalai and Valam

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

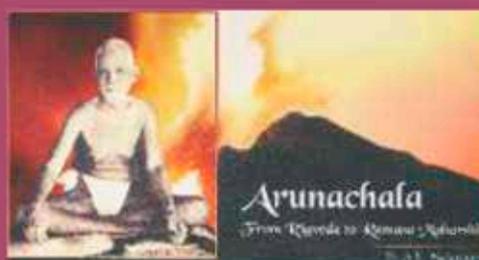
Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

76. Will those whose consciousness goes to and rests in reality stray towards the despicable ways of the world? To plunge headlong into and merge with that unreal world – is this not the activity of a base animal that, operating exclusively through the senses, has no stability in consciousness?
77. If you ask, 'What is the benefit of a dispassion – filled intellect that rejects with indifference the abundant enjoyment of sense objects? [the answer is] 'It is the unceasing experience of the natural bliss of the peace of the Self in the Heart which comes from a true dispassion that is not different from the knowledge of reality'.



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.