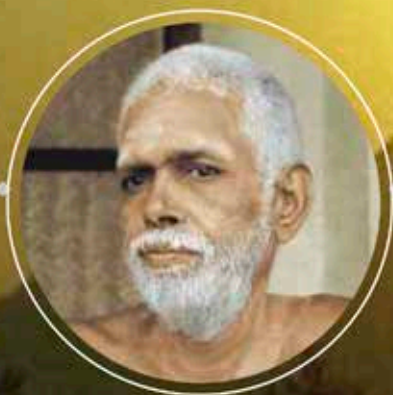


June 2018



# The Ramana Way

A Monthly Journal published by  
Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning  
Bengaluru

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We request members for the quarter and those who have not renewed last year to kindly send in their renewal amount of Rs.240/- at the earliest.

# 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*

Journal started by:	Sri. A.R.Natarajan, Founder President, RMCL
Printed & Published by:	Sarada Natarajan on behalf of <b>Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning, Ramana Maharshi Heritage Building, Post office Road, Sanjaynagar, Bangalore - 560094</b> Ph:(080)23514930, (080)42061951 Direct Fax:23512640
Managing Editor:	Revathi Sankar +919448853748
E-mail:	office@ramanacentre.com, ramanaway@ramanacentre.com
Website:	ramanacentre.com, ramanamusic.com
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**Editorial***Dr. Sarada*

What is self-enquiry? Self-enquiry is an enquiry that must spontaneously well forth within when there is a true and intense doubt about one's real nature. When I am hit by the fact that I do not know myself then the question is bound to rise within me, 'Who am I?' The question will rise, it need not be asked. The question 'Who am I?' springs from doubting one's own identity. If one is to ask what a doubt is or how is one to doubt someone what should our answer be? The seed of doubt may be sown in someone's mind by another but the doubt itself needs to take root and sprout within the individual leading to the enquiry. If for some reason the seed that is sown is not watered and nurtured the enquiry will not become manifest. It may either wither away or simply remain dormant.

Let us look at some instances where such an enquiry springs up. The question 'Who is this person?' being asked by another or the question 'Who am I?' being asked by the individual happens in cases of mistaken identities. In many of our movies we have stories wherein the hero or the heroine is a prince or a princess who has been lost in childhood unknown to all except to one or two key players. The child grows up as an ordinary citizen, roughing it out among the laity. However, at one point in the story, as it must be, there is an urgent need for finding the lost prince or the princess on account of the throne falling empty or into bad hands. Then the enquiry begins.

But this enquiry is from outside, by someone else 'Who is the prince or the princess?' Nonetheless, there must come another point in the story when suddenly there will spring up some clue, some revelation about the actual origin of the character. Then the enquiry will take an altogether more intense turn as to who this person really is, looking at every pointer that reveals that the present identity is false and that the original identity was different. Finally when the truth is revealed to the actual person, their own enquiry will begin. Their inner and outer tussle between their two identities will happen and finally one will be accepted as real.

Or else there may be the story pertaining to amnesia where an accident or a knock on the head has brought about loss of memory. Another twist in the story, another knock on the head, old memories return but they are hazy still. In the confusion between the present identity and the old one the question 'Who am I?' would arise. One may also wonder as to which identity one should actually stick with. Though the character may continue to remain with the new identity, it would be with a sense that this identity is false, I am not this person, I am actually someone else. Ultimately the story will lead to an unveiling of the false and the revelation of the true identity.

There could be the case of mental aberrations which are variations of amnesia. There could be regression where one suddenly becomes a baby or a child. Or hallucinations may arise where one sees oneself as someone else. One may even assume several different identities at the same time with each identity being unaware of the existence of the other. Or one may take oneself to be a dog or a cat or a donkey, perhaps depending on one's own propensities. In such an instance medical help is sought by others to help the individual regain the original identity. With good luck one may come out of the temporary spell. One may also have spells of clarity and spells of return to illusion and the transition would be made only through enquiry.

We have the story of Ahalya being cursed by her husband, the sage Gautama, to become a stone. Ramana has clarified that this is not a physical transformation. It means that she forgot the Self, she became jada, rock-like in her understanding and behaviour. What happened when Rama set foot in their Asram? Awareness of her real nature blossomed. In that instance it was an instantaneous transition back to the true nature by the powerful manifestation of grace. There was no enquiry required. But there is another part of this story which many of us may not know. This is narrated by Ramana himself as part of the hoary legend of Tiruchuzhi.

The sage Gautama too underwent the impact of a curse. For, before becoming a rock Ahalya remonstrated, 'You mindless sage! You have cursed me without enquiring into the reason for this occurrence and verifying whether I was truly guilty of the

offence that you think I was. Tell me when I will be relieved of my curse.' Gautama tells her that the touch of Rama's feet will free her from her curse. He leaves the Asram and as he journeys he finds that his mind has lost all clarity, it has become clouded and restless. He realises it is on account of Ahalya's implied curse in the words 'You mindless sage'.

Gautama too had thereby lost his original identity, wherein his mind was clear and abiding in peace. When he discovered that this was the case the question automatically sprang up in him, 'Why is this so?' It was on enquiring that he could go back to the origin of the change in his identity. Then he knew the source of the problem and being a sage he knew the remedy too. He realised that it was only when he beheld the dance of Siva, the Nataraja Tandava, that he would be free from the curse of Ahalya. And what indeed is this dance of Nataraja but the awareness of Siva's presence as the dynamic movement of the entire universe? It is what Ramana describes as the Sahaja Nishta, the natural state of being in the Self when nothing is seen apart from it. If nothing is seen as apart from the Self, then where is the question of wrong doing, where is room for anger or restlessness or loss of clarity?

Sage Gautama went to Chidambaram, the limitless space of consciousness as the name signifies, to behold this universal dance of Siva. Yet, he was redirected to Tiruchuzhi. He was promised that he would behold the Dancing Lord in that sacred place. What is Tiruchuzhi? It is the place of the sacred whirlpool, that whirlpool which will draw into itself the flooding waters that threaten to swallow the earth. It is the whirlpool created by Siva's trident piercing the earth and thereafter Siva is known there as Bhuminatha, the Lord of the Bhumi or earth. What are the flooding waters but the thoughts that completely swallow us? What is the trident of Siva but the piercing weapon of self-enquiry? And when this trident graciously pierces us the flooding waters of thoughts are drawn into the heart. Thereafter, Siva, the Self shines supreme in this body, which is known as the Bhumi or the earth.

This is the state which Ramana describes in the 'Upadesa Saram' as 'vinditi iha jeevastu deivikaha'

Attaining here and now,  
The highest happiness,  
Transcending freedom and harness,  
Exists the person of Godliness.\*

And it is said that no sooner did Gautama Muni set foot in Tiruchuzhi, his mind became crystal clear. He performed penance with this clear mind and beheld the glorious dance of Lord Nataraja after which he returned to his Asrama. Ahalya too had been freed of her curse by the dust of Rama's feet. Both Gautama and Ahalya came to Tiruchuzhi and were blessed with a vision of the wedding of Lord Siva with Gauri.

The story of Gautama narrated by Ramana reveals to us the process of self-enquiry. First comes our recognition that we have fallen into confusion, that there is no clarity in our understanding. I cannot be what I have taken myself to be because of so many experiences in my life which belie this. Believing that I am a body has thrown me into confusion and has rendered me restless in trying to constantly fulfil the needs of the body.

However, this body is continuously changing from when I was a mere cell in my mother's womb till the present moment. How then can I say I am this body? Even awareness of the nature of my body keeps changing, that too within the span of every twenty four hours. I assume a different body in my dreams and have no body at all in deep sleep. How can I be this body?

Even in the few hours that I am awake I do not really even know what is happening in my body to claim that I am the body. I have no clue about the functions of the vital organs or the movement of blood. I am not even for the most part conscious of my breathing which is the most visible part of my bodily functions. My image of my own body does not include the skeletal or the muscular systems, the blood and the pus and the gore. It is merely an image that I behold with my eyes.

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\*Translation by G.Kameshwar in the book 'Ramana Darshana Trayi' carrying the introductions to and verse translations of the three works 'Arunachala Aksharamanamalai', 'Ulladu Narpadu' and 'Upadesa Undiyar'.



My awareness of my body is only that of a nebulous boundary most of the time. Only when there is pain or when there is a pleasant sensation in some part of the body do I become aware of that part. And then I become, at that instant, my eyes or my nose or my ears or my tongue or my hands. The next instant, as and when another powerful sensation arises, I become that sense or that part of the body. When I have a headache I become the head, after a good meal, I become my stomach and so on. I can equally, therefore, exist without my eyes or my ears or my hands or my legs or without a kidney or an ovary. I can even change my gender from man to woman! What to say of being this body or any body when the body itself is absolutely changeable?

Am I then the breath, or the senses, or the mind or the intellect, if I am not the body? How can I be any of these if I am not a body as each and every one of these is dependent on my being a body? If I am not a body can I have a breath? If I am not a body can I have sense organs or sensations? If I am not a body where is room for the mind or the intellect? Is not the mind only the thought 'I am a body'? When there is no body where can such a thought arise? Hence when I understand that I cannot be a body which I have wrongly assumed I am, automatically all identifications will have to fall off as they are all completely dependent on the body notion.

If I become aware that I am not the body, then who will remain even to declare that I am not the body? Who is to deny or affirm? Who is to enquire? Thus as the sense of doubt about one's identity deepens it keeps cutting away at every identity even as it rises until one finally gets established in the pure silence of one's true nature free from all identities. The question 'Who am I?' is initially asked only by the one who is identified. It is identity questioning itself. Ramana says in his last composition 'Ekanma Panchakam' (Five Verses on the One Self), self-enquiry is like one in a state of drunken stupor asking himself, 'Who am I? Where am I?' Some have even said that Ramana has laughed at the method of self-enquiry by equating it to questions asked in a state of drunkenness. On the other hand, Ramana is actually laughing, if at all, at our stupor and pointing out that if we have thus become drunk with identity we cannot help but ask ourselves who we are.

The wonder is that even when we ask ourselves 'Who am I?' even in a state of drunkenness, our doubt is about our identity, never about our existence. We never do ask, nor can we, 'Do I exist?' Whether I have 'forgotten myself' or 'remember myself', whether I enquire or do not enquire and remain in illusion, I exist. In the 'Forty Verses on Reality' Ramana gives the story of the ten fools who wrongly thought that one of them was lost. This was because each time they took a head count the one who was counting invariably forgot to count himself. Ramana says that when the tenth man was taken to be lost, when they searched for him with loving concern and when he was ultimately joyously 'rediscovered', all along he was there. He was never missing at all.

To be struck repeatedly with the awareness that one is not what one has taken oneself to be and to keep questioning one's identity is the process of self-enquiry. As each thought arises one becomes instantly and acutely aware that this is a thought for me, it is an experience that is related to my identity with a body, but this is not the truth, 'Who am I?'

Gradually, the question leads us to try and fix attention on that nebulous entity who is declaring 'I this' 'I that', that entity which is hiding behind every experience manifesting as thought. Thus enquiry deepens until the awareness dawns that there is no such entity. As Sri A.R.Natarajan says, "One has to ask oneself the question, 'Which is the light which enables the seer to see this world of creation?' If this question is posed to oneself it would be seen that the individual, the objects and the world can exist only if that light falls on the mind of the seer."

Then the enquiry leads us to the source of the ego, to the very source of the 'I'-thought, whereupon the identity gets absorbed there and the Self reigns supreme.



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## **HOLISTIC MEDITATION\*** *A. R. Natarajan*

### **Unitary Perception:**

Holistic Meditation enables one to have a unitary perception. The unitary perception is the opposite of dualistic perception. When the mind is fragmented by thoughts it can think only in terms of pairs of opposites, good-bad, ignorant-wise, rich-poor and so on. In such a dualistic vision the body, mind and the Self are seen as three separate entities. The dualism of the mind springs from the de-linking of the mind from the source of light, the Heart which happens in the waking and dream states. Consequently one comes to believe that the body is self-conscious or that the mind is self-conscious or that both the body and mind are self-conscious. This results in one being aware of the multiple variety of forms in this universe, ignoring the underlying single unitary source of energy gushing in the spiritual heart.

### **The Ramana Way and True Vision:**

The Ramana Way restores to us the true vision of oneness of the energy source by locating it in the spiritual heart and providing the seeker a means to search and discover for oneself this central light within. To the extent to which one is successful in Holistic Meditation, the seeds of a new transformed life would be sown. Meditation would then embrace life as a whole and not be limited to the short period set apart to be free from thoughts and relate to the Supreme at that time.

### **The Light, the Seer and the Seen:**

We find that Ramana takes us through this unitary vision by placing before us certain fundamental truths. Beginning with the heart-centre he then takes us through the vast panorama of variety, the variegated world with millions of life forms and nature's infinite splendour. One has to ask oneself the question, 'Which is the

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

light which enables the seer to see this world of creation?' If this question is posed to oneself it would be seen that the individual, the objects and the world can exist only if that light falls on the mind of the seer. Ramana gives an analogy of the cinema theatre. In the theatre there is a projector, the film which is being projected and the screen on which it is projected. None of them can function unless light is focussed through the projector. For all life the essence is the ever-conscious light of the heart. This fact should not be forgotten and must be kept in clear focus by one following the path of Holistic Meditation.

Some examples: To drive home this point, Ramana gives the example of gold and gold ornaments both in the 'Forty Verses' and in his last composition 'Five Hymns on the Self'. Ordinarily one may see only the different forms of the ornaments like necklace, bangles, ear-rings and so on. But can they exist without gold? The goldsmith is aware and goes only by the weight of the gold. The other example is that of a sugar doll sold in a village shanty. A child would ask for the elephant or the deer not knowing that all the dolls are made of sugar and cannot be made without them. Likewise one who forgets the essence will perceive only division and variety. For the jnani however, divine light would be seen in all forms without losing sight of the truth that it is "limitless embracing the mind, the body and the world".

### **The 'Know – How' of the Unitary Approach:**

First and foremost one has to recognise the importance of such a unitary approach since it alone holds the key to a fully awakened mind and the bliss of natural joy. Secondly and perhaps equally important is the need to understand the mind and its essential nature. For this Ramana gives one an insight by drawing one's attention to what he calls, "The daily miracle about the mind" viz.; the daily disappearance of mind in deep sleep and its rising again on waking. The fact that the fatigued mind gets re-energised during sleep should also be remembered. Logically one can infer that the mind has linked itself to the centre, the Heart in deep sleep. Hence Ramana says in his Forty Verses, "God illumines the mind and shines within it".

**The Quest – Diving within:**

The existence of a treasure trove of happiness within is squarely placed before us. It is only logical that the best use of the mind's power would be to search for or quest for, this fountain of life. Hence in Ramana literature we find the expression, 'Margana', or search. Its importance is stressed over and over again. The search here is by the mind in the waking state for its own place of origin.

Perhaps the example of one using the T.V. 'Remote' for search of a particular channel of his choice would be apt. If the cable operator has made some changes or when some new channels have been added one has to search to locate the particular channel of his choice. Here the mind's search is for its own place of origin. Ramana gives the analogy of a dog tracing its master by a single means of identification known to it; his smell. It would not know whether its master is tall or short, fat or lean but it would certainly not miss his scent. Likewise the scent of its own origin, its own conscious nature would be imbedded in the mind. This would make it possible for one to be successful in the search.

Another familiar expression used by Ramana is to dive within, just as a swimmer would dive to the depths of a pool by using the diving board so too should one use the mind's power itself, its conscious nature, to dive within to discover the hidden treasure, the divine current in the heart.

*\*\* to be continued \*\**

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## The 'Talks' as a Guidance to Self Enquiry

N.Nandakumar

### Talk 26 (Excerpt) SELF REALISATION BY ELIMINATION OF MIND

D.: How shall we discover the nature of the mind i.e., its ultimate cause, or the noumenon of which it is a manifestation?

M.: Arranging thoughts in the order of value, the 'I' thought is the all-important thought. Personality-idea or thought is also the root or the stem of all other thoughts, since each idea or thought arises only as someone's thought and is not known to exist independently of the ego. The ego therefore exhibits thought-activity. The second and the third persons do not appear except to the first person. Therefore they arise only after the first person appears, so all the three persons seem to rise and sink together. Trace, then, the ultimate cause of 'I' or personality. The 'I' idea arises to an embodied ego and should be related to a body or organism. Has it a location in the body or a special relation to any particular spot, as speech which has its centre in the brain or amateness in the brain? Similarly, has 'I' got any centre in the brain, blood, or viscera? Thought-life is seen to centre round the brain and the spinal-cord which in turn are fed by the blood circulating in them, carrying food and air duly mixed up which are transformed into nerve matter. Thus, vegetative life - including circulation, respiration, alimentation, etc. - or vital force, is said to be (or reside in) the core or essence of the organism. Thus the mind may be regarded as the manifestation of vital force which again may be conceived as residing in the Heart.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Life force resides in everything. Plants sustain life energy in animals, including man. Plants, in turn, draw life force not only from the Sun but also from minerals and salts present in soil and stone. Phenomenon or world is thus only a manifestation of mind or life force present in greater or smaller measure all through matter. Mind or thought energy arises with the "I" thought. Taking the "I" thought to the Source or Heart takes one to the Source of all Phenomenon - the Noumenon or Supreme Being or God.*

**Talk 26 (Excerpt) SELF REALISATION BY ELIMINATING THE MIND**

D.: Now for the art of eliminating the mind and developing intuition in its stead, are they two distinct stages with a possible neutral ground which is neither mind nor intuition? Or does the absence of mental activity necessarily involve Self-Realisation?

M.: To the abhyasi (practitioner) there are two distinctive stages. There is a neutral ground of sleep, coma, faint, insanity, etc., in which the mental operations either do not exist or consciousness of Self does not prevail.

D.: Taking the first part first, how is the mind to be eliminated or relative consciousness transcended?

M.: The mind is by nature restless. Begin liberating it from its restlessness; give it peace; make it free from distractions; train it to look inward; make this a habit. This is done by ignoring the external world and removing the obstacles to peace of mind.

D.: How is restlessness removed from the mind?

M.: External contacts - contacts with objects other than itself - make the mind restless. Loss of interest in non-Self (vairagya) is the first step. Then the habits of introspection and concentration follow. They are characterised by control of external senses, internal faculties, etc. (sama, dama, etc.) ending in samadhi (undistracted mind).

**GUIDANCE RECEIVED:**

*Q: In sadhana there are three phases to be experienced by the sadhaka - mind occupied with non-self, mind freed from non-self consciously in sadhana and mind freed of non-self without accompanying consciousness as in sleep, faint etc. One has to consciously free the mind from the non-self till the Self is realised. Ashtanga Yoga too is based on freeing the mind of the non-self and brings the abhyasi to self enquiry and Samadhi in due course.*

*Without completing the sadhana of controlling the senses etc., could I take up Self Enquiry?*

*A: Surely. Self enquiry will eventually bless all the benefits of Ashtanga Yoga too. When the mind is eliminated through enquiry is there a controller or even the controlled?*

**Talk 27 SELF REALISATION THROUGH ATMA VICHARA, BHAKTI, YOGA OR KARMA**

D.: How are they (sadhanas for withdrawal of mind from objects) practised?

M.: (ATMA VICHARA) An examination of the ephemeral nature of external phenomena leads to vairagya. Hence enquiry (vichara) is the first and foremost step to be taken. When vichara continues automatically, it results in a contempt for wealth, fame, ease, pleasure, etc. The 'I' thought becomes clearer for inspection. The source of 'I' is the Heart - the final goal.

(BHAKTI) If, however, the aspirant is not temperamentally suited to Vichara Marga (to the introspective analytical method), he must develop bhakti (devotion) to an ideal - may be God, Guru, humanity in general, ethical laws, or even the idea of beauty. When one of these takes possession of the individual, other attachments grow weaker, i.e., dispassion (vairagya) develops. Attachment for the ideal simultaneously grows and finally holds the field. Thus ekagrata (concentration) grows simultaneously and imperceptibly - with or without visions and direct aids.

(YOGA) In the absence of enquiry and devotion, the natural sedative pranayama (breath regulation) may be tried. This is known as Yoga Marga. If life is imperilled the whole interest centres round the one point, the saving of life. If the breath is held the mind cannot afford to (and does not) jump at its pets - external objects. Thus there is rest for the mind so long as the breath is held. All attention being turned on breath or its regulation, other interests are lost. Again, passions are attended with irregular breathing, whereas calm and happiness are attended with slow and regular breathing. Paroxysm of joy is in fact as painful as one of pain, and both are accompanied by ruffled breaths. REAL PEACE IS HAPPINESS. Pleasures do not form happiness. The mind improves by practice and becomes finer just as the razor's edge is sharpened by stropping. The mind is then better able to tackle internal or external problems.

(KARMA) If an aspirant be unsuited temperamentally for the first two methods and circumstantially (on account of age) for the



third method, he must try the Karma Marga (doing good deeds, for example, social service). His nobler instincts become more evident and he derives impersonal pleasure. His smaller self is less assertive and has a chance of expanding its good side. The man becomes duly equipped for one of the three aforesaid paths. HIS INTUITION MAY ALSO DEVELOP DIRECTLY BY THIS SINGLE METHOD

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: By concluding that Self Realisation can happen by Karma Marga alone too, Bhagavan assures that no path is greater or smaller. Whatever the sadhana, sincerity in practice is the key.*

*Q: How does Karma Marga, say, serving my family or nation, help withdraw the mind from the external objects? Do I not engage external objects more rather than less?*

*A: When engaging with external objects for the benefit of what the mind has divided as "others", it removes the lopsided attachment to the "I". Though engagement with external objects may be the same or more, the internal object of "selfish pleasure" is evened out with "happiness of others". Eventually one realises what Bhagavan teaches that whatever one gives to others, one gives to oneself only.*

## **Talk 27 PRACTICE**

D.: Can a line of thought or a series of questions (For whom is this thought? Who am I?) induce Self-hypnotism? Should it not be reduced to a single point analysing the unanalysable, elementary and vaguely perceived and elusive 'I'?

M.: Yes. It is really like gazing into vacancy or a dazzling crystal or light.

D.: Can the mind be fixed to that point? How?

M.: If the mind is distracted, ask the question promptly, "To whom do these distracting thoughts arise?" That takes you back to the 'I' point promptly.

D.: How long can the mind stay or be kept in the Heart?

M.: The period extends by practice.

D.: What happens at the end of the period?

M.: The mind returns to the present normal state. Unity in the Heart is replaced by variety of phenomena perceived. This is called the outgoing mind. The heart-going mind is called the resting mind.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: What begins as the analytical enquiry of "For whom is this thought? Who am I?" which is stilling of the mind thought by thought, matures into ATTENDING TO THE "I" or "SELF ATTENTION" or "SUMMA IRU". The period of SUMMA IRU increases with practice and SELF ENQUIRY is used as support to put aside distraction of thought and returning to SUMMA IRU. This period of "sadhana" alternates with outward-turned mind. One should continue the sadhana till the mind is absorbed in the Heart.*

### **Talk 27 (Excerpt) SELF ENQUIRY WITH GURU BHAKTI**

D.: How do all thoughts cease when the mind is in the Heart?

M.: By force of will, with strong faith in the truth of the Master's teaching to that effect.

D.: What is the good of this process?

M.: (a) Conquest of the will - development of concentration. (b) Conquest of passions - development of dispassion. (c) Increased practice of virtue - (samatva) equality to all.

D.: Why should one adopt this self-hypnotism by thinking on the unthinkable point? Why not adopt other methods like gazing into light, holding the breath, hearing music, hearing internal sounds, repetition of the sacred syllable (Pranava) or other mantras?

M.: Light-gazing stupefies the mind and produces catalepsy of the will for the time being, yet secures no permanent benefit. Breath control benumbs the will for the time being only. Sound-hearing produces similar results - unless the mantra is sacred and secures the help of a higher power to purify and raise the thoughts.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: One can take up Self Enquiry directly and that leads to Self Realisation by conquest of the ego. However, one can take up Self Enquiry out of Reverence for RAMANA SADGURU. Bhagavan, in this answer, then takes up the role of the Sadguru and reveals the good that will emerge out of Self Enquiry (conquest of will, dispassion and equanimity) and why Self Enquiry is the supreme sadhana.*

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## Ramana Darshana Trayi – Ulladu Narpadu (Part 2)

*G Kameshwar*

Now, with prayers to ‘That’ Lord Almighty, let us explore the Second invocatory verse of uLLadu nARpadu

maraNabaya mikkuLavam makkaLara Naka  
maranabhava millA makEshan – sharaName  
chArvartan chArvoTutAn chAvuRRAr chavenNan  
chArvarO chAVA tavar

Meaning:

When those who are in dread of death seek refuge at the feet of the deathless, birthless Lord Supreme, their ego and attachments die, and they, now deathless, think no more of death.<sup>1</sup>

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

maraNabaya mikku uLa

Those who are stricken with fear of death

ammakkaL

Folks with pure heart

maraNabavam illA

One who has neither death nor birth

araN Aka

That which is a protective fortress

makEsan saraName chArvar

Verily surrender at the feet of Lord Almighty (Maheshan)

tam chArvoTu

Along with their bondages

tAm chAvuRRAr

Will die their sense of a separate individuality

chAvAtavar chAveNNam chArvarO

No more subject to death, will they ever again worry about death?

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<sup>1</sup> Translation from “Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi”

### Deliberations on the verse:

A person who is sleeping soundly, seeing pleasant dreams, has no desire to wake up. And when experiencing routine unpleasantness, one does not wake up either; or even if one wakes up, one quickly goes back to sleep to continue with the dream, and hope that it comes to a pleasant end. Whereas, if he or she has a nightmare, some terror experience in the dream, a '*simha-svapna*<sup>2</sup>' literally, then he or she will wake up immediately, and stay awake. Fear is the motivation to abandon, there and then, that state of dream.

It is the experience of Bhagavan that this world experience is not real. This wakeful experience of the world is as real as a dream. But so long as we have routine pleasant or unpleasant experiences, we have no reason to abandon this state. We carry on in the same vein, winding our cocoon of memories and desires, thinking that this is the best state, a real state, where we will somehow get happiness. Nothing shakes us from thinking that life as usual is a good thing. A good state.

However, there is one fear, which is state-shaking. It is the fear of Death. When we have a close encounter with death, we are state-shaken.

It can be the death of some near and dear. Whereupon, there does come a state of deep dispassion, a distaste for the world, a state of questioning, a quest for some unknown that is 'not ever touched by sadness'. But for most of us, this does not last. Soon one is back into the clutch of sense experiences, pleasant or otherwise, and all dispassion and discrimination is gone with the wind.

There are a few, who upon seeing death, embark on the 'great departure', shunning this world of sense experience, and go seeking the state that is not in the grips of time or death. Prince Siddharth of Lumbini was one of such persons, and he went on to become Buddha, the enlightened.

There was Bhagavan Ramana too, who as a young boy of sixteen, had a sudden encounter with death. In his case, he had to go nowhere. He was enlightened, here and now. His experience was instantly transformational, and he was rid of the limited sense of "I", this notion that one is the body-mind apparatus, once and

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2 Simha svapna – A lion appearing one's dream.

for all. He does mention that he was seized by fear, but he decided to face it and figure out what it was, enquire - do *vichara*. He also says that it was all instantaneous. Realization came in a flash.

In the second *mangalam* verse of uLLatu nARpatu, Bhagavan says that when a person, who is gripped by the fear of death, *surrenders totally* to Lord Almighty, then, his sense of distinct individual existence (as an individual being who is apart from the Lord) dies once and for all. And the Lord is deathless. Now that the Lord alone remains, who is to worry about death anymore?

Let us see what Bhagavan Ramana has said about his "great awakening":

He says<sup>3</sup>:

"It was in 1896, about 6 weeks before I left Madurai for good (to go to Tiruvannamalai - Arunachala) that this great change in my life took place.

I was sitting alone in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. I seldom had any sickness and on that day there was nothing wrong with my health, but a sudden violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it nor was there any urge in me to find out whether there was any account for the fear. I just felt I was going to die and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor or any elders or friends. I felt I had to solve the problem myself then and there.

The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: 'Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' And at once I dramatized the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out still as though rigor mortis has set in, and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, and that neither the word 'I' nor any word could be uttered.

'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burn and reduced to ashes. But with the death of the body, am I dead? Is the body I? It is silent and inert, but I feel the full force of my personality

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3 Extract from "Self Realization", by BV Narasimha Swami

and even the voice of I within me, apart from it. So I am the Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the spirit transcending it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless Spirit.'

All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as a living truth which I perceived directly almost without thought process. I was something real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with the body was centered on that I. From that moment onwards, the 'I' or Self focused attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death vanished once and for all. The ego was lost in the flood of Self-awareness. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time. Other thought might come and go like the various notes of music, but the 'I' continued like the fundamental S'ruti note which underlies and blends with all other notes."

In the book 'My Reminiscences' by Sri Balarama Reddy, Bhagavan is reported to have said to him "They say I gained realisation in twenty-eight minutes, or half an hour. How can they say that? It took just a moment. But why even a moment? Where is the question of time at all?"

Sri Reddy then asked Bhagavan if there was ever any change in his realisation after his experience in Madurai. He said 'No. If there is a change, it is not realisation.'

In Bhagavan's case, the Fear of Death drove Him to keen Atma-Vichara, and He had the 'great awakening' in a flash.

This experience of Bhagavan finds its reflection in the second 'mangaLam' verse of uLLatu nARpatu, where he puts it forward as an insight into the way of Surrender – prapatti, sharaNam...

When we read Ramana literature, we do see that he clearly says there are two basic ways to Jnana – the way of Self-Enquiry and the way of Surrender...These are two distinct ways.

About the path of 'Surrender', Bhagavan says to a devotee<sup>4</sup>:

"Leave it to Him. Surrender unreservedly. One of two things must be done. Either surrender because you admit your inability and also require a Higher Power to help you; or investigate into

the cause of misery, go into the source and merge into the Self. Either way you will be free from misery. God never forsakes one who has surrendered. "*mAmEkam sharanam vraja*".

In another conversation, he explains the concept of God's Grace to a devotee<sup>5</sup>:

"Yes, Grace is both the beginning and the end. Introversion is due to Grace: Perseverance is Grace: and Realization is Grace. That is the reason for the statement *mAmEkam sharanam vraja*. If one has entirely surrendered oneself, is there any part left to ask for Grace? One is swallowed by Grace".

We do see that the act of 'sharanam' that Bhagavan speaks of is a complete handover to a Higher power. The devotee keeps nothing with himself. After surrender, he will fully abide by Gods will. Such a devotee has no personal will left. No desires. No independence from God....

In the MangaLam verse 2, Bhagavan says: When a person is seized by an intense fear of death, let him surrender unreservedly to the Lord Almighty - Mahesan. Thereupon, he is swallowed in the Lords Grace, for God never forsakes one who surrenders. Once the devotee is swallowed, he has no sense of "I" or "mine" anymore. This is real death. A death, after which there is no birth of "individuality". No more question of death at all. No one left to die. No misery. There is only that Mahesan - Lord Almighty. Reality-Consciousness-Bliss.

This is what Kabir says: "Kabir, die in such a way, that you never have to die again."

So, in this manner, in the second invocatory verse of uLLatu nArpatu, the way of devotional surrender to a Supreme Deity is introduced.

**Saddarshanam***Master Nome*

Another Q.: As I am listening, meditating while you are speaking, I realize that there still is misidentification. When I inquire as to who has misidentification with the body and who is the one who somehow thinks there is misidentification left, it starts to fade. It is hard to keep the idea that there may be somebody who has some misidentification with the body.

N.: Is the one who supposedly has it a body?

Q.: I don't think he is anything.

N.: If the one who might become misidentified is not the body, how much more so not the body is the real Self ? If even the jiva is not the body, certainly Siva is not the body, and this can be understood even before resolving the jiva.

Q.: It is very hard to think I can be a body. I can think it, but that does not make it so. The more that I try to make it so, the more obvious it becomes that it is not going to happen.

N.: You cannot truly become the body. Bodilessness is the natural state and not something we become. Knowledge simply reveals it. It does not transform you from a body into a bodiless state. The Knowledge just reveals the fact. The vast Vision revealed here by the Maharshi, shining everywhere at all times, yet appearing nowhere and at no time, is self-evident for the bodiless.

Q.: What you just said points out a mistake in my approach, and that is, "If I am the body, how do I get out of being the body?" Similar to what was commented upon about time, it is an approach of some kind of mental contraption that I am attempting to use to get out of the contraption that I have made. I can't get there, because I am trying to make up something that isn't real, saying that this something is real, and then thinking that, somehow, I am going to get out of this "real" place to some place that is more real.



N.: You do not change places. You just find out how unreal your former imagination is. You un-realize all that you were previously realizing.

Q.: So, it is really self-un-realization. (laughter)

N.: Yes. The Maharshi has indicated that. All we have to do is unrealize what we have regarded as real. Speaking of realization is only a formality. If you are never the body, and if that which presently and always exists is bodiless Being, space and time are not measurements of you, and whatever appears in time and space cannot be your definition. Nowhere you shine; everywhere you shine. At no time do you shine; at all times you shine.

Q.: Stating “at no time” and “all time” does not mean that time is real, does it?

N.: He said, “Where shines, or appears, talk of space and time without us? The play of space and time, here, is if we are the body. Nowhere we shine, or appear, at no time we shine, or appear, but we everywhere and always shine.”

Another Q.: Is that a new translation of Bhagavan's words? I do not recall it in those words.

N.: What do you recall the verse as saying?

Q.: I am just wondering whether you are clarifying things, as we go along, from the printed edition.

N.: This is printed.

Q.: I meant previously printed.

N.: It is fairly literal. Kva bhati, where shines, in the third person singular, dik, direction or space, kala, time, katha, talk, vina, without, asman, us. I do not know if a more literal translation is possible. That is the first line of this verse. Do you have questions about the other lines?

Q.: I wonder, if I look at the previous printed edition, whether or not I will find those exact words.

N.: It depends upon at which printed edition you look. There are numerous excellent translations of the text.

Q.: But do they discuss shine in that way?

N.: Does someone have another edition here now? As what are they translating bhati, bhamo, and bhamah?

Another Q.: Here is the translation from the Tamil version.

N.: In this translation from the Tamil version, one can see the word “exist” instead of “shine.” Someone who is fluent in Tamil must look into the scholastic details of this. This translation is from the Sanskrit. Naturally, I would assume that Ganapati knew what he was doing when he translated it into Sanskrit, especially since Ramana's hand was also on the text, overseeing the Sanskrit translation and going over it in fine detail.

Both terms are fine and will do. If you want to exist, rather than shine, continue existing. If you like shining, rather than existing, continue shining. They amount to the same. If you want to both shine and exist, as Consciousness-Being, here, you can feel free to do so. (laughter)

Another Q.: All misidentification is in the mind. The misidentification with the body is only thought of in the mind.

N.: Yes, the misidentification with the body does not occur for the body. It is inert and quite innocent. So, in spiritual practice, we do not do anything to the body, for it has not caused any problem.

Q.: It is weird that we think that we are something objective, such as the body.

N.: Yes, that is weird. (laughter) I agree. Obviously, our nature is Consciousness, and we always exist and, also, always shine.

(laughter) This is known even by those who say that they only exist. (laughter)

Another Q.: We could have Shine-ites and Exist-ites. (laughter)

N.: Two different sects? (laughter)

Previous Q.: So, the mind lays claim to the body as being itself. Then, there is the idea that the body is who I am, even though it is just a rotting thing.

N.: Yes, if the mind sees it as that, it quickly renounces it. The mind can be regarded as the illusory connection. The Maharshi says so in another verse. It is the illusory connection between the Reality of pure Consciousness and the inert body. It borrows the reality and identity from Being, or Consciousness, and ties it together with the form of the body, and this appears as the mind, or the individual being. This is the misidentification. The odd thing about the misidentification is, if we examine it, it disappears before us. We find that there is no mind or particularized being. There is no such connection. Breaking this illusory knot is simply a matter of inquiry. The more we inquire, the less of a knot there is.

Q.: If I have an ego, I have time. Is that right?

N.: Certainly, when there are thoughts appended to the ego, there is the notion of time. Generally, two thoughts are required to conceive of time.

Q.: Thoughts appear in multiplicity and in groups, inclusive of the ideas of being the body and the mind.

N.: Even if an entire herd of thoughts go wandering by, inquiry reveals that none of them are you. You are that which always exists and shines. You are always Consciousness. You are always Existence. You are never the conceived. You are never caught up in the conceiving. You are never the individualized conceiver. The triad is not for you.

Q.: Yes, this seems to be what the verse is about. Anything that is not space-like is not I, who have no form or shape.

N.: As the Maharshi instructs, simply by realizing that we are not the body, the All-pervading and the Ever-present, the Timeless and the Spaceless, is revealed as our own nature. Considering yourself as a body is an attempt to squish the Eternal into a brief moment of time, called a lifetime, and to reduce the Infinite to a very small speck. It is just not true; nor is it really possible. That which is supposedly experienced from the “I am the body” position is like a short dream.

Q.: Yes, it is like a dream. Even, in illusion, it is momentary and does not last.

N.: Yes. First, there is the assumption of the individual. The individuality cannot stand alone, so it takes a form. That form is a body. From within the embodied position, time and space, even on a vast scale, are dreamed. Then, the illusion continues, and some small point in that vast scale of time and space is picked as our place and as our time. Then, we call that little speck, “us,” and think that we are bound. Unravel it.

Q.: Attending satsang unravels it. It is questioned, and there is meditation upon the true nature. The illusion already has holes in it, and more holes are made in it. There is something deeper than the illusion.

N.: Go on inquiring, until you find that illusion is only holes and that it has no substance. Reality, which is deeper than the illusion, remains self-revealed.

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## Shri Arunachala Padikam

*Eleven Verses on Arunachala  
Of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*

*G Kameshwar*

### Verse - 2

*anpuru aruNA calavazhan mezhugA  
yagattunai ninaintunain turuku  
manpili yenakkun nanpinai yaruLA  
tANTenai yazhittiTa lazhakO  
vanpinil viLaiyu minpamE yanpa  
rakattini iURumA ramutE  
yenpuka liTanin niTTmen niTTa  
minpataR kennuyi riRaiyE.*

*Word split, and meaning:*

*anpuru aruNAcala* : O Arunachala, who are the very form of Love!

*azhan mezhukAi* : Like wax that is on fire

*akattu unai ninaintu* : My heart contemplating you alone

*naintu urukum* : softening and melting

*anpu ili enakku* : I, who do not have consummate devotion

*un anpinai aruLAtu* : Without gracing me with (such) love for you

*ANTu enai azhittiTal azhako*: Having taken total control of me, if you were to abandon me to perish now, would it be fair?

*anpinil viLaiyum inpamE* : O happiness, that springs forth and swells from Love

*anpar akattinil URum Ar amutE* : O ambrosia that is never enough; ambrosia that wells up in the heart of true devotees

*en pukaliTa en uyir iRaiyE* : What do I say, O Lord of my life

*nin iTTam en iTTam* : Your wish is my wish

*atu ERku inpu* : That, indeed, is my happiness

*Verse rendering:*

O Arunachala  
Of love form!  
  
With no thought of you,  
My (hard) heart  
Not softening  
With love for you;  
Not melting  
Like wax on fire...

You,  
(it was, who)  
Brought me under your sway  
Without gracing me  
With (such) love for you.

And now,  
Were I to perish,  
Would it be worthy of you?

O happiness  
That sprouts in love!

O Ambrosia  
Welling up in the devotee's heart  
Though never enough to satiate!

What do I say,  
O Lord of my life!

Your wish  
Is my wish;  
And that, indeed, for me,  
Is happiness!

*Prose rendering:*

O Arunachala! You are the very personification of Love! I do not have such love for you, as that of wax softening and melting when put on fire. Indeed, without extending me the grace of such love, you took me under your rulership, making me over to yourself. If you now are indifferent to me, and let me down, making me die – would it be right on your part?

O Arunachala! You are that happiness that springs and swells from Love! You are that un-satiating ambrosia that wells up in the hearts of true devotees! What words shall I lisp, O Lord of my life! Please do just as you wish! Indeed, your wish is my wish too! And in that is my happiness too!

*Notes:*

The second verse of Sri Arunachala Padikam is a re-iteration of the same sentiment expressed in the first.

The devotee pleads with the Lord – ‘I am underserving. On my own, I have not developed loving devotion for you. Neither did you grant me such love. Knowing my lack of love fully well, it is you who made me your own. Now having taken charge of me, if you were to abandon me because I lack love for you, would it be fair? God, if you reject me now, I would just die!

Lord, you are Love personified! Should you not correct my shortcomings, and fill me with melting love for you?

Lord, you are Love that swells in the hearts of devotees, which is such that one is never satisfied however much one has of it.

You are the life of my life, the ruler of my heart! You are the Lord, and I am your obedient slave! What freedom do I have? What, indeed, can I say!

O Master, your wish is my command! Do with me just as you please! Now if you lift me up or let me down, whatever you do, is just fine for me. Whatever you do, is but bliss for me!”

The verse is an expression of complete ‘surrender’. The devotee is clear that on one’s own, one is nothing. One is incapable of that pure, melting love. It is the Lord alone who should be kind enough to grant that love. However, for a ‘surrendered’ devotee, what will is left? Whether the Lord grants pure love or not, it is his sweet will and wish. The devotee only wishes for whatever the Lord wishes, and finds happiness in whatever the Lord wills.

An excerpt from a discourse by Maharajshri Swami Akhandananda Saraswati (1911-1987), the great sage of Vrindavana, is given below. This beautifully conveys the sentiment of

absolute love, where the devotee is feeling the deathly experience of unfulfilled union with the Lord, and yet avers that whatever the Lord wills is not just acceptable to him, but is total happiness for him...

Quote<sup>1</sup>

“Merely by believing in God, one does not become a *bhakta* (devotee) or a *prEmI* (lover of God). It is only when one experiences the taste of union and the sorrow of separation that ‘*prEm rasAyan*’ (the ‘potion’ of love) becomes mature.

And to prepare this ‘*rasAyan*’ (love potion) one has to be prepared to face pain at times and at times iciness. Indeed, when one experiences ‘*viraha*’ (pangs of separateness) from one’s ‘*ishta*’ (beloved God), pain increases with every passing moment. Sometimes one sees death itself...

And then again, at times, this very feeling of desperateness brings about such a state of meditation, that from this ‘*viraha*’ (pain of separateness) there comes forth ‘*samyoga*’ (union)... One’s life-breath becomes fully satiated; every cell in one’s being drowns in the wetness of love; eyes brim with the ‘*rasa*’ of bliss. This is our experience.

When we reflect upon this with a clear mind – that such a state of bliss occurs only after meditation – indeed, only after the experiencing the ‘*rasa*’ of union – then we realize very clearly that it is God’s compassion towards us, God’s deep concern for our welfare, that brings both, the ambrosia of union and the bitterness of separation, and in this process, God is shaping our heart into His mould!

For sure we have to put up with some injuries resulting from hammer strikes that goes into this process of our re-manufacture! Without rubbing and beating, has any diamond been cut and polished to resplendence?

Whoever is in fear of sorrow and pain – such a coward-weakling – has absolutely no right to even step into the path of love of God.

Unquote

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<sup>1</sup> Translated from Hindi

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**Aksharamanamalai***Dr.Sarada*

*tUymanamozhiyar tOyumunmeyaham  
tOyavE aruLen aruNAcala*

Oh Arunachala, by your Grace let me abide in that true source in which those pure of mind and speech revel by ever abiding in it.

Like curdling of milk - pour curds into milk and leave the vessel undisturbed. The curdling happens and we get curds. The vessel should not be disturbed. This is a beautiful example Bhagavan gives us. Through enquiry one must reach the source and stay there undisturbed. He has told us in the earlier verse that enquiry is the greatest gift in our lives. Without self enquiry of what use is this life? What is the purpose of self enquiry? It is to make us abide in the source. tuppavilla ippiRappen payan oppiDa vAyen Arunachala, tUymana mozhiyar tOyumunmeyaham tOyavE aruLen Arunachala.....it is to sink into the source that one needs to hold on to self enquiry. Therefore to abide in the source, to abide in the true nature of Arunachala is the purpose of life. In the previous verse Bhagavan has told us that through tuppavivu - through self enquiry one can attain this highest goal of life. And in this verse he says what he always points out to that through self enquiry and through the complete reliance on the supreme power of Sadguru we get back to our own true nature - to this true source.

Recently Bhagavan gave us an opportunity to go into this question of self enquiry as a team. There was an activity in which each team member had to make some important choices. Each member had to keep one choice out of ten and give away others. Life is also a series of such choices, we are making choices at every point in life. Each experience in life is a choice until we have reached a point where we have given up the one, the 'I', who is making choices for us all the time. Although we may not give much significance, we may not give it much thought but we are making choices continuously in life. So the activity was to understand the importance of making decisions or choices. Before the activity

there was a meeting to discuss the choices to be given to the team - as to whether they should be simple day to day decisions or choices that were pertinent to the whole of life. Finally it was decided that the choices should be the ones pertaining to life. So that even if the team members took the choices playfully it would still have some impact upon them. Every member was serious about the decisions. Some may seem to be less important but it was actually not so.

Some choices were - going to a movie with friends, visiting a dentist, cleaning the house, enhancing one's personal skills, catching up with pending work, looking after family needs, earning lot of money, serving Bhagavan, self enquiry/

2 options were let go at each round, finally each member was left with 3 options. Then came a twist in the activity - it was told sometimes you recognise you cannot make choices, life will make a choice for you, so the member seats next to you will take one of your choices by force. You can in turn take something from them but not choice that was taken away. Some members found it very difficult to let go of their important choices. But then one needs to understand that along with Jnana marga one also should follow the Bhakti marga of surrendering (allowing things to be taken away from us, even what we consider very important). Bhagavan knows what is best for us. This is the aspect of surrender.

After all the exchanges were made 3 slips were still left with every one, two of which were to be given away and each member was left with only one choice. The member had to explain why they held on to that one choice. A very beautiful exercise which Bhagavan gave us. Each person holding on to the slip 'self enquiry' came up with different explanations as to why self enquiry is so important in life. One member said "Actually I had given away this slip of self enquiry and was holding on to others. But when I had to pick one back from my neighbour, self enquiry came back to me. So when it came back to me I felt Bhagavan had given it back to me. At the end I had with me the slips 'serving family', 'serving Bhagavan' and 'self enquiry' and I had to give away one. Today self enquiry has been a revelation in my life because Bhagavan gave it to me. Suppose I choose attending to family, but I am ill

or not able to earn money I may not be able to serve my family or Bhagavan. But even if I am old I can do self enquiry. So I have kept that slip with me in my purse behind Bhagavan's picture."

Thus he came up with a beautiful explanation. There was another member who said he chose self enquiry because though along with it he also loved serving people, Bhagavan says that self enquiry alone will help you to do the greatest service to everybody and it is like the water rising from the sea, getting back to the sea. Bhagavan says that in Ashtakam - Water that rises from the sea - it cannot stop until it gets back to the sea- it is its purpose, it is its home, it is its true nature. Bhagavan says without getting back to our true nature we are restless. No matter what we do we are only trying to get back to our true nature. So we have to do that. But when the river gushes back to the sea, on the way the river helps so many people. Civilisations have been built on the banks of the river. So that is how we can also do service, that is the only way in which we can do service.

Those who had chosen other purposes like serving Bhagavan - this is all inclusive of all things in life. Serving Bhagwan also means surrendering to him, also means doing self enquiry. Because he has asked us to do. So it is all encompassing.

Somebody else had chosen - 'doing pending work'. The person said the most important pending work is getting Self knowledge. So when I do pending work, I can finish all tasks and also have Bhakti Bhava or through self enquiry. One of the youngest team members said he will go out with friends for a film. The explanation was - serving Bhaavan is not within my power alone, serving family is again taken care of by Bhagavan. Bhagavan takes care of everything, I am a little child, so I have no work, so why not go out and enjoy? That person is Ramu - our driver. He had an experience that night when his car passed and a tree fell due to lightening. So he said, see how Bhagavan takes care of all of us. All I have to do is to sit back and enjoy.

This is the wonder of Bhagavan's grace. How has this grace come into our lives - without our searching for it. It is the great treasure of compassion, love. It is the treasure of all

auspiciousness which by its very nature is so full of love that it has entered our lives. Bhagavan's grace it is that he remains ever available to us in every form and specially in the form of the tool of self -enquiry which he has blessed us with.

Each one of us has this fount of love and compassion ever springing within us. Each one of us therefore feels concerned if we see pain around us. If we with our little identities can feel pain what is the love of that Lord for whom there is no purpose other than that love itself? So he is ever available as that treasure or fount which we need not seek. But if only we recognise that it is ever available, it is available. If we do not recognise then it becomes our beholden duty to seek it out in some way or the other because it is a promise that it is holding out to us that it is ever available, that it is our own nature.

OM NAMO BHAGAVATE SRI RAMANAYA



## Ramana is the Way of Ramana

*Shyam Sundar*

Happiness creates happiness and he is always happy whose brain rests in the heart without any purpose.

"The Self is simple being. Be."

"Apart from the seer, there is no seen." Ramana

Apart from simple being, I am not.

Apart from the heart, I do not exist.

Apart from the Self, there is no "me".

Apart from existence feeling, there is no thinker at all.

Complicated thoughts are arising to me. Who am I?

Self in the heart, silence in the heart, not "I"-thought in the brain.

A thinker says 'myself' in the head.

A seeker says 'myself' in the heart (to be there permanently).

"The heart is the Self. Realise it and then you will see for yourself.

There is no need to know where and what the heart is. It will do its work if you engage in the quest for the self."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi.

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## Ramana's Song of Grace - 25

*Revathi Sankar*

We are talking about the songs of praise by different devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. We have been talking about Siva Prakasam Pillai, one of the first two devotees who received spiritual instructions from Bhagavan Ramana about the path of self-enquiry.

Selections from Siva Prakasam Pillai's Pada Malai have been given a musical form as Ramana Pada Pancharatnam – a unique musical piece which has been set to music 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 Tyagaraja Pancharatnam. We are meditating on the same.

The third charana of the song goes like this

*Asai uDal nAn alanen jnAnam aLipOn pAdam vAzhghavE  
ISan mEl echumaiyum pODenDrisaipOn pAdam vAzhghavE*

- Tamil

*Bayasida oDalu nAnallavendare jnAna koDuva pAdake jaya  
ISwarana mEle ella bhaara biDu endu hELuvana pAda beLagali*

- Kannada

Meaning –

Blessed be the Feet of the One who gives Self knowledge when one recognizes 'I am not the body which is so dear'. Blessed be the Feet of Him who says 'Throw all your burdens on the Lord'.

When we are born itself, the identification with the body is taught to us. So convinced are we that we are this body that I disagree with anybody saying I am fat or I am short, even with a name I identify so much. When I see images of myself also I say I am that. Actually images of me on a photo with be only paper or ink, images of me on a computer or a phone are only dots put together. If I see myself in a movie, then also it is a group of dots which becomes an image and hence a motion picture. And what to say about seeing myself in a mirror? It is just a reflection, it is

light. Which of these are I, all or none of them? If someone tells me that I am paper, or ink, or dots or light, I won't agree. But what am I? Who am I?

Bhagavan repeatedly reminds us with lot of love that we are not the body, he gives us that knowledge. He makes us realize through analysis of the states of waking, dream and deep sleep that we are not the body. If we observe these three states for even one day what happens? Was the body the same in the dream state? No, it kept changing. Where was the body in deep sleep? There was no body at all in that state. So is this body which we have in the waking state a real body? What happens to it when we die? They take it to the crematorium and either burn it or bury it. Can the body take the heat when burnt or stay under the mud when buried, when alive? No. So what is it that is realizing everything that is done now and later? We have to know that, says Bhagavan and that is the real Self.

During Bhagavan's last illness, he was asked by a devotee as to how the pain was. Bhagavan replied, 'It is as if 1,000 elephants are stamping on my arm and the pain is excruciating'. But the smile on his face never changed. He was totally peaceful. Bhagavan would sing Ramana Sadguru along with the devotees when they were singing it. A devotee asked Bhagavan, 'Bhagavan this song Ramana Sadguru is in praise of you and you are yourself singing it!' Bhagavan immediately replied, 'Why do you take Ramana to be the six foot body? It is the Self known as Ramana which I am praising and singing'.

So here we are Bhagavan, please take the thought 'I am the body'. As Sadhu Om Swamy says, 'Naan ini illaamal pOhaTTum, Siva jnAna ramaNanE vAzhATTum, Un inai nAn enbadu ozhiyaTTum para uNmai edu unDO adu OngaTTum.' Let the truth shine and reveal itself, let the Ego perish and let the thought I am the body get destroyed by the weapon 'Who Am I?'

Bhagavan bless me with the practice of self – enquiry, so that I may reach by your Grace the Supreme state which is the true purpose of human life.

Oh! Lord Ramana

Thank you Bhagavan

Your attention seeking Child :)

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## **Amma's Guiding Presence** *Lokachandran*

There is much to speak about Amma, it is never ending. I was 22 years of age when I came to RMCL, I was very innocent. I didn't know about the world or anything else for that matter at that time. When I didn't have any idea where to go in my life, Amma taught me Namo Ramana and helped me to come up in life.



As my task was to drive Amma around and mostly that would be for some purchases, I simply thought that Amma was very fond of shopping. I thought she would make a list and go to the shop whenever she wished to, Only later I got to know that she was doing everything only for Bhagavan. This came to light in one instance.

Once we had to go to do some shopping for the forthcoming Seminar, so Amma requested Ayya (Sri A.R.Natarajan) that she would take me with the car. Ayya said that he had some work to do so he needed the car too. He thought about it for a moment and then said, 'Alright ma you finish your work first and then I will do Bhagavan's work'. Amma immediately got down from the car and said, 'Everything is Bhagavan's work only'. That was a point to be noted there. Whatever she did was only Bhagavan's job. She was declaring, 'There is nothing which I do for myself'. We can see how much surrendered she was towards Bhagavan. In fact she was only reminding Ayya about what he would always say. He would say, 'Everything is only Bhagavan.' Or 'For us RMCL is everything because it is Bhagavan'.

Then from within I got to know that what I was doing was totally nothing at all. It is like what the squirrels did service to Sri Rama, not even that much. I was able to work for RMCL with that attitude only. When I was working here in RMCL Amma used to give me work full time; Every moment of my time and my services



were used completely by giving me many different tasks. She had trust in me. She had faith in my driving and would prefer to be driven by me in case there was an option between two drivers. She had trust in me for all jobs. She used to give her purse to me and go if she had to go somewhere, I used to draw money from the bank for her, she never counted that, she gave that as it is when she had to go somewhere, so that I would take care of it safely. She used to spend from that money only when she was shopping.

Once, somebody asked me whether I would go for a job elsewhere. They enquired about my salary and I said I was getting 1,500/- at RMCL. They asked me whether I would go to that job if they gave me 5,000/-. I told them that I wouldn't even think about it, I don't need money. I didn't come here for the sake of money, If I needed money, I would have gone for earning it somehow at that time itself. Bhagavan made that person reveal to my mind that money is not my motto. And it is more than 30 years since I have come to RMCL. I am proud to say that Bhagavan has used my service in many ways.

At home too we often remember Amma. I used to iron clothes for my wife, and she used to say thanks. I would ask her why? Is it for the ironing? She would say no, it is not for that. This thanks is not for you at all, it is for Amma, it is because of her you have learnt all this.

Amma would ask me to leave saying the work for the day is over. But I would keep packing some things or doing some job which I knew needed to be done. Perhaps it was not urgent and could have been done the next day. Nonetheless, seeing that it needed to be done, I would take it up. At 9.00 p.m. I used to be working still. Amma would come and be surprised to see me working. She would ask 'I asked you to leave at 7.00 itself, why are you still here, you have to come early also tomorrow?' I never knew that time flew so fast. I used to feel that Amma and Ayya and all used to work so much, so I also would feel at least this much I have to do. They never told me anything, but it just came as it is by seeing them. Till today I have not been ordered to do any job, I used to get self-motivated and did many jobs. That is how I got influenced by them.

Bhagavan has said in his Aksharamanamalai *PorumaiyAm butara punsollai nan sollay porut arul ishtam pin arunachala. pin un ishtam*, means it is your wish. Likewise I used to be here surrendering myself to Bhagavan and that is how I worked here. Ramana only you have to give me opportunities according to your wish, is what I thought. At that stage only, when I realised that Bhagavan had brought me to RMCL for a higher purpose, I started reading Bhagavan's works.

Amma had an important role to play in my getting deeply connected to Bhagavan within me. There was a Ramananjali programme in Mettur. We went to Mettur. Those days I thought we would simply go and listen to the songs that's all. But Amma sang a song there – *Mohana mona sirippe*, there is so much inner meaning filled in that song. There is a line in that song, where the poet asks, what did we learn from Ramana? He taught me to chant Nammo Ramanaya, says Sadhu Om Swami. Of Kamba Ramayana it is said people asked the king 'What has Kamba given you Oh King?' The King says, 'I got different things like diamond, gold, silver, many other things only because of Kamba's Ramayana'. Likewise what did I learn? I have learnt the mantra of Nammo Ramanayave, it is a life savior to me. I chant it every day. It has been with me in all my difficult times. Even without me knowing, it has come along with me.

And once Amma asked me if I had a cassette player, I said yes. So she gave me a few cassettes and asked me to select all the songs which I liked and tell her. I didn't understand but still I selected a few and gave it to Amma. She said, we are going to release a special CD, Ramananjali's specially lilting songs, so this is for that. I was deeply touched that she had asked me also to make a selection. So after that I started to listen to many many Ramananjali songs. In recent years Amma also asked me start Satsang at home. That was a great blessing as we regularly sang songs and chanted Bhagavan's works at our home.

Everybody used to chant Sat Darshanam in the Shrine during satsang, This is in Sanskrit. But Amma told me read Ulladu narpadu in Tamil. So I took the cassette and book and then heard it. In the beginning I didn't understand anything, but when I heard it with attention to what Amma has sung, it became very clear. She

has sung it beautifully, clearly with correct split of meaning also. Whenever I get time I listen to it even now, in Amma's voice. Likewise I never tire of listening to Ayya's Atma Vicharam, which he spoke in Madurai, Amma used to suggest to me to listen to all of them.

When I saw Amma for the first time, I told her Namō Ramana. When Amma was not well during her last illness I couldn't see her. I stood far away; I couldn't take her not being well. Then Ambika akka said, Lokachandran has come Amma. Is it so, said Amma and I went close to her and said Namō Ramana. She didn't answer but she was trying to lift her hand up and say Namō Ramana with hands folded. So my last words to Amma were also Namō Ramana only.

Amma has been a pillar to our family. She was instrumental to bring me to this level and my family also to the level at which we are today. She has blessed us and I pray to Bhagavan that this blessing should be with us to do more and more service to Bhagavan.

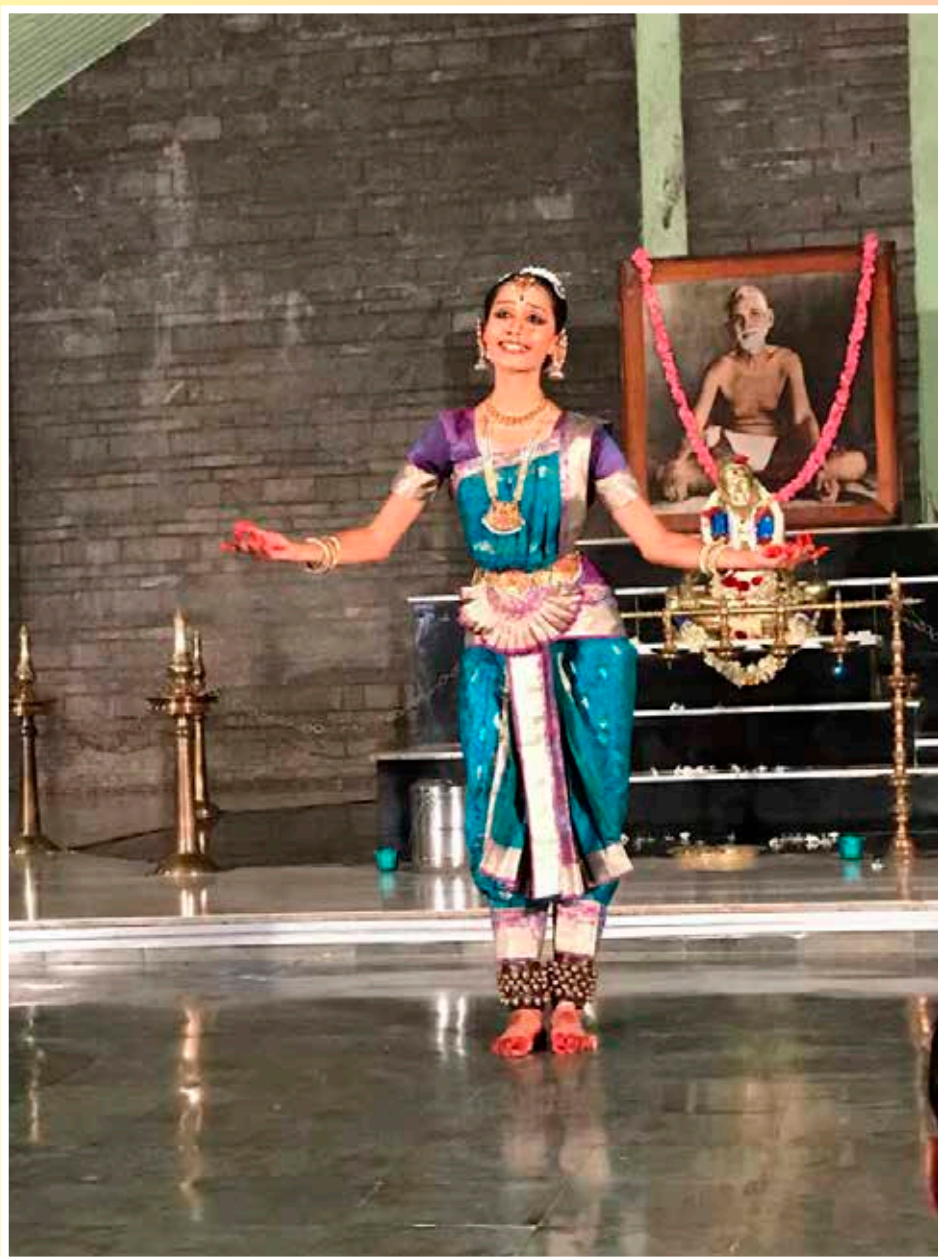
Namō Ramana

**News & Events***Revathi Sankar***Pournami Celebrations at the Ramana Shrine in March and May**

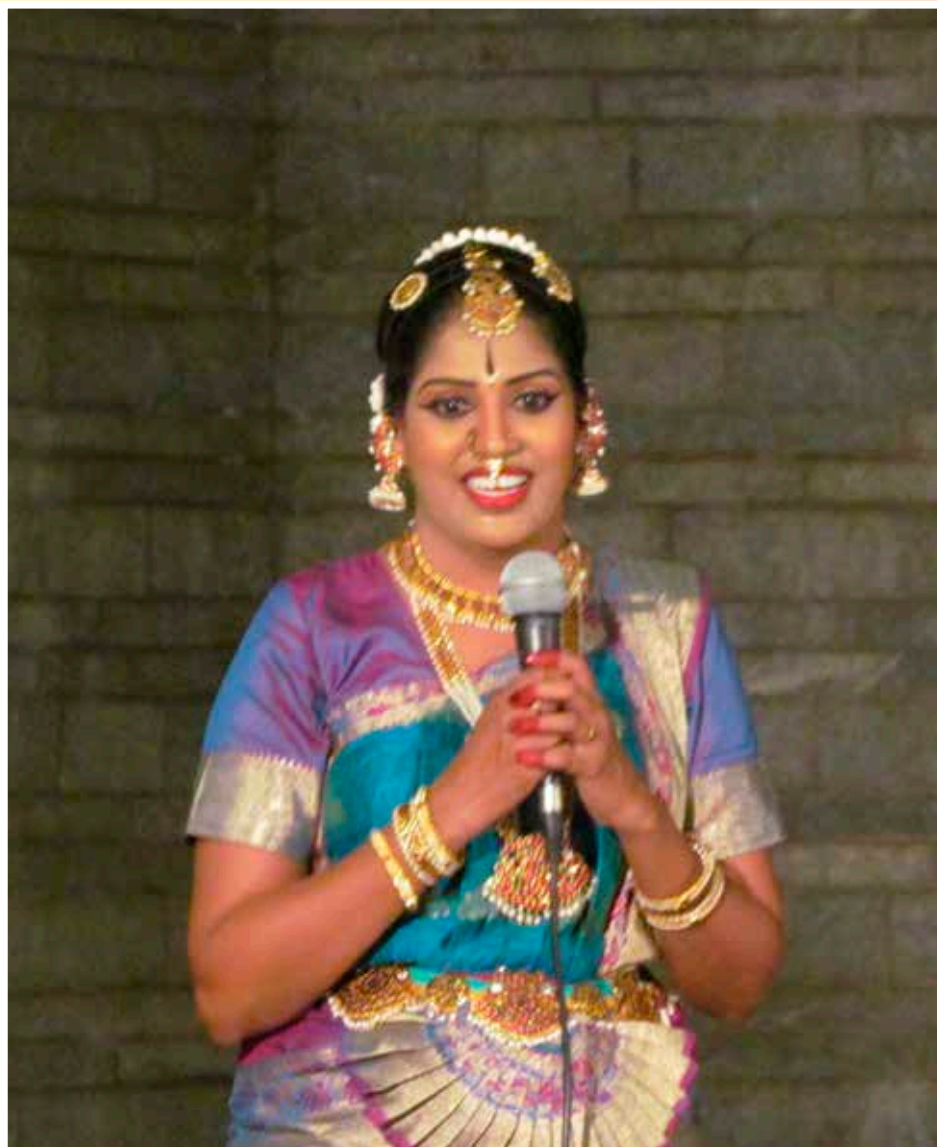
Bharatanatyam offering by Vincent Paul

Bharatanatyam offering by Kum. Revathi Sankar and Kum.Uma Sripathy











**Celebrations of Special Events at the Shrine**

Ramana Aradhana – Ramana Music offering by Smt.Poorna Sooraj and Ramana Pada Pancharatnam

Mother's Day – Bharatanatyam offering by Vidwan Ujwal Jagadeesh













**Events at the Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium**

Valedictory of Summer Camp 1 – Theme ‘Water’

Special Guests – Smt. and Sri Rama Prabhu, Sri K.S.Raghunathan and Sri S.C.Gupta

Valedictory of Summer Camp 2 – Theme ‘Aham – A Home’

Chief Guests – Smt. and Sri Rama Prabhu











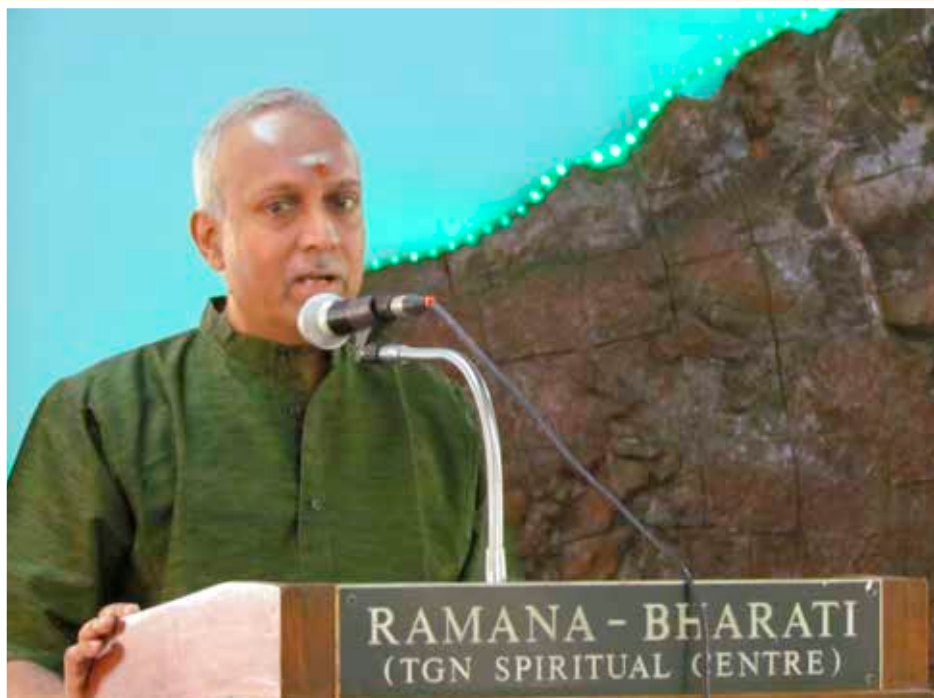


**Self-enquiry Workshops**

At Ramana Kendra Chennai and Kannada Workshop at Bangalore













**Ramananjali at Ramanalayam Chromepet**





**Ramana Aradhana Celebrations at Sri Ramanasramam**

Musical Feature by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar and 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 Music by artistes of RMCL

#### **23rd, 24th Saturday and Sunday Self-enquiry Workshop (English)**

Faculty – Dr.Sarada, N.Nandakumar, Venkatesh Deshpande, Dileep Simha

Guest Speakers – Dr.Kala Rani Rengasamy, Sri K.G.Subraya Sharma

#### **27th Wed Poornima Cultural Celebrations**

6.45 p.m. Ramana Sangeetham and Nrityam

By Students of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning

Aksharamanamalai and Girivalam of Shrine

### *At Bangalore, Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium, Sanjaynagar*

#### **3rd Sunday 6.15 p.m. Rangollaasa**

6.15 p.m. Ramana Nritya Bharatanatyam Homage to his Gurus

By Vincent Paul G. disciple of Guru Smt.Rupa Hemanth

### *At Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai*

#### **7th Thursday Maha Puja – Mother Azhagamma's Aradhana Festival**

Ramana Bhajans led by Smt.V.Radha

Mother Azhagamma – A Docu-drama – Video presentation

#### **8th, 9th Friday and Saturday**

Self-enquiry Workshop at Aruna Apeetha Ramana Nilaya

## Special Programs in July

### *At Bangalore, Ramana Shrine Mekhri Circle*

#### **27th Friday, Guru Poornima Cultural Festival**

06.30 p.m. Ramananjali

Puja, Aksharamanamalai, Valam

#### **29th Sunday, 11.00 a.m. Self-enquiry**

11.30 a.m. Ramananjali Sangeetham

An offering by Smt.V.Radha and Ms.Chandrika Mehta

### ***BSRMRC Presents Gnananjali – Enlightenment Cultural Festival, Chennai At Ramakrishna Mission Student's Home Auditorium, Mylapore (Next to Vivekananda college)***

#### **7th Saturday, 7.00 p.m. 'Naan Yaar?' – a play in Tamil**

by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar and artistes of RMCL

### ***At Narada Gana Sabha, Sathguru Gnanananda Auditorium, Chennai***

#### **8th Sunday, 6.30 p.m. Ramana Nrithya**

Classical Dance offerings by students of young gurus and by senior artistes

#### **9th Monday, 6.30 p.m. The 125th Theatre Production of RMCL**

Arunachala Ramana – Baala Kaandam

The Story of Ramana – An Inner Journey – Part 1

Concept & Presentation – Dr.Ambika Kameshwar & Dr.Sarada Natarajan

With artistes of RMCL and RASA Arpita

### ***BSRMRC Presents Gnananjali Enlightenment Festival, Madurai***

#### **14th, Saturday 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. Self enquiry Workshop in Tamil**

'Aanmiga Payirchi Mugaam' at Oddanchatram

#### **15th, Sunday 6.30 p.m. Ramananjali Music and 'Ramana Lahari'**

– A Dance ballet by artistes of BSRMRC led by Smt.Rupa Hemanth and Smt. Anusha Satish at Nagamalai, Madurai

#### **16th, 17th, Monday and Tuesday**

9.30 a.m. Self enquiry Workshop in Tamil at Ramana Mandiram

# 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

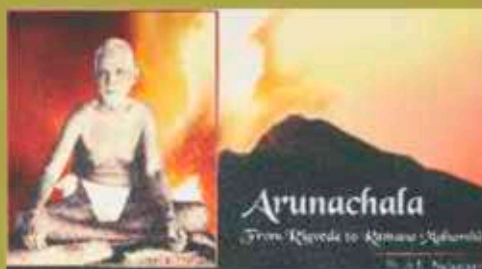
## **Guru Vachaka Kovai in English**

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

### **Investigation into Truth**

60. [First] completely drive away the confusion caused by the world by making the world subside into nothingness. There, the seer sees that world – free void as an object. Destroy that void as well in the ocean of consciousness that is the seer's true nature.
61. Everything exists and shines as being – consciousness. If you remain firmly established in the Heart as that same being – consciousness, the false dualistic nature [of the world] that arises through delusion, and which creates fear, will cease, and you and the world will become one and the same.



### **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.