

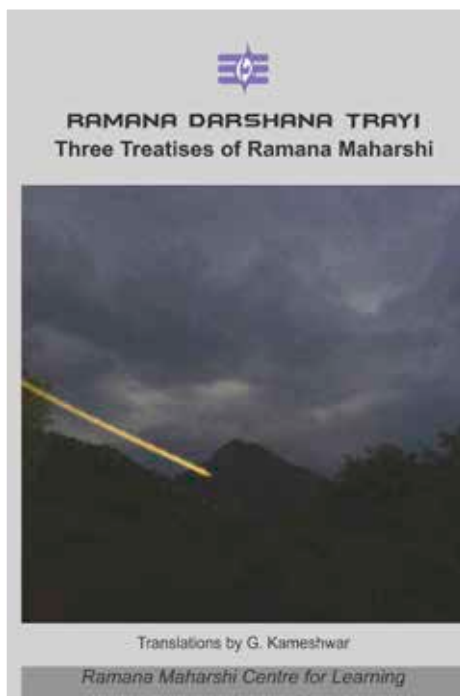
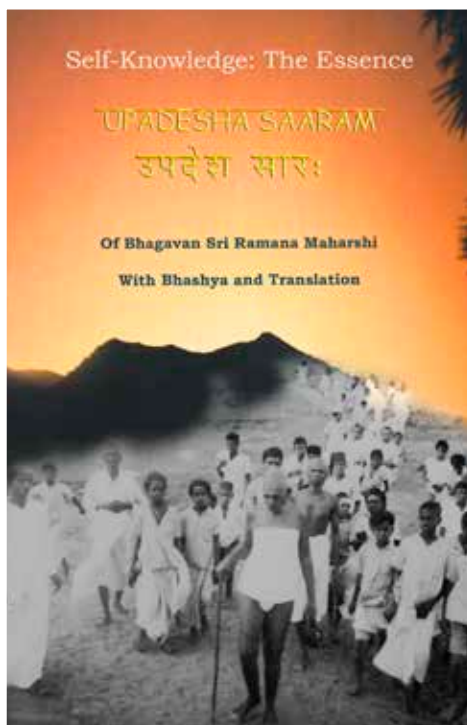
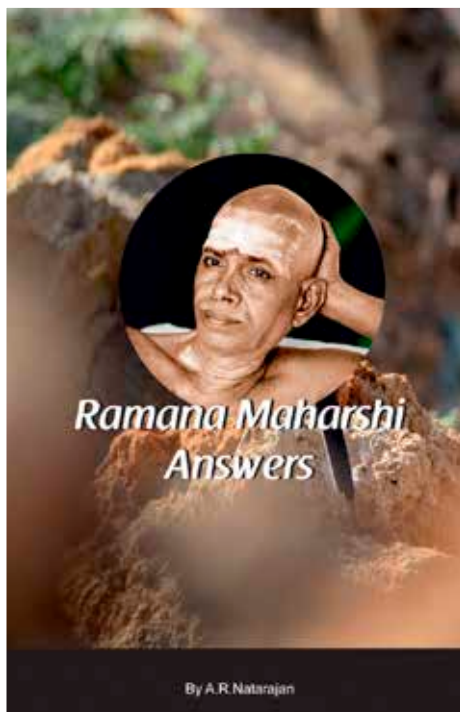
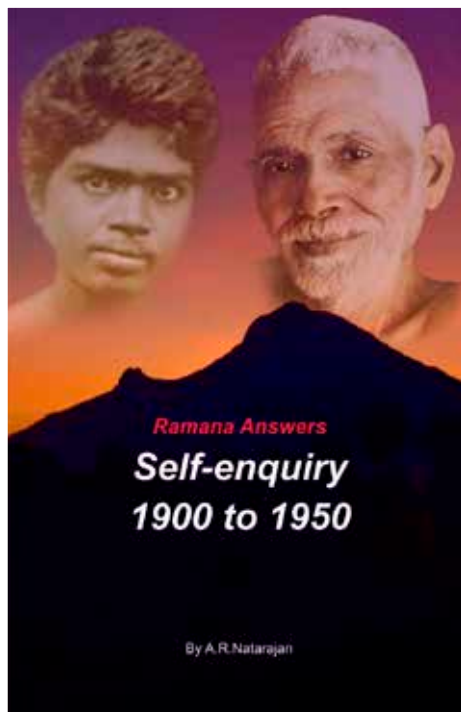
May 2018



The Ramana Way

A Monthly Journal published by
Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning
Bengaluru

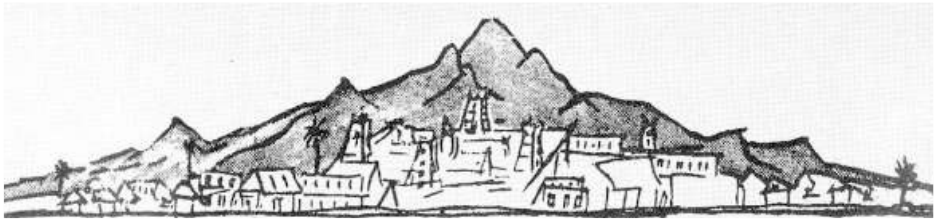
NEW Publications



THE RAMANA WAY

A Monthly Journal since 1981

Celebrating Ramana Rasa Anubhava



Editor: Dr. Sarada

Associate Editor: G. Kameshwar

Assistant Editor: Dileep Simha

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

- Ramana Gita X, 10

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| Journal started by: | Sri. A.R.Natarajan, Founder President, RMCL |
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| Website: | ramanacentre.com, ramanamusic.com |
| Printed by: | Aridra Printers, Bangaluru. |
| Designed by: | M. Muralidhara Hegde |
| Annual Membership: | Rs. 240/-, Price per copy Rs. 20/- |
| No. of pages: | 52 |

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Editorial*Dr. Sarada*

The infallible boat of self-enquiry with Ramana at its helm ferries us across the great storms of doer-ship and the subtle undercurrents of identity, of being the possessor and the experiencer as well. We tend to believe that we are aware of the rise of identity in the sense of being the doer. To the extent that we are aware, it becomes possible for us to question our sense of doer-ship and to surrender it. Whenever the thought 'I have done this' or 'I am doing this' or 'I need to do this' surfaces we need to be alert to the fact that it is the rise of doer-ship in us. This we may be aware of. But if we feel diffident thinking 'I am incapable of doing this', there too it is the sense of doer-ship that is at play. When I am not the doer in the first place where is the question of my wondering about my inability to take up or complete a task? The sure fire arrow against this enemy is the enquiry 'Who is the doer? Who am I?'

So deeply ingrained and so subtle is our faith in our own ability to act both physically and mentally that it has a continuous unseen influence on us. We take it for granted that all the actions done by the body are done by us. Equally we take it for granted that all the actions of the mind are our own. No sooner does a thought arise, we assume that it has arisen by our volition and therefore we have full control over it. We believe that we have the ability to think in various ways. We say 'Yes, I remember this happened'. When I say so I believe that I have performed the mental action of recalling something. I believe that it is I who have recalled the event. Equally when I recognise someone or something, I believe I am performing the actions of recall along with associating that recall to the present moment.

We say, 'This is right, that is wrong'. When we do so we believe we have the capacity to analyse, to classify and to discriminate between the right and the wrong. So attached are we to these mental actions of ours that when somebody counters saying, 'You didn't say this' we vehemently assert 'I remember fully well that I did say so.' At such times we are fully sure that the power to recall is ours. Or if someone does something that we

believe is not in the rightness of things we get disturbed and ask, 'How can people make such gross mistakes?' When we make such judgements we believe that ours is the power of discrimination.

Recalling, recognition, classification, analysis, discrimination, determination, all these are mental functions. These are actions performed by the mind. Who performs these mental actions? If any one of us were to be asked this question what would our answer be? Would we say, 'God performs these actions'? Would we not say, 'I perform these actions'? Would we not declare without an iota of doubt, 'It is I who recall, I who recognise, classify, analyse and discriminate'? Every time a thought arises, is it not the sense of doer-ship that is becoming manifest?

In surrender what does one do? One may say that all actions happen according to the will of God. One may even believe that all the mental movements happen by the power of the Supreme alone. Every time if even so much as a thought arises, along with it another thought too may arise which declares again and again 'This is the manifestation of God's power, it is God's action, not mine'. Even if one were to do so it cannot be said one's surrender is complete. Why?

In a way even when we state that something happened purely by God's Grace we are actually revealing our innate sense of doer-ship. If we really believe that everything is happening not only by the Will but also the Power of God, then where is the question of making any declaration about it? Would we declare, 'Actually it is the wind that turns the windmill, I have nothing to do with it'? Or 'It is the turning of the Earth on its axis that creates the illusion of the sunrise and the sunset. I don't make these happen.' If we were to make such a statement wouldn't the whole world laugh at us? If it were an equally established fact in every mind that it is the Supreme Power alone that is responsible for all actions why would anyone ever speak of it? If it were at least established in my mind, I for one wouldn't talk about who is responsible for any deed, would I?

What is it that is implied when I say that everything including every mental movement happens only by the divine will? It is implied that I am performing the subtle mental action

of affirming this fact. My subtle mental actions would then be witnessing the unfolding of the divine will and recognising that it is the divine will that is at work. Hence, every time I become aware that something is happening on account of Grace or the Supreme Will I am retaining my entity as separate from that Grace or Will and I am retaining my capacity to recognise and affirm that Grace.

So Ramana asks us to surrender this last vestige of doership through the question, 'Who is the I who is affirming that everything is God?' It makes one wonder, 'Who am I to certify that everything is God's Grace or that everything is God?' In a state of awareness of this truth, would there be any separate entity to talk about the grace of God? Is it for this reason that Ramana, nearly at the end of his ecstatic hymn on Arunachala, the 'Marital Garland of Letters', pleads, 'Arunachala, treat my blame as praise and hold me in your Grace'. Where had he blamed Arunachala? Was even praise 'blame' because it established a separate entity? Ramana has said in an earlier verse of Aksharamanamalai too, 'I have broadcasted your deeds. Do not spurn me on account of this. Throw open your Grace and govern me.'

The surgeon's knife of self-enquiry becomes essential to cut away the root of the disease, the root of identity. But for doing so, it is may well persist in a subtle form. Self-enquiry it is which performs the twin tasks of acting as the scanner light which first reveals the tumour of identity and then as the laser beam that cuts it away.

The identity of basking in the knowledge of the Supreme Grace may be joyous and purifying. At the same there is also a danger of using it as an alibi to shirk one's own responsibility. Whenever we do something wrong, we may be quick to say that we have no control. We may hide behind the excuse that it happened according to the Supreme Will. Again we use this excuse in the mental realm as well. When an unwanted thought rises in our mind we claim that thoughts come and go of their own accord despite our effort to keep them away.

Therefore, as a first step in self-enquiry Ramana prompts us to take the responsibility for our thoughts. He says, alright thought may have arisen of its own accord but what made it your thought? There are millions of objects that are available for you to think of at any moment in time. How is it that there is one thing

alone that becomes a thought for you at that moment? How is it that another thing becomes a thought for you at the next moment? Ramana says that an object becomes a thought for you because you hold it, because you grasp it with your attention. He points out to us that the action in the mind or its movement is not on account of the coming and going of thoughts. They do not come and go of their own accord as they are lifeless objects. It is only the subject's attention that lights them up and gives life to them.

The only movement in the mind is the moving of the light of attention from one object to another making them appear as one thought after another. Thus self-enquiry takes us to the root of the sense of doer-ship by revealing that the very movement of attention from one object to another is the primary action of the mind. One may surrender this action too and remain perfectly still. Or, if one is unable to surrender, one may take the help of enquiry and ask oneself again as Ramana shows the way by doing so in his 'Arunachala Padigam' 'The Decad on Arunachala'. Ramana asks, 'When everything is you, the elements and all living beings, how can I alone be apart from You, O Arunachala?' With this question Ramana brings the searchlight back on the 'I'.

As Sri A.R.Natarajan writes, "We are all familiar with the thought that God is everywhere. We also say that God is an inner presence. Both are not contradictions. He who finds the divine presence within himself will find God everywhere. But we have lost touch with God's presence within. Why? It is because we do not look within. We do not know the meaning of what it is to look within. If you don't know the meaning of what it is to look within, we will miss the magnificence of this inner presence."

Whenever the mind moves one must question 'Who is aware of thought? Who am I?' With that question the movement of the mind will be immediately cut off as it is turned away from the object part of the thought to the subject. In fact, in self-enquiry attention is focused on the very core of the subject 'I'. What is this sense of identity? When one turns attention on it one recognises that it is a thought 'I am so-and-so'. It is a thought 'I am 'A' or 'B' or 'C' or 'D' or something or someone'. This something or someone may change. I may be young or old, thin or fat, angry or sad, but the 'I' sense remains constant. Who am I?

If we do not enquire what would be doing? We would be thinking of something or the other. And what do we do when we think? One is that we are moving our attention from one object to another and therefore there is the movement in our mind. This action is our primary action, it is the basis of our sense of being the doer. This we have seen. There is something further that we do. We do not merely observe one object after another, we grasp it and hold it as well. We claim that object as our own. We become the possessors of those objects.

Why are we so obsessed with taking photographs moment after moment of events and of ourselves as well in 'selfies'? Is it not to possess that moment? We wish to possess our experience in some concrete form to be able to go back to it at will, to be able to share it with others. Even when we do not capture an experience in a physical camera we have already captured it in the camera of our minds. We have already stored it away in the cupboard called our memory. We are able to pull it out of our cupboards and use that object again when we wish to. Would we be able to do so unless we believe that we possess it? Would we think of it as our knowledge and our memory?

Enquiry makes us scrutinise, 'In the absence of any object for me to hold, to grasp as my thought, who am I?' To remind us of our habit of holding every experience as my thought, Ramana gives us the first question, 'For whom is this thought?' And the answer would always be 'For me'. 'It is my thought'. Every thought is my thought, I possess it as mine. When I recognise this, I firstly accept my responsibility with regard to that thought. Even if the thought has arisen on account of Divine Will, the fact that I have claimed it as mine is my own doing. So how do I say it is not mine? If I were to say so, I would still possess the thought that I am surrendering, would I not? The only way is to abide in perfect silence. If this is not possible, if thought arises then to go back to the questions, 'For whom is this thought?' This reminds me that thought is only 'mine', at best it belongs to me, it is not 'I'. Who am I?



HOLISTIC MEDITATION – I*

A. R. Natarajan

Life's Purpose

There must be some purpose why one is born. If there is no purpose, all our actions would then be meaningless. Would they not? We must go into the question of the purpose of life itself fundamentally. When someone asked Bhagavan, 'What is the purpose of life?' he replied that the very question itself can come only due to good karma. It is because many people are not concerned at all about this. They live totally unconcerned, never questioning why they are here on this earth at all. They begin their lives, live and end it, totally wastefully. If there be no purpose to one's existence it would not be different from an animal existence.

Human beings have a highly evolved power of the mind. If we do not use this power even to enquire about the purpose of life itself, we would surely drift along purposelessly. One day would come and go, another would come and go, and so on endlessly. The dates in the calendar would be torn every month, the year's calendar would be folded and thrown away perhaps. Year after year would go by and one would be no wiser essentially than what one was when one was a toddler. So, it's a question which each one has to put to ourselves to prevent living a life which has no core meaning.

Individual, World, God

Ramana points out that all life is a relationship between the individual and the world, and the individual and the Supreme. All seeking on the spiritual path is concerned with two questions, 'How, should one relate to the world?' and 'How should one relate to the divine?' In both, the centre is the individual. Therefore the purpose of meditation is to discover the essential nature of the individual. Is he a mere automaton? Is he free or bound? Is he only a creature of circumstances or is he a free man? The individual's importance is always being stressed by Ramana. Ramana shifts the emphasis

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

to the need for understanding the essential nature of the individual. Understanding the nature of the individual is all important.

The total picture

In Ramana's teachings, he places before us certain new ideas, new because we are not used to those ideas. They arise from his steady abidance in the Self. In order to understand these new insights one has to proceed with reference to certain basic concepts. Ramana himself gives us clues to enable each one of us to experience one's own state of inherent happiness.

We are all familiar with the thought that God is everywhere. We also say that God is an inner presence. Both are not contradictions. He who finds the divine presence within himself will find God everywhere. But we have lost touch with God's presence within. Why? It is because we do not look within. We do not know the meaning of what it is to look within. If you don't know the meaning of what it is to look within, you will miss the magnificence of this inner presence.

The inner presence has to be felt by being aware of it. When I give a public talk for instance, I am aware of some familiar faces, I am aware that some are interested, that some are not interested, I am aware of the direction that the talk is taking and so on. Awareness means a perception of what is happening around you, to be able to absorb the totality of the picture. But we know only that which is 'outside'. We miss the totality for we do not know that which is 'within'. The inner movement of the mind is not known to us.

A vital clue

For our sakes, yours and mine, Ramana has given a location to this presence of the divine within. According to his experience, which will be discovered to be our experience also, if we search for it, that force is sporting in the spiritual heart of everyone. The spiritual heart is different from the blood pumping heart. This leading clue enables one to search for and discover the spiritual heart.

Much has been discussed about this guidance regarding the location. Some ask, 'How can one locate God in a particular

place?’ Ramana himself provides the answer. Since one has identified himself with his body, it becomes necessary to specify God’s presence within the body. When one has identified oneself with the body and calls the body ‘I’ one has to find God’s presence within the limits of the body. The fact is we are thinking we are this body. So, Ramana gives us a clue as it were, because he knows. He does not want one to wander and waste his effort. Life’s time span is very short. The longest life is also short. Therefore Ramana has to give an invaluable clue. Therefore his Vidya, the knowledge which he is sharing is called ‘Dahara Vidya’, the ‘Knowledge about the Heart’.

The Energy Centre

The next proposition which Bhagavan is exposing us to is that the spiritual heart is the very energy centre of all life. Energy flows from this power grid. All power is only located in God, not in the individual. It is open to each individual to draw on that power, by relating to that power, by linking himself to that power. You have to re-establish your connection, since it has gone haywire now, as they do in “By-pass surgery” for the physical heart. To the extent to which one is able to draw on that power, to that extent one is more alert, more attentive and more harmonious.

We say that there is a power grid failure, it means that the connection of the sub-grid with the main power centre has been shut off. So, the next question is how is one to be linked to this power, energy of the divine located in the spiritual heart? The fundamentals have to be stressed again and again. The heart is the power centre from which energy flows first to the mind, because we are living with the mind. We have no other instrument. So, the Supreme energises the mind and is the hidden power behind it.

However after this power has been fed in it is fragmented by the thinker by transmitting that power of his mind to thoughts which occupy his attention for that time. No one can have thoughts without the thinker. So, thought is energised by the thinker. When the thinker’s attention moves from one thought to another thought then that thought loses its energy and another thought gets energised. Quite often the mind’s energy is wasted on unnecessary and purely psychological thoughts. Thus the mind’s energy is getting dissipated throughout the day.

Involuntary Recharging

What happens when the mind's energy is thus drained off? Here one is to remember that this drawing on the energy of the spiritual heart is not by any voluntary act of the individual. It happens in deep sleep. Everyday one is overtaken by sleep. Each man is compelled to sleep. Unless one sleeps, one would be totally 'energy-less'. The divine supplies the energy to each individual mind by linking it to its own power centre, the spiritual heart, in deep sleep. Going into details Ramana explains that the individual whose mind's power is exhausted by the end of the day, mostly wastefully, is forced by providence to a rest called deep sleep.

The mind sinks into the spiritual heart involuntarily. By this link the mind gets recharged and is fresh once again on waking. The example may be cited of a mother feeding an infant in sleep without its knowledge. But due to lack of knowledge of how to remain connected while awake as well, the same dissipative process happens each day.

Therefore Ramana repeatedly emphasises the need to become aware of how to dive within to the spiritual heart and to remain steadfastly linked to it. Then all action would be done with the totally undistracted power of the mind.

The 'Talks' as a Guidance to Self Enquiry

N.Nandakumar

Talk 25. (Excerpt) (Talks 25, 26, 27 and 28 together form a complete summary or revisit of Bhagavan's teachings)

Talk 25.

On a former occasion B. V. Narasimha Swami, author of Self-Realization, asked: Who am I? How is it to be found?

M.: Ask yourself the question. The body (annamaya kosa) and its functions are not 'I'. Going deeper, the mind (manomaya kosa) and its functions are not 'I'. The next step takes one to the question. "Wherefrom do these thoughts arise?" The thoughts are spontaneous, superficial or analytical. They operate in intellect. Then, who is aware of them? The existence of thoughts, their clear conceptions and their operations become evident to the individual. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the individuality of the person is operative as the perceiver of the existence of thoughts and of their sequence. This individuality is the ego, or as people say 'I'. Vijnanamaya kosa (intellect) is only the sheath of 'I' and not the 'I' itself. Enquiring further the questions arise, "Who is this 'I'? Wherefrom does it come?" 'I' was not aware in sleep. Simultaneously with its rise sleep changes to dream or wakefulness. But I am not concerned with dream just now. Who am I now, in the wakeful state? If I originated from sleep, then the 'I' was covered up with ignorance. Such an ignorant 'I' cannot be what the scriptures say or the wise ones affirm. 'I' am beyond even 'Sleep'; 'I' must be now and here and what I was all along in sleep and dreams also, without the qualities of such states. 'I' must therefore be the unqualified substratum underlying these three states (anandamaya kosa transcended). 'I' is, in brief, beyond the five sheaths. Next, the residuum left over after discarding all that is not-self is the Self, Sat-Chit-Ananda.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : When "I" goes within in search of "Who am I?" its nature moves from the darkness of Ignorance to the complete

light of knowledge - the Self. Not a single change in the "outer circumstances" (sensory world, inner world of thought-intellect and the bliss of complete darkness of deep-sleep/ unconscious, but total, surrender of the ego) is sought or resisted. Self Enquiry is the Direct Path to true happiness.

Talk 25.(Excerpt)

SELF REALISATION THROUGH DRIK-DRISHYA VIVEKA (in the previous excerpt, Bhagavan teaches Self Realisation through transcending the five Kosas)

D.: How is that Self to be known or realised?

M.: Transcend the present plane of relativity. A separate being (Self) appears to know something apart from itself (non-Self). That is, the subject is aware of the object. The seer is drik; the seen is drisya. There must be a unity underlying these two, which arises as 'ego'. This ego is of the nature of chit (intelligence); achit (insentient object) is only negation of chit. Therefore the underlying essence is akin to the subject and not the object. Seeking the drik, until all drisya disappears, the drik will become subtler and subtler until the absolute drik alone survives. This process is called drisya vilaya (the disappearance of the objective world).

D.: Why should the objects drisya be eliminated? Cannot the Truth be realised even keeping the object as it is?

M.: No. Elimination of drisya means elimination of separate identities of the subject and object. The object is unreal. All drisya (including ego) is the object. Eliminating the unreal, the Reality survives. When a rope is mistaken for a snake, it is enough to remove the erroneous perception of the snake for the truth to be revealed. Without such elimination the truth will not dawn.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: In the previous excerpt, Bhagavan treats the whole of creation as Consciousness seeing itself through five different Kosas/ worlds and Self Realisation as transcending the Kosas and the worlds. In this excerpt we see Bhagavan taking the whole of creation as "seer" and "seen". Enquire "Who is the seer?"

till all "seen" is eliminated along with the relative "seer" of the "other". On such elimination, the real Seer or the Self-Luminous Self reveals its Eternal Existence. This is Self Realisation. If one can see with Bhagavan that the whole creation is only seer-seen experience, self enquiry becomes easy and the only duty.

Talk 25. (Excerpt)

SELF REALISATION BY ELIMINATION OF MIND.

D.: When and how is the disappearance of the objective world (drisya vilaya) to be effected?

M.: It is complete when the relative subject, namely the mind, is eliminated. The mind is the creator of the subject and the object and is the cause of the dualistic idea. Therefore, it is the cause of the wrong notion of limited self and the misery consequent on such erroneous idea.

D.: What is this mind?

M.: Mind is one form of manifestation of life. A block of wood or a subtle machine is not called mind. The vital force manifests as life-activity and also as the conscious phenomena known as the mind.

D.: What is the relation between mind and object? Is the mind contacting something different from it, viz., the world?

M.: The world is 'sensed' in the waking and the dream states or is the object of perception and thought, both being mental activities. If there were no such activities as waking and dreaming thought, there would be no 'perception' or inference of a 'world'. In sleep there is no such activity and 'objects and world' do not exist for us in sleep. Hence 'reality of the world' may be created by the ego by its act of emergence from sleep; and that reality may be swallowed up or disappear by the soul resuming its nature in sleep. The emergence and disappearance of the world are like the spider producing a gossamer web and then withdrawing it. The spider here underlies all the three states - waking, dreaming, and sleep; such a spider in the person is called Atman (Self), whereas the

same with reference to the world (which is considered to issue from the sun) is called Brahman (Supreme Spirit). He that is in man is the same as He that is in the sun. (Sa yaschayam purushe yaschasavaditye sa ekah). While Self or Spirit is unmanifest and inactive, there are no relative doubles; e.g., subject and object - drik and drisya. If the enquiry into the ultimate cause of manifestation of mind itself is pushed on, mind will be found to be only the manifestation of the Real which is otherwise called Atman or Brahman. The mind is termed sukshma sarira or 'subtle-body'; and jiva is the individual soul. The jiva is the essence of the growth of individuality; personality is referred to as jiva. Thought or mind is said to be its phase, or one of the ways in which the jiva manifests itself - the earlier stage or phase of such manifestation being vegetative life. This mind is always seen as being related to, or acting on, some non-mind or matter, and never by itself. Therefore mind and matter co-exist.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: One who cannot visualise manifestation of life as Consciousness experiencing itself through five screens (Kosas) or merely as Seer (Drik) and Seen (Drishya) can understand manifestation of life as the Mind raising as subject and object. In the waking state, when the subject is enquired into and eliminated by the quest "Who am I?" the object too falls away. The mind stands eliminated. The Self underlying all the three states is Realised by eliminating the mind.

Talk 145. Celebrating the Unborn

Mr. P. Brunton: Why do religions speak of Gods, heaven, hell, etc.?

M.: Only to make the people realise that they are on a par with this world and that the Self alone is real. The religions are according to the view-point of the seeker. Take the Bhagavad Gita for instance: When Arjuna said that he would not fight against his own relatives, his elders, etc., in order to kill them and gain the kingdom, Sri Krishna said, "Not that these, you or I, were not before, are not now, nor will not be hereafter. NOTHING WAS BORN, NOTHING WAS DEAD, NOR WILL IT NOT BE SO HEREAFTER" and so on. Later as he developed the theme and declared that He had given

the same instruction to the Sun, through him to Ikshvaku, etc. Arjuna raised the doubt, "How could it be? You were born a few years ago. They lived ages ago."

Then Sri Krishna understanding Arjuna's standpoint, said: "Yes. There have been so many incarnations of myself and yourself, I know them all but you do not know."

Such statements appear contradictory, but still they are correct according to the viewpoint of the questioner. The Christ also declared that He was even before Abraham.

D.: What is the purpose of such descriptions in religions?

M.: Only to establish the Reality of the Self.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : To the one seeking the Self in self enquiry, birth and death are non-events. The real birth is to be born into the Unborn Self and abide naturally.



Ramana Darshana Trayi – Ulladu Narpadu (Part 2)

G Kameshwar

As an entry into the main translation, let us try and examine, in some detail, the two invocatory verses of the treatise.

The invocatory verses of uLLadu nARpadu

If we examine the commentaries on Indian spiritual treatises written by great sages, it is often seen that the commentary on the very first verse of the treatise is very long. For instance, one can see the commentary of Adi Shankaracharya on the name ‘Vishwam’, the first name of Vishnusahasranama, or his commentary on ‘athAtO brahma jijnAsa’, the first aphorism of Brahma Sutra. The reason is that the very first verse (or even the very first word) of a treatise usually encapsulates the main thrust and purport of the entire treatise. It stands out like a flagstaff or the Gopuram (tower) of a temple, a stamp of authority, or a knockout punch carrying the weight of the whole treatise – like Bhagavan Sri Krishna blowing the Panchajanya conch to signal the start of Bhagavad Gita and the Mahabharata battle. uLLadu nARpadu is no different.

Let us begin with a stroll around the garden of invocation, the two mangalam¹ verses, that welcomes us into the temple of the treatise.

Here is the first verse...

உள்ளதல துள்ளவண்ணர் வாள்ளதோ வாள்ளபொரு
ளள்ளலற வாள்ளத்தே யுள்ளதா - லுள்ளமென
முள்ளபொரு ளள்ளலெவ னுள்ளத்தே யுள்ளபி
யுள்ளதே யுள்ள லுணர்

uLLadala duLLavuNar vuLLadO vuLLaporu
LuLLalaRa vuLLattE yuLLadA - luLLamenu
muLLaporu LuLLaleva nuLLattE yuLLapaDi
yuLLadE yuLLa luNar

¹ Mangalam – auspicious; the invocatory verse is termed as ‘mangalam’ verse

Meaning:

Unless Reality exists, can thought of it arise? Since, devoid of thought, Reality exists within as Heart, how to know the Reality we term the Heart? To know That is merely to be That in the Heart².

I am giving below the words of verse, split, with rough explanations:

uLLadu aladu

Unless there is some real substance that exists; a real Being

uLLa uNarvu uLLadO!

Will there be awareness of existence? Will one know that one is?

uLLA poruL

That existence; that Reality; That Being

uLLal aRa

Without thoughts

uLLattE uLLadAl

Since it exists in the heart

uLLamenum

That is (also) known as the heart

uLLa poruL

That substance true; That Being; That Reality

uLLal evan?

How is one to contemplate?

uLLattE uLLapaDi

In the manner in which that (Reality) abides in the heart

uLLadE uLLal uNar

Abiding in the same manner, is the way of understanding; understand that.

2 Translation from "The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi"

Throwing light on this verse, there is a very beautiful explanation given by Prof K Swaminathan³.

He says:

“The first stanza, woven out of pure Tamil words, is an emphatic assertion of the oneness of being, awareness and the Heart. It dwells lovingly on the Tamil root uL common to being, thinking, heart and inner space, all associated with indivisible oneness and wholeness. The verb uLL (to be) which admits of no past or future tense, is repeated eight times, the word uLLam (the heart) thrice, uLLu (to think) thrice, and uNarvu (feeling) twice; thus the venba as a whole, through sound, suggestion and explicit statement, pulls the mind inward to the very heart of being-awareness.”

Indeed, this verse of Bhagavan is perfection in itself.

Deliberations on the verse:

I know I exist. I am. I don't need any third person corroboration of the fact. You don't have to tell me, 'You exist!', for I know that 'I am!', that 'I exist'. I know that there is a 'Being', "I", here, in this body... There is some 'Existence'... If that were not so, then I would not be... And that Existence, that 'Being' which I say that 'I am', exists in all my states. It exists now. It exists when I dream, when I am in deep sleep, and even when I am unconscious.... At all times, when I am alive in body, there is some 'Being' that exists in this body that I am in ...

Can that "I", that 'Being' / Existence, be my body? It cannot be, for it does not make sense. Given today's technology, every part of this body seems to be transplantable. Let alone the fact that every cell of the body is constantly regenerating, cells are dying, new cells are born... And then again, when I dream, I have different identification – which at that time, is very real. When I am dreaming, I do not know that it is all unreal. I do have some identity or the other during my dreams – and there are also other persons,

3 “Ramana Maharshi” – Book by Prof K Swaminathan

apart from me, in my dream. But then, how can that be? Is it not quite illogical that there can be any person or thing, apart from me, inside my head when I dream? Are they not all in me? But during the dream, they are all very real, distinct, and quite apart from "I" that I believe I am at that time.

And then in deep sleep, there is no cognizance of "I" the mind, the body, or any other form. Yet, I exist.

Who is this entity "I", which exists, underlying all these states?

It is the experience of Bhagavan Ramana that "That" entity is not limited by the body-mind at all. He says that our real "Self" is deathless, and exists in the heart, as the heart. It exists in/as the spiritual heart, not the physical heart. The spiritual heart is said to be in the right side, where we tend to point to, when we say "I". Bhagavan says that "That" is indeed the heart, and is called the "heart". And that heart is an experience that is knowable when there are no thoughts, when the mind is in absolute silence. Since this experience is only when there are no thoughts, then how is one to know 'That' with the mind? It can't be done. Mind cannot know that. So then how is one to know that state? Bhagavan says that the only way to know "That" is to be "That". There is no other way. So he asks us to silence the mind, just "Be" and thereby "Know That" – which he refers to as the 'uLLa poruL'.

Thus, that which is known as Sat or Brahman in Vedanta, has been referred to in Tamil as 'uLLa poruL' by Bhagavan.

In one stroke, it conveys all...

That there is something that exists. uLLa : It exists.

By the word uLLa, there is also the connotation that it is "inside". You have to seek it within.

poruL signified that it is a real substance. It is not shoonya – nothingness. poruL also signifies essence, reality, meaning, significance, fruit, result....

In his other immortal composition 'aksharamaNamAlai', Bhagavan refers to 'OmkAra porul'.

He says –

OmkAra poruL, oppuyar villOy
unai yAr arivAr aruNAchala!

Import of Omkara, peerless you are by far,
Who can comprehend you, Arunachala!

Here, in the emphasis of Bhakti, there is a devotional allusion to Arunachala as the Supreme Reality, which is beyond understanding. That very same 'incomprehensible OmkAra puruL', is referred to by Bhagavan in uLLadu nARpadu, in the emphasis of jnAna, as 'uLLa poruL' – or 'The Substance that is', 'The Being', 'The Reality that is', 'The Existence-Substance'...

And Bhagavan has begun with 'That' itself as the mangala (auspicious, invocatory) verse. Normally, the mangalam verse of any spiritual work would be one of prayer to Lord Ganesha (the remover of obstacles) or to a deity that is the primary purport of that work. Bhagavan Ramana appears to depart from this tradition, and begins with uLLa poruL, rather than praying to any deity. It is 'That', which is 'You', says he. Begin within. With yourself. No other persons or tools are required. To realize the core truth about all that exists, you have to travel nowhere, know nothing. Silence the mind. Just Be. And thereby, know 'That', the Reality that shines as "I"-"I" in all.

Such is the message of the first invocatory verse.

It may be recalled that a second invocatory verse was added because the first one did not mention any divine deity. But before we go to the second verse, let us spend some more time with the current verse, looking at the charge that this verse does not have a traditional Mangala (auspicious) beginning, and that it does not refer to any Divinity...

To my mind, this charge can be questioned.

Take the very first letter of the first verse. It is உ. This letter (alphabet form) is also referred to as 'piLLaiyAr chuzhi' in Tamil. In Tamil language and culture, it is customary to first write 'உ', before we start writing anything. This indicates an auspicious beginning, with the thought of Ganesha (PiLLaiyAr), the Lord who removes all obstacles in one's work. PiLLaiyAr (Ganesha) is mangala swaroopam itself – he denotes Auspiciousness. So one may say that the mangala aarambham, auspicious beginning, is in the first letter itself.

Just as an interesting data point, let us see the examples of three other great Tamil treatises that start with letter, 'உ'.

First, TiruvAymozhi of NammAzhwar.

உயர்வற உயர்நலம் உடையவன் யவன் அவன்
மயர்வற மதிநலம் அருளினன் யவன் அவன்
அயர்வறும் அமரர்கள் அதிபதி யவன் அவன்
தயரற் சூடரபி தொழுதுஎழுஎன் மனனே

Second, Kamba Ramayanam.

உலகம் யாவையாம் தாமாளவாக்கலாம்
நிலைபெறுத்தலாம் நீக்கலாம் நீங்கலா
அலகிலா விளையாட்டுடை யாரவர்
தலைவரன்னவர்க்கே சரண் நாங்கனே

And third, but not the least, Periya Puranam

உலகெலாம் உணர்ந்து ஓதற்கு அரியவன்
நிலவா உலாவிய நீர்மலி வேணியன்
அலகில் சோதியன் அம்பலத்து ஆடவான்
மலர் சிலம்படி வாழ்த்தி வணங்குவாம்

The above examples are just to show that there are some very interesting precedents, of immortal treatises, that commenced

with the letter “உ”, one of which is Periya Puranam, which was the treatise that so consumed young Venkataraman (Ramana) as a teenager.

Now, let us explore the ‘piLLaiyAr chuzhi’ further⁴.

The letter உ (U) is at the heart of pranava (Omkaara) - A U M. Here A stands for Srishti - creation, U for Paripaalanam (protection) and M for Samhaara - dissolution...i.e. for Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra respectively. Thus உ stands for MahaavishNu.

There is a shloka about the significance of the letters in the word Guru - where ‘U’ (உ) is the vowel attached to both consonants G and R.

gakArah siddhidih prokto rephah pApasya hArakah
ukAro viShNuravyaktah tritayAtmA guruh smrtah

‘ga’ is said to give success; ‘ra’ destroys sins. “u” is Vishnu unseen, and the one with all three as Self is known as Guru

Here *ukAro viShNuravyaktah* means: உ is Vishnu unmanifest... That is Paramatma, who pervades all, and is yet unseen...

And Vishnu Sahasranaama says that Mahaavishnu is daivatam daivatAnAm ca (God of Gods) and mangaLAnAm ca mangaLam (the most auspicious of auspicious)...

Thus, one may say mangaLa Arambham, the traditional auspicious invocation of a deity, is indicated by the very first letter உ, as Vishnu Un-manifest, the most auspicious of auspicious, the God of Gods, and the very heart of Omkaara.

⁴ For a really comprehensive analysis of ‘Pillaiyar suzhi’, please refer to Kanchi Paramacharya’s Tamil treatise, Deivattin Kural – Volume 3.

Saddarshanam

Master Nome

**kva bhAti dikkAla kathA vinAsmAn
dikkAla leelEha vapurvayam cEt |
na kvApi bhAmo na kadApi bhAmo
vayam tu sarvatra sadA ca bhAmah || 16 ||**

Where shines (appears) talk of space (direction) and time without us?

The play of space and time, here, is if we are the body.

**Nowhere we shine (appear), at no time we shine(appear),
But we everywhere and always shine.**

N.: “Here” and “there,” “now” and “then,” are for “me.” There is someone for whom all such experience is. This is so concerning not only what plays out in time and space but time and space as factors of experience. They are for someone. By rough analogy, we could say that time and space are woven like a cloth. The world is painted like a picture on that cloth. Neither the cloth nor the pictures are the viewer. The one who sees them is not in the picture and is not in the cloth.

“Where shines (appears) talk of space and time without us? The play of space and time, here, is if we are the body.” The play here signifies the experience in the world. If we are not bodies, what is space? If we are not bodies, what is time? “Nowhere we appear, and at no time we appear.” We are not in space. We are not in time. We are the Self, which is of the nature of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. This is spaceless and timeless. Bodies and objects appear in time and space and are determined by them. Are you the body? If you are not the body, you are not here, and you are never elsewhere. If you were the body, you would be in time, and thus the concepts that you once were, you now are, and you will be sometime else are conceived. Are you the body? If you are not the body, there has been no birth, there will be no cessation, and there is no between time. If you are the body, there is the world in which there is this weaving of time and space. If

you are not the body, what is the universe? If you are not the body, is there anything outside you? Time and space are the merest appearances within you, but you are not in them. What is in you becomes absorbed in you or is of the same nature. Your nature is Being-Consciousness. When is time? Where is space?

“Nowhere we appear, at no time we appear, but we, everywhere and always shine.” It is Being-Consciousness, alone, that shines. There is nowhere where it is not. There is no time when it is not. You are always That. You are not the body. Understand your bodiless nature fully. There is no moment in which you are, be such past, present, or future. You have no personal life in the past or one spreading out in the future or one with which to be preoccupied in the present moment. You are not the body. If you are not the body, the very senses used to perceive some signs of time and space are not yours, and the experience they provide does not pertain to you.

Always you are. What could disturb your peace? Always you shine. What darkness could come over you? You have existed always. You have been shining always. You will exist always, and you will shine always. Time does not measure you, and it does not diminish you. You are not the body, so you are called “the Infinite,” and “the Eternal.” In truth, you are timeless and spaceless. You are not big and not small. Those conceptions do not apply. You are not long and not brief. Those conceptions do not apply. You are not only That which presently exists; you are That which alone exists, ever.

This verse clearly follows what was referred to as a more profound meaning of the previous verse. If you were to adhere to the ostensible meaning of the previous verse, it would seem as if the Maharshi is contradicting himself, but there are no contradictions in his seamless teaching.

“Where shines” can mean “where appears.” “Talk of space and time without us”: “Talk” indicates the perception or conception. You are not in time. Time does not create you. You are not in space, and you are not encompassed by space. Space

does not create you. Time and space are conceived by you. With the rise of the mind, time and space appear. With the dissolution of the mind, time and space disappear.

Space is conceived in relation to a body, which becomes the locus, the point of experience, in illusion due to superimposition. Time, likewise, is conjured up in the mind, requiring two or more thoughts in order to even appear. The time becomes the distance, as it were, between the two thoughts.

“Where shines (appears) talk of space and time without us?” However conceived, or supposedly experienced, time and space depend on us. We do not depend on time and space. Whatever is in time is not us, and whatever is in space is not us. That means that the body and mind are not us. The play of space and time, here, is if we are the body. If we are the body, there is reality to here and now and to there and then. These are dependent upon the “I am the body” conception, but are you the body? This is the basic inquiry: Are you the body?

If you know with experiential Knowledge the truth that your nature is bodiless, you find that so much confusion is absent for you. So much confusion is built up on the “I am the body” conception, including confusion regarding your bondage or your liberation. Without the “I am the body” notion, there is tremendous clarity, and the Truth has a simplicity that is Self-evident.

“Nowhere we appear, at no time do we appear.” Bodies appear and, consequently, disappear. A body appears in time; a body appears in space. You, though, do not appear. You do not appear in space, and you do not appear in time. You remain unformed, unborn, timeless, and spaceless. The timeless is also eternal; the spaceless is also infinite.

Sri Bhagavan says, “but we everywhere and always shine.” The nature of your Consciousness is unembodied. Your very Consciousness is everywhere and at all times. Wherever and whenever anything shines, it is you that shine, and that is your own Consciousness. You never appear, yet everywhere you are. You

never manifest, yet at all times you are. If there is manifestation, you are all of that. You shine and appear as all that. Yet, in truth, you remain forever unmanifested, as the Timeless and the Spaceless. For such a one, how could there be limitation?

If you are timeless, what is birth? What is death? If you are spaceless, you have no location. What is the meaning of “here” and “there?” To know your Self in this manner, all that is required is to inquire deeply into your innate Being, your own natural Existence, which is the Self, and, in the course of doing so, to abandon any misconception that associates the body as a definition of your Self.

Another Q.: I am considering a possible stumbling block.

N.: Are you considering stumbling or planning on an obstacle? (laughter)

Q.: Sri Ramana says that the sage is the body and other people are the body, but, for the sage, the body and everything else are names. Thinking of that, I think that there is a loophole if people want to say that they are the body.

N.: But the instruction is for those who are desirous of Liberation and not for those who are hoping for a loophole. (laughter) For those who are loopy, any amount of loopholes can be imagined. (laughter) If your point is that, throughout all time, there are those who can manage, by some way or other, by hook or by crook, to misinterpret and distort the most well intentioned instruction, you may be correct, (laughter) but for those who are desirous for Liberation, it really is of no interest. Such imagination would merely show what a funny animal a human can be.

Sri Arunachala Padigam

Eleven Verses on Arunachala
Of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

G.Kameshwar

Verse-1

karuNaiyA lennai yANTanee yenakkun
kAtcitamU taruLilai yenRA
liruNali yulaki IEngkiyE pataittiv
vuTalviTi lenkati yenna
maruNanaik kANA talarumO kamala
maruNanuk karuNanA manni
yaruNani curantang karuviyAyp peruku
maruNamA malaiyenu manpE.

Word split, and meaning:

karuNaiyAl ennai ANTa nee : You, who ruled me, by your (reasonless) compassion

enakku un kAtci tantu aruLilai enRAI : If, now, you do not bless me by granting your vision

iruL nali ulakil : In this dark, miserable world

EngkiyE pataittu : in extreme distress, by sheer yearning

ivvuTal viTil : If this body is to be dropped

enkati ennAm : What would be my state (fate)?

aruNanaik kANAtu alarumO kamalam : Without sighting the Sun, will the lotus blossom?

aruNanukku aruNanAmanni : Being the Sun of the Sun

aruL nani curantu : Grace, welling forth in abundance

angku aruviyAyp perukum : There, gushing (in spate) as a mountain stream

aruNa mAmalai enum anpE : O Love, known as the great mountain Aruna

Verse rendering:

You, who held reign over me
 By sheer compassion reasonless;
 If you do not now, by your vision bless
 Me, yearning, in great distress
 Floundering, In this world darkness
 Were this body to drop harness
 What would be my state, distress?

 Will the lotus blossom
 Without the Sun's gaze?
 You, the Sun of the Sun
 A fount of Grace
 Stream in spate,
 O Love, Known as
 Aruna mountain great!

Prose rendering:

You it was who exercised your dominion over me by showering me with your compassion (a compassion which you graced of your own volition on undeserving me) ... Now having made me your subject, if you do not bless me with your vision, leaving me to flounder in the misery of spiritual darkness, and were I to die as a result of this sheer yearning to see you, what then would be my state, my distressful destiny? Tell me, can the lotus blossom without sighting the Sun? Oh Arunachala, you are the Sun of the Sun! You are a gushing mountain stream of abundant grace! Oh Love in the form of the Supreme mountain that goes by the name of Aruna! (pray, let me not perish without your vision!)

Notes:

'Arunachala Padikam' is a work of intense devotion. It is a song of 'Bhakti' and 'surrender' through and through, and a clarion call to the world to come and be rid of their misery of spiritual body-mind-world darkness by being consumed by the light of love of this hunter of hearts – Arunachala.

Of this opening verse of 'Arunachala Padikam', Sri AR Natarajan writes: "The first of these spontaneous verses on Arunachala moves one to the core of one's being. It is a passionate

plea to Arunachala to fulfill his job of bestowing knowledge and a reminder to him about his power to make the Heart lotus blossom¹".

The reference to 'spontaneous verse on Arunachala', comes from the fact that Padikam was a spontaneous composition. Among the different compositions of Bhagavan, only two were composed by Bhagavan of his own volition. These were the 'Arunachala Padikam' and 'Arunachala Ashtakam'. The other works of Bhagavan were composed on the request of others.

Interestingly, 'Arunachala Padikam' and 'Arunachala Ashtakam' were composed sequentially – as one inspiration stream, sometime around 1916 CE.

How this happened has been conveyed by Bhagavan, and recorded by Devaraja Mudaliar in his 'Day by Day' diary notes.

Mudaliar writes²:

"Bhagavan told me that one morning, when he was sitting on the verandah in Virupakshi Cave, the words **karuNaiyAl ennai ANTa nee** came to him very insistently, but he took no special notice of them. It seems the same thing happened the following morning also. Then Bhagavan composed the first stanza of 'Arunachala Padikam' (Eleven Verses on Arunachala). The next morning the words beginning the second stanza similarly came to him and he composed the second stanza; and so it went on every day, until the last two stanzas were composed on one day."

Bhagavan Himself said³:

"Somehow it never occurs to me to write any book or compose poems. All the songs I have made were made at the request of someone or other in connection with some particular event. Even the Reality in Forty Verses, of which so many commentaries and translations now exist, was not planned as a book but consists of verses composed at different times and

1 'Arunachala, Rigveda to Ramana Maharshi', by A.R. Natarajan

2 'Day by Day with Bhagavan – From the Diary of Devaraja Mudaliar' – diary note 26-10-45

3 'Day by Day with Bhagavan – From the Diary of Devaraja Mudaliar' – diary note 9-5-46

afterwards arranged as a book by Muruganar and others. The only poems that came to me spontaneously and compelled me, as it were, to compose them, without anyone urging me to do so, are the Eight Verses to Arunachala and the Eleven Verses to Arunachala. The first day the opening words of the Eleven Verses suddenly came to me one morning, and even if I tried to suppress them, saying, 'What have I to do with these words?' they would not be suppressed till I composed a song beginning with them, and all the words flowed easily without any effort. In the same way the second stanza was made the next day and the succeeding ones the following days, one each day. Only the tenth and eleventh were composed the same day. The next day I started out to go round the hill. Palaniswami was walking behind me, and after we had gone some way, Ayyaswami seems to have called him back and given him a pencil and paper saying, 'For some days now Swami has been composing poems every day. He may do so today as well, so you had better take this paper and pencil with you.' I learnt about this only when I noticed that Palani was not with me for a while but came and joined me later. That day, before I returned to Skandasramam, I wrote six of the eight stanzas in the Ashtakam. Either that evening or the next day Narayana Reddi came. He was at that time living in Vellore as an agent of Singer & Co. and he used to come from time to time. Ayyaswami and Palani told him about the poems and he said, 'Give them to me at once and I will go and print them.' He had already published some books about me. When he insisted on taking the poems, I told him he could do so and could publish the first eleven as 'Padikam' and the rest, which were in a different metre, as 'Ashtakam'. To make up the 'Ashtakam' I at once composed two more stanzas and he took all the 19 stanzas with him to get them published."

*** To be continued ***

Upadeshasaram*Ujwal Jagadeesh****tajjaDam hyasat*****All these are insentient. They are not the Conciousness
which 'I Am'.**

In one of the dance ballets presented by our Centre, "Hamsa Dhvani", Hamsas and Hamsinis, Swans from various parts of the world meet at the Manasarovara for an international seminar of Swans. The theme of that significant seminar is "What makes a swan 'a swan', 'a hamsa'?" The great Jnanis like Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna and others too are referred as the Supreme Hamsas, Paramahamsas. Then what is the true essence of being a hamsa? The seminar commences with an invocation dance of Hamsas. Then it proceeds with a series of paper presentations by various scholarly swans bringing out the specialties of a swan to understand the essence of being a hamsa.

The first swan to present a paper expounds that strength is the hallmark of a swan. An adult hamsa while standing can be about five feet tall. Swans can have a wing span of as much as 10 feet. These wings are not just long, they are strong too. One of the significant manifestations of a swan's strength is its powerful flight which gives it the ability to cross oceans extending to thousands of kilometers. Because of its strength in many texts the swan is referred to as the king of birds. The strength of the Hamsa is illustrated in a story of a crow and a Rajahamsa in Mahabharatha too.

When Ramana Maharshi was a schoolboy even his friends would dread opposing him for any reason. One of his classmates recalls that his legs would be like iron. He was an unsurpassable swimmer and wrestler. Even in later years there is an instance when a huge boulder fell on his hand and he moved it off with his other hand. His little finger was hanging loose from his hand, he simply pushed it back into place and returned to the Asram. Instances of his unimaginable physical endurance are numerous. But is strength the hallmark of Ramana, a hamsa?

The next swan presents a paper describing a hamsa as an epitome of beauty. In Indian literature the gait of a beautiful woman is likened to that of the swan. The swan being a symbol of beauty it is used extensively as a motif both in traditional and modern jewelry and Indian clothes.

Even when Ramana's hair was matted, his nails long and curled, his body covered with grime and dust, a state in which his mother could not bear to see him, even in that state many spiritual seekers came to him and have written songs on his shining, gold bright form. Of course, his physical presence was so bewitching that more than 1000 photographs of his have been taken. A young English girl wrote to her father after seeing Ramana, 'You cannot imagine anything more beautiful than Bhagavan's smile. When he smiles, the whole world smiles.' Surely Bhagavan is most beautiful, but is beauty the hallmark of Ramana? Or is beauty the external manifestation of some other quality that is the hallmark of the true swan.

The next presenter elucidated that swans are the personification of love. It is a well-known fact that swans have long lasting monogamous relationships. When two swans face each other, their long graceful necks naturally form a valentine. It is indeed so beautiful to watch the swan pairs dancing in synchrony even in courtship. We know of the classic love story of 'Nala Damayanthi' where a swan played the role of the love messenger. There can be absolutely no doubt that love is a very significant quality in a swan. But then again, the question arises whether this love is the primary quality or is it an offshoot of any other.

The hamsa is itself a symbol of the Indian culture. Hamsa is the epitome of knowledge of every kind. The next speaker highlighted the fact that the hamsa signifies art and learning. The word 'swan' itself signifies a song. The concept of Hamsa has a prominent place in Karnatik Classical Music. Many of us may be familiar with popular ragas such as Hamsadhwani, Hamsanaadam and Hamsanandi. But how many of us are aware that there are more than 25 ragas accepted in classical music texts with inspiration drawn from hamsa and with the name hamsa imbedded in them? Goddess Saraswathi rides on a hamsa, which signifies

all learning. Brahma, who is the Creator of the Universe and from whom the Vedas originate, not only uses the Hamsa as his divine vehicle but is Himself depicted in the form of a hamsa.

Yet the assembly wonders whether even knowledge is the epitome of a hamsa or is there anything further that we need to explore. Again if we look at Bhagavan Ramana as a supreme hamsa, there can be no doubt that he is embodiment of all knowledge. He could say with spontaneous simplicity that his unbroken awareness of the Self is like the sruti note in music while all other experiences are like the other notes that come and go. He was referred to for clarification by scholars of all scriptures. Yet, he was by no means a scholar in the traditional sense of the word. He had only the basic academic formal education and no scriptural education in the formal sense. So the question arises, 'What really makes a swan a swan?' What is that quality in a swan that enables a swan to pick and embody the cream of every experience?

What is the unique quality of a swan, which makes only a swan a swan? If it is strength, then Garuda may well make a better swan. If beauty is the swan's trademark, then the peacock could well be a swan, if it is the white plumage which marks hamsas out, they have many competitors to reckon with, and what becomes of the black and grey swans? Surely it is not the colour that gives hamsa its uniqueness. Is it music? Then what of the nightingale? Is it love? The krauncha is famed for giving life itself for the sake of the mate. Where then does the uniqueness of the hamsas lie? What truly makes a swan a swan?

It is viveka or discrimination or right thinking which really makes a swan a swan. This ability of discrimination on the part of swans is called 'Neera ksheera viveka'. Neera ksheera viveka is the unique ability of the hamsa, an ability to separate milk from water, truth(sat) from the falsehood(Jadam) when the two are offered as a mixture.

Our scriptures says we are all hamsas, meaning "Aham Sa", "I am That (He)". Ramana asks us to understand "That" with the enquiry "Who am I" within ourselves. Through the proceedings

of the International Seminar of swans we comprehend that the “I-Aham” cannot be limited to the body, neither be limited to the senses which perceive beauty, neither is it our own prana-life which is the dearest possession that we hold on to, neither is it the intellect which makes one understand the nuances in Fine arts nor is it the ignorance of not knowing. When one rejects all these qualities as jadam-lifeless and then turns deeper into one’s own experience of existence, one realizes the Conciousness that one is.

*vigrahendriya prANadhi tamah
nAham ekasat tajaDam hyasat*

The body, the senses, the vital force and ignorance, all these are insentient. They are not the Consciousness which ‘I Am’.



Power of the Word

Sanjay Lohia

Past, Present and Future....

- 1) Experience takes place only in the present, and beyond experience nothing exists.
- 2) There is neither past nor future. There is only the present. Yesterday was present when you experienced it, and tomorrow will also be also present when you experience it.
- 3) Even the present is mere imagination, for the sense of time is purely mental.



The Ocean of Ramana Music

Narayan, Radha, Ashwini

Narayan Shetty

There are no words to describe Amma. There can be no one else who can replace amma. In my journey of 16 years at RMCL, I have received so much of love from Amma. Amma used to handle so much of work, to the level of a full fledged Audio



Company. She used to handle it all by herself. There are so many cassettes, even an audio company cannot handle it. It needs many hands to operate such a task. But Amma did all the management of the cassettes, CDs like accounting, supplying, from the beginning of production till the end – Recording to sales. She had a wonderful memory; she used to manage it so well. When I joined in 1998, I used to think, in Master Recording Company there were so many staff members to do so many things, but Amma did all that single handed. Not only that she also did the notating of all songs, managed Ramananjali programs, each a full time job. It is a big ocean, all this she managed tirelessly. When I think back now I feel that I am proud to have worked in the Ocean of Ramananjali. It is impossible for a single person to do so much. I have never seen Amma sitting idle even for a moment. Every moment thought of Ramana only. Even if I spoke to her about anything commercial, she used to simply say that it was not required for her at all, she was very clear about that.

She was like a child. Sahebru (Sri A.R. Natarajan) used to tell, since I used to work under Amma, he said take care of Amma, she is like a child. Truly she was like that only. She never used to get angry at all. My coming late to the office used to be a common occurrence. When I came to office, everyone used to ask, 'Is it raining in Malleswaram?' Even today, akka had messaged me to come at 2.00 p.m. I got late today also. I laughed at myself and

thought today also I have made it late even to talk about Amma, on the day of her Memorial also. I have made so many mistakes but she has never showed anger towards me. Even if she got angry, just for a moment that's all, that too for the sake of the job not done. After that she would become normal and would smile and continue to work. I have not seen such a person like a mother in my life. I always feel that Amma is with me, her blessings are with me. I can see that quality in Akka also, Amma has lived and showed and has been an example to akka also. I am not able to speak but I am sure we treat akka as we treated amma and Akka will also be as kind as Amma only.

Amma and Sahebru have imbedded in me by their words and their lives faith in Bhagavan and His Grace. Life is a matter of ups and downs and I have my share of them. But through all this there is sure awareness of Bhagavan's Grace being with me all the time and taking care of me in every way. Ramana Music has been one of the greatest blessings in my life. When I am down some of my favourite songs come back to me. The words give me strength to get back on my feet and continue. There are a couple of songs that I carry in my pocket and I keep singing to myself as well. Akka has been kind enough to give me opportunities to sing a couple of songs at the shrine as well to express my love for Ramana Music and my homage to this great ocean which I have seen embodied as Amma.

Smt.V.Radha

There is so much to say about Mami, so many aspects of her persona and her work. Each was an ocean. So, today each one of us has been given a specific aspect of Mami's work to dwell upon. It would be some area where we have specifically interacted with Mami. Although



my association with Mami has been mainly in the area of Ramana Music, today I have been asked me to speak about the Seminar, how Mami would take interest in it. This is because much is already known about Mami's unparalleled contribution in that area. Of

course, her guidance to me in Music was immeasurable and I pray to Bhagavan to be able to carry the torch of Ramana Music forward in a manner befitting to Mami's contribution.

As I said, now I am focusing on Mami's participation in the National Seminars, the major annual event at our Centre. She would call me 20 – 25 days before the Seminar and she would have 2 – 3 cards with her. In those cards beginning from Ramananjali, guests who would come for the seminar, guests who were going to preside over the program, everything would be in detail. She used to instruct as to who would stay at the Centre and what has to be provided for them. That was really excellent.

Being the perfect hostess she would tell us what we had to arrange for their stay from bedding onwards, especially in the month of January, it would be chill. She used to ask whether there were enough of bed sheets, quilts, even a small detail like a stool or a mosquito repellent, it would be perfect. If something was not enough, she herself would go personally to the shop and purchase things. She used to get Jamakhanas (large cotton carpets). She had bought new Jamakhanas for the Shrine as well when needed. She used to inform us about the items that she had purchased and ask us to add it to inventory. If students from Chennai came, then we have to provide a Jamakhana for them so that they stay together. If old people were coming, then we have to provide a cot for them, So meticulous in her planning and execution. She would pay attention to the specific needs of each of the guests on the list. So, no words to express that at all.

When I was given an opportunity by Ambika akka to write about Mami, this is how I wrote :

For more than 30 years now, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan has been walking, talking, thinking and may be even sleeping Ramana Music. At this point I would like to mention a song –

*Pechilum Ramanan, Moochilum Ramanan, ninaivilum Ramanan,
nenjinil Ramanan,
Manadile Ramanan, Anaittilum Ramanan. Ramana Ramana
Ramana Ramana.*

I would like to conclude with one more incident :

Mami left her body on 23rd of August. On 18th of August I went to visit her in the evening. She was going on telling for the past week that she needed to go to office, that she wanted to meet Radha and tell her about some transliteration. But that did not happen. So I and Sapna went to meet her only on the 18th. As soon as she saw us, she said 'Sapna, Radha'. She acknowledged both of us lovingly though she was at that getting facial seizures due to her condition. After that the seizures became frequent. We had to take her to the hospital. At that time, Dileep sir was at the left side of her bed and I stood beside her right side and Sapna near Mami's feet. We were singing Ramanaya Ramanaya song. We thought she would listen to it and feel happy. Immediately she turned to Dileep Sir and said, 'Ra Ma Na. Only three letters, that's all. Ra, Ma, Na.' She indicated the three letters with a three fold movement of her hand. We felt convinced that is the deeksha, the initiation into Ramana Nama given by her to all of us. She had breathed only the Ramana Nama through her music and at all times it had been the undercurrent of her life. It is with the full force of her sadhana that she handed over this legacy to us. By that great blessing that thought is constantly running within all of us.

Smt.Ashwini Balaji

So many have spoken about Mami, I don't think so anything is left for me to speak about, yet there is one special area I can touch upon. Everyone has seen Mami in the office; I have seen her more at home. She engaged my services at home



to support me. My mother would scold me before my marriage always saying I didn't help her in any of the household tasks like cutting vegetables, cleaning and so on. Today if you see me, I have learnt how to cut vegetables from Mami. It may appear to be a silly or trivial thing to have learnt from her, but that is the truth. She was a perfectionist even in cutting vegetables. She never used to

compromise on anything in her perfection. If there was a banana stem to be cut, she used to cut it in equal pieces like an art work. She was so clean while doing any job with the right knife and a plate for the cut vegetable and another for the waste.

All of us know how Bhagavan used to be perfect in everything like stitching books, cutting vegetables. Same way Mami also used to do it perfectly. Not only was she perfect, she also taught me how to cut vegetables according to the dish to be prepared, Salad means – cut vegetables in a particular manner, for stew it would be in a different way and so on for each dish. She taught me all this. So now even at home I now help my mother whenever possible in cutting vegetables. She used to sit in front of me and do some other job when I used to cut vegetables and she would guide me. Today when I cut the vegetables, it is hard to take in that she is physically absent.

Everyone says that Mami's presence is felt. But although I am quite old, perhaps I am still childish. I am not ready to accept that she is not there; I want her physical presence to be there. Till date I don't accept that Mama has left us and gone away. Since it is so many years I don't have a choice. I still feel that Mami had to be there for some more years. Mami has inspired me greatly. It may a small thing that I have learnt from her, but it was really impactful in my life. I miss her very much. I seek her blessing always and I would always keep her in my memory.

News & Events*Revathi Sankar*

Sivaratri Cultural Festival with offerings of special pujas, by Shankaranarayanan, Dileep Simha, Raghavendra, Gopalakrishna, Manikanthan and Pavan. Vedic chanting was offered by H.S.Suryanarayana, H.S.Thyagaraja and Manikanthan. Ramana music was performed by H.S.Thyagaraja and Ramana Bhajans class led by Smt. V.Radha. Ramana Nritya was offered by students and artistes of Japamalasara, RMCL and of BSRMRC led by Gurus Smt.Rupa Hemanth and Smt.Niveditha Srinivas.









Ramana Nritya was also offered by Srinivasan Rajendran and his students of Aditya Hridayam Space for Arts. Talks were given by Sri Venkatesh Deshpande, Smt.Veena Sudhindra and Sri Venkatesh Murthy.





The Ramana Sahasranama Homa and Laksharchana were performed by Sri Subramaniam, Sri Satyanarayana Sastry, Sri Venkatesan, Sri Govindan and Sri Ramana Sundaram.







RAISE – Ramana Art Form Interventions for Self-Awareness and Excellence
– End of year performance by 300 children from Govt. Model Primary School , Geddalahalli.









RAISE – Performance by 100 children from Manjunatha School, Sanjaynagar







Self-Enquiry lectures and sessions by Nandakumarji at Nashville, Maryland and Seattle







Special Programs in May

At Bangalore, Ramana Shrine Mekhri Circle

20th Sunday, Mother's Day Cultural Festival

11.00 a.m. Self-enquiry

11.30 a.m. Ramana Nrityam – A Bharatanatyam feature

By Ujwal Jagadeesh

29th Sunday, 6.45 p.m. Poornima, Full Circle

Ramana Nritya by Revathi Sankar and Uma Sripathy

Aksharamanamalai and Girivalam of Shrine

At Bangalore, Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium, Sanjaynagar

19th Friday 6.45 p.m. Valedictory – Summer Camp 2

At Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai

13th , 14th Ramana Aradhana Festival

13th Sunday, 8.00 p.m. Musical Feature by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar

14th Monday, 10.00 a.m. Ramana Pada Pancharatnam

Special Programs in June

At Bangalore, Ramana Shrine Mekhri Circle

3rd Sunday, Prani Mitra Day Cultural Festival

11.00 a.m. Self-enquiry

11.30 a.m. Ramana Sangeetham and Nrityam

By Students of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning

23rd, 24th Saturday and Sunday

Self-enquiry Workshop (English)

27th Wed 6.45 p.m. Poornima, Full Circle

Ramana Sangitam

Aksharamanamalai and Girivalam of Shrine

At Bangalore, Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium, Sanjaynagar**3rd Sunday 6.15 p.m. Rangollaasa**

Ramana Nritya Bharatanatyam Homage to his Gurus
 By Vincent Poul G. disciple of Guru Smt.Rupa Hemanth
 Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi Research Centre

At Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai**7th Thursday Maha Puja – Mother Azhagamma's Aradhana Festival****8th, 9th Saturday and Sunday - Upadesa Saram Workshop**

At Aruna Apeetha Ramana Nilaya

Continued Telecast of 'Sri Ramana Leela'
on
Sri Sankara TV till end of May-2018.



RMCL website re-launched.
Do visit www.ramanacentre.com



New – Watch on RASA Web TV (www.rasawebtv.com)
Friday 8.30 pm to 9.00 pm – Ramana Oli
Saturday 7.30 pm to 8.00 pm – Ramana Rasanubhavam
– Talks
Sunday 8.30 pm to 9.00 pm - Ramanotsavam



Ramana Every Day

RMHC - Ramana Maharshi Heritage Centre - Sanjaynagar

RMS - Ramana Maharshi Shrine - Mekhri Circle

RSCS - RMCL Satsang Centre at South Bangalore

RSCR - RMCL Satsang Centre at Rajarajeshwari Nagar

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

Thursday: 6:00pm at RSCS

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

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

Saturday: 11:00am at RMS

Sunday: 10:30am at RMS

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

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

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

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

Monday - Saturday: 5:00pm - 7:00pm at RMHC.

Yoga classes [Contact - Vanaja Rao (9900601012)]

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

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

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

Talks - English by Dr. Sarada Natarajan

Sunday: 11:30am at RMS

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

Sunday: 10:30am at RMS

Parayana of Bhagavans Sanskrit Composition by Ms. Savithri

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

Talks, Parayana and Puja by Sri Chandrashekar (9448839594)

Thursday 6:30pm at RSCR

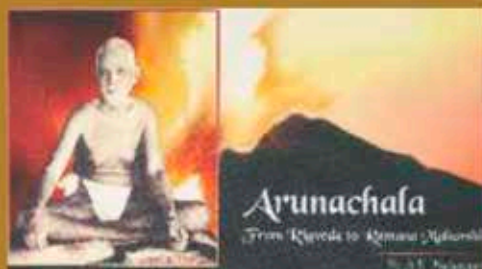
Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

58. All the differences that, crowding together, accumulate to form the world are in truth only the sport of grace, the power of the one consciousness. Therefore, jnanis whose sole focus is the knowledge of the radiant reality will never perceive the world of many differences except as a mere appearance.
59. For the true jnani who is firmly established in the state of the Self, free of the contagion 'I am the body', the world flourishes solely as consciousness, as nothing other than [his own] Self. It is, therefore, a mistake to view the world as different from oneself.



ARUNACHALA FROM RIGVEDA TO RAMANA MAHARSHI

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