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The Ramana Way

FORTY YEARS



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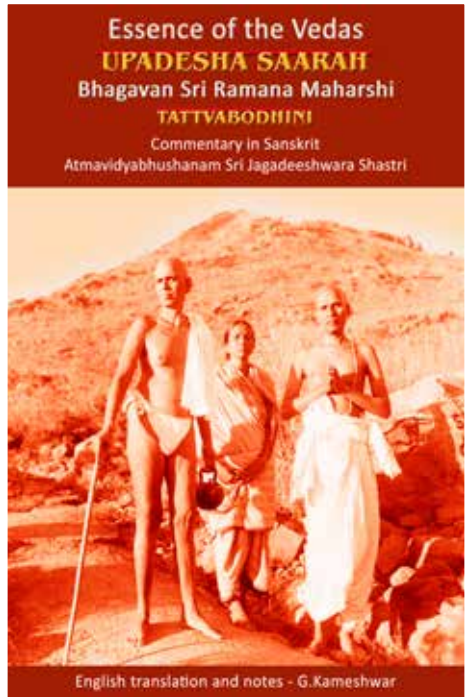
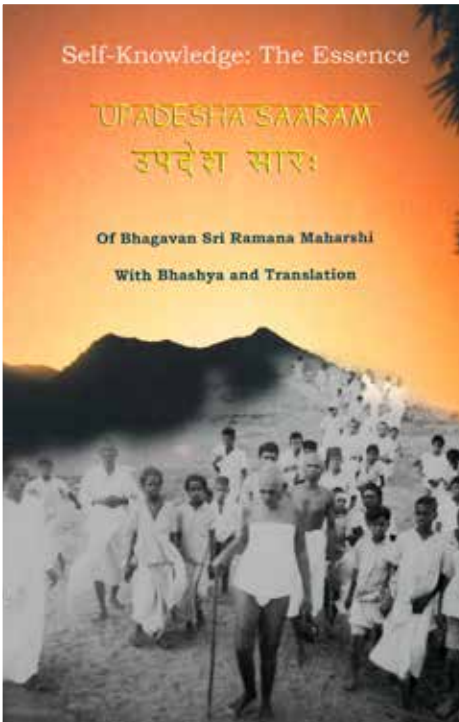
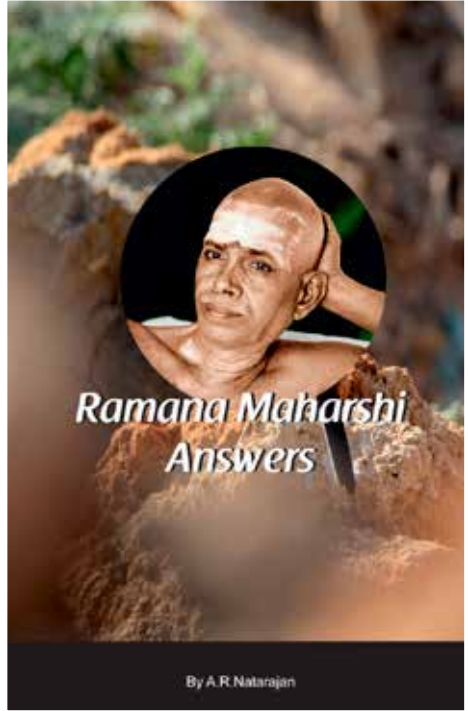
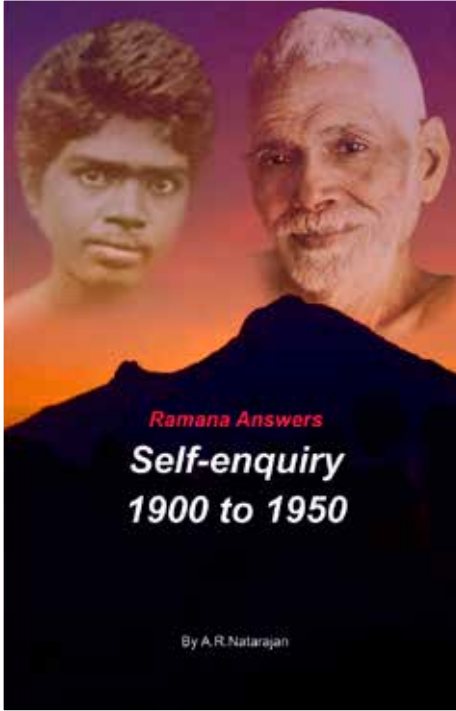
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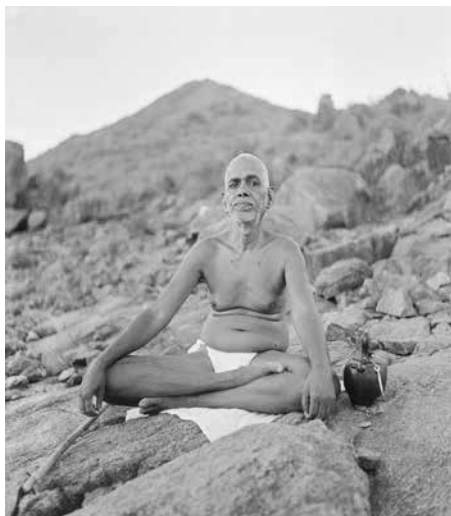
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NEW
Publications



THE RAMANA WAY

A Monthly Journal since 1981



Celebrating 'The Ramana Way' - 40 years

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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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We are completely ensnared in the pursuit of apparently varied targets. The seeming variety and multiplicity of the desires that we are chasing keeps us from feeling a sense of boredom or weariness. We are never tired of running behind our longings because each appears to be new, something that I have not sought or attained earlier. We fail to observe that we have sought and attained the same goal millions of times.

Little do we recognize that in truth there is one and only one goal that we are seeking. That goal, sans each of these so called motives, each and every guise in which desire comes to us, is only a different form of one single, unchanging yearning. I want to be happy, happy all the time. That's it. Nothing more, nothing less.

I want to be happy. But I think I want a car. I want to be happy. But I think I want good health. I want to be happy. But I think I want friendship and love from the people around me. I want to be happy. But I think I must become learned and accomplished. I want to be happy. But I think I want some object or the other, physical, social or mental.

No doubt I believe that the attainment of these varied goals will bring me happiness. That is how my chase of that object commences. Yet, somewhere along the line, the purpose is forgotten, completely lost sight of and the object begins to consume me. At the point when I do achieve the object, I may be happy, or I may not be, because my attention is not on attaining happiness. My attention has been on the object. If the reaching of that object does not give me happiness, I shift my attention to another object, forgetting as usual that the object was not my real goal in the first place. If the attainment of the chosen goal gives me happiness, I seek to repeat the experience, once again forgetting that it was not the object that I sought but the happiness alone which mattered.

On the other hand, if we recognize what Ramana points out to us, that it is happiness alone that we are seeking, every one of us, all the time, then our focus would change entirely. Each time a desire arises in the mind for any object, for any experience

whatsoever, the question would also accompany this desire 'Why do I want this?' The answer would be 'In order to be happy'.

Then, if we are vigilant, the next question would follow, 'Will this certainly give me happiness? Will this give me continuous we would ask ourselves, 'Will this certainly give me happiness? If it does give me happiness, will it give me so much happiness that I don't have to seek anything thereafter? Or will my life just wane away in seeking one thing after another in order to find happiness, seeming to find it and losing it repeatedly? Is there such a thing as a permanent solution? Am I going in the right direction to achieve my goal of attaining happiness?'

These and other questions will begin to haunt us. The pursuit of happiness in objects will cease to entice us. On the other hand, we may become weary, we may become tired of doing the same things again and again, doing those things which hold no real promise of happiness. As we become aware of our meaningless repetitive actions, at one point the revelation would also come that our thoughts are equally repetitive and meaningless. Our thoughts, that form the basis of our actions, are forever running around in circles, chewing the same cud times without number. All with the hope of attaining happiness.

But Ramana tells us time and again with the greatest love, that happiness is our own nature. Not just that we need not search for it outside but that such a search is actually futile. Searching for happiness outside oneself will yield no results because happiness does not lie outside and cannot be found there. When this fact strikes us in full force, then the mind would become silent.

As Sri A R Natarajan writes, "The mind identifies itself with whatever object its attention is fixed on. The purpose of the effort and practice ... is to transfer the focus of the mind's attention to itself, to its centre. Consequently, the entire energy of the mind becomes available for revealing the nature of the mind - 'by gathering itself from variety to thought-free unity of itself, it enjoys freedom from distraction... the gaze turned on itself leads to the discovery of its nature'."

Sarada Natarajan

The Ramana Way – Editorials from 1981 to 1984

We bring to you excerpts from editorials in the first four years when the journal was called simply 'RAMANA'. The editorials have appeared in the book 'Ramana Way in Search of Self'. On reading the book, Sri Ramaswamy Pillai, an old devotee of Bhagavan Ramana, immediately took a taxi from Tiruvannamalai to Bangalore, profusely blessed the then young writer and returned to Tiruvannamalai right away without spending even an hour at Bangalore.

- Editor



The question 'What is this 'I'? has led, not to an answer but to an awareness that we are not fully conscious of our own nature. We have grown to understand that the 'I' daily sets in deep sleep and rises on waking, hence it must have a source into which it disappears and from which it reappears. But what that source is, we are not aware.

Hence, donning the garb of inward explorers, let us solve for ourselves the enigma of our own true nature. We are now armed with the questing spirit, the basis of self-enquiry.

How do we proceed? How do we track the 'I'-thought to its source? Simply by observing it.

* The editorials after the first one, have appeared in the book 'Ramana Way in Search of Self'.

It is known that the baboons of the African deserts have their secret water sources even in the driest of summers. The bushman of the Kalahari simply holds a baboon captive, feeds him salt to make him sufficiently thirsty, and then lets him loose. The baboon rushes to the water source followed by the bushman and both quench their thirst.

The 'I' - thought is like our African monkey.

It must return to its source and gain succour, and so it does daily in sleep. But then, we want to track it to the source while we are awake and conscious. For this we must isolate the 'I'-thought and rivet our entire attention on it.

The 'I' - thought occurs only in association with other thoughts: 'I feel', 'I see', 'I enquire'. It assumes an independent identity for itself linked with a particular name and form and thereafter linked with associated thoughts. When we rob the 'I' - thought of these supports (of its linkage with other thoughts) and scrutinise it on its own, it immediately falls back for support into its source. And as we observe this, the observing mind, along with the 'I'-thought, merges in the source, the thirst for knowledge is quenched.

This is self-enquiry, the victorious path! Bhagavan expresses it thus in Sat-Darshanam:

"On the rising of the ego everything rises with its subsidence all subside.

The ego is therefore all.

Tracking it is the way to victory over everything."

§ § § § § §

The victorious path of self-enquiry taught by Ramana is a simple one. Bhagavan has said so repeatedly and emphatically. In Upadesa Saram He declares:

"What is the mind? If one searches to find out, then there would be no separate entity as the mind.

This is the straight path."

By terming self-enquiry 'simple' and 'straight' it is implied that the intellectual understanding of this method is simple. And, though the practice of it is by no means child's play, if pursued properly it is absolutely direct.

The question would naturally follow, 'What is the 'proper' pursuit of self-enquiry?' When the 'I'-thought is isolated, attentively observed, and attacked with the intense enquiry 'Who am I?' it falls back into its source, the Self, and abides there - this is true self-enquiry.

However, in practice, the 'I' - thought often resists the attack of self-enquiry. Instead of immediately falling back into the source it takes refuge in the long habit of associated thoughts or in the lull of false quietude. What happens as we observe the 'I' - thought and attempt to isolate it (in order to track it to the Self) is that it refuses to get isolated. For a split-second it seems to us our entire attention is focused on the 'I'-thought. We have it pinned under the searchlight of enquiry. But no! It has run away again into a labyrinth of other thoughts. Very often it is a few seconds or even many minutes before we are aware that the attention has wandered away from the 'I' -thought. But the moment we are aware of the presence of other thoughts let us tackle them with the question 'For whom are these thoughts?' The answer naturally follows, 'For me'. Then, 'Who am I?' The attention, with this question (and the attitude of doubt that accompanies it), is back on the 'I'-thought. How long the attention stays there depends on its intensity. Attention is the key word in self-enquiry - observation and attention. And as often as the mind wanders away into the maze of varied thoughts, attention must be brought back to the observation of the 'I' -thought.

This may appear to be a tedious process, for, attention may waver anywhere between never and a few hundred times even in a few minutes of self-enquiry. But if we are genuinely gripped by the attitude of enquiry, the whole process would be an exciting adventure. Madame Curie, for years melting masses of 'pitchblende' (to isolate radium) in a dingy garage, working against all odds, did not give up, thinking the process 'tedious'. Surely, we

who wish to isolate the 'I'-thought, the basis of our entire existence, cannot afford to find the practice tiresome. As Bhagavan instructs in the Appalam Song, we must "ever, unwearied, joyously" pursue self-enquiry. And what a discovery awaits to fulfill this constant vigilance - the ever-effulgent, overflowing Bliss of the Self!

§ § § § §

With an intense attitude of enquiry we have isolated the 'I' - thought and observed it with consuming attention. Now, we are sure, it cannot escape into dissipating thoughts but must necessarily fall back into the Self, its succour.

But alas! The 'I' - thought has other tricks up its sleeve. It will not so easily relinquish its falsely independent identity. The force of attention is so strong on it that it cannot now escape into other, associated thoughts. So it brings about a lull, or quiet of mind. This lull is dangerous, for it is a false quietude and yet is attractive (as any quietude is a relief from the constant tension of thoughts). The danger lies in mistaking it for the true Silence of the Self.

One might wonder, 'How do we recognise whether our quietude is a false lull or the true Silence?' There are two factors which help us distinguish between these. The moment when there is absence of sorrow can hardly be equated to the moment which pulsates with joy. Even so, the lull of the mind or *mano-laya*, as Bhagavan terms it, is merely the absence of thoughts, it is not the positive, vibrant Silence of the Self. Bhagavan narrated the story of a Yogi who practised such quietening of the mind. After asking for a glass of water he once fell into a trance of quietness for many many years. The moment he awoke he shouted, 'Water, water'.

If this was the case with the last, superficial thought, Bhagavan pointed out, what would happen to the deep-rooted tendencies? And the most deeply rooted, the limited identity of the 'I' - thought, would naturally remain unshaken.

Also, when the mind is thus temporarily quiet, there is an awareness of quietness for someone. That is to say, I am aware

that I am quiet. That means there is 'I' and there is 'quietness' and the quietness is for the 'I'. The Self is itself peace, the Self is Silence (the Self is not 'silent' - there is no process, just Existence). Hence, a quietness which is 'for me' indicates that there are still two separate identities, the 'I' - thought is not merged in the unity of the Self, but has linked itself now with quietude (instead of with other thoughts). It is still linked and not isolated. So, Bhagavan says, pursue the enquiry further, ask, 'For whom is this quietness?' The answer will come, as before, 'For me'. Then, 'Who am I?'

When the 'I' - thought is thus pursued beyond even the false lull, all its escape routes are cut off, it has to retreat into the Self. Then shines forth the Peace and Silence in which there is no one to experience quietness, no one to pursue the enquiry and no one to give the answers. For, the pursuit, the answers, the quietness, the experience, are all the One, the Self.

§ § § § § §

When the 'I' - thought is finally merged at its source, the Self, and abides there, there is no one any more to ask questions or to give answers. All is the Self. 'Then, what happens to me? Do 'I' die? Will there be a void? How will I exist? How will I function without any thoughts?' These are some of the doubts which assail a seeker who wishes to set forth on the adventure of self-enquiry.

It is a wonder that we should so fear. All navigators feared that their ships would fall off the edge of the flat earth until one made bold and sailed the invisible corners of the round earth. What he met with was not death but the death of fear (for himself and all navigators thereafter) and the discovery of a far greater Earth to roam free on.

The loss of the 'I' - thought in the Self is not a death but the gain of true Life. For, the 'I' - thought, only a reflection of the Consciousness of the Self, has merely been 'masquerading' as the Self. Merging back at the source, we discover the Kingdom of Bliss as our very own, no, as our very Self. Bhagavan describes the sheer ecstasy of this state: "the whole body becomes a mere power, a

force - a current... it is an inundation; you, a mere straw, you are swallowed alive, but it is very delightful, for you become the very thing that swallows you."

The river of the 'I' - thought, which we began to trace alongside the Himalayan Beas, is now back at its source, the Heart. This Heart is not the physical, blood circulating organ, explains Bhagavan. It is the spiritual Heart, two digits to the right of the centre (a digit is approximately the width of a finger). Bhagavan has repeatedly pointed out that the Heart is the source, the Centre, itself the Self; thus giving us all an invaluable clue. It is much easier to locate an object in a large house if we know the exact room and spot in which it is placed. Searching as we are for the source of the 'I' - thought, the location of the spiritual Heart is an important clue in our treasure-hunt. If, as we try to track the 'I' - thought to the source, we know that it rises from the Heart we can focus our attention in that direction.

Thus, from the very beginning of our search we can travel in the right direction. Bhagavan has given the very Centre of the Self, we have only to track the 'I' - thought to this Centre and experience as our very Self the resplendent throb of the Heart.

§ § § § §

We had reached the Heart of Bliss, the incessant throb of light, the Self. Are we still there? If we are still rooted in the Self there is nothing more to say. But, perhaps, we have strayed away again. Yes, it often happens in the Self-ward way that having once reached the destination, we yet return to the habitual Sway of the masquerader, the 'I' - thought.

But the path of self-enquiry, by leading us to intermittent dips in the Self, has whetted our taste for that Bliss and like one drugged we return again and again to drink of that Peace, until, one day, we return no more for we have not moved away at all.

Till then, however, eternal vigilance must light our path, all along the way, from the very beginning. Even as we begin the search

our attention to the 'I' - thought and its source must be both intense and continuous. Self-enquiry is not a pill to be swallowed once in a while, a method for our Sunday practice; it is the life-breath. It must be a part of our everyday moments. The attitude of self-enquiry must permeate our entire way of living and enquiring attention to the 'I' - thought must occupy every idle moment.

Again, fear rears its head among seekers of the Truth. It is true perhaps that Galileo talked only of physics even to his house-keeper's son or that Ramanujan perceived extraordinary mathematical relationships even in a taxi number. But we, we only want to know about ourselves (and more often than not, though we claim to have the attitude of enquiry, are quite smugly confident that we already know ourselves.) For that there is ample time. The things which need our urgent attention lie elsewhere, our work, our food and sleep, our daily pleasures and pains. 'In the midst of all this how would it be possible to continually and attentively track the 'I' - thought?' we wonder. It is a sad plight.

But Bhagavan is Compassion incarnate.

Don't worry, he assures us, it is enough if you devote a few minutes a day to self-enquiry. If it is properly practised in this time its current will automatically continue throughout the day.

Breathing is so natural to us that it does not require our constant attention. However, when we have a blocked nose we may have to put some nasal drops and perform breathing exercises to breathe normally again. We have forgotten our Natural State, the Self, and self-enquiry is the exercise to clear this blockade of forgetfulness. A little of this medicine will clear the way for the natural current to resume its force.

However, for such of us who intensely yearn for Self-knowledge and are burning with enquiry, Bhagavan has advocated continuous, joyous self-enquiry. Then, 'Lo! Very easy is Self-Knowledge. Very easy indeed!'

§ § § § § §

Grace is the pulsating awareness of Bhagavan's Presence. It may be that we feel His Presence when a prayer is fulfilled. We may experience it in the sweetness of His Name and Form or just the blooming of a flower, the rainbow spray of a waterfall. That moment when His Presence is an experienced reality is the moment of Grace. It is like the first overwhelming glimpse of a snow-caressed Himalayan range, cool-lit by the moon. It has the overpowering majesty of the silent mountains and the tender love of the soft, blue-white snow.

For, Grace experienced is the Self savoured. Grace and the Self are the same force of Powerful-Peace. And the Sadguru, as the throbbing luminosity of the Self within us, draws us to Himself through Grace.

Some may wonder how Grace and the practice of self-enquiry are interlinked. But the very understanding of the unity of Grace and the Self makes apparent its absolute necessity in the Self-ward way. The bliss of the Self is known to us only in the recollected peace of deep-sleep. But Grace is a waking joy. Thus, it provides us with a conscious glimpse of the Self. And this opiate taste of vibrant awareness tempts us to plunge within repeatedly, away from the habitually externalised lures of the mind. It recharges our quest with renewed vigour.

Bhagavan explains that Grace and self-enquiry interact. The very attitude of enquiry is a result of Grace, of the magnetic pull of the Self. And self-enquiry, in turn, re-opens the flood-gates of Grace. But in moments of despondency, when all effort seems futile, it is to Grace we must turn. There sometimes arise, in the Self-ward path, problems special to the individual which no book or knowledge of the spiritual methodology can solve. Turning to Grace is the only refuge. At such times when we consciously turn to it, and at many moments when we do not even do so, Grace overwhelms with its ecstatic power. The operation of Grace seems secret. Yet, what if we can never comprehend its mystery, it is enough, more than enough, to taste the eye-misting, bone-melting sweetness of its Glory.

From the Founder's Pen: 1981-85

The Silent Mind

From the Founder's Desk 1981 - 1985

We bring excerpts from Sri A R Natarajan's articles published in the Ramana Way in the last four decades*

ATTENTION - SWITCH

What is being attempted is 'looking at the mind by the mind'. Attention of the mind which has so far not been on the individual, the thinker, the doer, but on his thoughts, is shifted back to the person. The individual is taken for granted and has not been given any attention. As a result, the mind's power has not been utilised for Self-knowledge, knowledge about oneself. At this point, it is worth remembering that the mind is a dynamic force because of its essential content, namely consciousness, intelligence. The mind identifies itself with whatever object its attention is fixed on. The purpose of the effort and practice now suggested is to transfer the focus of the mind's attention to itself, to its centre. Consequently, the entire energy of the mind becomes available for revealing the nature of the mind - 'by gathering itself from variety to thought-free unity of itself, it enjoys freedom from distraction... the gaze turned on itself leads to the discovery of its nature'.

If attention is fixed on the subject even as conceptualisation takes place, as the movement of thoughts gathers momentum or soon thereafter, one would be tackling the problem at its very inception. Vigilance is needed not to be carried away by the swift thought current. Repeatedly attention is brought back to the individual. How? For self-attention Ramana gives two invincible tools, the first of which is in the form of the question 'Who am I?' One begins by questioning for whom these thoughts occur. Since the thoughts are for the person, attention reverts to him. Thought formation is muzzled, nipped in the bud by this device for self

*These articles have been published in the book 'The Silent Mind'.

attention in the garb of a question. This switching back of attention to the 'I' serves the important purpose of cutting it off from the company of other thoughts. In other words, the identification of the mind with rest of the thoughts is scissored. The 'I' -thought is isolated, actively observed and attacked by the intense enquiry 'Who am I?'

The isolation of the central thought thus achieved is, however, not an end in itself. It is a step, no doubt an important one, in the intelligent journey back to the source. Here we have to press into service the complementary weapon, provided by Ramana, again in the form of the question, 'whence am I?', 'wherefrom does this 'I' -thought arise?' The whole idea being one of merging the mind in its source. This query creates an awareness in the mind of its source. The disease is the identification of the pure mind with the impurities of the past as a result of the idea of separate existence. For eradicating this false notion the potent medicine is awakening of source consciousness through this method. 'This practice of self attention is a gentle technique which merely invokes awareness of the source from which the mind springs'. Success depends on the extent to which one is saturated with the keen edge of enquiry. For there is no fixed time for its practice. Even while engaged in work, there can be, without any prejudice to the work itself, the under-current of attention on the 'I' and its real nature as a powerful and silent vehicle of consciousness.

Recapitulating, the practice of self-enquiry separates the 'I' from its association with other thoughts and the mind turns within. This happens more readily with growing awareness of its inner strength. Fed simultaneously with the invigorating tonic of source-awareness, the mind itself becomes the bridge back to its abode. When the mind is fed with the joy of silence the old habit of seeking links with the other thoughts gradually wanes, till at last the mind stays submerged in the vast all-pervading silence of its source.

SILENCE AMIDST NOISE

It is one of our pet ideas that if we could somehow run away from the world to the solitary Himalayan heights, to some mountain

caves or hermitages, we will be able to solve the problem of the quiet mind. The panacea is 'solitude' and it is believed that it can be found only away from our work schedules, from our daily chores, away from the people we are used to? Thus thinking, we seek nature's quiet spots. The desire to be alone, to keep off company, is for the purpose of tackling the mind free from outside disturbance.

Having launched upon a feverish pursuit of work, used to looking with dismay at an empty page in the engagement diary or even a gap of few minutes, these retreats to scenic spots are regarded as a balancing factor. Time would then be available to learn about the subtlety and vagaries of the mind, its whims and fancies, since the normal run does not provide any leisure for such meditation or reflection. By all means if one's circumstances permit it, if karma is kind in this regard, one can resort to such places, where the mind is easily harmonious and restful. But then, it does not need argument to show that such changes in environment or circumstances may not be possible for all or at times of one's choice. Often, carefully laid plans break. Instead of the joy of the much looked forward to, disappointment would stare one in the face.

Do we need to regret this? Can we afford to place the all-important need for a silent mind in the hands of some outer circumstance such as a suitable environment away from work? In overrating the importance of solitude perhaps we have not understood what solitude really means. 'Solitude' says Ramana, 'is in the mind of man'. It means making the mind still. This can be done in a crowd also. 'Solitude cannot efface one's thought. Practice does it. The same practice can be made here too'.

This position is consistent with Ramana's teachings that circumstances are pre-ordained and not of our making while at the same time the freedom to get back to the natural silence of the pure mind is unfettered. The opportunity of discovering the silent mind is open to all. It does not really matter if outer circumstance, like pursuit of one's sadhana in a conducive environment, is available or not. If the sun of a favourable fortune shines, by all means let one make hay. If, however, the situation is dark let it not

deter. One can see the stark reality of what Ramana says. The obligation to practice the quest, to search within for the source of the mind cannot be excused away, even if the circumstances are not to one's liking. For, practice alone can rid the mind of its trappings, of its addiction to thought.

Hunting the 'I' with the twin invincible weapons provided by Ramana, one has to dive within. Entering as a pearl diver would with breath and mind control, persisting beyond the lulls of the mind, one arrives at the source of the mind only to be lost in the vastness of the mind's space. When the mind is not crowded with thoughts it becomes free and spacious. It is like removing furniture from the room which is cluttered with it. Then, the very act of removing furniture makes it spacious. Space was not created. It was there before. The furniture had cramped it. When the mind is freed from the noise within, a deep and vibrant peace would prevail.

THE JOURNEY'S END

Having 'carelessly' missed the natural silence, one must find one's way back through self-enquiry backed by consciousness of the ever-operative grace of Ramana. Silence would then be restored. A repose which no activity can disturb would prevail. The pure mind is quiet because the latent tendencies have dried up for want of attention. The mind no longer has any inclination to move out at all in search of happiness through objects.

According to Ramana in that state it would be as 'difficult to bring out a thought as it is now to keep it out'. A conversation which a devotee held with him would help to clarify.

D: Do you have thoughts?

M: Usually I have no thoughts.

D: But when you are reading?

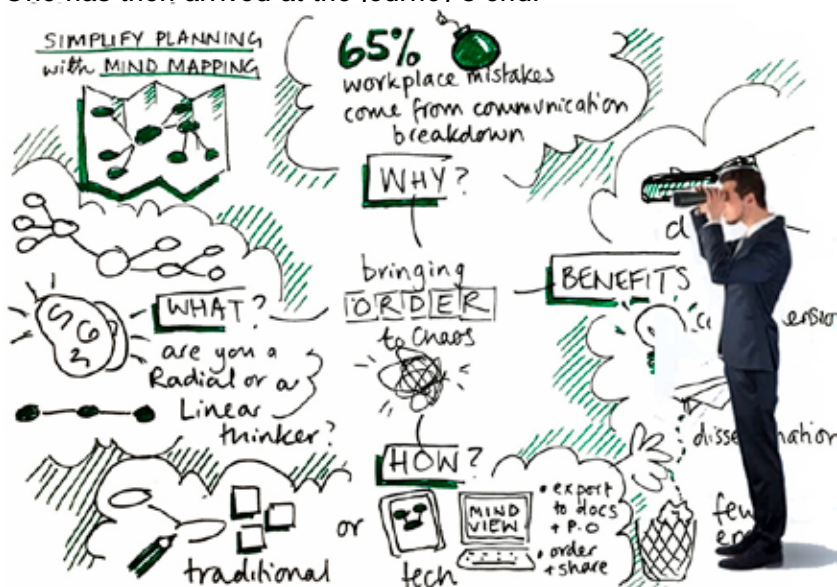
M: Then, I have thoughts.

D: And when some devotee asks questions?

M: I have thoughts, while replying, not otherwise.

What does this imply? Thoughts are only for the immediate purpose, here, to understand what is read or to elucidate. Once this purpose is served, the thought process ends. This is in contrast to our present state. If we read the newspaper it would set off a series of thoughts with reference to what was read. Similarly, while answering a doubt, there would be a sense of self importance or a looking down on the enquirer and so on. The thinking continues and leaves impressions which push thoughts hither and thither, later. But for one who is rid of tendencies, 'incidents interest only so long as they last' as they would a child. One ceases to think of the event when it is over.

The joy and peace of the pure mind is such that one would not stray into the thought world. The mind then becomes sharp like the end of the grass blade, for, its energy remains integral and is not broken up into thoughts. The jobs on hand get done perfectly and there would be no hang-over of thoughts to disturb. One has then arrived at the journey's end.



Talk 95.

A question was raised as follows by Maj. A. W. Chadwick:

Mr. Edward Carpenter, a certain mystic, has written in a book that he had Self-Realisation on some occasions and that its effects lasted sometimes afterwards, only to be gradually lost. Whereas Sri Ramana Gita says, "Granthi (knot = bondage), snapped once, is snapped for ever." In the case of this mystic, the bondage seems to have persisted even after Self-Realisation. How can it be so?

The Master cited Kaivalya as follows:

The disciple, after realising the all-shining, unitary, unbroken state of Being-Knowledge-Bliss, surrendered himself to the master and humbly prayed to know how he could repay the master's Grace.

The Master said:

"My reward consists in your permanent unbroken Bliss. Do not slip away from it."

D: Having once experienced the Supreme Bliss, how can one stray away from it?

M: Oh yes! It happens. The predisposition adhering to him from time immemorial will draw him out and so ignorance overtakes him.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : "Who am I?" is to be practiced till, like the stick used to stir the pyre, it has burnt everything and itself out completely. "Smaranad Arunachala" or "Arunachalamena aham ninaippavar ahattai veraruppaai Arunachala" means the thought Arunachala has the power to erase not only the thought "I am not in Tiruvannamalai" but also the thought "I am in Bangalore" and also the thought "I am the body" before revealing itself as the all-shining Self.

Talk 95 (Excerpt)

D.: What are the obstacles to remaining steady in unbroken Bliss? How can they be overcome?

M.: The obstacles are: (1) Ignorance which is forgetfulness of one's pure being.

(2) Doubt which consists in wondering if even the experience was of the Real or of the unreal.

(3) Error which consists in the "I-am-the-body" idea, and thinking that the world is real.

These are overcome by hearing the truth (Sravana), reflection on it (Manana) and concentration (Nididhyasana).

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: So far as one remains ignorant of one's pure being, there is no subeccha (desire to seek enlightenment). So the first step in Jnana Marga is to hear about one's pure being (Sravana) and develop Subeccha, the desire to be established in the Self. The second obstacle is doubt which is overcome by Manana or Vicharana, the second stage in Jnana Bhumiakas. The third obstacle is residue of attachment to the body resulting in tanumanasa or flitting between reality and the unreal. This is overcome by Nididhyasana or concentration or holding the "I" with effort.

When all residue of body identity goes, the fourth Jnana Bhumiaka of Satwapatti or Self-realisation dawns.

Talk 95. (Excerpt)

The Master continued:

Experience is said to be temporary or permanent. The first experience is temporary and by concentration it can become permanent. In the former the bondage is not completely destroyed; it remains subtle and reasserts itself in due course. But in the latter it is destroyed root and branch, never to appear again. The expression yogabhrashta (those who have fallen down from yoga) in Srimad Bhagavad Gita refers to the former class of men.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Bhagavan is explaining the Jnana Bhumiakas of Tanumanasi and Brahmaid. When the sadhaka flits between experience and proclivities, it is the stage of Tanumanasi (third Bhumiaka). When all proclivities are exhausted, one is Self Realised. The stage of Tanumanasi is also called Yoga-bhrashta - one who has fallen from experience of the Self. In verse 6:41 of the Bhagavad Gita a Yoga-brashta is said to experience birth in higher planes for many years before being brought to this world again in a conducive home to complete the sadhana. Sant Jnaneshwar is called a Yoga-bhrashta

as he had very little effort to attain Jnana and had great siddhis even as a child. Ravana is also referred to as a Yoga-bhrashta. Depending on the positive or negative proclivities, they do great good or become great instruments of punishment before attaining salvation through their root proclivity to meditate. Self Enquiry relentlessly and directly aims at destroying proclivities.

Talk 95. (Excerpt).

D.: Is then hearing the Truth meant only for a limited few?

M.: It is of two kinds. The ordinary one is to hear it enunciated and explained by a master. However, the right one is to raise the question for oneself and seek and find the answer in oneself as the unbroken 'I-I'. To be reflecting on this experience is the second stage. To remain one-pointed in it is the third stage.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Subeccha or the desire to seek enlightenment arises only after Sravana. Looking outside, one wonders how few even come to this stage. One wastes time in judging others. So, Bhagavan says that real Sravana is to raise the question, "Who am I?", from within and seek and find the answer as the unbroken "I-I". To remove doubts, one has to reflect (manana) on the experience. To completely erase all vasanas of 'I am the body', one remains one-pointed on holding the unbroken "I-I". This last stage is called by Bhagavan as "Summa Iru" or "Be Still". Bhagavan calls this Muzhu Muyarchi - perfect action. With this inner-strength alone all worlds are transcended and one abides effortlessly as the Self.

Talk 95. (Excerpt)

D.: Can the temporary experience be called samadhi?

M.: No. It forms part of the third stage.

D.: It looks then as if even hearing the Truth is limited to a very few.

M.: The seekers fall into two classes; kritopasaka and akritopasaka. The former having already overcome his predisposition by steady devotion, his mind thus made pure, has had some kind of experience but does not comprehend it; as soon as he is instructed by a competent master, permanent experience results.

The other class of seeker needs great effort to achieve this end.

How will the hearing of the Truth, reflection and concentration help him?

They comprise upasana (the nearest approach to Truth) and will end in his Self-Realization.

The fourth stage is the final one of liberation.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: In the third stage of Jnana Bhūmikas (Tanumanasi), the sadhaka has some experience of the unbroken current-substrate ("I-I"). The sadhaka feels that the world experience is the substrate and the experience of "I-I" comes and goes. In the fourth stage of Satvapatti the unbroken life-current "I-I" is realised as one's nature and the world experience merely appears and disappears or comes and goes in that substrate without any doership on the part of the ego.

Talk 95. (Excerpt).

The fourth stage is the final one of liberation. Even there some distinction is made according to the degree, as

- (1) the knower of the Brahman (Brahmavid)
- (2) Brahmavid-vara
- (3) Brahmavid-varya
- (4) Brahmavid-varishta

But all of them are in fact liberated even while alive.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: The seven jnana bhoomikas are:

1. *subheccha (the desire for enlightenment)*
2. *vicharana (enquiry)*
3. *tanumanasa (tenuous mind)*
4. *satvapatti (self-realization)*
5. *asamsakti (non-attachment)*
6. *padarthabhavana (non-perception of objects)*
7. *turyaga (transcendence)*

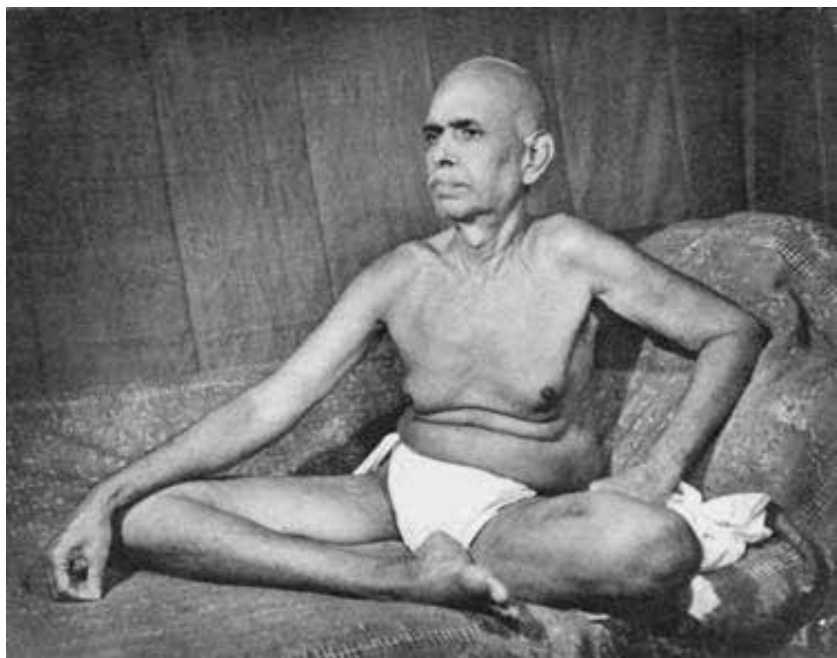
Those who have attained the last four bhoomikas are called brahmavit, brahmavidvara, brahmavidvariya and brahmavid varishta respectively.

Satvapatti or Brahmavid is one who realises his Self to be the thought-free consciousness and the world comes and goes without

any doership on his part. The higher stages only indicate lesser and lesser appearance of the world. For the sake of the seekers, Bhagavan would play all four teacher roles. He would say that Ishwara alone does everything (Satvapatti). He would teach to treat the world like a dream (non-attachment of asamsakti). He would ask whether the body and world appeared in deep sleep or when the "I" is held (non-appearance of objects of padarthabhavana). He would teach by absorbing all in Silence (beyond words teaching of Turyaga).

Swamy Natanananda asks why do other stages of Jeevan-Mukti exist if Turyaga is the highest. Bhagavan responds that as there is no ego after Satvapatti, the stage is not a choice of the Jnani but that of Ishwara.

Self Enquiry holds Turyaga as the nature of all.



Another Q.: I am wondering if there are degrees of inquiry. It is much like asking if I can partially know my Self. I do not think that is possible. It seems that the inquiry does not have degrees. It is so direct that there is nothing that I could measure. There is no difference when I am actually inquiring.

N.: The inquiry consists of a very formless Knowledge, so it really does not have parts, steps, and stages. However, if, within the context of a particular span of time, the aspirant attempts to analyze the progress of his practice, and if he is engaged in inquiry, he can say that the inquiry becomes deeper and deeper, or he might say that the superimposed illusions become thinner and thinner. If the inquiry is continuous, it is no longer wrongly associated with any kind of mental activity, however astute. Once it is entirely off the mental level, and thus continuous, it would be very difficult to describe it in steps, stages, or degrees. The attempt to measure it would necessarily bring in an examination of, or inquiry into, the nature of the measurer.

Another Q.: Yes. I would have to find some entity that experiences the Self in a way that is less than direct. I would have to be an individual that supposedly is somehow a filter.

N.: Yes. Or, a mind that is outside it that could analyze or report on it that would not be engaged in the inquiry at the moment of its reporting. However, for the purposes of the practice and instruction, we can loosely say, when a certain depth of experience is there, "Inquire more deeply," and thus proceed to remove some other misidentification. When you inquire, what actually is occurring, and how are you going to measure that?

Q.: When I am inquiring, there actually is no one who is concerned about the depth anymore or how to measure it. That is just not there anymore.

N.: The quintessence of the inquirer is the depth. The inquiry is always into the nature of the inquirer.

Q.: Yes. There is simply no one else involved. It is absolutely singular.

N.: In an infinite ocean that is of infinite depth, how are you going to take a fathom reading? It is also shoreless, so you cannot really measure how far you have gone.

Q.: It is so peaceful not to have worry about all of that.

N.: It is so peaceful not to worry about the individual's concerns.

**siddhasya vittih sata eva siddhih
svapnopamAnyAh khalu siddhayonyAh |
svapnah prabuddhasya katham nu satyah
sati sthitah kim punar-eti mAyAm || 35 ||**

The Knowledge of the established Truth (Being)
alone is accomplishment.

Comparable to (resembling) a dream, indeed, are
other accomplishments.

The dream of one who is awakened, how can it now
be true?

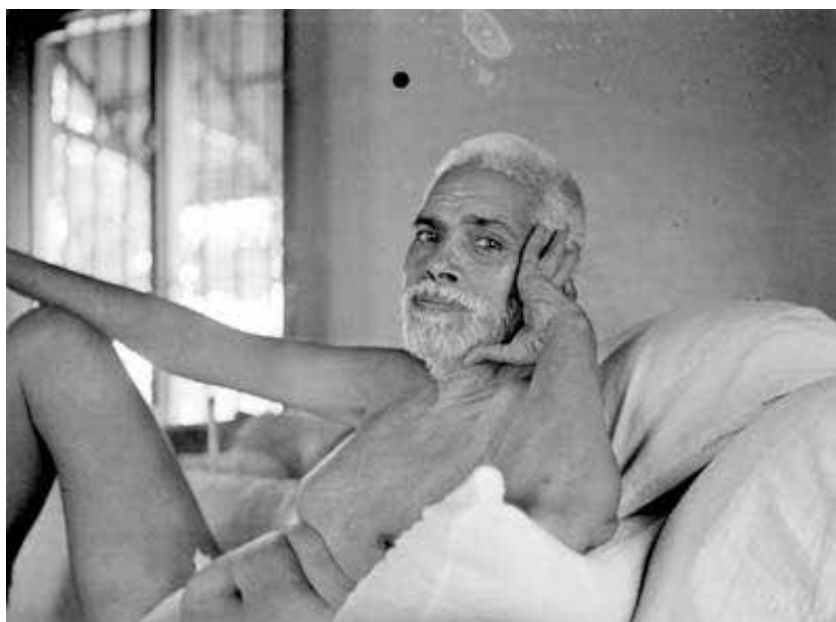
Does one who abides in Truth (Being) again approach
illusion?

N.: The word “siddhi” can mean “accomplishment,” or it can mean “miracle.” Sri Natarajan has interpreted it as miracle, and has presented the verse as a commentary on real Knowledge versus that which seems to be miraculous. It is not uncommon for aspirants to assume that the power of Supreme Knowledge will endow somebody, as a body, with certain unusual, superhuman powers. Whether such powers exist or not, is really not a matter of discussion, for those who perform them say that they exist; but, in Reality, are such things existent? They are like dreams. If the belief is that, when one attains Realization, he possesses additional unique abilities, such as the power of knowing things from afar, power of healing, and such, he must ask why should Knowledge of the supreme, ever-existent Reality endow the illusory, embodied

individual with special powers? What could Self- Knowledge, or Self-Realization, have to do with knowing what is in someone else's mind, as in the case of telepathy? One can see that Self-Knowledge can make one utterly disinterested in what is on anyone's mind, including one's own, but why would it make one interested in this power that would be much like keeping an open telephone connection with everyone else's mind? Or, why would the realization of bodiless Being result in the ability to exert influence over other bodies? Or, why would the realization of bodiless Being enable one's body to do unusual or miraculous acts? For those who are fascinated or impressed by such phenomena, the verse declares that all of this is a dream. One who knows Reality does not even approach such things. He looks at this as a dream after he has awakened. If, in a dream, you see a magician who can do all sorts of marvelous things, when you wake up, what do you think of his act? It is no more real than the rest of the dream. The magician may seem to have different powers, different abilities, or a different knowledge of things, but he still is just part of the dream. Realization is like waking up.

“The Knowledge of the established Truth, the Knowledge of Being, alone, is accomplishment.” For this one should spiritually strive. It is proof of itself. Its bliss, which can be only inwardly perceived, is proof of itself. There are no other proofs of the Realization of pure Being, which is the highest accomplishment and the only true accomplishment. If one considers that there must be some other sign of Self-Realization, in this dream, or some advantage in this play of illusion, he is entirely mistaken. If one thinks that such spiritual Knowledge will give him some added advantage in the world, such as an ability to manage events in a better way, or some miraculous powers, to which the verse directly alludes, such as the ability to know something far away, to read someone else's mind, as if that would be that interesting, (laughter) the ability to heal the body, the ability to contradict the usual laws of nature, walking on places upon which one usually does not walk, and one thinks that this would be the sign of realizing the Truth or of having realized the Truth, or that this would be a sign that someone else has realized the Truth, it is entirely deluded. All that is dream stuff.

If we see some peculiar accomplishment in a dream, such as something that does not follow the waking state's usual laws of nature, or, if in a dream, a magician has the ability, in your dream, to make impossible things appear, and they seem real as far as the dream is concerned, how do you view all of this once you wake up? If someone in the dream has the advantage of being able to predict the future events of the dream, how do you view that when you wake up? Does any of that have any significance whatsoever? Is any of that even remotely related to waking up? Is it not all just dream stuff by dream characters who do not actually exist?



(Verse-5 Continued... Part 3)

Verse-5

maNikaLIR caraTena vuyirtoRu nAnA
matantoRu moruvanA maruvinaI neetAn
maNikaTain tenamana manamenun(g) kallin
maRuvaRak kaTaiyanin naruLoLi mEvum
maNiyoLi yenappiRi toruporuT paRRu
maruvuRa lilainizhaR paTitakaT TinviN
maNiyoLi paTanizhal patiyumO vunnin
maRuporu LaruNanal loLimalai yuNTO

Verse rendering:

Like a thread
On which is strung
A cluster of gems;
It is indeed you alone
Who exist
As every single soul
And in every single 'knowing',
(every single) belief/religion.

Like polishing a gem,
If the mind is polished
On the grinding-stone of the mind
Until it becomes flawless;
Then
Your Grace-Radiance glitters forth.

Thereafter,
Just as the color/sparkle of a flawless gem
Is untouched by that of any other object,
No attachment touches (the flawless mind).

*If the resplendence of the Sky-Gem (Sun)
Falls on a photographic plate
Can any object (photographed)
Make an impression (on the plate)?*

O Aruna mountain of goodness-radiance!

*Other than you
Does any thing exist?*

Notes:

This beautiful verse of Bhagavan reveals the real nature of all existence, and the means of realizing that.

In Part 1, we explored the first part of the verse, where, using the analogy of gems strung on a thread, Bhagavan says that from the point of view of Absolute Reality, true and eternal, Arunachala is the sole Existence.

In Part 2, we explored the second part of the verse, where using the analogy of a gemstone being polished on a grinding stone, Bhagavan says - *'If the mind is polished on the grinding-stone of the mind itself until all flaws are removed, then the mind shines with the luster of your Grace, O Arunachala.'*

Let us now savor the third part of the verse, where Bhagavan says:

And just as a flawless gem's sparkle is unaffected, untouched, by the color or shine of any other object in its vicinity; so also, attachment to any external object cannot approach or touch the polished mind. If sunlight falls on a photographic plate/film, can any object (photographed) make an impression on that film anymore?

When the mind has been polished on the grinding stone of the mind, then it becomes flawless, like a polished diamond. As a diamond sparkling with ever so many different colors, the pure mind too sparkles with many beautiful qualities. If we compare the pure, colorless, light of the Sun to the supreme-radiance

of Nirguna Brahman (attribute-less, supreme, Reality), then the sparkling of the diamond can be compared to the divine Guna-s (qualities) that manifest in a mind that is *shuddha-sattva*, pure and clean. This is the sparkle of Jnana (Knowledge).

The divine qualities of a *sAttvika* (pure and polished) mind have been described by Sri Krishna in Bhagavan Gita, as follows:

“Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga, charity, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of scriptures, austerity and straightforwardness; non-injuriousness, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquility, non-slandering, compassion to all beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness; vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, and absence of pride.” (Bhagavad Gita, Ch 16, v 1-3)

And in another place in the Gita, the attributes of a mind of knowledge have been listed by Sri Krishna as:

“Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the Acharya (preceptor), purity, steadfastness, self-control;

Non-attachment with regard to objects of the senses, and also absence of egotism; seeing the evil in birth, death, old age, diseases and miseries;

Non-attachment and absence of fondness with regard to sons, wives, homes, etc., and constant equanimity of the mind with regard to the attainment of the desirable and the undesirable;

Unwavering devotion to Me with single-minded concentration; inclination to resort to solitary places; lack of delight in a crowd of people;

Steadfastness in the knowledge of the Self, contemplation on the Goal of the knowledge of Reality.

These, that have been stated from 'humility' etc. to 'contemplation on the Goal of the knowledge of Reality'; are spoken of as Jnanam, Knowledge.” (Bhagavad Gita, Ch 13, v 8-12)

As can be seen from the above lists, the sattvic mind, endowed with divine attributes, is totally indifferent to the lure of external objects.

In the current verse of Arunachala Ashtakam, Bhagavan Ramana has said – “... *attachment to any external object cannot approach or touch the polished mind. If sunlight falls on a photographic plate/film, can any object (photographed) make an impression on that film anymore?*”

Ajnana is the equivalent of the photographic-plate in the Adhyatma context. It is because of Ajnana that a person thinks of himself as a distinct individual (jeeva) and therefore sees *bhEda* (differences of objects). Due to this *bhEda dRshThi* (perception of difference), the jeeva sees the external world as a source of happiness, and seeks to possess objects to experience joy. When Jnana rises, this Ajnana is completely destroyed, whereupon the world of differences ceases.

Sri Krishna says in GIta :

*teshAmanukampArtham ahamaj~nAnajaM tamaH |
nAshayAmi AtmabhAvastaH j~nAnadIpena bhasvatA ||*

*Out of compassion for them alone, I, residing in their hearts,
destroy the darkness born of Ajnana with the luminous lamp
of Knowledge. (Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 10, verse 11))*

Explaining this verse, Kanchi Paramacharya has said¹:

*svarUpa jnAnam by itself will not set aside ignorance. It only
notifies its presence. But if the same svarUpa jnAnam is
reflected by the mano vRtti (mind mode) that results from
continued experience of the state of meditation on the
Vedanta Maha Vakhyas after studying and reflecting on them,
that will immediately burn the ignorance. This mano-vRtti is
akhaNdAkAram (not fragmentary, entire, whole)... Even if the
sun has the svabhAva (inherent nature) to burn cotton, it burns
the cotton only when the rays touch it through a special lens!*

This Akhandakara Vrtti is referred to by Bhagavan Ramana as ‘*ekachintanam*’ in the Upadesha Saaram (verse 14), where he

¹ As related to Mahamohapadhyaya R Krishnamurthi Sastrigal; recounted by him in the book “MahA PeriyavAL - Darisana AnubhavangAL”, vol. 1, published by Vanathi Padhippakam (Aug 2006 Edition)

says that by one-pointed focus on the Oneness (of the individual self with Brahman), the mind gets destroyed (as it were)².

With the destruction of Ajnana, there is no *bhEda-dRshThi* (perception of difference), and 'no object makes an impression on the film (of the mind), anymore.'

This state of the Jnana is described by Bhagavan Ramana in Guru Vachaka Kovai, thus:

Some people say - "The mukta (liberated Being) like the rest of us perceives the world in all its vast variety; and yet he sees non-difference in it". This is not correct. It is only in their view, based on their own wrong perspective of seeing differences, that they believe that the mukta too perceives the world of objects. Know, that the Mukta is not a perceiver at all." (GVC, verses 931, 932).³

In Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, Smt Suri Nagamma records⁴:

Remarked some other person: "It is said that the eyes of a Jnani appear to look at things, but in reality they see nothing."

Bhagavan: "Yes, the eyes of the Jnani are likened to the eyes of a dead goat, they are always open, never closed. They glitter but they see nothing, though it seems to others that they see everything."

Thus, when the Sunlight of Jnana-svarupa-Self is focused by the lens of Atma-vichara, as the single Akhandakara-ray of Eka-chintana (focused thought of Oneness of self and Brahman), the coating of Ajnana in the mind gets burnt off. What remains is the pure, polished, mind, sparkling with divinity of Arunachala, where there is no perceiver-perceived duality at all. Arunachala alone shines, as the sole, eternal, existence.

2 Ref Upadesha Saaram of Bhagavan Ramana, with Bhashya of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, published by RMCL Bengaluru (first edition, 2017), page 95

3 Translation adapted from 'The Garland of Guru's Sayings', by Prof K Swaminathan

4 Letter dated 26 October 1947



- Yoga implies prior division and it means later union of one thing with another. **But who is to be united and with whom?**
- Yoga enjoins *chitta-vritti-nirodha* [repression of thoughts], whereas I prescribe *atmanveshana* [quest of oneself]. This latter method is more practicable.

A more advanced man will naturally go direct to control of mind without wasting his time practising control of breath.

AZHAGAMMAL – A SAGA OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Book Extract

As part of celebrating the 40th year of publications from Ramana Maharsh Centre for Learning, last month we brought to you an extract from our very first publication. This was the title 'Bhagavan Ramana and Mother'. This was also the first book authored by Sri AR Natarajan. Further, it was the first book of our Centre to be published in Kannada. The translation was by Shivaram Karanth under the title 'Bhagavan Ramana mattu Matrusri'. Here we bring to you practically the last book written by Sri A R Natarajan, bringing him full cycle as it were, beginning and ending with Mother Azhagamma.

- Editor

Azhagammal – Mother Divine



Mother Azhagammal's womb is indeed a womb of wombs. To be the mother of Ramana, who was born with a specific command of and clothed with the power of Arunachala to broadcast its glory. Its glory has two facets. The first one as a guru whose fire of knowledge burns away the illusive mind and the other as that of a matchless giver of boons, asked and unasked. It is obvious that Azhagammal too would be no ordinary person. For undoubtedly she must have done rare penance to be deserving his grace. One finds that ostensibly she was like any other housewife, devoted whole-heartedly to her husband and having normal attachments.

However, what marked her out was her strong inbuilt sense of detachment, certain readiness to accept that the course of events are part of the ordainer's just laws. This sense of detachment enabled her to cut off all her links with the members of the family and move over to Virupaksha Cave to be a disciple of her son Ramana. For a mother, the sense of 'my' and 'mine' are natural and deep rooted towards her children. Her decision to abide by Ramana's guidance cuts at the very root of these feelings. This she readily accepted. After a couple of years of her stay with Ramana she came to regard all the inmates as her sons. On the first day of the arrival of a new inmate an old one had died after a brief illness. Ramana told mother, "Mother you have been grieving for your son who is no more. Another has come in his place".

It is difficult to exaggerate the hardship of a life on the Aruna hill, more particularly for women. The only other woman who had stayed on the hill was the grandmother of greens (*Keeraipatti*). For those who are familiar with the summer heat of Tiruvannamalai know only too well the scorching intensity of the sun at that time. There were hardly any water sources. The only known sources were '*Mullai Pal Tirtham*' and some springs in the hill. She lived there for six years and she was never known to complain about it. She had placed herself in the hands of her jnani son and wherever he was that was her place too.

For centuries Arunachala, the red hill, has been drawing saints to itself, some of whom are famous. Virupaksha Deva, Guhai Namasivayam, Guru Namasivayam, Isanya Jnana Desikar and in the twentieth century, Mahan Seshadri Swami. Even though this list is long, it does not contain any illumined lady. Arunachala, embodied knowledge has taken a hand to give Azhagammal this blessing of being privileged to be the first and only illumined woman of Tiruvannamalai. This is symbolised by the *Matrubhuteswara* temple dedicated to her and built according to the best agamic traditions.

[As we had covered the first chapter from 'Bhagavan Ramana and Mother' we continue here from after Bhagavan Ramana left home for Tiruvannamalai.]

Mother's Anguish



The sudden departure of Venkataraman from Madurai on August 29, 1896, filled mother Azhagammal's heart with anguish. Being a helpless widow she could only entreat her brothers-in-law Nelliappa Iyer and Subba Iyer to make an all-out search, which they did. However, in the absence of any clue, they drew a blank. She was desperate and helpless. Therefore the mood of surrender was fully on her.

Though the laws of grace are mysterious, beyond the mind's comprehension, one thing is clear. When one realises the utter futility of all human endeavour and recognises that God alone is the true helper then the support is very much there, unfailingly there. It manifested itself when Ramana's love for his mother made him reveal his presence at Tiruvannamalai.

Ramana Reveals Himself

In the blazing fire of enlightenment, Venkataraman's identification with a particular name and form had been reduced to ashes. Therefore he could not sign the note he had written to his brother before leaving for Arunachala. Yet at this juncture, Ramana decided to reveal to his mother the necessary information by which she could trace him.

MOTHER – THE FIRST DISCIPLE

Nelliappa Iyer's Vain Attempt

In May 1898, a confident Nelliappa Iyer came to Tiruvannamalai with the firm resolve to take his nephew back with him. By that time Ramana had shifted from Gurumurtam to a

nearby Mango Grove. This sanctuary away from the crowd was provided by a devotee, the owner of the grove. He had given strict instructions to the watchman of the grove not to allow anyone inside. When Nelliappa Iyer came to the grove to meet his nephew the watchman refused him permission to enter. Finally, however, the watchman agreed to let him in if the Swami had no objection.

Nelliappa Iyer used all his argumentative skills as a lawyer to convince Ramana that he should return home. He assured him that the family members would in no way interfere with his inner or outer life. All that they were anxious about was that his body should be looked after properly when he was engaged in such severe penance. He could even continue his tapas at the samadhi shrine of a great saint near Manamadurai undisturbed. These pleadings were obviously of no avail.

Come Back My Son



When Nelliappa Iyer hesitatingly conveyed the refusal of Venkataraman to return home, Azhagammal did not lose heart. She was confident that his love for her would make him relent.

The very first sight of her Venkataraman's body filled Azhagammal's heart with overwhelming grief. His body was emaciated, covered with dirt, his hair was matted, his nails had grown long and he was wearing only a cod-piece. This had shocked and saddened Neilliappa Iyer earlier. Yet even in this hour of sorrow, she did not miss the brilliant radiance of Ramana's supreme state of Self-abidance. Already some devotees had gathered around Ramana, attracted by his divine aura, by the perfume of his spiritual glory.

Mother - The First Disciple

In her overwhelming desire to ensure his return, Mother had forgotten the poignant first sentence of Ramana's letter to his brother while leaving home, "I have in search of my father and in obedience to his command, started from here". At the very time of his enlightenment he had lost all his individuality. His mind was devoured in the blazing fire of knowledge. He had become the property of Arunachala Siva. It was a compulsion and there was no question of his deciding anything thereafter. He had been summoned to spread the glory of Arunachala. How could he return 'home'?

Mother became desperate about the impasse. There was no sign of response from Ramana for he continued in the same state of silence. To her it was painful for it was totally contrary to the care of her Venkataraman before his sudden departure.

At this juncture, on her final visit, Mother appealed to the devotees present to intervene on her behalf. One of them, *Pachiappa Pillai* requested Ramana, "Your mother is weeping and crying. Why should you not at least say 'Yes' or 'No'. You need not break your silence, but you can at least write – here is some paper and a pencil". Thereupon, Ramana wrote thus: *"The Creator remaining everywhere makes each one play his role in life according to the unfolding of the divine law. That which is not destined will not happen despite every effort. What is destined is bound to happen. This is certain. Therefore, the best course is to remain silent."*

It could be stated that mother Azhagammal was Ramana's first disciple, for it was to her that the first Upadesa, the auspicious instruction which a guru gives to his disciple was given in 1898.

Ramana Grants A Boon

Mother had an inbuilt detachment in her. How else could Ramana's mother be? Her earlier lessons in Vedanta and her initiation into the sacred mantra '*Aham Brahmasmi*', 'I am Brahman' had the power of sowing their seeds of detachment, already strong in her. Therefore she did not go again to Arunachala to see Ramana for many years.

Her next visit was only in 1913, fifteen years afterwards. That too was only on a way back from a pilgrimage to *Benaras*

(now *Varanasi*). No further commentary is required about her mental renunciation and acceptance of the message, which she had received from Ramana in the *Pavalakundru* temple. In the meantime Ramana had shifted to Virupaksha Cave.

When mother came in 1913 she was accompanied by her daughter-in-law Mangalam, wife of her youngest son Nagasundaram. They were allowed to stay overnight. This was the first time when ladies had been permitted to do so. To Azhagammal it was obvious that her son's stature was such that he could fulfill any prayer and grant any boon, which would be asked of him. Though she had overcome to a large extent any desire orientation in her mind, still understandably she wanted to ensure the continuance of the family lineage. Her first son Nagaswami had died issueless prematurely. Ramana had surrendered himself to the Supreme. Hence her sole hope rested on Nagasundaram. Mother requested Ramana that Mangalam may be granted a boon of having a son so that the family lineage would continue. Ramana's life is also a testimony of the fact that he would fulfill the requests and grant the boons asked for and even those unasked. Next year in 1914, a son was born to Mangalam and was named Venkataraman in gratitude.

Ramana's Prayer



The year was 1914. The place, Virupaksha Cave in Aruna Hill. Azhagammal was in a delirious state hovering between life and death. Ramana, whose body and mind had been surrendered to Arunachala the very day he had heard of the name Arunachala, was by her side. In this context, we find a prayer by Ramana whose poignancy and depth of loving concern for 'Mother's Recovery' is unmatched.

The first job to be entrusted to Arunachala was the immediate one of rescuing mother from the jaws of death and curing her fever. But that would only be a half done job. What about the suffering of continuing rebirths unless the mind is dead? The body's purpose would be served only in the event of the ending of the illusory mind.

The further verses are a prayer to Aruna hill to complete its job, to make mother an illumined one ending once and for all the repeated lives lived in ignorance. It may be mentioned that a few years later Sri Ramana himself did this job for his mother on 19th of May 1922 at Sri Skandasramam. Is he not the human embodiment of that very force?

Ramana was to guide her mind back to the source, the heart, which he was to do with his sacred hands. At this point of time nobody could have crystal – gazed into the future. Mother Azhagammal herself was to live an ascetic life for six years, maturing spiritually by residing with him at Virupaksha Cave and Skandasramam.

Skandasramam – The Years of Discipleship

One devotee Kandaswami noticed the difficulties that Ramana and mother had to undergo for want of water and accommodation. In those days there was no water near the cave. With single-minded devotion, drawing on Ramana's grace, Kandaswami decided to construct an Ashram higher up on the hill where these problems could be solved. He discovered a perennial water source up the hill. The thought of difficulties and the fear of failure never occurred to him. He removed the boulders and thorny shrubs that surrounded the area. He levelled the adjacent area, prepared a big plot of land, enough to accommodate a large building. Next, he raised a wall of granite on its eastern slope, as a containing wall for a flat, levelled terrace. He filled up the space behind the wall and planted mango and jackfruit trees. He also raised a flower garden there. With the help of other devotees he managed to build a brick construction where Ramana, his mother, and the inmates could stay in reasonable comfort.

To mother's delight, a separate kitchen was built behind the main building. She could feed her son and guru Ramana and the devotees. Mother's faith in Ramana as her guru also grew

by leaps and bounds. Some of her visions made her aware of Ramana's divinity. Once when he was before her, he disappeared suddenly. She started crying, thinking that he had discarded his human form. Then he reappeared to her great joy. On another occasion she had a vision of him garlanded by snakes like Siva.

Mother's Mukti



On the most significant day in mother's life and for us, 19th May 1922, Ramana went inside her room and sat by her side. He kept her head on his lap, his right hand on her spiritual heart and the left hand on her head.

What happened for several hours was later described by Ramana himself thus: "The *vasanas* of the previous births and latent tendencies that are seeds for future births came out. She was observing the scenes of the experience of *vasanas* one after another. As a result of a series of such experiences, she was working them out".

At 8.00 p.m. that night mother attained Mahasamadhi. When someone remarked that mother had passed away, Ramana corrected, "No, she did not pass away, she was absorbed".

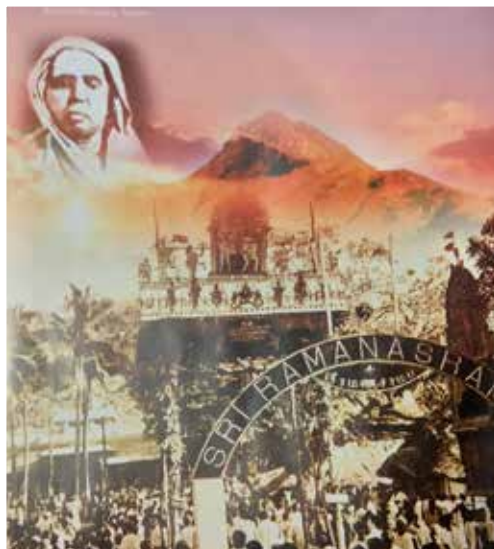
Years later in 1947 Ramana revisited Skandasramam with the devotees in response to their requests. Then he pointed out to Suri Nagamma the spot where mother was placed after her nirvana. "There mother had her nirvana. We made her sit outside. No mark of death was visible on her face. She was like one seated in deep samadhi. Divine light was seen in a holy dance, just where you are sitting now".

The Samadhi Shrine

Ganapati Muni was one of the catalysts for drawing out Ramana's teachings and making them available to the world. In August 1917 at Skandasramam, he and his followers had asked Ramana questions on all aspects of spiritual life. On the 21st of August, Muni's wife Vishalakshi put a vital question, which was to be directly applicable a few years later to Azhagammal.

Q: If a woman liberated while alive sheds her body, what would be the right thing to do, cremation or burial?

R: In liberation and Self-knowledge there is no difference between men and women. The body of a woman liberated while alive is not to be cremated as it is a temple of God.



In view of the authoritative ruling given by Ramana on the subject, mother's body had to be buried and a lingam had to be installed over the samadhi. Since the Aruna hill itself is regarded as the form of Arunachaleswara, the question of her samadhi being located on the hill did not arise. The nearest spot selected was on the southern slopes of Arunachala, adjacent to 'Pali Tirtham' (a water

source). Ganapati Muni went down to make the necessary arrangements for the samadhi rituals and installation of the linga, as early as possible in the morning. During the night two of the inmates and few others went to town to collect materials like cement, stone slabs, etc. for construction of the samadhi.

A few days earlier, Ramaswami Pillai and Kunjuswami had gone up the Aruna hill and cut a few pieces of bamboo, though they themselves did not know the why of it at that time. These bamboos came in handy for carrying mother's body down the hill.

Ramaswami Iyer and others at Skandasramam were pallbearers who brought down mother's sacred body to the samadhi site, which had already been cleared.

Though it was thought that the news of the samadhi rites should be kept a secret, somehow it spread during the night throughout the town. By the morning there was quite a large gathering of devotees with flowers, fruits and coconuts. *Nadaswaram* players were also performing. Many music groups were singing songs with great devotion.

The construction of the samadhi was done in accordance with the rules given in *Tirumantiram*, an ancient Tamil work by *Tirumular*. The *Abhisheka* was done with milk, curds, coconut water and other requisites brought by the devotees. *Kusha* grass and *vibhuti* was spread in samadhi pit in accordance with tradition before mother's body was lowered into it at about 10.00 a.m. Ramana also put some *vibhuti* and camphor into the samadhi pit. The pit was covered with camphor, *bilva* leaves and *vibhuti* and finally closed with a stone slab. A lingam was placed on the top. On the suggestion of Ganapati Muni, it was named "Mathrubhutheswara Mahalingam", meaning 'Ishwara who had become Mother'. The Muni's further suggestion that a Sri Chakra Meru could also be placed in the Shrine was executed. The Muni himself installed it at the appropriate place. *Naivedya* (consecrated food) was offered and the first pooja was done burning camphor and waving the lights.



The Dance in the Heart - Ramananjali Nritya - II

Ujwal Jagadeesh

We at RMCL are celebrating 40+ years of Ramananjali which encompasses the songs written by and on Ramana and its various translations made available in musical format. We are also celebrating 40 years of Ramananjali Nritya, dance to these Ramananjali Songs. As a part of this we bring to you a series of articles, including interviews with those associated with Ramananjali Nritya from its inception.

Dr. Kala Rani Rengasamy is a B.A. Hons, Delhi University and PhD from Mother Theresa Women's University. She has served as a lecturer in Sri Meenakshi Government College for Women, Madurai. Her oratorial talents, honed by her father Sri Guruswamy and encouraged by her mother Smt.Seethalakshmi, found recognition even in her childhood at Delhi when she received an award from the then President of India for winning a contest. She gives philosophical lectures especially on the Life and Teachings of Ramana Maharshi. She was awarded the title 'Variar Viruthu' by Bharati Yuva Kendra in Madurai for giving philosophical lectures. She is the Director of the school for Bharatanatyam 'Sri Ramana Natyalaya'. Smt. Kala is blessed to be a devotee of Bhagavan from her childhood as her parents had great devotion for Bhagavan and were active members of Ramana Kendra, Delhi. Later, her father Sri S. Guruswamy was the Vice President of Madurai Ramana Kendram and now her husband Rengasamy, who is equally devoted to Bhagavan, is serving in that capacity. She is herself an active part of the Madurai Kendram and a Governing Body Member of Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi Research Centre, Bengaluru.

Ujwal: How did Ramana and Dance enter your life?

Kalarani: Actually, they both entered without my knowledge. At the age of 4, my parents took me to the dance class and Ramana too entered at the same time when we started attending satsangs at Delhi Ramana Kendra. There used to be satsangs every week on every Sunday in one of the devotee's house.

The irony is that in his childhood my father, Sri Guruswamy, was staying very close just 2-3 streets away from Ramana

Mandiram at Madurai without knowing of its presence. Appa was staying in Madurai till he was posted in Meteorological department at Kodaikanal. When he got transferred to Delhi, he had left us at Madurai and had gone ahead to rent a house, Before we joined him there, he was at Delhi for two months, At that time, Subbaiah Mama invited him to come to Ramana Satsang if he had some leisure. So Appa went to that Sunday Satsang and that's it, Bhagavan caught him like kantam irumbum pol (magnet attracting iron filings). Later when he came back to Madurai and visited Ramana Mandiram, he felt very bad that he had wasted so many days without knowing Ramana and coming to Mandiram.

U: A R Natarajan Mama too shares the same emotion that everyone in his family had seen Bhagavan and he had missed having Bhagavan's darshan. Hence he was filled with a fire to take Ramana to everyone, so that nobody missed him. You said that Bhagavan and dance entered your life simultaneously. From whom did you learn dance and what was your experience learning it?



K: When I was about 4 or 5 my parents took me to a teacher named Smt. Gowri who taught me the basics of Bharatanatyam. At the time of my Arangetram for two years I learnt Bharatanatyam under Smt. Renuka Raghunathan, a disciple of Vazhavur Ramaiah Pillai, who fine-tuned my dance. She was a very strict teacher. She had taken only three disciples and I was one of them. She trained all the three of us to perform our Arangetram.

I was 15 years old when I did my arangetram, I was in the 11th Standard which was also the year of our All India public examination. We practiced for nearly six months.

Later intensive daily practice of ten days with all the musicians with orchestra. Sulochana Aunty sang the Muruganar Song which I performed and she came for two of the rehearsals.

U: In this sense you are the very first dancer to have performed a Ramananjali dance in her arangetram. The only person who had danced to a Ramananjali song before that was Yamini Krishnamurthy who had given a benefit performance for the Kendra. Did your teacher enjoy choreographing a song on Ramana?

K: She felt very happy choreographing the song “Tenum paalum tittikkum” that is ‘Vandu Vidum dhoodu’ – ‘Song to the Bee messengers’. This is a composition of Muruganar Swami from his ‘Ramana Sannidhi Murai’ set to kAnaDa Ragam. It is in the Nayaka-Nayaki Bhava, which is very typical in Bharatanatyam. The meaning was beautifully given by Professor K Swaminathan. It was a very nice experience which we all enjoyed. My teacher also was happy that it was something different from the regular curriculum of Bharatanatyam. She also accepted Sulochana Aunty’s singing of that song during the Arangetram. In those days teachers may not have accepted these changes. By Bhagavan’s grace she was kind enough to accept them.



I used to visit A.R Natarajan Uncle and Sulochana Aunty’s house to play with Sarada and Ambika. I would be specially invited to witness dance concerts. I do not remember being invited for the Music concerts or even to the movies which Uncle would rarely take Sarada and Ambika to. But because of my special interest



able to take me to these shows, he made it a point to take me along with Sarada and Ambika. So I got to witness the performances of Dr. Padma Subramaniam, Sonal Mansingh, Yamini Krishnamurthy and other great artistes.

I remember the program by Yamini Krishnamurthy that was organized as a fund raiser for the Delhi Ramana Kendra and held at the Ashoka Hotel, Delhi. It was a wonderful program which I, Sarada and Ambika enjoyed. All the photographs of the performance of Yaminiji were given to me by the Ramana Kendra saying it would be useful for me as I was the only one learning dance at that time.

Since she was to garland Yaminiji on the stage, Sarada wore what we called a 'half-saree' for the first time. The lower part would be a full skirt and half the length of the saree would be worn from the waist upwards similar to a saree. Sulochana Auntie thought it will look great on her. So these were very memorable times.

I used to share whatever I learnt in dance class with Sarada and Ambika. I also taught them a few dances for their Annual days and sometimes for birthday functions.



U: So informally Bhagavan made you the first dance teacher of Ramananjali Nritya. Inspired by your teaching, Sarada Akka and Ambika Akka with Hema Akka used to perform the dances 'tummedalara', telugu translation of 'songs to the bee messengers' and 'Gavo Nacho', hindi translation of 'kummi pattu' in the Ramananjali performances in the world tour in 1980.

K: I often feel shy when they refer to me as their first dance teacher. The teaching was a spontaneous sharing between us as we were such good friends and loved to share everything. But they did perform the dances that they learnt from me in their school or at functions in their house. The dances that I recall sharing with them were the gypsy dance, 'idadu padam tookki' and 'teruvil varaano' on Lord Nataraja, which are padams. I also taught Ambika a javali, 'aduvum solluvaal'.

U: Perhaps the fact that she first learnt the gypsy dance from you was an unconscious prompting for Sarada Akka to make the gypsies narrate Bhagavan's story in our very first full-length dance drama 'Ramana Vijayam'. She also played the role of the gypsy several times when that ballet was performed. When did you formally start teaching dance?

K: I had started dance classes in Delhi itself, even before my marriage. I was teaching five to six north Indian students. They learnt with great enthusiasm. The name of the dance school was 'Ramana Natyalaya'

Aruna, my daughter has started a branch of the 'Ramana Natyalaya' now at Melbourne too. It is surely Bhagavan's Grace.

U: Natyashastra says that Dance has the capability to bless us with all the purusharthas dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (fulfilment of desires) and Moksha (liberation) . Abhinaya Darpana says Sabha is a Kalpataru, a wish fulfilling tree. I understand you had got an opportunity to meet Sadhu Om Swami and he had told you the secret of what needs to be asked or not asked in the Sabha called the world which is taken care of by the Sabhapathi who is Ramana.

K: When I went to Sadhu Om for the first time, he asked “Do you have the practice of praying?” I said “Yes”. He then asked “While praying, what do you ask for?” I said “I ask for a good silk dress - Pattu Pavadai, jewels and that I should do well in my studies.” He said “Bhagavan wants to give you much more than what you desire, so why do you have to ask for your small wishes. It is not necessary to ask anything because he knows everything.” Since I got this upadesa at a tender age it sank within me and stayed firmly in my heart. From then I don’t ask anything of Bhagavan, I just enjoy Him.



We, the students of the very first Ramana Bala Kendra had some connect with Bhagavan through our samskaras as my other batch mates also share their thoughts. We were lucky enough to be in this group at a very early age. I was in my 4Th standard when I joined Bala Kendra. Without our knowledge unconsciously we were in connection with the Guru or he chose us to follow him.



We know that through our vaasanas and samskaras we will be born to the chosen parents and come to the correct place. My journey with consciousness started in my house and also with weekly classes in the RBK. Our house had the base of spirituality where my grandfather would loudly chant Vishnu sahasranamam and Bhagavat Gita every day. He would make us learn these by heart and explain the meanings to us though we were very young to consciously understand. Probably even our

names, Chinmayee, and my sister's, Paranjyothi, are indicative of the spiritual background in our family.

During that time we were also introduced to RBK and it really enhanced our knowledge. As a child I was always fascinated by the stories told by Sulochana Maami about friendship and about Bhagavan seeing God in everything. These have really shaped me into a different person, different from how people normally live their lives in the world. Upadesha Saaram was a part of our curriculum at RBK. Although I had not learnt it my heart, the meanings and given by Sarada Akka went into my heart as it were. The meanings come to me whenever I require them the most in taking the certain decisions.

This reminds me of an incident in Bhagavan's life. A devotee saw that he was teaching the chanting of Upadesha Saaram to some small children with great care. The devotee said to Bhagavan, 'When even we are struggling to grasp the meaning of these verses, what is the point of teaching it to these little children?' Bhagavan replied, 'It will come back to them and help them at the right time.' This is very true in my life. Although we thought of RBK as a co-curricular activity the meanings about the teachings have really impacted my life not only in taking decisions but also reacting to certain difficult phases of life in a positive manner

The song Arunachala Siva is always with me, always....



These was all the things that we were taught as children through dance, drama, singing, chanting, drawing etc. Though we were from different backgrounds in RBK during the many trips to various places without our knowledge we were also being taught about staying and adjusting with others.



When we went to Tiruvannamalai we would go on Giripradakshinam and visit Virupaksha Guha, Skandashram and other places connected with Bhagavan. The discipline that



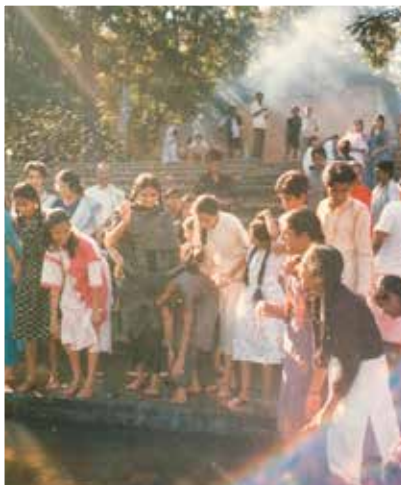
we had to follow was imbibed by all of us at the early budding age... Especially in Delhi trip, a long one, I had to manage myself and my little sister that imbibed a responsibility and leadership quality in me as I

was a quiet, shy and inexpressive girl.

Like in academics we would take and study entire the life history of Bhagavan. This inculcated the reading habit in us from then onwards. Though we had class on weekends we would always remember Bhagavan either through reading, dance, drama or singing. I feel very nostalgic thinking about those days.

My heartfelt thanks to RBK for connecting me to my spiritual source at a very early age. All of them Natarajan Maama, Sulochana Maami, Sarada Akka, Ambika Akka, Murali Maama, Srinivasan Maama, Nikki Maama, Kumar Anna. I really thank each and every one who made my childhood very meaningful and seeded my young mind with Bhagavan's teachings and made my life very meaningful and shaped me to be a truly positive person.....

N a m o
Ramana



My contact with Bhagavan and Ramana Bala Kendra started when I was in my 1st standard, around the year 1981.



The classes were held at that time in my school premises, which was right next to my house. I used to tag along with my sister Chinmayee, just for the attraction of delicious prasadam which was distributed at the end of our weekly classes.

Gradually I was attracted to Sulochana Mami, Sarada Akka and Ambika Akka, for their talents in singing, dancing, storytelling etc., and they used to teach us Bhagavan's teachings in a simple and easily understandable way through many activities with so much love and patience.



Watching my sister and my roles on prestigious stages like Ravindra Kalashetra and Chowdaiah Memorial Hall my parents used feel very happy and proud about us.



I was part of the ballet shows, though mine used to be a very small role, I was always excited wearing various types of costumes make-up etc. Once, I played the role of the calf Lakshmi, when Cow Lakshmi first came to the Asram. We all know that Lakshmi was given moksha by Bhagavan. My role was to jump around Bhagavan to seek his attention and get patted by him.



At a tender age I visited New Delhi, Chennai and many towns and cities with Ramana Bala Kendra members to take part in many dance-dramas. I can say it was nothing but Bhagavan's blessings.



I remember going on trips to Tiruvannamalai very often and giri pradakshina was a real pleasure trip for me, as I enjoyed the company of my Bala Kendra friends. By his grace I still enjoy it with my family now.

We used to go to Virupaksha cave and Skandasram when we visited Arunachala. I would see many people doing meditation there. As a child I liked imitating them. That was the seed sown by Bhagavan which is still growing in me.



Thank you Bhagavan for entering my life at a tender age through Ramana Bala Kendra.



How Bhagavan Captured Us

Smt.Sulochana Natarajan

Bhagavan provided us with the best of spaces to lead our lives when we are at Delhi, as he had done before and always thereafter as well. The Meena Bagh flats were on Maulana Azad Road, one of the arterial roads in the heart of New Delhi. At one end of our road was situated the Indian Vice President's residence. At the perpendicular cross road was the then Prime Minister's residence, 10 Janpath. On the other side was the National Museum. The famous Vignan Bhavan was also situated down the same road on one side and on the other the Govt. offices, Nirman Bhavan and Udyog Bhavan. Three roads parallel to ours was the main road connecting the Rashtrapathi Bhavan and the India Gate. It was surely Bhagavan's Grace that we were allotted such a prime place. This is just to say how Bhagavan has taken care of us at every juncture in our lives in every way.

We were in 27 Meena Bagh. More than anything the name and the number stuck in our minds as the foundation of our involvement in the Ramana Movement and Ramana activities. For me, it was to be the place that nurtured the start of the Ramana Music Movement, the very purpose and joy of my life. The number 27 had a special place in our minds even prior to that. ARN was born in the year 1927. It was on 27th December of 1951 that ARN communicated his consent to our marriage after which we got married in little more than a month on the 6th of February 1952. Sarada was born on 27th June 1960 and Ambika on 27th March 1964. In this way we were happy to have been given 27 Meena Bagh as our home where we spent 12 very happy and fruitful years.

Did we not have any travails at all? There were the normal share of ups and downs. There were even moments of apparent despair. But through everything the over-riding experience was of Bhagavan's presence.

Each of the flats in Meena Bagh had a servant's quarters and a garage at some distance from the flat. It was a D II type of

flat according to the Govt. classification. It had two spacious bedrooms each with a big bathroom attached, one large drawing cum dining hall, a kitchen, a store and two verandahs, one in front and one at the back. We had both these verandahs enclosed, one for our privacy and secondly because we used the back verandah as our dining space. The actual dining area was converted into a large puja room.

In our block of Meena Bagh the other residents comprised of one Muslim family, one Sardarji family, one UP Kshatriya family who used to be very active, rajasic, two Keralite families and one Punjabi family. It was a very nice cosmopolitan atmosphere. The Muslim family, the Zinjanis, was a family of seven children of which the last two girls were almost of Sarada's age. These two children, Shaista and Bushra, became very close friends with Sarada and Ambika and on all week days the foursome would invariably be together practically till dinner time. Now and then in the weekends all the children in the block would get together and put up some skits and other cultural presentations like songs, mimes etc. Thus Bhagavan provided ample opportunities for their talents also to flower in a spontaneous and natural way.



60. SAMADRK

Impartial

Constant abidance in the Self without attractions or aversions, in the world of infinite variety, is to be equiminded. The true seer's vision is all pervasive as he is aware of the essential unity in this multiplicity. The Bhagavad Gita extols such persons for their freedom from any difference. Those whose minds are externalized develop attachments due to contact with the objective world. In contrast persons with intuned minds experience the truth that the seer, the seen and the act of seeing are essentially one.

What can one say about Bhagavan's equality? The state of mukti that he bestowed on his mother Azhagamma, he also bestowed on Lakshmi the Cow, Jackie the dog, Valli the deer and an unnamed crow which devotees simply refer to as 'The blessed crow'. All these have samadhis within the precincts of Sri Ramanasramam, samadhis built by Bhagavan himself. These are the visible testimonials to the numberless being on whom Bhagavan's impartial grace has showered and brought their lives to fruition.

Describing this equality, Muruganar Swami writes that Ramana showered grace on all like a tree that on a scorching day gives shade to every comer, by nature, not by choice.

Om SamadRShE namaha

61. SATYADRK

Seer of Truth

That which rises and disappears cannot be the truth. That which is eternal and unchanging is the truth. The ignorant one is caught up in forms and names. Those who are conscious of the reality underlying these names and forms are seers of truth.

Ramana saw only the truth always. A devotee, Mercedes de Acosta asked him whether he, herself and her servant were all one. Ramana replied, 'I, you, your servant and the monkeys outside the window are all one'. She wondered how the monkeys could be one as they were not even human beings. He replied, 'All are one in one-consciousness'. He saw nothing apart from this truth.

Om SatyadRShE namaha

62. SATYAHA

Embodiment of Truth

The seer of truth becomes Truth itself. To abide in the Self is to know the Self says Ramana in Upadesa Saram. One becomes that fullness of Consciousness when his individuality is merged in the whole.

Satyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer, in his 'Ramana Sadguru' refers to Ramana as the embodiment of the Existence principle, the core of truth. 'Asi padatturuvaanavan' who is the very form of the word 'asi' or 'existence'.

Om SatyAya namaha

63. PRASHANTAHA

Full of peace

It is only the one who is aware that peace is his natural state who can be immersed in peace. The knower of truth knows no perturbances says Ramana. The Bhagavad Gita verse "The one who abides in That, is free from perturbation" also refers to this. One could feel it in the profound peace in the presence of Ramana.

The peace of Ramana would envelop one and all. There are innumerable instances of those coming to him laden with grief and pain and their burden being completely dissolved in his presence. It could be Echammal who had lost her children and husband in quick succession, it could be a lady who, during her honeymoon, had seen her husband being devoured by a shark to remember two instance of extreme anguish being wiped out by his peace.

Paul Brunton describes this as 'a steady river of peace' that he experienced flowing next to him the very first time he was seated in the Maharshi's presence.

Om PraShAntAya namaha

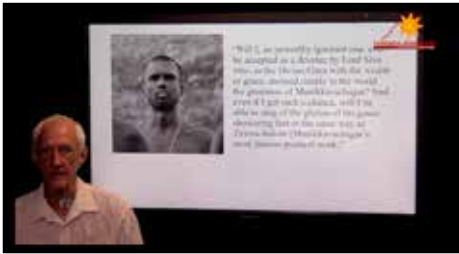
News & Events

Revathi Sankar

The 44th National Seminar and Cultural Festival was flagged off as a 20 weeks online event on January 23rd, 2021. The theme of the Seminar and Festival is Ramananjali 40+. Talks have been given by eminent speakers on poetry and poets in Ramananjali Music. Songs from Ramananjali have also formed a part of the presentations.

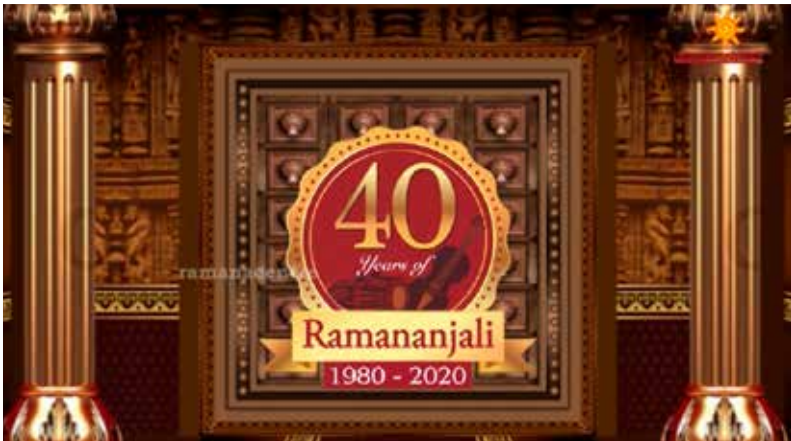
The talks and sharings in January and February were by G.Kameshwar, Dr.Kalarani Rengasamy, Sri K.G.Subraya Sharma, Dr.A.S.Venugopala Rao, Smt. Mahalakshmi Suryanandan, David Godman and Ramanacharana Tirtha Nochur Sri Venkataraman.





The cultural events in January and February began with the English and Tamil rendering of Aksharamanamalai by G.Kameshwar and Dr.Ambika Kameshwar, a musical feature 'Ramanaya Namu' by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar along with Dr.Vaishnavi Poorna, excerpts from Ramananjali Carnatic Classical Concerts and selections from Ramananjali's 500th program.





Special Dates in March and April

- » March 8th, 9th, 10th Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Laksharchana and Sthapana Day
- » March 11th, Thursday, Mahasivaratri
- » March 14th, Sunday, Cultural Festival at Ramana Maharshi Auditorium
- » April 14th, Wednesday, Ramana Aradhana

Special Online Dates – March and April

Ramanacentre Bengaluru – YouTube Channel (Subscribe to get detailed program)

- » 44th National Seminar and Global Online Festival – Ramananjali 40+
- » Every Wednesday 6.15 pm – Ramananjali Cultural Program
- » Every Friday 6.15 pm – Ramananjali – Down Memory Lane (A video presentation of the history of Ramananjali)
- » 2nd and 9th March – Tuesdays – Sri K.V.Subramonyam on Ramana Kritis
- » 16th and 23rd March – Tuesdays – Dr.T.N.Pranatharthihran on Muruganar's Ramana Puranam
- » 20th March - Saturday – Michael James on Compositions of Sadhu Om Swami
- » 21st March – Sunday – David Godman on Bhagavan and Muruganar
- » 28th March – Pournami – Sri Nochur Venkataraman on Ramana Pada Pancharatnam
- » 6th and 13th April – Tuesdays – Robert Butler on Muruganar's Ramananubhuti
- » 20th and 27th April – Tuesdays – Dr.N.S.Lakshminarayana Bhatta on Kannada Ramana Geethe

Declaration

Statement of ownership and other particulars about THE RAMANA WAY according to Form IV, Rule 8 of the Registrar of Newspaper for India.

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I, Dr. Sarada Natarajan, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Place : Bangalore

Date : 31.03.2021

Sd/-
SARADA NATARAJAN
Signature of the Publisher

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

To register for Online sessions contact

Uma 9538472026 or join on <https://meet.google.com/kwx-bdoa-gtf>

Online and On site Self Enquiry sessions

Thursday: 7:00 pm to 8.00 pm at RSCS

By Sri Nandakumar ji

Friday: 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm at RMHC

By Dileep Simha and Dr. Sarada

Everyday: 5:30 am to 5.45 am, 9:30pm to 10:00pm (online)

By Sri Nandakumar ji & others

(Chanting and Self-enquiry)

Online Satsang

Chanting, Reading, Music, Talks, Puja

Saturday: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at RSCS

Every Sunday 7.00 pm to 8.40 pm Kannada Satsang

Every first Sunday 11.00 am to 12.30 pm Tamil Satsang

Online and On site Music and Dance classes

[Contact - Uma (9538472026)] at RMHC

On site Talks, Parayana and Puja

By Sri Chandrashekar (9448839594)

Thursday 6:30 pm at RSCR

40 years of The Ramana Way

'The Ramana Way' – Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning's monthly journal, its voice and connect with devotees across the world, has completed four decades of its publication.

In the first issue of the journal, in February 1981, Sri A.R.Natarajan wrote 'By the grace of Sri Ramana, we are confident that our institution will be an oasis, where there will be union of hearts and minds, a blossoming of Love – all-embracing Love – by an understanding of the Truth and taking our root in it.'

On hearing of its publication, Sri V.Ganesan, Managing Editor of 'The Mountain Path' Sri Ramanasramam's journal, wrote; "I find it difficult to contain my happiness. Your family journal 'RAMANA' is indeed going to be a landmark in the Ramana Movement!"

For the first three years, the journal was an eight-page folder. In 1983 it grew into a regular booklet with a new cover design by Muralidhara Hegde.



Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

124. The *jnani* firmly abides as the undivided Self and shines above all others by rooting out individuality. He alone comprises all the *siddhas* who appear to be separate and multiple on account of individuality. All the many *siddhis* that appear to manifest through them [*the siddhas*] in fact belong to the *jnani* who, firmly established in his real state, remains as a mere witness of them. He is Dakshinamurti himself.