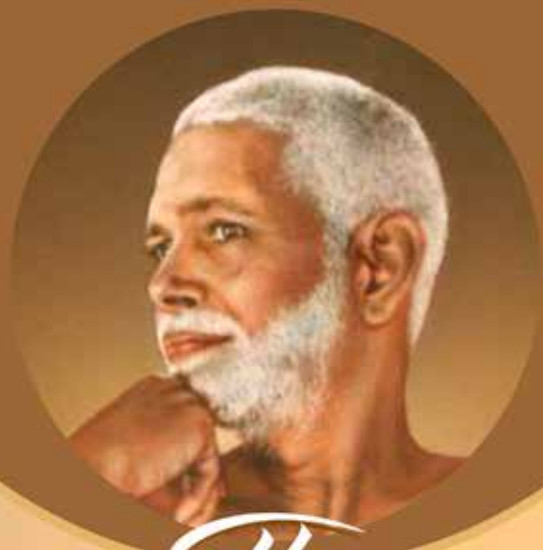


April 2021

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The Ramana Way

FORTY YEARS



Ramana
Dance

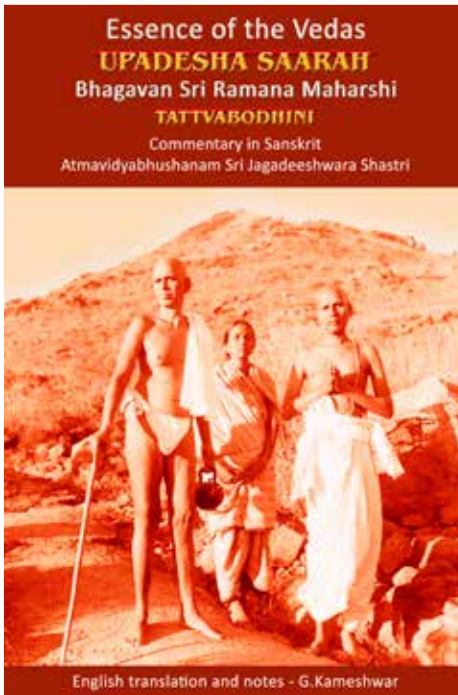
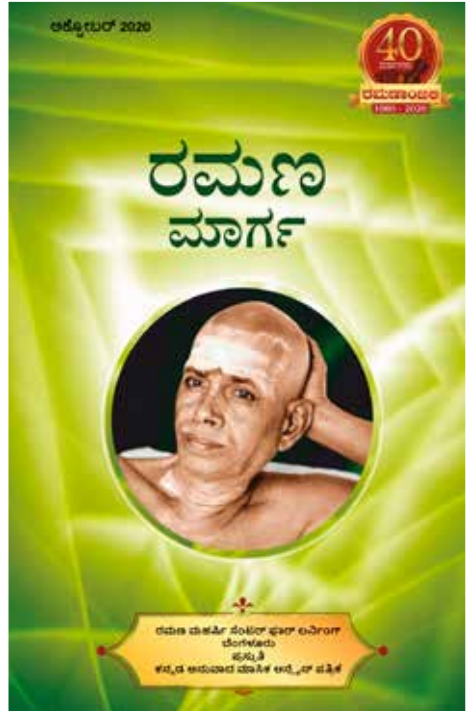
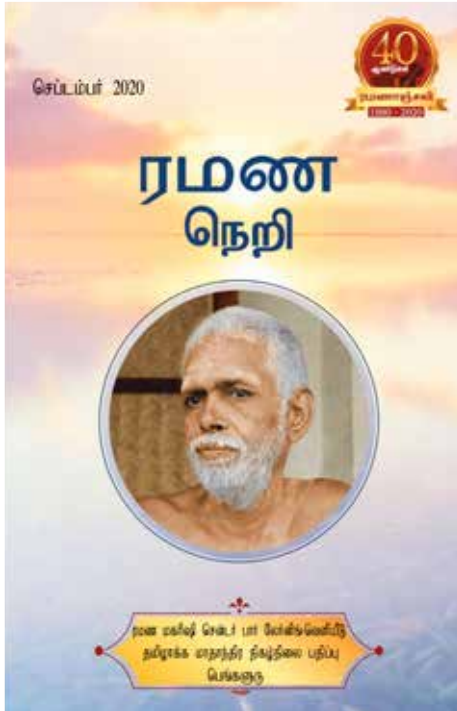


Ramana
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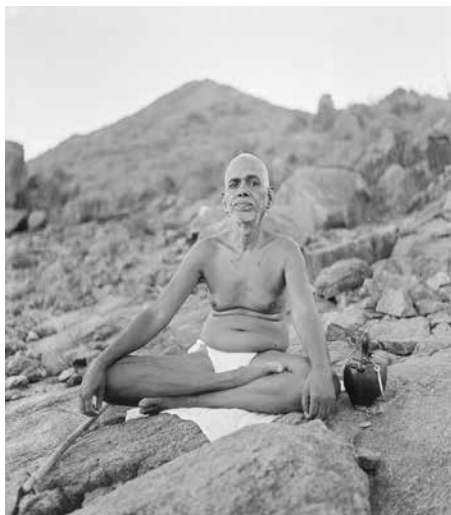


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THE RAMANA WAY

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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Contents

The Ramana Way 40

Editorial	Dr.Sarada	5
From the Editor's Desk: 1986-90		7
From the Founder's Pen: 1986-90	A.R.Natarajan	14
Meditations		
A Conversation with the Founder	Chadalavada Vijaykumar	19

Celebrating Ramana Rasanubhava

‘The Talks’ as Guidance to self-enquiry	N.Nandakumar	20
Saddarshanam	Master Nome	23
Arunachala Ashtakam	G.Kameshwar	26
Ramana is the Way of Ramana	Shyam Sunder	30

40 Years of: Ramana Publications / Dance / Bala Kendra

Ramana Maharshi - Extravagant Boon Giver	Book Extract	31
The Dance in the Heart	Ujwal Jagadeesh	41
My Journey to Arunachala – Ramana Bala Kendra	Geetha Raman	46

Ramananjali 40+ : Moods and Might of Music

Three Ramananjali Miracles	Ramana devotees	54
Song of Grace	Revathi Sankar	58
How Bhagavan Captured Us	Smt.Sulochana Natarajan	60
Sri Ramana Sahasranama Stuti	A.R.Natarajan	65

RMCL – Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning

News and Dates	Revathi Sankar	66
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The purpose of every action as of inaction is one and only one. The purpose is to attain happiness, not just to attain happiness but to remain in a steady state of undisturbed happiness.

In order to achieve this purpose we engage in one action after another action endlessly till such a point of time that the very purpose of action is forgotten and actions seem to become ends in themselves.

The question is never asked as to whether these actions and their results are bringing to us the desired happiness. We forget the very goal of our endless activity. We never seem to tire of this grind. If at all we do feel a little tired or weary at times, we wish to take rest only in order to be able to continue, to resume the unceasing chase of running after results. We are not interested in pausing and wondering where this is leading us.

When we do not even enquire whether our actions are producing the sought after result of unalloyed joy, where then would the question be asked as to who is seeking this happiness? Yet, is that not the most important question? If I do not even know the 'I' who is seeking happiness, of what use would it be to me even if I were to attain happiness? Would I be thrilled at the prospect of some stranger inheriting an enormous legacy or some other stranger finding hidden treasure?

Therefore, Ramana asks, 'Of what use is knowing anything at all if one does not know the Self?' And he sweetly adds, 'Once the Self is known, what else remains to be known?' In his extravagant compassion, as Muruganar calls it, Ramana does not stop with telling us that Self-knowledge alone is of paramount importance. He gives us the simple path to regain this knowledge that is lost to us in the shroud of ignorance. All we have to do is to hold on to the question, 'Who am I?' keep holding on to it, never let go of it, until it consumes every other thought. If any thought arises, the question 'Who am I?' would return to remind us, 'This is only a thought. My thought. But who am I?'

What happens after the enquiry 'Who am I?' has consumed all other thoughts and the 'I' alone remains? When the 'I' remains completely free of thoughts its attribute as a 'thinker' disappears. When there are no thoughts, the 'I' is no longer a thinker, says Ramana. Further, there is no longer a seer or listener or taster or actor. There is no longer an experiencer. Who then am I? Seeking thus beyond the experiences rising as thoughts, including the thought of absence of thoughts, when one continues beyond all experiences, one would discover one's true nature bereft of all division. And that indeed is bliss.

As Sri A.R.Natarajan writes, "Once the experience of staying within is tasted, all else pales into insignificance. If one is prepared to become food to the Sadguru, to the fullness of consciousness, then nothing can bar the loss of individuality and the discovering of the universal. One is then bathed always in bliss."

Sarada Natarajan

The Ramana Way – Editorials from 1986 to 1990

We bring to you excerpts from editorials in the second four years when the journal had become the full-fledged 'The Ramana Way'. The editorials have appeared in the book 'The Surging Joy – Of Self-discovery'.

- Editor

THE PURPOSE OF PURPOSE

We are incurable. We cannot live a moment without purpose. Tagore wrote a beautiful story about 'Worker's Paradise', where everyone was busy, where everyone had work and went about it unrelentingly. Into this paradise, by some error, was sent a wrong man. He lazed and lounged and never worked. The people of 'Worker's Paradise' were disturbed, but had no time to bother. Yet one day the man befriended a hustling girl who came to fill water at the silent torrent (silent because it wouldn't waste time singing). She pitied him for having no work and therefore asked if she could help. When he asked for one of her pitchers to paint on, she walked away, annoyed at his concept of wasting time. "But how could a busy person get the better of one who had nothing to do? Everyday they met, and everyday he said to her, "Girl of the silent torrent, give me one of your clay pitchers. I shall draw pictures on it. " So, one day she finally gave in. When he had drawn line after line, and filled colour upon colour, she looked at it and asked him what it meant.

"The man laughed.

"Nothing. A picture may have no meaning and may serve no purpose."

"The girl went away with her pitcher. At home, away from prying eyes, she held it in the light, turned it round and round and scanned

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

the painting from all angles. For the first time in her life she had seen something that had no meaning and no purpose at all."

And so Tagore's lovely story moves on. The purpose of the story is to highlight the beauty of leisure, to proclaim that art need have no utilitarian end, it is its own purpose. Oh! Oh! Here we go again. The story is about purposelessness - and yet the story has a purpose. The purpose, doubtless is to support purposelessness, yet in doing so the story itself undoubtedly has an aim, a goal, something that the story seeks to achieve. The advantage of this story is that it redefines 'purpose'. Purpose need not be something that seems directly and obviously 'useful', it may be of subtler substance. Yes, there are concrete purposes and subtle purposes.

True, it may seem that beauty and love, creativity and wonder, do not need purposes, because they themselves are the purpose. Yet, why do we create? Because it gives us joy. Why do we love? Because it brings happiness. Why do we stop and drink in the beauty of a butterfly or an exquisite sculpture? Because perceiving that beauty makes us happy. Yes, deny it as we may, every action has a purpose, even inaction has a purpose. One may argue that sleep is purposeless, yet we go to sleep because we want to (a purpose, certainly) and we wake up with a purpose too. Of course, there is no sense of purpose during sleep, but we are not conscious of what happens either. So, to modify the assertion a little, every conscious moment of ours is filled with purpose.

Further, purposelessness itself may become a purpose. Such is our absolute addiction to purpose. Every little deed of ours, every single thought is imbued with it. When we say, 'I do not want to do anything today', we mean 'I want to do nothing'. Yes, in all things, the want, the motive is present and that is the purpose.

It is for this reason that Bhagavan has never once asked us to discard purpose or to transcend it. He would certainly know that in the name of breaking our bond with purpose we would probably create new and subtler bonds with it. Hence, as a thorn is used to remove another, as a snake must suck its own poison out, as the

germ of a disease itself is introduced into the body to prevent that disease, even so purpose alone must fight the purpose-epidemic. Thus, Bhagavan gives us the paramount duty, the highest purpose. If we hold on to that purpose, all other goals will seem insignificant. All other aims will wither away in sheer irrelevance.

What is that supreme goal? It is Self-abidance, says Bhagavan. Self-abidance is the highest goal because it is the basis of all actions and their fruits. It is the power of the Self that makes any and every action possible. Therefore, when one holds on to the Self, when one abides as the Self, one would have infinite capacity for action. However, there would be no need to act. Because the Self is also the basis of all fruits of action. Having attained that which is the essence of all aims, all goals, what more would remain to be achieved?

What is the one underlying purpose of all purposes? We act in order to attain something which, we believe, will give us happiness. We laze because that gives us happiness at that time. We produce objects of utility, of use, because we are happy when we use them. We create objects of sheer beauty, which have no 'use', because the very creation gives us joy, because the experience makes us happy. We indulge our desires to be happy. We abstain from such indulgence also only to be happy. We eat ice-cream because we enjoy the taste of it. Sometimes we stop ourselves from eating it, because we are happier when we can sing well and eating ice-cream might disrupt the latter, greater happiness.

Whatever activity we may pursue, both physical and mental, if we ask ourselves 'Why am I doing this?' the answer will invariably be, 'To get happiness'. But let us ask ourselves, 'Why do I want to be happy?' There can be no answer or, at best we may say, 'Because I want to be happy, that's all'. Only happiness is really its own end. Every other pursuit has a purpose beyond itself and that purpose is to attain happiness. Thus, though our lives seem to be filled with millions of purposes, in effect every living being has only one purpose - to be happy, and to be happy always. The entire panorama of changing wishes, of multiple pursuits is but a tool to achieve the single purpose of unbroken joy.

And where is this eternal spring of joy? It is the Self. Every stream of laughter and every wave of joy rises only from the blissful ocean that is the Self. It is for this reason that Self-abidance is supreme bliss, ever fresh, ever full. Naturally, Self-abidance is the basis of all fruits of actions. It is the ultimate goal, really the only goal, which we seek at so many wrong doors. When we recognise this error, all other purposes will fade away. The need to become Self-aware will occupy our entire energies. Every thought and action will be geared in that direction. Then we will no longer be addicted to purpose. We would have hooked our wagons to the supreme-purpose-engine which will drive us safely to the frontiers of purpose-land. And there, at the boundary, it will also disappear leaving only Self-awareness, beyond purpose and lack of it.

NO LOSERS

4th August 1992, Tuesday, 12.15 A.M. The hundred metres hurdles. Eyes that are not directly on the track are glued to images of the Olympic Games being relayed live on television. 'On your marks', 'get set' and the gun sounds. Everyone is racing down the track, leaping over hurdles placed one after another in close succession. Many of these hurdles are not cleared, they are toppled down but the runner keeps on nevertheless. Spectators at the edge of their seats. And, the winner! Great celebration and exhilaration. On the television the race and the finish are replayed from various angles. 'Hey!' I say suddenly, 'the winner also knocked down a couple of hurdles, he didn't clear all of them. How is he counted as the first, the gold-medalist?' 'Because,' comes the explanation, 'his pace was unaffected even after a brush with the hurdles. Whereas, the others slowed down whenever they toppled a hurdle, they took longer to regain their balance and momentum.'

Yes, there are very few of us who can fly clear over the numerous hurdles that block the Selfward track. For most, a direct encounter with at least a hurdle or two seems inevitable. Yet what matters really is the total disregard for the hurdle, the ability to remain untouched by it although it might have violently hit one on the shank or the heel as one tried to clear it. True, the hurdle was not really cleared, but it has been passed nonetheless and

the race is very much on, so the athlete must keep on moving, and moving at his highest pace. Even so, after every 'fall' it is our resilience that counts, the capacity to keep on undeterred until the goal is attained.

Bhagavan says one must not pay much attention to one's failings and disturbances, it is best to ignore them. Excessive attention to them will only bog us down, like those athletes who lose their speed after toppling hurdles. On the other hand, Bhagavan asks us to make the best use of every positive mood. Always one's sight should be set on the goal, the finish line. Absolute attention, deep determination and the importance of the prize bring about marvellous feats in one person after another. Be it the 800 metres or the 'walking race', in the last few minutes of hair-raising excitement a person way back in the track is suddenly racing or trotting ahead of all competitors. Runner after runner is left behind, even the favourite finds himself or herself only in the fourth position.

It is equally important for us to remember that at any moment we may emerge winners. And we must remain ever in preparedness for that moment. The going may often seem tough, the mind may be in absolute chaos, but at any point one may suddenly get charged with energy to race ahead of all thoughts and merge into the source. Where would this energy come from? From a single-minded yearning for the Self that is our goal. The miracles of such single-minded pursuits are visible daily in the Olympics.

Disregard for hurdles, disregard for breath that comes in sharp wheezes, disregard for aching limbs that beg to drop down, disregard for the fact that one is unlikely to win, indeed, disregard for all things except the goal 'I must win'. Old records are broken only to be broken again. Unbeatable feats are surpassed. Moments of glorious human endeavors are savoured. 'All wonderful indeed,' exclaimed a friend, 'but once the first three places are settled why do the others still labour on? There is no glory for them. What is the big idea of fainting in exhaustion when you know you cannot win?' Well, there are other goals besides winning. Each individual compares his or her Olympic performance with their

own other performances in the past. Thus the headlines told us that Shiny Williams was happy even though she failed to qualify for the Olympic round. Because, she had fared better than her best till date and that was reason enough to rejoice.

Even so, every attempt we make at self-enquiry is meaningful if we feel that a positive mood has been created, if we are more calm and happy, if we are more detached as a result of it. We may not have had a conscious dip into the Self but at least we are in the vicinity, we are making progress, so we would feel and be cheered. But what if some attempts seem to be an utter waste? We heard that the world record holder for walking was nowhere in sight even after a dozen competitors had walked across the finish line. Would there be any reason for her to complete the walk, to try and reach the finish line? Why, the question cuts at the very root of the Olympic spirit! The Olympic motto declares that the struggle is more significant than the winning. What is the struggle for? To finish the race or match, competing as best as one can at the time. This is what makes it a worthwhile experience to every individual. Everyone cannot win the race, everyone cannot finish it in a rain of glory, but everyone can finish the race. That is what keeps everyone going - be they fourth or last.

The finishing line is common to all though the time one reaches there may vary. We too have a 'finishing line', one that belongs to every one of us, it is the very Self. We may not recognise its presence the moment we hear of it, we may not be quick to love it, we may not fly back to it in the shoes of winged enquiry. Our enquiry may be half-hearted or our minds more turbulent than others. In spite of this, in spite of everything, the goal cannot be denied to us. We too will race across the finish line in some glorious moment, a glory that brings no medals, but what over-flowing bliss!

But imagine the Olympics without the goals, without the prizes, without the timing of the games defined, without parameters, without even finishing lines. Who would compete then? Tell a person that he must run and run as best as he can but there is no end to his race. Would he run? Not until some fearful power were chasing him. And in that case he would have a reason for running. Here we

have the all-important purpose once again. Unless our spiritual life is infused with purpose it could well become meaningless drifting. We need a purpose and we need to be head over heels in love with the purpose, it must mean more to us than anything else in the world. Only then can we emerge winners.

To say that no purpose is needed because the Self transcends purpose is to describe Antartica from the perspective of a Tiruvannamalai summer. As long as we do not experience the Self, so long as we perceive ourselves as limited beings and enjoy a sense of doership, we must pursue Self-knowledge. Otherwise we would merely be cheating ourselves in the thought that we have no sense of attachment. Or else we may meander into the still waters of indifference where nothing moves because all is listless, lifeless. To avoid these dangers we must at all times stick to the supreme purpose of Self-abidance.

Yet, did we not say that chasing purposes amounted to running after dreams, that it is like lunging after a carrot dangling just out of reach? Are we not now contradicting ourselves by seeking a purpose, be it even the best? The point, however, is that we must not only remember the limitation of purposes, but also must recognise our own weakness of clinging to purpose at all costs. If we accept both these factors, we arrive at the perfect solution. Because 'purpose' is futile, we will drop pursuing mirages. Yet, because we are realistically aware that we cannot thus totally cut away our love for illusion, we will allow ourselves just one illusion, the only illusion that can get us out of the maze of all illusions. And that is the thought that Self-knowledge is to be attained and that all endeavour is to be directed to that one goal. Then certainly, perhaps even before we know it, that brilliant flame of knowledge that seems to shine in some distant tower would be experienced as one's own Self.

From the Founder's Pen: 1986-90 Meditations

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

THE EXPERIENCE

Yes. Experience is the word. Knowledge implies subject and object. But experience is non-terminous, eternal.

-Talks 128 Page 114

The experience referred to here is of the natural state, the state of bliss. This bliss is inherent and is not dependent on others or situations in life. What little we know of it is vicarious and is based on the authority of the scriptures. The scriptures are clear on this point that our true nature is eternal, pure and is one of happiness. We do believe this to be true. However, the foundation of faith is not the product of one's own experience and under stress it clearly falls like a pack of cards. This is why we find Ramana being categoric on one point that experience alone matters, for doubt will always linger, hidden, to disturb faith and to break the fabric of the edifice built on concepts. One has, therefore, to learn to be aware of this bliss, a taste of which would draw one to the deep within, to the core of one's heart.

Here it may be necessary to be sure on one point. The experience which is spoken of is different from what we are used to. What we know is the happiness of the subject derived from an object or from relationship born of identification. In the experiencing of the natural state there is only the experience, for the subject alone is. Perception is unitary and not divisive. This oneness of perception, being total in its sweep, is of a different dimension. Yet it is our own. Hence it is that we are always drawn by an inner urge and we are sure to discover it as surely as the river would find the ocean. But often we wander away to far off pastures pulled by our past, pulled by what we have taken so far to be means

* These articles were published in the book 'Meditations'.

for happiness. One has to remember that any new experience is possible only to the extent to which room is created, mental space is created by removing the burden of the past. All life renews itself by the withering away of, by the dropping off of the past. The trees totally without even a single leaf in winter become a rich foliage of greenery in spring. Why? Only because the dead leaves have been dropped to give place to vibrant life as fresh leaves.

Why do we hang on to the past, to the memories of experiences which have come and gone, which can have no meaning when they are over? Why are we so scared of living totally in the present, not escaping from it by shifting attention to the past and future? The answer seems clear. We are afraid of losing what we know for what we don't. The experience of the joys and sorrows of the externalised mind is within our field of knowledge. We know precious little about the breadth and sweep of a mind firmly anchored in its root, of a life where the mind is sunk in the heart. It is precisely here that the Satguru Ramana steps in. Having taken the human form he literally pushes the mind within by the power of his steady knowledge. Many would come to his presence with rutting minds, only to find instant peace, a mind at rest. It may happen during the evening hours after recital of the Vedas when the power of Ramana's silence would radiate or it may happen just by a furtive glance of Ramana.

Unfortunately we would never permit him to do the job fully. The frightened mind would send its s.o.s. As Ramana told Major Chadwick, so long as one does not know better, so long as one is unaware of the experience of a unitary life, fear would surely show its head. The solution quite clearly is only the medicine of diving within which enables the savouring of life's true sweetness.

Some would complain that the experience which they had in Bhagavan's presence lasted only a few days or at the most a couple of months till they were back in their old grooves. Ramana would not encourage them in this train of thought. For, what is natural is capable of being found wherever one may be. Practice is what is needed. Persistent practice, unflagging practice, which indeed would be the true measure of our faith in Satguru Ramana's words. He would encourage by gently reminding one of the universality of

his presence. He would remark that 'Bhagavan's feet are everywhere, where can you gather except at his feet?'. He would give a message as to Mrs. Merston, that she 'could carry Bhagavan in her heart' even if she went to London leaving the old hall at Ramanasramam. What was told to them is equally true for each of us.

Then there is the problem of intermittent experience for the inturned mind. Because of the inability to stay within, firmly, the mind is externalised again. The problem of the straying mind, however, need not disturb. For, once the experience of staying within is tasted, all else pales into insignificance. One is bound to be back for more of the joy of questing, or finding for oneself what has been so elaborately described in the scriptures. If one is prepared to become food to the Satguru, to the fullness of consciousness, then nothing can bar the loss of individuality and the discovering of the universal. The scriptural statement that joy is the substratum of all life becomes real. One is then bathed always in bliss.

LIGHT AND SHADOW

Mind - mind: What is it? It is a mixture of 'chith' (intelligence) and 'sankalpas' (thoughts). Therefore it forms all this - the mirror, light, darkness and reflections.

Talks 589 Page 541

From May 1935 to April 1939, the period covered in the 'Talks', many persons came to the Maharshi to quench their spiritual thirst. Some had renounced home, put on the ochre robe for an exclusive pursuit of truth. Some were erudite scholars, veritable authorities on the sacred scriptures, yet others were householders caught up in the humdrum of daily routine and enmeshed in ceaseless worries of family life. There were also the simple folk, peasants and shepherds, naive and guileless. But one common thread is found in all questions over these five years. The most important and general problem which seems to be bothering a person pertains to how the mind could be controlled. This concern arises because of the failure to get a real mastery over the mind after years of practice. The battle to hold on to a single thought seems just as difficult if not more than the battle of life with all its scars and wounds.

Ramana's reply would depend upon the questioner himself, for, what one would give serious thought to and what one is likely to practice depends upon the individual background and preparedness. One of the methods would be easy for one person and another for another person. To those given to social concern and reform Ramana would recommend it, but always with a rider that it has to be done unselfishly. If so done the mind would become pure and ready for single pointed attention to the goal. To those who believed in the efficacy of the holy name, Ramana would read out the story of Namdev from a magazine or narrate the tale of Tukaram, every pore of whose body chanted the name of Rama when he was forced to remain silent. A simple peasant with undiluted faith would be asked to carry on with the repetition of the holy name 'Siva' 'Siva'. Ramana would elaborately clarify the doubts of the scholars but would also bring them back to the idea that in the last analysis all learning has to be unlearned, for truth transcends all the pairs of opposites. Thus each person would be taken gently along the path without disturbance of his faith but at the same time he would be trained for diving within.

Ramana would never fail to emphasise that the only sure way for mind-control is to understand it. The direct path is to find out its nature. By enquiry into the source of the mind the truth is revealed. Having said this, Ramana does not allow one to guess at what the mind is and involve oneself in a world of concepts. He therefore explains simply what it is. Reflecting upon the light so thrown by Ramana on the mind one finds that the mind can be said to consist of two kinds of thoughts, the individual 'I'-thought and the 'other thoughts'. The 'I'-thought, the sense of individuality, reflects the consciousness or intelligence since it springs from a conscious source, the heart. It is 'chith', intelligence, the light giving portion of the mind referred to by Ramana in the quotation on which we are meditating. The other thoughts, however, are really the impressions of the past trying to get a foot-hold by seeking the person's attention. They constitute the dark side of the mind. The first step would be then to manage the separation of the conscious 'I' -thought from the other thoughts. This is achieved when the mind's attention is not paid to other thoughts. These cannot survive in the absence of such attention.

It is best to constantly keep the goal in mind. When it comes to mind-control, the goal is the full use of the dynamic power of the mind. It is the only energy source available to us and we operate with it throughout the waking time. However, we are unable to harness its full potential, for, the energy of the mind is wasted and dissipated because of endless thoughts. Many thoughts are those which we do not want, but having given attention to them in the past their hang-over is still there. Also, we often indulge in thoughts, leading sometimes to actions, which leave one with a sense of guilt and regret. The wanted thought is pushed out by the unwanted thought. So, the panacea lies in finding a technique, a method which would free us of the harassment of thoughts which we do not wish to entertain.

While such a wish is only natural, there is a fallacy in wishing away some thoughts while holding on at the same time to other thoughts. Hence we find Ramana labelling all thoughts as sorrowful. They are all in the same bracket. To try to choose between thoughts would leave us with this problem of preference among thoughts eschewing some and sticking on to others. Such efforts are bound to fail because we are hammering away at what may be termed the non-conscious part of the mind, at thoughts other than the conscious 'I'-thought. Effort is misdirected and has to be brought back to the core, to the conscious 'I'-thought.

Ramana would therefore have one stick to the thinker and let thoughts severely alone - good, bad and indifferent are given the same treatment, the same neglect, the same inattention. Their place is the dustbin and they belong to the rubbish heap. Why give them life? Why let them sprout by letting the conscious portion of the mind dwell on them?

Since attention, exclusive attention to the thinker, is all that matters, one has necessarily to learn methods by which one can stick to the conscious portion of the mind. When one enquires into the source of this feeling of individuality, the mind acquires the strength to stay within. As a result it would reflect the consciousness in all its fullness.

A Conversation with Sri A R Natarajan Chadalavada Vijaykumar

I came across an interesting conversation from my old notes between Sri ARN and another devotee after the Satsang in 2004 ...

Sri ARN used to answer all the question however basic with lot of patience and cheerfulness but once in a way if a devotee asks a serious and interesting question Sri ARN 's eyes used to light up and he used to reply with a verve...

One such short Q & A is given below:

Devotee: Sir, while meditating the witness that we come across, is it part of the mind or is it part of Consciousness?

Sri ARN: Excellent question... It is part of the mind. Mind is witnessing the mind.

D: Oh... I mistook it for Consciousness witness.... Then how to get there?

ARN: That is the paradox... Bhagavan says you are already there... Meaning we are that Consciousness... The hurdle is the ego which Bhagavan says comes up in the waking state and lingers in dream state and vanishes in the deep sleep state.

D: Yes Sir... I follow... Bhagavan says latch on to I - thought and enquire into the source of I - thought...

ARN: Yes... Each individual's level of understanding is different and accordingly Bhagavan has given steps to follow.

D: Yes Sir... The dependency on objects should go... including the dependency on witness... Then ego merges into the source... Then you are " That ".

ARN: Excellent... You are blessed by Bhagavan... Convert the theory into practice... You are almost there...

D: Thank you Sir....

I do not remember the name of the devotee... he was a Scientist in IISc... I took down the notes then because I realised then the questions were very deep which was Greek and Latin to me then ... I have understood the importance of these questions and answers now...

The conversation may not be exactly word to word but as I have noted to give the gist of the meaning.

Namo Ramana

END

Talk 92. (Excerpt).

Objects perceived by the senses are spoken of as immediate knowledge (pratyaksha). Can anything be as direct as the Self - always experienced without the aid of the senses? Sense perceptions can only be indirect knowledge, and not direct knowledge.

Only one's own awareness is direct knowledge, as is the common experience of one and all. No aids are needed to know one's own Self, i.e., to be aware.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: One is the limitless Self that has no deficiency. Instead of directly perceiving this, one identifies with the limited instruments of perception - senses, breath, mind, intellect and ignorance - and seek fulfillment of self by accumulation of sensory objects, health of inner organs, more knowledge, ethics or change of personality. Bhagavan is freeing the seeker from all search in these worlds by asking the sadaka to directly perceive the limitless Self by freeing it from these limiting "aids" of indirect perception.

Talk 92. (Excerpt).

The one Infinite Unbroken Whole (plenum) becomes aware of itself as 'I'. This is its original name. All other names, e.g., OM, are later growths. Liberation is only to remain aware of the Self. The mahavakya "I am Brahman" is its authority. Though the 'I' is always experienced, yet one's attention has to be drawn to it. Only then does knowledge dawn. Thus the need for the instruction of the Upanishads and of wise sages.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Though the 'I' is always experienced, yet one's attention has to be drawn to it. Only then does knowledge dawn. Thus the need for the instruction of the Upanishads and of wise sages. PRACTICE.

Talk 93.

All are aware of their own Self only. Wonder of wonders! They take what is not as what is, or they see the phenomena apart from the Self. Only so long as there is the knower is there knowledge of all kinds (direct, inferential, intellectual etc.); should

the knower vanish they all vanish together with him; their validity is of the same degree as his.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: From the simplest to the most complex, from involving just a few to involving whole countries, Bhagavan takes us to the root of all problems - the knower or ego raising from the Self and feeling itself and all phenomena as separate from the Self. When the knower dissolves in the Self, so do all phenomena. Till then any solution - sensory, breath, mind, intellect or change of personality - does not really solve the problem which will again manifest. The knower has to go the Source.

Talk 94.

A man prayed to the Master to pardon his sins. He was told that it would be enough if he took care to see that his mind did not trouble him.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: As man has become subtle, sin too is subtle. Even the earlier virtues like speaking truth, being ethical, not coveting, being humble, non-attachment etc can be made into sin by the ego raising and claiming as "I am humble" etc. Man can even make a virtue of sin by saying, "I always own up my sins, I always regret my sins etc". So, the subtle human is to be more responsible now and consider that arising of the "I" thought is the origin of sin and not rest till it is merged in its Source.

(Talk 95 has been covered in the earlier issue)

Talk 96.

Maj. A. W. Chadwick: Of what nature is the realisation of Westerners who relate that they have had flashes of cosmic consciousness?

M.: It came as a flash and disappeared as such. That which has a beginning must also end. Only when the ever-present consciousness is realised will it be permanent.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Cosmic Consciousness is called Samvit. Till one merges into this Samvit whose intrinsic nature is Existence-Eternal, one slips back to limitations. In Vedanta too "Who am I?" is taught. For instance, in Panchadasi, it is taught that the objects are varied in waking and dream, and ignorance becomes the object in deep-sleep, however, the Samvit (Cosmic Consciousness) which is

aware of these three states and objects remains unvaried. That is one's essential nature, says Panchadasi. Without positing that one should renounce the waking "I", Bhagavan asks us to start doing sadhana. As soon as a thought arises, ask 'For whom is this thought?'. What was taught only to Sannyasins is now opened up by Bhagavan for all. Till our very nature is revealed as that Samvit whose intrinsic nature is eternal Existence, "Who am I?" will not forsake us. In the end, it will itself merge into the Samvit along with the ego.

Q: When we do not even have the strength of mind to renounce the sensory body and relationships in this world, are we eligible to practice Self Enquiry which is said to take us to the Eternal Cosmic Consciousness (Samvit) beyond all the moksha lokas (worlds with no doership) too?

A: Bhagavan says in Sri Arunachala Navamanimalai that this is the Karana (purpose) for his Avatara (taking birth in this world) - to spread Tanmaya Nishta (Abidance in the Samvit Self) to all.

Q: Then is this world itself a moksha loka?

A: When it is the Self Itself, why cannot it be Moksha Loka? Self Enquiry removes all doership while constantly erasing the doer.

Q.: Where one's Knowledge of the Self deepens and steadies, it feels more and more like the appearance or disappearance of the dream subject and his dream adventures, their vanishing or not vanishing, and abidance in the Self is less and less interrupted.

N.: For the jnani, the appearance and disappearance of the body, the senses, and world are of no consequence. He knows that which exists at all times and sees no differences. Even the so-called differences of life and death do not perturb him. He treats them as a dream after one has awakened. The dream does not persist for him.

The term siddhi can mean "accomplishment," in which case, the verse is, "The Knowledge of the established Truth (Being), alone, is accomplishment. Comparable to (resembling) a dream are other accomplishments." Any other accomplishment in life is within the context of the dream of maya. The one thing to be accomplished is Realization of the Self, for this deals with Reality. Everything else is like dream accomplishments. If you accomplish something in a dream, after you wake up, what happens to that accomplishment? What happens to the entire dream life? It is gone, without a trace. The waking up would be the only real accomplishment. Waking up to the Self is the only real accomplishment. The rest seem to have value only in the context of a dream.

"The dream of one who has awakened, how can it now be true?" This is indicative of two points. First, viewing all of our accomplishments as a dream, there is no desire for such, but only the desire for the Truth, in which one comes to steadily abide. Secondly, how can the dream of one who has awakened now be true? Of last night's dream, whatever was dreamed, what remains now? There is not a trace of it. All the experienter, the experiencing, and the objects of experience have gone. The outer things and the inner things, within the dream context, are completely gone. They do not continue. It is only from a residual standpoint of illusion and for the purposes of explanation for an aspirant that it is said that a sage sees everything as a dream, as if the dream were still going on but

he sees it as insubstantial. Does the dream continue after you wake up? Not at all. In the same way, the world and accomplishments in the world do not exist at all when you know yourself. To say that you are in relation to them, to the extent that even to describe you as being detached from them, is ridiculous in the terms of the things of last night's dream. In one sense, you are supremely detached from the things of last night's dream, because the things of last night's dream do not exist for you. Just so is it for those who have realized the Truth. "Does one who abides in Truth, in Being, again approach illusion?" If you abide in Being, will you recreate the maya? One who abides in Being is Being. The Truth abides in and as the Truth, and that One will never approach illusion.

Another Q.: You asked, "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?" It is just dreaming about waking up.

N.: It is not even dreaming about waking up. It is just dreaming and, in the dream, wrongly associated with a seemingly far away waking state. In a similar way, a person may assume that spirituality confers some special power over the phenomenal things or that possession of some special abilities, subtle, mental, or physical, will be proof of having awakened from this dream. How could that be proof? How could that even be a sign? The magician in your dream is not really an awakened one. He is just a magician dream character in a dream.

This text is directed toward the aspirant for Liberation. So, the meaning of the verse is that one should not aspire for or be impressed with those kinds of phenomena. What is necessary for complete peace and happiness is to be awake to the Reality of the Self. Nothing else can substitute for that.

Although many wondrous stories are retold of events that happened in the Maharshi's presence, and still continue to happen because of his Grace, what is it about him that is really extraordinary? It is the glorious Self-abidance in which neither individuals nor phenomena exist, in which there are no differences, in which there is nothing more to be done, nothing

to be accomplished, nothing else to be known, but in which there is just the one, absolute Existence, which is utterly devoid of individuality and the world.

He says, “Does one who abides in Being, the Truth, again approach illusion?” Realizing yourself as the Self, the non-perceiver, the non-doer, the non-conceiver, would you return to a position of being a perceiver, a doer, or a conceiver? It would be stepping back into illusion. Know for certain the Knowledge of the absolute Truth. Your Being is what is real, is what is truly spiritual, is what is important, is the only thing that endures, and is the only thing that is truly spiritually precious.

The Knowledge is its own proof. It cannot be seen with the eyes. It cannot be conceived by the mind. It is always invisible to others, because, in it, there are no others. Your own continuous experience of the bliss of its Perfect Fullness is the proof, if proof be needed.

**Eight Verses on Arunachala
Of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**

Verse-6

*uNToru poruLaRi voLiyuLa mEnee
 yuLatuni lalatilA vaticaya catti
 ninRaNu nizhanirai ninaivaRi vOTE
 nikazhvinaic cuzhalilan ninaivoLi yATi
 kaNTana nizhaRcaka vicittira muLLun(g)
 kaNmutaR poRivazhi puRattumor cillA
 ninRiT u nizhalpaTa nikararuT kunRE
 ninRiT cenRiT ninaiviTa vinRE.*

Word split, and meaning:

uNTu oru poruL: There exists one substance/reality
arivOLi uLamE nee: You, who are but consciousness-effulgence heart

unil alatu iIA: In you, as non-apart from you
aticaya catti uLatu: there exists a wondrous, indescribable
(anirvachaneeya), power
ninRu aRivOTE: from that (power), by means of (the effulgence of) consciousness

aNu nizhal nirai ninaivu: swarm of shadowy thoughts, atom-like
nikazhvinaic cuzhalil : In the swirl of Prarabdha
or cillAI ninRiTum nizhalpaTa nikar: manifesting, like a movie picture projected through a lens

anninaivu oLi ATi: by the light of that mind-mirror

uLLum: Inside, in one's heart, and...

kaNmutaRpoRi vazhi puRattum: Outside, by way of the eyes and other sense-organs

nizhal caka vicittiram kaNTana: the world-picture is seen, like moving pictures on a (cinema) screen

aruT kunRE: O Mountain of Grace!

ninRiT cenRiT: Whether they manifest as existing, or cease to be
ninaiviTa inRE: they are not distinct from you!

Verse rendering:

*Aye, there exists One substance/reality,
(namely) You
Who are, in reality,
Consciousness-Effulgence-Heart alone!*

*(And) In you,
As non-distinct from you
Exists
A wondrous/indescribable power!*

*And from that (power)
By the light of consciousness
Manifests,
Via the (reflected) light of the mind-mirror
A swarm of atom-like shadowy thoughts
in the swirl of predestiny;
And like a lens projected movie-picture;
Inside,
(in one's mind),
And outside,
by way of the eyes and other sense-organs;
The world-picture is projected, seen,
In the manner of moving pictures
on a (cinema) screen!*

*O Mountain of Grace!
Whether they (these pictures)
Stay, as appearance,
Or go away,
They exist not
As apart from thee!*

Prose rendering:

*Oh yes, there exists One substance/reality; (namely) You!
You, who are, in reality, Consciousness-Effulgence-Heart alone!
(And) In you, there exists a wondrous/indescribable power, which*

is non-distinct from You! And from that (power), by the light of consciousness, there rises a swarm of atom-like shadowy thoughts, whirling in the swirl of prArabdha karma (predestiny), manifesting (are illumined) by the (reflected) light of the mind-mirror. And thereby, like a lens projected movie-picture, the world-picture is projected, seen (by the mind); both, inside one's mind, and outside, by way of the eyes and other sense-organs. This is in the manner of moving pictures on a (cinema) screen!

O Mountain of Grace, whether they (these pictures) manifest, or cease to be seen, all this is, in reality, not distinct from you, who are the sole reality/existence (just as movie pictures, which do not exist as different from the screen on which they are projected).

Notes:

This is a very profound verse, where Bhagavan is sharing His direct experience of the great secret that underlies all existence and experience. In this one verse, Bhagavan has stated the essence of all Vedanta. For the great benefit of all seekers, Bhagavan Himself has provided a detailed explanation of this verse, which has been recorded in 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi'¹.

To quote:

While explaining stanza 6 in Arunachala Ashtaka, Sri Bhagavan observed as follows:

The final word in the previous stanza asks, "Is there one?" The initial words in the present stanza answer, "Yes, there is the One....." It proceeds, "Though it is the only One, yet by its wonderful power it gets reflected on the tiny dot 'I' (the ego) otherwise known as ignorance or the aggregate of latent tendencies; this reflected light is relative knowledge. This, according to one's *prarabdha* (past karma now fructifying), manifests the inner latent tendencies as the outer gross world and withdraws the gross external world as the subtle internal tendencies; such power is called mind in

¹ Talk 323, dated 7 January 1937

the subtle plane and brain in the physical plane. This mind or brain acts as the magnifier to that Eternal One Being and shows It forth as the expanded universe. In the waking and dream states the mind is out-ward bent and in sleep it is in-ward bent; with the mind as the medium, the one Supreme Being seems diversified in the waking and dream states and remains withdrawn in the sleep state, or swoon, etc. Therefore you are only That and cannot be otherwise. Whatever the changes, the same one Being remains as yourself; there is nothing besides yourself."

The previous stanza says: Once exposed to sunlight, a sensitive plate cannot take on images; similarly, the mind (the sensitive plate), after exposure in Your Light, cannot reflect the world anymore. Moreover, the Sun is of You only. Should his rays be so powerful as to prevent images being formed, how much more so should Your Light be? It is thus said that there is nothing apart from the One Being, Yourself.

In the present stanza the tiny dot = the ego; the tiny dot made up of darkness = the ego consisting of latent tendencies, the seer or the subject or the ego rising, it expands itself as the seen, the object or the *antahkaranas* (the inner organs). The light must be dim in order to enable the ego to rise up. In broad daylight a rope does not look like a snake. The rope itself cannot be seen in thick darkness; so there is no chance of mistaking it for a snake. Only in dim light, in the dusk, in light darkened by shadows or in darkness lighted by dim light does the mistake occur of a rope seeming a snake. Similarly it is for the Pure Radiant Being to rise up as the Ego – it is possible only in Its Light diffused through darkness. This darkness is otherwise known as the Original Ignorance²...

² Moola avidya : Original ignorance.

To follow Ramana is to follow heart.

To follow heart is to follow Ramana.

"Ego is the feeling that I am this Body. Then all world (Suffering) begins. "

I should disappear as I-thought and exist as I-experience.

Being connected with its own projections I-thought always seeks escape from the being.

When I-thought tries to remain connected with being it disappears automatically.

Or we disappear as I-thought and exist as heart, as being permanently.

It is better to hold onto our own existence feeling than to mental pictures which keep us busy all the time.

If I think, I believe I am - It is ego.

If I feel, I realize I am - It is Self, it is being.

If I am absent I am ego.

If I am present I am Self (Atma).

When 'I' surrender to Self, to existence feeling in the heart, 'I' am accepted by the same.

Then Self reveals itself which is called perfection.

To surrender to existence feeling is to surrender to Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi.

All other types of surrender are merely verbalization.

Without surrendering to oneself, one cannot abide as oneself, as Self.

If one has known whence I, the only thing which remains to do is to surrender completely.

"Be yourself, and nothing more."

"Be as you are."

"The self is simple being. Be." (Instead of thinking about existence).

Bhagavan Ramana – Extravagant Boon Giver

Book Extract

This is an extract from Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning's third publication about Ramana's miracles and boons reported by those blessed by his daily miracles. Faith in Ramana's power and protection grows and prepares one for surrendering to his grace. This book was published in September 2006. The earlier two publications from the Centre on Ramana's miracles are 'Ramana Maharshi's Miracles - They Happen Everyday' and 'Ramana Maharshi's Miracles – The Continuing Story'. All the three books have been compiled by Sri A.R.Natarajan.

BHAGAVAN'S MIRACLE IN THE AIR

By S. Niranjan Nanthagopan

I was flying from Jaffna – on 15th June 1999, Tuesday – to Colombo in a military operated (for Civilian traffic as the roadway is not accessible) Russian made Antonov Aircraft. In all fifty two passengers ranging from year old infants to elders aged eighty-five boarded the flight around 1.00 p.m. (12.30 IST) for an hour long journey to Colombo. It was about half an hour later around 1.30 p.m. that we heard a huge noise that sounded as if the plane's wings were breaking away. We were half-way towards our destination to Ratmalana Airport and 15-20 minutes away from the International Airport at Katunayake (KIA). As soon as we heard this I started chanting 'Aum Namō Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya' together with Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra. Soon after this my inner feeling told me that Bhagavan was with me and nothing wrong would happen. As I looked through the window one of the fans stopped working and smoke was ensuing from the engine. Luckily most of the passengers were unaware of what was happening outside, as they were not used to these types of journeys by air. Many of them were flying for the first time. Only few of us knew and kept silent and each one of us was praying. About 15 minutes later the pilot managed to land with one fan working at the KIA. We were stopped in the middle of the main runway and surrounded by the Fire Brigade. Later the fire brigade helped all the panic stricken passengers to disembark from the aircraft. This aircraft

has a history of crashing down due to technical reasons as well as due to falling prey to the missiles of the separatist movement in Jaffna. This has happened at least five to six times in the last two or three years.

How did this plane land safely with the passengers and the crew?

Isn't it the grace of Bhagavan which has saved all of us?

I have not seen Bhagavan during his life in the body but he is ALWAYS with us and guiding us in this complex world.

RAMANA SENDS VISWANATHA SWAMI

By N. Srinivasa

I have been a staunch devotee of Sri Ramana since 1937. My father too was an ardent devotee. During my college days, he took all of us to Sri Ramanasramam during his annual leave. In the course of our visits to the ashram we had the opportunity of moving closely with Viswanatha Swami.

My last son Jayakrishnan was born in 1964. At the time of the delivery even though my wife developed severe labor pains there was no immediate medical assistance nor was any conveyance available. When I was perplexed and anxious as to what to do, Ramana's miracle happened. My neighbour returned from the station by a taxi even though it was past midnight. I was able to take my wife just in time to a maternity hospital.

Jayakrishna was a supremely weak child and to add to the problem it would be a herculean task to feed him. He took so little milk that it was surprise that he survived at all. The doctors were also non-plussed.

On his first birthday in 1965, Viswanatha Swami suddenly visited us. On being informed about the problem, he took the child in his hands smeared sacred ash on his forehead and belly. He then requested my wife to bring a bottle of milk, with which he fed the child drop by drop. Surprise of surprises, the child drank almost the entire bottle of milk! After that the Swami compassionately put the child in the cradle and rocked the cradle for fifteen or twenty minutes.

He also stayed with us for about ten days feeding the child at the right time. Gradually the child began to drink normal quantities of milk and started putting on weight. While the Swami was with us the whole atmosphere was surcharged with spirituality. For he would be chanting some sacred mantra or the other especially as he rocked the cradle everyday. The second miracle had also been performed by Ramana within one year through Viswanatha Swami.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL WITHOUT PASSPORT

By Venkat Narayanan

On 27th of September 1999, I left for Vancouver, Canada, from Chennai via Singapore and Hong Kong by Indian Airlines in the first sector and Cathay Pacific in the subsequent sectors with a client of mine from Gudiyattam – a senior Director on the Board of a long standing spinning Mill.

We were on a mission to meet several financial institutions in Canada and USA with specific appointments made prior to our departure.

We started from Chennai by Indian Airlines to Singapore and Bhagavan upgraded us to First Class when we checked in and the Airlines made an unusual departure by letting us check in more than 2 pieces each.

On arrival at Singapore next morning, we proceeded to another terminal in a relaxed manner as our connecting flight by Cathay Pacific to Hong Kong was to leave only after four hours. My client told me to proceed to the checking-in counter of Cathay Pacific to collect my boarding pass for the onward journey as he wanted to spend some time window shopping.

I went to the counter in the other terminal and it was totally empty without any passengers moving around. I presented my passport and the ticket to the counter staff, a young lady. She checked the reservation in the computer and told me to come with my friend later and check-in together as there was plenty of time. Hence, I started to move away looking for my friend. The particular terminal where this incident took place was completely empty and there was no crowd except few passengers resting in the chairs around. I then heard the announcement for another

aircraft by the same airline leaving for Hong Kong immediately. A thought crossed my mind that if my friend had come with me to the counter, we could have tried to leave by this earlier flight.

No sooner did I start moving than I saw my friend within 50 yards of the airlines counter walking towards me and I stood where I was for him to join me. Both of us now walked towards the counter and found that the airlines staff member had gone somewhere. After a few minutes she returned hurriedly seeming to have attended to some urgent work.

Now I gave my friend's passport and our tickets to check-in. I told her my passport was with her as she had taken it to check my Canadian visa. She said she had returned it to me with my ticket but I said she did not and had kept it by her side.

She searched her desk and I checked my briefcase etc. My passport WAS NOT THERE and it had disappeared within a matter of 5-7 minutes from when I showed it to her particularly drawing her attention to my Canadian and US visas. The next 15 minutes went in vain convincing her that it was with her and must have fallen in the gaps in the furniture around. She allowed me to come in and check everywhere but my passport was not there. She promptly said we could not continue our journey without our passports and refused to check us in and give our boarding passes.

Meanwhile, some passengers started to queue up for other flights. I had no option but to go to the help counter, stationing my friend near the same counter, and made repeated public announcements. There was no result and the help counter advised me to see the Police in the basement.

Reluctantly and with a heavy heart, I started to look for the Police where directed. Because, my client would suffer immensely if the trip could not take place as planned. Also, it would take a good amount of effort to obtain a temporary passport from the Indian Consulate in Singapore and it would take lot more time to restore my other visas. My passport carries multiple entry visas for USA, UK and Canada and my residence permit for Dubai, UAE.

I managed to locate the policeman in charge there, who asked me to come after an hour as he had to call in the appropriate department of the Police force from elsewhere in the airport.

I climbed up recalling everyone of my actions from arrival at the new terminal to the moment I realized I lost my passport, but I did not panic even for a moment because I was calling Bhagavan Sri Ramana for help and praying to him continuously to help me trace the missing passport.

Again for the second time, I saw the lady returning to her counter from somewhere and I stopped her. I begged her to return my passport. She again said she had not taken it and that the passport was not with her.

I sat near the same counter praying all through to Bhagavan and little after that, the new Police arrived. I narrated the entire incident calmly and requested them to talk to the lady in the counter. She also acknowledged that she saw my passport but insisted that she had given it back to me. Another half an hour went by and I felt strongly every moment that Sri Bhagavan would perform a miracle and my passport would appear somehow.

Suddenly I was called by the Police and the lady staff who asked me to spell my long south Indian name carefully. I wondered why and they said there is a possibility that my passport was mistakenly taken away by another passenger who was leaving by the previous flight by Cathay Pacific to Hong Kong. I was told the Captain of the aircraft had called the base to say they have a passport on board which did not belong to any passenger in the aircraft. The base relayed my name back carefully and the Captain confirmed my name on that passport.

What had happened was: Between the minutes I was told initially to come with my friend and later when I returned with my friend to the same counter (probably not more than 5-7 minutes), there was a rushing passenger to collect the boarding pass for the flight which was leaving within a few minutes. After he left the counter, the lady saw my passport and mistakenly thought it belonged to him and rushed to the gate and gave it to the Cathay staff to give it to him on board. He must have said that he had his safely and the new one did not belong to him.

So with Sri Bhagavan's help my passport was located and the airlines immediately issued our boarding passes. They told me that I could fly to Hong Kong and collect my passport on arrival and continue my journey. For the first time in 15 years of my

International travel, I traveled for four hours on an International Aircraft without my passport. On arrival just outside the aircraft I was given my passport safely.

Our entire tour went on schedule without any problem and we returned after completing our assignments. We could indeed feel Bhagavan's Divine presence throughout. Needless to say, my friend went promptly to Sri Ramanasramam at Tiruvannamalai to convey his most sincere thanks to Sri Bhagavan.

BHAGAVAN RAMANA'S GRACE KNOWS NO BOUNDS

By Gopal Sarma

We are a family of sincere Ramana devotees. My mother was the most dedicated of us all. Her total surrender to Sri Ramana Maharshi not only made her die peacefully with Ramana's name on her lips but provided a direction and a purpose to the lives of the other members of our family. She used to say that always remembering Ramana will let us do our duties and face our struggles in life with peace and equipoise. She always kept a picture of Ramana with her and wanted her children to do the same to visually remind us of how Bhagavan would have us face life's challenges. This was my mother's conviction and she lived it till her end came in April of 1999.

My faith in Bhagavan Ramana was tested recently. In late October 1999, just a few months after my mother passed away, I had to make a difficult decision. I was diagnosed as potentially having esophageal cancer and my options were grim. Even if my condition was only pre-cancerous, the chances of becoming cancer were sizeable. On the other hand, the surgical option was not a guaranteed 'cure' and had its own high risks for a 66-year-old person like me. It was not a decision I could make myself and I was left stunned and confused. I did, however, strongly feel that this was a reminder to me to expedite my spiritual progress. When I surrendered to Sri Ramana totally, I knew that He would guide me in the direction that would hasten my spiritual growth. As a man who identifies with the head over the heart, this act of surrender did not come naturally and thus seemed all the more astonishing to me. I also somehow knew that Ramana would give me another chance, a new lease of life as it were, to vigorously pursue the direct path of 'Self-Enquiry' that I have found stills my mind and fills my heart.

I agreed to the surgery but asked the surgeon that I should be allowed to keep Ramana's picture with me not only during the surgery but even afterwards during my hospital stay. He did not object. The rest reads like a miracle: I not only survived the major surgery but am recovering fast. Also, I am cancer-free! Bhagavan's grace helped me make one of the most difficult decisions of my life and continues to fuel my recovery so that I may bask in His benign glory.

A TALK AT ARUNACHAL PRADESH

By S. Mundayoor

As this is the year of the Golden Jubilee of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's Mahanirvana, many interesting accounts and experiences are being shared by devotees who had been privileged to have his darshan or grace. These are very touching indeed even for a new reader and immediately stir something deep within.

I do not belong to the above privileged groups, nor have I had a chance as yet to visit the Holy Asram, living as I am for the last two decades in this north-eastern end of our country. Still, here is a special experience I'd like to share with the readers.

Well, it was in April 1983, if I remember right. I was attending a Teacher's Camp of the Vivekananda Kendra schools in Arunachal Pradesh, at Kharsang. It was a 10 day long annual affair and quite a hectic and absorbing programme attended by about 100 Kendra teachers to which many learned academicians and experts were invited from all over India. That year our main faculty was from the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, and included Dr. K. Subramanian. Late Dr. Subramanian was very soft spoken and gentle; his sessions were very absorbing as were his tips on handling small children. We all enjoyed his presence both in and outside the class.

On the last day, the Kendra's General Secretary, Sri A. Balakrishnan, rose up to say, "We've heard Dr. Subramanianji speaking about English language teaching for the last nine days. So today I am requesting him to speak on a different topic – about a great sage of modern India, whom he knew so closely: Sri Ramana Maharshi".

As the respected professor rose to speak, everyone paused attentively. Many in the audience hardly knew anything

about the Maharshi. And as he began, suddenly it appeared some mystic power was casting its spell in the hall.

Dr. Subramanianji spoke softly and with feeling, his voice hardly audible outside the hall. He spoke of how from his young age, he used to have the Maharshi's darshan everyday and his blessings on everything he did. As if by a miracle, the entire audience was still and in a trance. Were we being transported over time to the holy presence of the Sage? For the whole hour of his talk, we continued to be in that state. Even after he finished, we felt a deep silence pervading over the hall and around us. Even those who were hearing of Ramana Maharshi for the first time admitted to their feeling this strange spell.

Over such a long stretch of time, I do not remember much of what the Professor talked that morning. Yet, even today when my mind occasionally wanders to that Karsang camp and Dr. Subramanianji, I suddenly feel enwrapped in strange silence deep in my heart. Can I consider it the grace of the Maharshi?

*Late Dr. K. Subramanian was the Editor of the 'Mountain Path' for some years.

ACTION AND REACTION

By B.G. Krishnan

My children (son and two daughters) are ardent devotees of Bhagavan Ramana and they are associated with the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning and Ramana Bala Kendra, since their school days. I came to know the greatness of Bhagavan only through them and I have read about the miracles attributed to him. Now I have one to report myself.

My son, Jaisriram, who is fairly well placed in life due to the grace of Bhagavan, started preparing for the ICWA a few years back to better his career prospects. Due to pressure of work at the office, however, he was not able to concentrate and clear one group in the Final. He was faithfully taking the exam half yearly and his preparation was confined to 4 or 5 days leave he used to avail before the examination. Every time he failed very narrowly. For his latest attempt in December 1999, he could not get even the normal short leave. He had to attend office till the 23rd and the examination was to commence on the 26th. In the circumstances,

I thought he would have to start his studies a couple of days earlier than usual by working during the nights. His preparation time was normally after supper (10 p.m. to early next morning) and I expected him to start preparation on the night of 21st. Instead of starting his studies, he left the house saying that he had some work at RMCL in connection with Sri A.R. Natarajan's latest title, "Timeless in Time", (a comprehensive biography of Bhagavan), due for release on Bhagavan's Jayanthi on 24th December. He did not tell me that the work on the biography had to be completed by 7.00 a.m., the next morning if it was to be printed in time for the release. I could not believe his lack of seriousness for the examination and could not help muttering to myself "Only Bhagavan should see him through the exam". I had lost faith in his performance.

I was really surprised when he recently broke the news that he had cleared the exam this time. I sincerely feel that the success this time (which eluded him all these days) is due to the grace of Bhagavan.

Editor's Note: Jaisriram helped in the work on the book all through the night of 21st December and the work concluded by 6.30 a.m. on 22nd. As he had to go to work as well, he must have been too tired, to study on the nights of 22nd and 23rd. His preparation then was restricted only to two nights of study. He had never mentioned at RMCL that his exam was just few days away. This very special book was released on the D-day and his efforts of carrying the baton in the last stretch of the relay contributed to making it possible. The miracle reported by his father was also not passed on to the Editor until Jaisriram was called in for one more night of work at RMCL in the second weekend of November. We do not know if there is any other examination round the corner.

LOST & FOUND **By Vaishnavi Poorna**

Both my father Sri Kameshwar and my mother Dr. Ambika, are full of devotion to Bhagavan Ramana. Since my birth I have grown in this atmosphere. I love Bhagavan Ramana. I read the Illustrated Story in the Ramana Way and know his Astottara. He has given me many chances to sing about him and to participate in various dance programs built around him.

I would like to write about a miracle which happened on the 12th October 2000. We had gone to the Central Station with other members of our dance troupe for presenting a dance ballet 'Purushottama Ramana' at New Delhi. We all went to the station. On reaching there, we found that we were late so we had to rush to our compartment. In that confusion one of my bags got left behind. I realized this only after reaching the compartment, but it was too late. I had many valuable things and costumes for the programme in that bag. Since the costumes for the whole group were specially designed and prepared much in advance, it would be next to impossible to find alternatives in Delhi. I was feeling guilty about the confusion this would cause in the ballet.

The fathers of my friends Srithika and Sandhya had come to the station. To console me they said they would make enquiries and get hold of the bag. They took the particulars about the bag and its contents. I had left the bag in the front portion of the station. There seemed no chance of my getting the bag.

My friends' fathers went to the 'Lost and Found' department. Just as they entered someone brought in the bag. This person must have been only Ramana. Since they could answer the enquiry about the contents of the bag it was handed over to our friends who immediately took it to my father. Surprise of surprises, though we were on the train, my mother's cell-phone worked till I was informed that the bag was found. Ramana actually wiped my tears. I had been crying till I came to know about the miracle which had happened. My costumes were sent by courier by my father and reached the next day, in time for the program.

The Dance in the Heart - Ramananjali Nritya

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 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.

A brief glimpse of the interview so far...

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... I was 15 years old when I did my arangetram... 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.



K: 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.

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...

U: Sarada Akka and Ambika Akka remember attending a dance performance of yours after your arangetram.

K: Yes. I have performed several times at Delhi. My father used to arrange a special program of mine for the underprivileged children who lived in a set of hutments in Delhi. But they had their own association and as Ramana Kendra also



used to help the children annually with notebooks and uniforms, they invited me to perform at their association's annual event.

U: Now at RMCL we are having a very major project for underprivileged children and reach out to nearly 500 children every year by teaching them different aspects of Natya and also giving them opportunities to perform. Looks like Bhagavan made you a forerunner in this part of the Ramananjali dance movement also. Did you perform Ramananjali Dance after you came to Madurai?



K: No I didn't perform after marriage. Except for one ballet where there was no one to perform the role of Azhagammal. So my daughter Aruna insisted that I should do that role. That is

the only role I played on stage after marriage.

U: There are many dance gurus who prefer to focus only on teaching dance and they do not perform on stage. Some of them

choose this consciously for various reasons, the main one being that they feel they would like to focus fully on teaching. Sarada Akka and Ambika Akka's guru Kumari Meenakshi also was a performer in her younger years but later dedicated herself entirely to teaching and choreographing for the dance numbers. Can you share your experience of teaching dance and specifically of teaching Ramananjali Dance?

K: Teaching is a great experience which brings in-depth insights and understanding.

While teaching, the meaning of the songs becomes clearer to us. I started dance classes at Madurai mainly to prepare children for the Ramana Jayanthi celebration programs. We



We came to Madurai in 1983, I started dance classes during 1984. The classes used to happen in Ramana Mandiram itself, Somanna (Sri Somasundaram) would identify the students and bring them there.

I used to teach them dances for Ramana songs. In the earlier days my mother, Seetha, used to sing with an orchestra for the performance. This was for the first two or three years. Later we started using tape recorders with cassettes and then CDs.

It is a matter of great joy to me that my daughter Aruna also is one of my students. At the very beginning she was not interested in joining my class. I didn't compel her at all. Once we were practicing for a Ramana Jayanthi and the mridangist was about to play. She stood in front of the mridangam and said "I will also dance". Then I started teaching her. But most of her learning happened automatically just by seeing other students.

Aruna's Arangetram happened in Madurai. A big troupe of musicians came from Chennai to Madurai for the event. The whole team except for the photographer. Ambika did the singing and the nattuvangam and Bama Visweswaran was also at the vocals. Aruna performed aruNan Udittanan – Song of the Dawn

by Satyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer, Varnam - Giri uru vAgiya based on the verses selected from the Bhagavan's Arunachala Aksharamanamalai and Anbumalai Azhagumalai, a Kuravanji (Gypsy) dance from the Ramananjali repertoire.

Aruna has registered her dance school Ramana Natyalaya at Melbourne. She is planning an annual day of her dance class based on Ramananjali songs which should happen this year by Bhagavan's grace. I am suggesting to Aruna to create a dance drama on Bhagavan once she completes her annual day with Ramana items. Bhagavan should grace it.

Recently she gave a performance in a temple there and her students performed Arunan Udittanan which was appreciated.

U: So the parampara of Ramananjali nritya is continuing.

You are a wonderful orator. Your speeches are interestingly interspersed with stories and anecdotes and communicate the points in simple and clear words. Do you think dance has helped you become good at oration?

K: Yes yes. Dance teaches us to express ourselves clearly. One more thing is it takes away the stage fear which helps us in the speech too. It may help make our facial expressions appropriate and perhaps a bit dramatic too wherever needed. Dance gives us deep insights into life, into emotions and poetic approaches to the emotions. Most importantly, it teaches us to connect with the divine through devotion. This is the essence of my speeches as well.

U: You told me that you had the blessing of meeting Sadhu Om Swami during your visits to Tiruvannamalai. Could you share some of your other interactions with Swami?



K: In Sadhu Om Swami's presence I performed for a song "ninaitAalum inippurude". My mother used to sing it. Sadhu Om Swami had arranged for some musical instruments too to accompany the singing.

We knew Mahalingam Uncle from Ramana Kendra, Delhi and his wife Neela Aunty whom we dearly called as 'Arunachala Siva Aunty' as she sang Aksharamanamalai at the Kendra. She once sang this song "ninaitAlum inippUrude". My mother asked for the lyrics of this song thinking the tune was lilting and suitable for Kala to dance. So she copied it into a paper. My Father did know that this song was written by Sadhu Om Swami.

There is a word "Poruppu" used in the song which in spoken Tamil meant 'responsibility'. However, this meaning of the word did not seem appropriate in its context in the song. My Father told this to Sadhu Om "If only I knew who the composer of this song was, we can ask for the meaning of this word in this context."

Sadhu Om said "Oh! Do you want the meaning of this word? 'Poruppu' here means 'Malai - Mountain'." Appa thought Sadhu Om was a great scholar so was able to tell the correct meaning.

Next morning when we went to the Ashram Book stall, we saw Sadhu Om Swami's book of songs on Bhagavan 'Ramana Geetham' and realized that 'ninnaitAlum" was written by him. That evening Appa went to Sadhu Om Swami and in great excitement said "Swami, you have written this song" Sadhu Om Swami just brushed it away with a smile.

My Journey To Arunachala

Geetha Raman

Walking down the memory lane is always a very pleasant experience, especially when one cherishes the childhood days laced with fun and frolic. A similar feeling runs in my mind when I look back at my early school days, when I got to associate myself with Ramana Bala Kendra.

The Ramana Bala Kendra (RBK) was started by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning (RMCL) in January 1981 (17 Jan 1981, to be precise, if I recall correctly). I was a student of class VI at Karnataka Educational & Cultural Society (KECS) and on 17th, Saturday, in the third week of January 1981, our school finished as usual at 12.30 P.M. We were told by our Headmistress that we could go to RMCL for Ramana Bala Kendra and before that we should register ourselves at the school. We were eagerly waiting and at about 1.30 p.m., some members of RMCL came to our school premises and met students on the ground floor shed. The response from the students was overwhelming and at least about 100 students volunteered to join immediately.

From there we proceeded to the upstairs house in Palace Orchards where the classes were held. It was No. 40/41, First Floor, 2nd Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore-560003. We later understood that this address was to be the hub of all Ramana activities for the next 20 years and for a group of us students of RBK it practically became a second home. There we met Natarajan Mama, Sulochana Mami, Sarada Akka and Ambika Akka. They enrolled interested students from classes I to X for weekly classes on Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's teachings and music.

I joined RBK and was keenly interested in learning various group activities. The classes used to be conducted initially once in a week, on Wednesday evenings and later on got re-scheduled to Saturday afternoons. I used to eagerly look forward to going to the 'Ramana class' as we grew to call it. However, my first class on the first day was indeed very scary! Sudarshan Mama was very strict and was scolding some student which made some of us go and hide

till the class finished! Notwithstanding, once the classes got over, he used to call all of us and distribute sweets, biscuits and chocolates! He was the one who taught us to greet each other with “**Namo Ramana**”, which to this date, we have been following religiously.

Bhagavan Ramana entered my life the day I reported at the RBK. Myself, along with my younger sister Uma and my friends, namely Mallika, Saritha, Savithri, Jayashree, K Geetha, Jaisriram and Sujatha used to assemble at the RBK and from 2 P.M to 5 P.M, would attend classes. The association with these friends which started at RBK has continued till date. The curriculum included classical dance, classical music, drama, painting, drawing and storytelling.

In addition, teachings of Bhagavan, his life history, bhajans, prayers and hymns used to be taught to all. Since the students belonged to different classes and age groups, we were broadly divided into two categories as juniors and seniors. I was in the senior group of the first batch. The classes used to be very interesting, as the teachings of Bhagavan were shared with us in the form of storytelling, painting, dance, drama, collage making etc. The first prayer we learnt was “UPADESA SARAM”. The first stanza read as under:

“KARTURAJNAYA PRAPYATE PHALAM
KARMA KIM PARAM KARMA TAJJADAM”

The meaning of the above verse is: BY THE WILL OF THE CREATOR, ACTION BEARS FRUIT. IS ACTION, THEN, SUPREME? NO, IT IS INERT, UNCONSCIOUS.

The classes used to be real fun and were a source of great learning. With the blessings of Bhagavan and God's grace, we took active part in our classes. The teachers included Sulochana Mami for music and chanting, Sarada Akka used to take classes on Bhagavan's teachings for senior group. Ambika Akka used to conduct dance classes for both junior and senior groups. Murali Mama was in charge of drawing and painting. Shankar Mama used to look after the library. Sudarshan



Mama, manager of RMCL used to coordinate and organize all the above activities. The other support staff played a major role in the overall conduct of all programs. To name a few, Srinivasan Mama was in charge of conducting puja and at the same time, used to feed all of us with his excellent cooking skills! He also used to accompany me, my younger sister Uma, Lakshmi and Mallika to our homes after the classes. Nikki Mama and Kumar Anna were responsible for all lighting arrangements, photography of all events, and stage management for all shows. Natarajan Mama was the founder and the backbone of RMCL. Natarajan Mama was ably assisted by Sulochana Mami, who walked along with him as a pillar of strength in building this great institution. We remember them with great respect and miss both of them from the core of our heart. Similarly, Srinivasan Mama was another great human being of RMCL group, who contributed immensely to the organisation.

My first dance program on stage was at Bal Bhavan sometime in



1982, where I performed **“Palisu Nammanu Guru Ramana”** which went off very well, by the grace of Bhagavan. I received a prize for the best dance, the first one in my life, which was a memorable one.



So many programs followed one after another in different parts of the country with Ramana Group and each and every student got an opportunity to showcase their individual talent as well as be a part of the ballet.





The visits to Tiruvannamalai Ramanasramam, the Arunachaleswara Temple, Giri Valam with friends, visits to Skandasram, Virupaksha Cave, Pachaiamman temple etc are so fresh in the memory etched like carvings on the stone. The antics by Mallika with her talent in mimicry during Giri Valam would never be forgotten, though we used to be scolded by our seniors!



We used to chant 'Aksharamanamalai' and during Giri Valam, everyone used to recite the verses

**"Arunachala Siva, Arunachala Siva,
Arunachala Siva, Arunachala"**

(108 verses of Lord Siva), which used to make us feel that Bhagavan was accompanying us.

Two other important places associated with Bhagavan where I visited with the group was to Tiruchuzhi, his birth place, and Madurai, where Bhagavan attained enlightenment. Those visits were indeed the most memorable ones, which will be cherished for a life time! We got an opportunity to learn various chants of



Bhagavan's works, Upadesa Saram and Sat Darshanam at a very tender age, which has remained in our memory to this date.

During the course of my association with RBK, along with my friends Savithri and Saraswati, I undertook the Junior Exams in dance in the Karnataka Secondary Board. Later, the three of us also performed our Arangetram in the Ramana Shrine with a repertoire fully consisting of Ramana Dances. Uma, my sister was also to be a part of the event and the four of us had our photo sessions together. But just a few days before the Arangetram she had a small accident and a minor fracture because of which she could not join us. Sulochana Mami, on seeing my dance skills, provided me an opportunity to conduct part time classes to junior students. I happily accepted the offer and was a dance teacher for about four years.



During those years I participated in the dance dramas that were produced every year by RMCL and presented during the National Seminar at Chowdiah Memorial Hall. We have travelled to Delhi, Bombay, Hyderabad, Chennai and different parts of Karnataka with these dance dramas. We would also perform at Iruvannamalai at the Asram from time to time.



During this period we did three professional video recordings of our ballets. The first one was Skanda Ramana, the second was Ramana and Mother and the third was Ramana Prabha. I was blessed to be a part of all these.



In the month of April 1995, I suddenly got engaged to 2Lt A Raman, marriage was scheduled in September 1995. It was with mixed feelings that my Ramana friends received the news as I was required to move to Ambala (Haryana) after marriage with my husband.





Though everyone was very happy about my marriage, they found it difficult to come to terms with the fact that I would leave them after some months. My marriage was attended by all members of RMCL.

Later in September, I left Bangalore with my husband. Thereafter, almost after every two years, I would relocate to a new place with my husband, due to the nature of his job. However, I used this opportunity to offer my talent to Bhagavan by participating in every cultural program organised by the Army at stations like Ambala (Haryana), Mhow (MP), Pune (Maharashtra), Meerut (UP), Binnaguri (WB), New Delhi, Amritsar (Punjab) and Gaya (Bihar).





In between, whenever my husband moved to field areas or high altitude areas (non-family stations), I would come back to Bangalore to stay with my parents / in-laws. The association with RMCL was revived during those times. The friendships which started off at RBK have continued till date and have only grown stronger with time.

Even during the last year's pandemic, we could all interact with each other, though virtually, and share our association with Bhagavan.

I would like to thank each and everyone who has been a part of this wonderful journey with Bhagavan through RMCL, which commenced at a very young age but has continued for over four decades and is still continuing by His Grace!

II NAMO RAMANA II

Ramananjali Miracles

In this last section of our magazine 'Moods and Might of Music' we dwell on different aspects of Ramananjali, the poetry, the life of its founder-director, Smt.Sulochana Natarajan and experiences in the lives of devotees related to Ramananjali. Here we bring you three miracles that are directly linked to Ramananjali (which also form a part of the book 'Bhagavan Ramana – The Extravagant Boon Giver' – book extract from which has been carried in this issue.)

- Editor

Bhagavan's Gift to the World and to Me

By Charles Madigan

Charles Madigan sent a large donation in response to Sri Ramanasramam's request for supporting Ramananjali's tour to Europe, America, Canada and the Far East. He describes how Bhagavan Ramana arranged the circumstances enabling him to send this donation. Miracles like this made it possible to share the rich 'Ramananjali' music the world over in the Birth Centenary Year of Bhagavan Ramana. Below is an extract from his letter to Sri Ramanasramam.

Thank you very much for your kind letter dated 20th with the photo of Sri Bhagavan. It made me very happy and I will always keep it with me. Thank you also for the descriptive narration of the tour.

It might be encouraging for you to know that Sri Bhagavan's Grace is working for you to fulfill the tour you are now planning, because the 500-DM/I enclosed was given to me the day I received your kind letter, as a present from a friend who knew that I wanted to buy a Video tape-recorder.

So for a whole day, I was uncertain (weak as I am) what to do. I wanted the recorder but I knew you needed the money better. But as usual Sri Bhagavan solved the problem because 5 minutes before leaving my work that day, my employer asked me to see him in his office and said that he had heard me say a time ago that I wanted to buy a recorder and had bought me an expensive one as a present. So kindly accept the enclosed notes from Sri Bhagavan.

I hope to be able to send you some again soon.

Curing My Fever Smt. Sulochana Natarajan

The beauty of Bhagavan Ramana's miracles is that they happen in the most natural manner. To the extent that they may even go unnoticed. For the past few years I have been struggling with my voice which seems to have developed a will of its own. For the most part it has been refusing to co-operate with me wholeheartedly. After a long-drawn heart breaking time, singing being the almost my life-breath, a real change for the better began to become noticeable. This came in the time for my two annual Karnatic Classical Concerts, the first at Tiruvannamalai, during the celebrations of Bhagavan's Mother's Aradhana. The second concert came a week after that at Bangalore.

At Sri Ramanasramam, my voice was in good condition and in the holy atmosphere, on the day of Maha Pooja, the concert went off with ease. Even then, there were one or two points when there was a sudden unaccountable hoarseness in the voice, but this did not mar the overall mood of the program. We traveled back to Bangalore on Tuesday and the concert here was to be on Sunday. Out of the blue on Wednesday I developed the beginning of what I was afraid would be a severe cold, but I let it be and took some simple palliatives. That night we called Rajkumar Bharati at Chennai in connection with some recording details. We did not realize that he was about to leave for London early next morning and it was just 'by chance' that we got him on the phone. Further 'by chance' we simply asked him if he could suggest any homeopathy remedy that could effectively combat a cold within a couple of days and render the voice in a good condition for a concert. He too immediately suggested a couple of medicines saying they would surely act quickly. The medicine was procured by Thursday evening and I started the course on Friday morning.

In the meantime I had also developed fever and body pain in typical viral style. I was finding it difficult even to sit for a few minutes at a stretch but I tried to keep to my daily routine. It struck me as strange that thirteen years back in 1987, when we first began these concerts on Maha Pooja, I had been down with high fever for my Asram concert. Then I had selected as the main piece for the concert Bhagavan's composition 'On Curing Mother's Fever'.

This year, after the long gap, the same composition was back in the concert. And this year, after all these years, I was down with fever again. By Saturday evening, after a second day of the homeopathic medicines, it seemed to me that I needed a dose of antibiotics which would work on an immediate basis if I were to attempt the concert. So I made an appointment with Dr. Rajaram at the Ramana Clinic. Surprisingly, an hour before I left for the clinic, I began to notice a dramatic improvement in my condition. In addition, after taking an injection from the doctor, I felt almost back to normal.

The next day, the day of the concert, found me feeling only tired but otherwise in no unhealthy condition, I stopped all medication lest it should make me feel weak. From the word 'go' in the concert it was as if some other force took over. I have, of course, given many concerts and participated in numerous Ramananjali programs. I always lose myself in the music which is a great joy to me. Any tensions and anxieties that exist before the concert simply melt away. But this time was a new experience to me. It was as if there was absolutely no volition. Except for one or two moments in between, I had no control over any part of the concert. It just happened. Everyone was happy with the concert. And those who heard both the concerts said that this one at Bangalore was full-throated and more lively. It had been an enjoyable experience for all.

The next morning my fever and cold returned and ran their usual course with the usual medication being continued thereafter. And the miracle had happened, almost as if in the usual course.

Bhagavan's Grace through Ramana Amudam
K.V.Srinivasan, Dubai

I am deeply attached to Ramana's Aksharamanamalai. When I go to work, I always play 'Ramana Amudam', a Ramananjali cassette in which all the 108 verses have been chanted. It would instill a lot of freshness in me in the morning and prepare me for the tough day ahead.

In December 2000, I went to Abu Dhabi with my family members, and the family of one of my friends. Abu Dhabi had a festive look because it was the time of U.A.E.'s national festival. We

reached the place at about 5 p.m., and did some shopping and then decided to have a tea break. We parked our cars in a public car parking area and had our tea. While we were having tea my three children Arjun, Amrut and Anket, were playing with the cassettes in the car and making a real mess. By the time we finished our shopping and tea break, it was dark and was around 7 p.m.

Entering my car I found that many cassettes were strewn all over. I got worried about my 'must' cassette 'Ramana Amudam' containing Aksharamanamalai. I told my wife Sudha and my children that unless it was traced we would not leave the place. We searched inside every nook and corner of our car, including the dashboard. But this cassette was nowhere to be seen. Seeing my distress, Sudha suggested we move the car a little away from the place in order that we could see the area underneath the car. Accepting her suggestion, I moved the car away when my eldest son spotted something dark on the ground. He ran and picked it up. To our utter astonishment and surprise it was my purse with all credit cards, labour card and driving license besides some amount of money. Had I lost the purse containing all these items, particularly the labour card, I would have been put to a lot of difficulty.

After praying to Bhagavan to convey our grateful thanks before starting the car, I looked once again within. Surprise of surprises, I found the cassette in the dashboard itself. How can I describe the vastness of his grace? In order to restore my purse containing the most valuable items Ramana had blinded all of us to the existence of this cassette, which was in the dashboard itself. He forced me to look under the car in search of the apparent loss but for which I would have lost the crucial labour card, credit cards and other valuable items.

Even as I write about this incident, several months later, I am thrilled at the fact that Ramana never lets down those who believe in him.

Ramana feeds us amruta, ambrosia, every moment. The Self is available to us all the time. The compassionate one tirelessly feeds us for us to attain the state of amrutatva, the state of immortality. Bhagavan gives his own state to all of us. It is for us to take it or ignore it. Bhagavan also says that unless and until you seek the Self and get it, even God won't give it to you. But if you show some interest and put some effort to attain it, I am sure Bhagavan is the first and only one who stands by our side.

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

cittam salittu sErndiDu jlvar baktiyillA pAvigaL Ayinum
sisuttuyar kaNDu tETRuM tAy pOI kasindu karuNai
kaNNiR tadumba
innSor solli Engumamandai manRa tETRu mannan pAdam
vAzhgavE Tamil

chittavu sotu sEruva jlvige bhakti illada pApiyE Adaru
shishu tApa kanDu oliyuva tAyante karagi krpe bAshpa
kaNNali tumbuta
ee mAta hELi pIDita manava svastha mADo arasa paada
bALali Kannada

Meaning –

The fatigued beings who take refuge in him, even if they
be sinners with no love,
Like a mother who sees the suffering of her child, heart
melting, eyes brimming with compassion,
Speaking sweet words, the distraught mind he heals,
may that monarch's feet be praised!

Every time a thought arises, I move away from the Self. What more sin is required to commit? I am constantly identifying myself with the body and thoughts, the mind which moves is held by me constantly, instead of holding on to the Self.

But Ramana, you are so compassionate, you show yourself to me, the incarnation of the Self, whenever I move away from you even physically. I am riding a vehicle, there you show yourself as a picture behind some other vehicle. I go to a movie and there also you show up as your teaching or a picture. It is very clear to me that you hold on to me constantly as I am not capable of even holding on to you. Strange that I confidently feel I am the one who is performing all actions which is absolutely impossible.

There was a sinner who came to Bhagavan and many people witnessed this incident. He cried to Bhagavan saying that he has committed sins which are irreversible and the consequence is going to hell and nothing else. Bhagavan spontaneously answered to that person saying, 'Bhagavan will go to hell along with you'. The devotee was shocked.

In the 389th 'Nama' or name in the 'Ramana Sahasranama', the litany of 1008 names on Bhagavan, Sri Jagadeeswara Shastry hails Ramana as NIRAYAPAHAH, One who protects from hell. Sri A.R.Natarajan writes in his commentary, "It is the mind which makes hell of heaven and heaven hell. What matters is the mind. It is precisely in this field that Ramana's contribution is most significant. His method of self-enquiry helps one to be restored to one's own purity of mind, to be able to deal with life situations with equanimity and poise." So we offer worship to Bhagavan saying, 'Om nirayApahAya namaha'!

Like a mother who feeds the child with lot of love, Bhagavan feeds us the ultimate amruta with lots of love. I hope I too realise that Bhagavan is feeding me this amruta and I realise that and turn back to Bhagavan soon and not waste any more time in hungering after illusory delicacies.

Lord Ramana

Thank you Bhagavan

Your attention seeking Child :)

How Bhagavan Captured Us

Smt.Sulochana Natarajan

In the early Delhi years, while the association with the Ramakrishna Math continued strongly and while Ramana Kendra had become a steady spiritual fount, I also wanted to be with friends. And Bhagavan fulfilled this desire of mine too, like an indulgent parent. He brought about my reunion with several of my childhood friends and a close bond grew between all of us and more intimately with a few of them.

It meant that we socialized more. And ARN was not interested in friends and socializing but he came to the various social events along with me. In fact, we always went everywhere as a family. By temperament ARN was quite happy being with himself. Funnily enough, in our Bangalore years, I became so steeped in Ramananjali music that I did not wish for any company whatsoever. In those years at RMCL he gave plenty of time to family and the large extended family of Ramana devotees. He would speak with many of them personally at the Shrine, visit some of them and call them on the phone as well and attend their family events when the occasions arose. In the Delhi days, he had no 'friends' and never sought any. He would go to the club to play tennis and he had a friendly relationship with everyone he knew. But I have not known him to build any special bonds. He did give his family all the attention that we needed but never more than that. He showered love but had his daily schedule which he did not compromise for any reason. It is a strange combination, but that is the way it was. He was not at all regimental about his routine but never gave it up either. His morning meditation and puja, his evening tennis (this later became the evening walk) and at Delhi, weekly visits to the library, where he took the children as well and introduced them to the joy of reading.

Both Sarada and Ambika would read plenty of books. But Sarada became a voracious reader. I would often say that if she sets her eyes on any printed page, she could not take her eyes off it. She read fiction as well as spiritual literature. In the latter, her

choice was quite ahead of her age and she read the children's Mahabharata which was a tome, and several volumes of Munshi's Krishnavatara. But in fiction, her choices were in keeping with her age. She was never to be seen at home without a book in hand except during meal times when she was not permitted to do anything other than focus on the meal.

Meals were always to be had together, the whole family would gather at the dining table at the specified meal time, lunch or dinner. Breakfast, out of necessity was at varied times, except on holidays when it would again be a family meal. Till the end ARN followed this practice of eating together and later, when Ramana work made our routines varied, even when Sarada would come home nearing midnight after working at the studio for the Ramana tele serials, he would finish his meal but sit with her again when she had dinner. Ambika and Kameshwar continue this tradition and the whole family comes together at least for dinner every day and for lunch on days when all are at home. While at Delhi we kept a specific time for our meals as well. We had a lovely dinner gong which I would ring to call everyone to lunch or dinner. The children's dear friend from our Ramana association, Kalarani, found this gong fascinating and felt it was an attractive way in which I weaned them from their play to the lunch table.

We would begin our meal with the prayer from the Ramakrishna Math tradition. After that we would chat with each other. Sometimes ARN would play music from the transistor but singing was not allowed as it would interfere with the eating. Sarada enjoyed her food and was never fussy about food right from her birth. Some children, I learnt later, are particular even about which brand of milk powder they will have. But not Sarada. I remember that I would simply use whichever milk powder or milk that I could source whenever we travelled in interior Karnataka as ARN would go on official tours then. And she would always drink her milk happily. She would later say that she simply loves food so it did not matter what kind of food it was. Ambika was quite the contrary. She had very clearly defined tastes in food and in clothing. She would eat only what she wanted and carefully choose the clothes that she wore every day. Sarada was a dreamer and often seemed

unaware of the world around her. Ambika was very connected to every moment, alert and very affectionate.

Bhagavan gave us plenty of good food to eat as in Delhi seasonal fruits and vegetables would be available right at the doorstep. We had separate street vendors for fruits and vegetables. Our sabjiwala – the vegetable vendor, was a deeply spiritual man and I have had several discussions with him about the significance of many Bhagavad Gita verses. As one of the speakers later noted in our seminar, this is India, where spirituality has percolated into the very bones of the people and flows in our veins as it were. I do believe that one fine day the sabjiwala renounced home and hearth and went away to Brindavan to find his spiritual fruition, for he suddenly stopped coming.

Good food was also forthcoming as we had an excellent cook with us. He was with my parents before my marriage and joined us at Delhi. He was 'Mani' to me and ARN, Mani mama to the children. Whenever he was on leave I would do the cooking and I enjoyed doing so. I was blessed with excellent culinary skills and all of us enjoyed the meals that I cooked. Like in every aspect of life Bhagavan made me plan well and this manifest in cooking as a planned varied schedule.

While there was no shortage of good food, there were some items which would be made available only in limited quantities for several reasons. These would always be distributed equally at the very beginning of the meal in smaller bowls so that no one ever felt that he or she had been denied their share. I did this very naturally and only later realized that it may be the influence of having read about Bhagavan and how he would share all food equally among all who were present. This habit made it easy for Sarada whenever she carried some of our south Indian delicacies to school to share with her friends. They always trusted her to share these delicacies equally among all of them.

In later years when the Ramana movement literally flooded our lives, everything got swallowed up by Bhagavan. But in those Delhi days Bhagavan allowed me to have two parallel threads to

my life. One was of course the spiritual endeavour. The other was being with friends. This was perhaps needed for our life at Delhi as I would be at home alone all day and being with friends did not allow me to get into feelings of loneliness. Further, I did not have the confidence to go out on my own. My friends would take me shopping when required. They were all elder to me and gave me loving advice to deal with the children as a young mother. And whenever we had difficult times, their solidarity was amazing.

As Muruganar sings in his 'Vaitta Pattu', 'Master of Proper Placing' 'Natpile vaazhvai vaittaay' 'In friendship, life he placed, the wonderous Lord Venkata'. In fact, my friends literally helped give a new lease of life to Sarada. When as a girl of eight, Sarada was all but dead, in dehydration due to jaundice, I did not realise this. But my friends immediately noticed that the child seemed to be turning blue. One friend, Malathi put her into her car which she herself drove. In the meantime, another friend Janaki called her neighbour who was a senior doctor in the best government hospital, Wellington. No doubt it was Bhagavan alone who saved her through the timely warning and help of my friends, after a critical period of 24 hours when she was on drips, and also by providing the right medicine for her. ARN would recall later how he roamed Delhi almost like a mad man in search of that one drug which the doctor said would cure her. Not finding it in shop after shop and finally getting it late at night at shop at Old Delhi where Bhagavan somehow entered the mind of pharmacologist who found that drug for ARN.

Recalling this incident, ARN would also say that one should not get into such a frenzy of anxiety about anything as Bhagavan alone is the bestower of life. But at that time we were all in the grip of great fear. However, Bhagavan was always our recourse at times of distress. I sang the song Sharanagati when baby Ambika did not pass urine for two days and Bhagavan gave her relief. On another occasion, when she was only three years old, the doctor insisted that she had diphtheria. It was a severely contagious disease and in those days the rule was that we would have to leave the child alone in the contagious diseases ward of the hospital. However, in the last moment the doctor asked us to

return the next morning for the final diagnosis. Another doctor was on duty the next morning in the Government Health Care Centre. He examined the child and said that it was acute throat infection but not diphtheria. She suffered the course of the illness but at home with all of us and was protected by Bhagavan from being exposed to others in a contagious diseases ward.

I had plenty of fun with my friends at Delhi and at the same time, they were solidly there for our family in every time of need. ARN too was aware of this and so, though not very keen on the social part of the friendship, he too was affectionate to all of them and their family members. It was in some senses a larger family that we had and this paved the way for the expansion into the huge Ramana Family.

In the second half of our stay there, even at Delhi, once Ramana Kendra began to grow, things began to change, and as I said, imperceptibly, but surely, Bhagavan began to envelop all our time and energy until there was no room for anyone or anything else.

Sri Ramana Sahasranama Stuti

384. NIKRTIGNAH

One who knows the art of pretence.

Ramana was omniscient. Everyone was an open book to him. There is no miracle which he could not perform. He was the repository of the eight-fold siddhis. Yet he would pretend as if he was just a human being. He would do his utmost to hide his glory. He would disclaim all the daily wonders he would be working in a devotee's life. Ganapati Muni says in one of his verses that even his human garb was a mere pretence to hide his glorious state, that he was a 'Maya Manushya'.

Om nikrtignAya namaha

385. NIDANAVIT

Knower of the primal cause, knower of the essential features of medical science.

The primal cause for sorrow is ignorance of one's true identity. Ramana cut at the root of this basic fallacy by experiencing death even as a teenager. Ramana was an adept in home remedies and would often suggest such remedies to the devotees. N.N. Rajan records the home remedies which Ramana would suggest like applying neem leaves, turmeric, rose water, water heated by sun and cooled, when Rajan's wife was sick with small-pox.

Om nidAnavide namaha.

386. NIRGRANTHAH

Without clothes.

As soon as Ramana arrived at Tiruvannamalai he threw away his clothes in the Ayyankulam tank. Thereafter he wore only a kroupina, a small cod piece. One can say that this symbolises externally his total renunciation of all worldly possessions. He had no possessions, not even a cloth to cover his body yet he was always in the state of supreme bliss.

Om nirgranthAya 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+. The talks and sharing in March were by Sri K.V.Subrahmonyan from Sri Ramanasramam, by David Godman and Michael James.

A Ramananjali musical feature by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar, supported on the vocal by Dr.Vaishnavi Poorna was part of the Global Online Festival. We also had a sharing by Smt. Sushila Ramanan along with a group music devotional singing by the Punarvasu Group.



By Bhagavan's Grace, literally after a year we were able to hold an 'offline' event at the Shrine. This was the Laksharchana on the 8th, 9th and 10th of March. This happened as part of the Sthapana Day Celebration and included the Ramana Sahasranama Homa.

Sivaratri was celebrated on the 11th of March. 'Gnananjali' - a whole night cultural festival was held in collaboration with Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi Research Centre. Ubhaya Kala Sangama - A Ramananjali classical concert started the evening with Sri B.S.Anand leading the vocals as well as playing on the mridanga along with artistes of Ramana Maharshi Centre.



Four yaama pujas were offered to Bhagavan.

BSRMRC's old production 'Nava Rasa Vaibhava' was led by Smt. Rupa Hemanth.



Smt. V. Radha led a devotional music concert. Sri Vincent Paul and his students presented a feature in classical dance.

The new theatre production from RMCL 'Ramana Sannidhi Murai' was played in two parts.

The festival concluded with a Bharatanatyam offering led by Sri Ujwal Jagadeesh.



Special Dates in April and May

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

44th National Seminar and Global Online Festival – Ramananjali 40+

Below is the tentative schedule for the online programs in the coming two months. There may be variations in the dates and timings. To know the exact dates and timing of the programs please subscribe to Ramanacentre Bengaluru YouTube channel.

Every Wednesday 6.15 pm – Ramananjali Cultural Program

Every Friday 6.15 pm – Ramananjali – Down Memory Lane (The history of Ramananjali)

Special Talk on Ramana Pada Pancharatnam by Sri Nochur Venkataraman (Date will be announced on YouTube)

14th April – Ramana Aradhana Celebrations

**Ramana Pada Pancharatnam from Bangalore and Chennai
Aksharamanamalai Chanting and Puja to Bhagavan**

- » 11th and 18th April – Sri K.V.Subramonyam on Ramana Kritis
- » 24th April – David Godman on Bhagavan and Muruganar
- » 25th April – Dr.T.N.Pranatharthiharan on Muruganar's Ramana Puranam
- » 27th April – Pournami Celebrations: Robert Butler on Muruganar's Sri Ramana Guru Prasadam
- » 2nd May – Robert Butler on Muruganar's Sri Ramana Guru Prasadam - 2
- » 9th May – Dr.T.N.Pranatharthiharan on Muruganar's Ramana Puranam

16th May – Mother's Day Celebrations

Dr.N.S.Lakshminarayana Bhatta on Kannada Ramana Geethe

- » 23rd May - Sri T.V.Chandramouli on Muruganar's Ramana Sannidhi Murai
- » 26th May – Pournami Celebrations: Ramananjali Music
- » 30th May – Sri T.V.Chandramouli on Muruganar's Ramana Sannidhi Murai

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 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 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

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40 years of The Ramana Way

We are celebrating our joy and gratitude at the completion of 40 years of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning's monthly journal 'The Ramana Way'.

In 1973, Sri V.Ganesan, Managing Editor of Sri Ramanasramam's journal 'The Mountain Path' asked Kumari Sarada, then 13 years of age, to write an article for the journal. This was to be about her recent meeting with Muruganar Swami as he had attained mahasamadhi shortly thereafter. On reading that article Sri Ganesan prophesied, 'Saradamma, you will be editing a Ramana journal someday'. The prophecy came true in RMCL's monthly journal 'RAMANA' of which Kumari Sarada became the editor in 1981.



Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

125. The 'greatness' of those who claim that they are trying to know themselves, whilst at the same time remaining excessively attached to the body, is that of an ignoramus who, believing a crocodile to be a log, grabs it as a raft to cross a river.