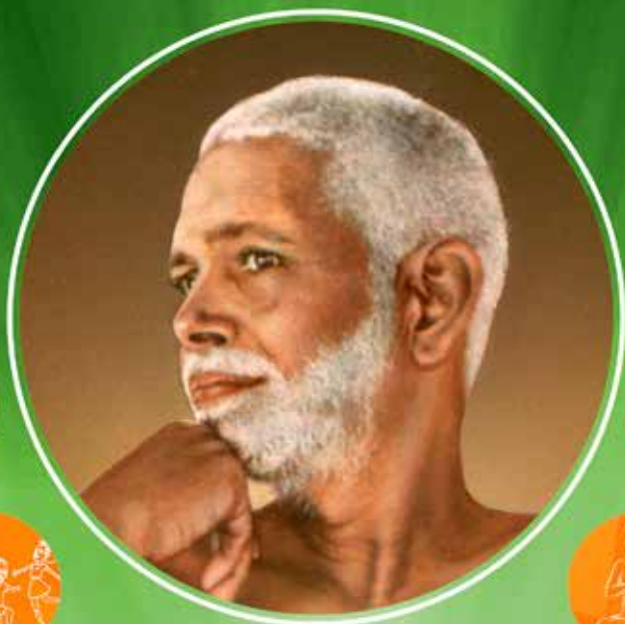


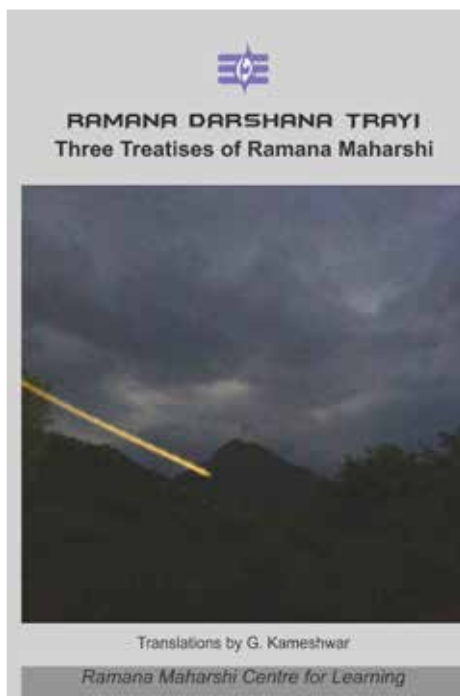
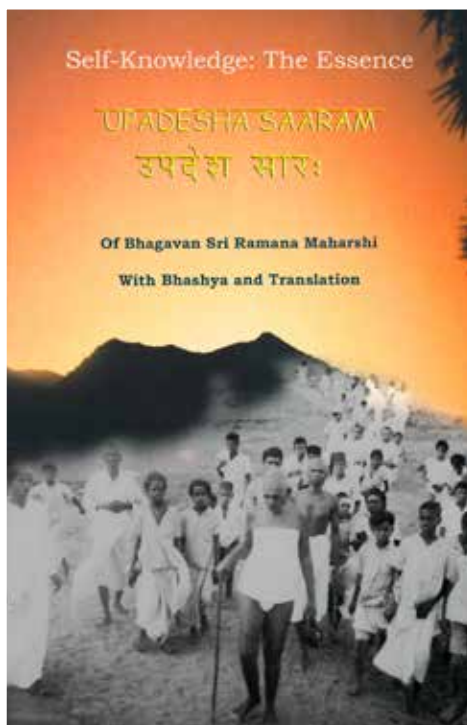
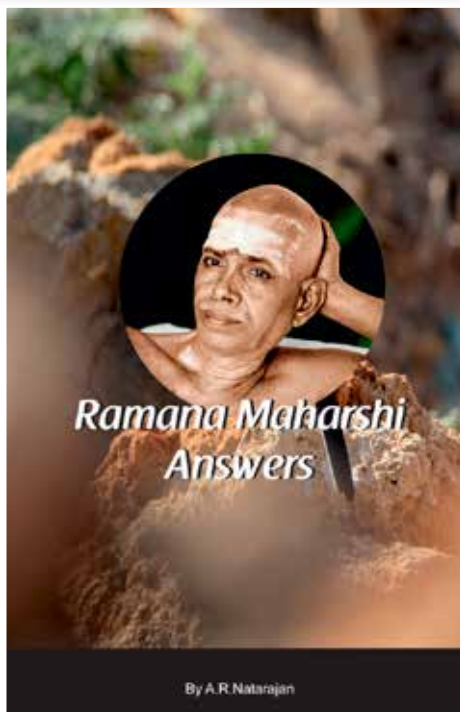
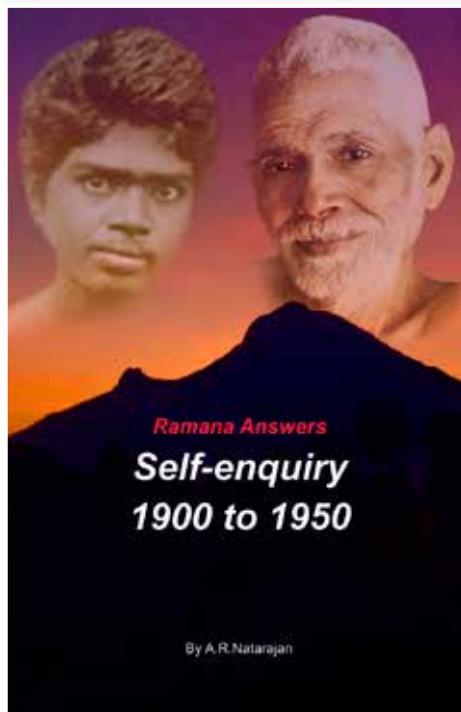
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The Ramana way



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THE RAMANA WAY

A Monthly Journal since 1981

*Celebrating
Ramana Rasa
Anubhava*



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

- Ramana Gita X, 10

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Editorial*Dr. Sarada*

Isn't it strange? When I am typing out these words, my fingers that are doing the typing do not say 'I am typing'. Yet I say, 'I am typing'. Who is this I who is not typing and yet states 'I am typing'? Isn't it strange? Even as I type my eyes that are seeing the words do not say, 'I am seeing'. Yet I declare, 'I am seeing the words'. Who is this I who is not actually performing the act of seeing since that act is done by the eyes, and yet declares with confidence 'I am seeing'? Isn't it strange that your eyes that are reading these printed words do not say 'I am reading' and yet you say to yourself 'I am reading'?

Isn't it strange? When I eat something, the teeth that bite into the food do not say, 'We are biting the food, we are chewing the food!' The tongue and the palette do not declare, 'We are tasting the food!' The gullet does not say, 'I am swallowing the food.' The stomach does not claim, 'I am digesting the food'. Yet, I say, 'I am eating the food, I am biting and chewing the food, I am tasting the food'. Who is the 'I' who says all this?

Isn't it strange? When I breathe in and breathe out my nostrils that draw in the fresh air and throw out the old air from within the body do not say, 'We are breathing in. We are breathing out.' The lungs do not say anything either. Do they say, 'We are pulling in the fresh air. We are pushing out the old air.'? Yet I say that 'I' am breathing. Am I the lungs that are breathing? If not, who am I? Am I the heart that is beating? Does the heart say, 'I am beating'? No. It is I who say, 'My heart is beating'. Who is this 'I'? Who am I?

When I have a pain in the neck or the head it is not the neck or the head that cry out 'I am in pain'. It is 'I' who say that I am in pain. Who is that 'I'? When the body breaks out in sweat, it is not the skin that complains about the clamminess. It is I. When a cool breeze comforts me on a hot day, again it is not the skin that finds it refreshing. It is I. No part of the body, and not the whole,

declares that it is 'I'. Ramana says in his 'Forty Verses on Reality' that the insentient body does not say 'I'.

Is it my brain which registers these processes and says 'I am assimilating and analysing'? Is it your brain that is saying 'I am comprehending all this'? Although most of us believe that we think with our brains, do any of us really feel that the organ that is the brain is our 'I'? If that is the case then why do we think we are the whole body? Surely we do not feel that the brain is 'I'. Rather, we think with our brains much as we work with our computers. Brain is our thinking instrument, it is not 'I'. Does the brain declare, 'I know this'? Yet, even as you read are you not telling yourself 'I understand this, I do not understand that'? Who is the 'I' who says all this?

Even supposing I were to say, 'I am my fingers'. Is not the very statement a fallacy? Would not the very statement posit an 'I' who in turn has fingers that belong to the 'I' and hence are called 'my fingers'? Further, are the fingers stating 'We are I' or am I stating that the fingers are 'I'? The same would be true for any other part of the body.

I who say 'I' do not see myself as a set of fingers or as a pair of eyes or as a brain that is a mass of convolutions and a series of electrical impulses. I do not see myself as the arms and the legs, the bones and the muscles, the blood and the organs that constitute my body. If that is the case, who thinks 'I am typing, I am seeing, I am understanding'? Who am I? Isn't it strange that I lay claim to activities that are not done by me? Isn't it stranger still that I do not even know who the 'I' is? Yet, I say 'I know myself'!

Why do I say that I do not know myself? This can be said because there appear to be two parts to every experience. There is the experience, of course, like 'I am eating' 'I am writing' and so on. There is also an experiencer, one who knows that one is eating, writing, reading, walking, talking, whatever one is doing. There is the action and there is the actor. Are they one and the same? The actions keep changing, they come and go. What about the actor? Does the actor change too? It may seem as if the actor

is changing because the body is changing. It may seem as if the actor is changing because thoughts too change. Ideas change, desires change, emotions change, goals change.

With every change does awareness change? Does consciousness change? Is consciousness different when one is conscious of walking and different when one is conscious of eating? Is consciousness different when one is conscious of sorrow and different when one is conscious of joy? Is consciousness different when awake and when in a dream? Is consciousness different when the body was young, does it become different when one is old? We are aware of all our changing experiences because of the light of consciousness that shines within us. Does that light ever change?

Ramana gives the example of a lamp that would be lit in theatre productions of yore. This lamp would burn throughout the play and act as the light on the stage by which the drama would be seen. Many actors would come and go, many emotions would be played out in the course of the production. Would the lamp change on account of these? Would it become any different with the changes in the actions on stage? Would the lamp rage when anger is played on the stage? Would the lamp cool down if the actors act calm and composed?

The whole play is enacted only because of the light of the lamp but the lamp itself has nothing at all to do with the play. It is by the light of the consciousness that shines in us as 'I am' that all actions happen and awareness of the actions also happens. Do we not know this? Yes we do. Yet we do not value that light. We may even go so far as to think that the purpose of the light is only to make the play visible.

Strange it is that what the 'I' is means nothing to us. What the 'I' does alone matters. We are interested in what we can do on account of the presence of consciousness. In fact we extend this approach even to our perception of the divine. We say that it is divine grace when we are saved from an approaching difficulty or calamity. We may even see it as divine grace when events move smoothly. Sometimes we may be able to perceive the unfolding of

every moment, the magnificent panorama of life and death as the play of grace. But can we see that when nothing at all happens just the being is the greatest grace?

Isn't it strange that we long for Self Knowledge but do not value stillness? For the most part we may wish that the mind is still for awhile so that it will be refreshed and can work better after the period of stillness. The powers of concentration are valued because they are oriented towards better goals and better results. If asked where self-enquiry will lead to one can answer with confidence 'It will lead to steady Self-abidance' for one has Ramana himself vouching for this. What if someone were to ask, 'And what is the purpose of Self-abidance?' Would we have any answer?

As Sri A.R.Natarajan writes, "When troubled by too many thoughts one may think that the goal to be achieved is a thought free state. On the one hand people desire it and on the other they fear it because they think that they do not have an experience of our natural state and are consequently afraid of it. We find this kind of doubt and fear in some of the questions which were put to Ramana.

D: Can we think without the mind?

R: Thoughts may be like any other activities, not disturbing the consciousness.

D: I know that one can think remaining forgetful of the physical body. Is it possible to gain that consciousness which is beyond thoughts?

R: Yes there is one consciousness. It subsists in the waking, sleep and dream states. If it is known you will be aware of that which is beyond thoughts."

Although Ramana thus assures us that we have everything to gain and nothing to lose by turning back to our source, we seem to remain unconvinced. We 'know' that we are not the body. We know that the body is only a concept in our mind. We also know that mind itself is only a series of thoughts based on the

primary thought that the body is I. Yet, we live from moment to moment thinking that the body is 'I', not recalling, not pondering on, not internalising our knowledge that it is otherwise. We do not pay attention to that which we know and prefer to act from the perspective of ignorance.

Once in a way, when we have a strong physical experience, perhaps pain or hunger or thirst or a desire for a something that we term 'physical', we may tell ourselves that the body is not I. When we see death or go through some incident that prompts us to ponder on death, we may declare that the body is not I. But this thought does not rise within us every time the mind moves. Each time we do not counter it with enquiry. Each time we do not wonder about our taking the physiological bodily experiences to be our own.

If, however, we do begin to question ourselves and shift attention to the 'I' through the enquiry 'Who am I?' at every point when the mind says 'I this' or 'I that', gradually the awareness that one is not the body would become stronger and stronger and not be merely passing thought.

One must remember though that the point is not just to say or to think or to feel 'I am not the body', it is to know who I am. Ramana has quoted 'Be still and know that I am God'. To this he added, 'Know and not think that you are God'. What is the difference? What if one has never tasted sugar but is able to say, sugar is not salty, sugar is not chilly, sugar is not bitter, sugar is not sour? One may be able to say all this but would it mean that one knows the taste of sugar? Once one knows the taste of sugar, however, one would immediately know what sugar is not as well.

So Ramana says that one must know the Self by being the Self. The question 'Who am I?' helps one to do so by turning attention back to the 'I' notion or the 'I' feeling and thereby to its source. When one actually begins to see that the body is insentient as pointed out by the Sadguru, then one truly begins to wonder about the sentient being who is able to say 'I am'. One recognises that it is not Sarada who says 'I am Sarada' but I who say 'I am

Sarada'. It is not the gender in me that says, 'I am a woman'. It is I who say 'I am a woman'. Yes, the body does not say 'I', there is a sentient, conscious being who is able to say and think 'I am the body'. Who is this conscious being? Who am I?

Is it the Self that says 'I am Sarada'? Is it the Self that says thereafter 'I am fat/thin, tall/short, dusky/fair' and so on and so forth? Ramana states, 'The Self is unborn. It does not rise or set. It must rise in order to say 'I am Sarada', but it does not do so'. What then in me says 'I'? This, says Ramana is the 'ego' or the 'I'-thought. It is called the knot between the consciousness and the insentient body.

How does one cut the knot? By trying to observe this knot one realises that it is simply not. It is non-existent. That there is an action posits an actor. When there is no action where is the actor? That there is a thought posits a thinker. If thought is not, where is the thinker? If there is something to be watched apart from the 'I' one would posit a witness. If there is nothing apart from the Self to be seen who is the witness? When there is no action who am I? When there is no thought who am I? When there is no movement, no manifestation who am I?

Who am I whom I currently do not value or value far less than the supreme importance I give to goals, to actions, to thoughts, to manifestation? If I would value the Self beyond all manifestation, movement, thoughts, actions and goals, if I would turn to that light of consciousness alone by questioning every movement away from it, it will undoubtedly stand revealed. This, Ramana declares is Arunachala's assurance and it is undoubtedly his as well.



THE NEW DAWN**A. R. Natarajan***SPRING TIME, ALL THE TIME**

According to Ramana the true nature of the mind is silence. In the natural state, the mind is unifocussed, totally attentive and at its full potential. This is because the mind is only an aspect of the Self in action, the dynamic side of it, consciousness is characteristic of it. A conversation which a devotee had with Ramana reads:

D: In the book “Who am ‘I’?” You have said that the heart is the seat of the mind. Is it so?

R: The mind is the Atman.

D: Is it Atman itself or its projection?

R: The same.

One could also refer to Ramana’s instructions to Gambhiram Seshier, at the beginning of the twentieth century. He told him “Mind is in reality only consciousness, because it is pure and transparent by nature. It is spacious, unitary.”

The mind with which we are now functioning is constantly pestered with wanted and unwanted thoughts. Memories of the past sensate experiences sow tendencies which give directional pulls. Sometimes that which one calls “My mind” is very much out of one’s control in the sense that one is unable to ward off unwanted thoughts or one is caught up with obsessive thoughts. Therefore methods are sought for bringing the mind under control, to hold it in check.

Does it mean that each individual has two minds? One the limited, distracted one and the other integral, unitary and totally attentive? The answer is clearly ‘No’. The mind is always pure like ether. Just as the atmospheric pollutions do not effect the ether which remains unpolluted so too the pollution of the mind due to its

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

distractions and experience of the past will not change the essential characteristic of the mind which is always pure. Once the habitual outwardness of the mind is tackled appropriately, then the present desire and fear complex of the mind will drop automatically.

In order to go to the root of the matter one has to remove certain false or incorrect notions. When troubled by too many thoughts one may think that the goal to be achieved is a thought free state. On the one hand people desire it and on the other they fear it because they think that they do not have an experience of our natural state and are consequently afraid of it. We find this kind of doubt and fear in some of the questions which were put to Ramana.

D: Can we think without the mind?

R: Thoughts may be like any other activities, not disturbing the consciousness.

D: I know that one can think remaining forgetful of the physical body. Is it possible to gain that consciousness which is beyond thoughts?

R: Yes there is one consciousness. It subsists in the waking, sleep and dream states. If it is known you will be aware of that which is beyond thoughts. The same nagging doubt is seen in questions like 'Does a Jnani have thoughts?'

Here one would notice that the worry is about thoughts and not about the power to have them which is really the crux. For there is a mix up between a thought void and a thought free mind, which is the opposite of the uncontrolled mind. The essential question about the nature of the mind is not even posed.

Ramana points out that each day in deep sleep we do not have thoughts. Why should we therefore fear a state that is free of thoughts? Secondly he emphasises that if one looks at thoughts and seeks to control them, erroneously thinking that it would lead to the control of the mind, then he would have missed the wood for the trees. Because all thoughts are for the thinker, the centre of every thought is the thinker. The movement of thought itself is caused by shifting the thinker's attention to some other thought, from one thought to another. Thoughts have no independent status and they will move away from the mental horizon the moment the

thinker changes his attention to some other thought. Ramana once clarified "Arranging thoughts in the order of value, the 'I' thought is the all important thought. Personality-idea or thought is also at the root of or the stem of all other thoughts, since each idea or thought arises as somebody's thought".

Any method which tries to minimise thoughts or hold them controlled for sometime would be without a proper foundation. Forceful limitation of thought for particular periods through different modes of spiritual practice would at best be palliatives. They are based on concentration and not on attention. When concentration weakens the forcefully controlled mind would become uncontrolled again and the old thoughts would return with reinforced vigour. There can be no lasting benefit.

It is in this context that one must understand Ramana's teachings that the peace of mind which we all seek can be found only through understanding the mind and not by controlling it. If one understands the mind right it would be seen that the mind is centred now on the individual 'I' thought. It would also be seen that in deep sleep this 'I' thought is nascent. Understanding the nature of this 'I' thought by questioning its source, its centre, alone can lead to the result sought because one would be rightly directed. This enquiry into the source of the mind is called self-enquiry, or enquiring into the nature of the individual to whom all thoughts relate. According to Ramana this is the only infallible means for being restored to the natural state of the silent mind.

Based on his experience Ramana indicates the source to be the spiritual heart from which the notion of 'I' rises on waking and into which it subsides in sleep. This source is the fullness of consciousness. Thereafter thoughts will arise depending upon the need. They will cease when their purpose is over. There will not be any carry forward of thought. For, there is no need to find pleasure outside when one is immersed in joy. The mind's natural silence is undisturbed by the pulls and counter-pulls of a mind with its endless seeking. Happiness in its fullness would have been discovered. Each moment would be fresh and invigorating. For then one has crossed the time barrier. A life lived in the present blooms. It is spring time all the time.

The 'Talks' as a Guidance to Self Enquiry

N.Nandakumar

Talk 49

D.: How to know the 'I'?

M.: The 'I-I' is always there. There is no knowing it. It is not a new knowledge acquired. What is new and not here and now will be evanescent only. The 'I' is always there. There is obstruction to its knowledge and it is called ignorance. Remove the ignorance and knowledge shines forth. In fact this ignorance or even knowledge is not for Atman. They are only overgrowths to be cleared off. That is why Atman is said to be beyond knowledge and ignorance. It remains as it naturally is - that is all.

D.: There is no perceptible progress in spite of our attempts.

M.: Progress can be spoken of in things to be obtained afresh. Whereas here it is the removal of ignorance and not acquisition of knowledge.

What kind of progress can be expected in the quest for the Self?

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Some of the "objective goals" held by the "knower" in sadhana are "progress", "higher state", "improved consciousness", "less thoughts", "I will be peaceful hereafter" etc. Bhagavan is saying that the Self does not become an object of knowledge. For whom is "progress"?

Talk 49. (Excerpt)

D.: How to remove the ignorance?

M.: While lying in bed in Tiruvannamalai you dream in your sleep that you find yourself in another town. The scene is real to you. Your body remains here on your bed in a room. Can a town enter your room, or could you have left this place and gone elsewhere, leaving the body here? Both are impossible. Therefore your being here and seeing another town are both unreal. They appear real

to the mind. The 'I' of the dream soon vanishes, then another 'I' speaks of the dream. This 'I' was not in the dream. Both the 'I's are unreal. There is the substratum of the mind which continues all along, giving rise to so many scenes. An 'I' rises forth with every thought and with its disappearance that 'I' disappears too. Many 'I's are born and die every moment. The subsisting mind is the real trouble. That is the thief according to Janaka. Find him out and you will be happy.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: In this talk Bhagavan, through Janaka, elevates us from the mundane world of sensory objects to heaven by saying that Janaka was seeking happiness alone. Janaka enquires as to who robs him of this happiness. That is, he wants to find true happiness of which he cannot be robbed. Bhagavan lifts us from the mundane world to the kingdom of heaven and from there to Sathya Loka - true happiness. Can there be "progress" in Truth - Sathyaloka? There is objective knowledge and objective ignorance in waking and dream. There is an ignorance of objects into which one completely loses oneself in sleep. But waking, dream and deep-sleep are all arising only in ignorance of the "I". This ignorance is far deeper than appearance and disappearance of the objective body called birth and death. As soon as the "I" thought raises and tries to follow a thought, one should understand that at its source lives the source of all waking worlds, dream worlds and deep sleep. For whom is this thought? Who am I? The thought 'who am I?' destroys all other thoughts and in the end burns itself out in the Self. There the thief who robs one of happiness - the mind - is destroyed.

Talk 50.

Sri Bhagavan read out, from the Prabuddha Bharata, Kabir's saying that all know that the drop merges into the ocean but few know that the ocean merges into the drop. This is para bhakti, said he.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Everyone experiences the drop merging into the ocean in deep-sleep and death. However, God Realisation or Self Realisation where the infinite merges and absorbs all finite nature is experienced only by few. This is ananya bhakti or para bhakti - God alone IS or the Self alone IS.

Q: Does 'God alone IS' or meditation on "Rama", "Ramana" or "Sarve Jana sukhino bhavantu" also end in 'Self alone IS'?

S: Even when the Nama or Mantra is effortlessly observed to be going on automatically, there is a Self, the act of witnessing the Nama going on effortlessly, and so does the Nama. The Stula Loka is permeated by the Sukshma Sareera of God. However, who is witnessing? For whom is this witnessing? Who am I? The Self absorbs the Nama and the witnessing. "Who am I?" is the final question in all other sadhana and the only quest in self enquiry.

Talk 51

A young Brahmin (25 years of age) came on a visit to the Master. At his sight he became hysterical and shouted Sivoham, Aham Brahma Asmi, "You are God", "You are Para Brahman". "You are my father", "Father, save me" and so on. His hysterics waxing, he beat his chest violently alternately with both his hands, shouting Sivoham, Sivoham. Then again he shouted hysterically gnashing his teeth, "I will stamp out materialism", as if he was crushing materialism between his teeth.

Then he asked. "Either give me power, either give me power - or - or - or - I will..." He began as if to throttle himself. When gently removed by others he fell prostrate before Sri Bhagavan, saying, "I will take refuge at the feet of my Father. Father! You are Parthasarathi, I am Arjuna. We will stamp out materialism," and so on. He was finally taken away from the presence of Maharshi. He washed himself, took some light refreshment and quietly seated himself in the hall for some hours. He abstained from the midday meal. In the afternoon he had another fit when he shouted, "I will chop off the head of Krishna, if he should come here now. He advised me to give up my job, but does not protect my mother. Or let him chop off my head," and so on.

After some hours of quiet, Sri Bhagavan asked Mr. K. L. Sarma to read out a portion of his commentary on Anubandha (Appendix to 40 verses). The gist of it is that people, unable to help themselves, ask for divine powers to be utilised for human welfare. This is similar to the story of a lame man who blustered, saying that

he would overpower the enemy if only he were helped on to his legs. The intention is good but there is no sense of proportion.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : The pain of a single word of mistrust from a dear one takes minutes, hours, or even a whole life time to heal. How is such a one to carry the pain of injury caused by the darkness within the whole of mankind. Man injures another as he is not aware of the oneness of all. This is the cross borne by the saint. Such pain can be offered to the Lord only by the completely surrendered one. How can an individual who cannot even bear a personal affront or loss of limb or personal wealth or fame bear the cross of ignorance of Man? The pain of the Sage is dissolved in that one power that underlies everything. Nay! There is no pain as there is nothing apart from that One.

Talk 52

A man from Cocanada asked: "My mind remains clear for two or three days and turns dull for the next two or three days; and so it alternates. What is it due to?"

M.: It is quite natural; it is the play of brightness (satva), activity (rajas) and darkness (tamas) alternating. Do not regret the tamas; but when satva comes into play, hold on to it fast and make the best of it.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Great periods of time are encapsulated in the moment. Years of failure or a few days of dullness is "regret" in this moment. Years of good success or days of good sadhana is "sadhana" in this moment. Do not waste time in regret (Tamas in this moment) and hold "Who am I?" (Satva), says the Maharshi.

Talk 52. (Excerpt)

D.: What is the Heart?

M.: It is the seat (if such could be said of it) of the Self.

D.: Is it the physical heart?

M.: No. It is the seat wherefrom 'I-I' arises.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : The sadhaka who dives deep within with the quest, "Whence am I?", "From where do I arise?" may hold that the "I" arises from the Heart. Heart is nothing but the seat of the "I-I". In Ulladu Naarpadu, first invocatory verse, Bhagavan points out that the Heart is that "Consciousness purged of thought". How to know it? Who can remain apart and know that thought-free Consciousness. To know it is to Be the Self. Be the Heart. Be. "Who am I?" and "Whence am I?" both erase the effort and effort-maker, revealing the effort-free Self.

Q: Is there absolutely no benefit that one can have derived from this "surrender" or "jnana"?

S: One could probably say that the pain from the falsity of "self-importance" goes away.



Saddarshanam*Master Nome*

Another Q.: One has to escape the “I.” Tendencies rest upon and depend upon the assumed “I”-thought. “Who am I?” does this.

N.: Yes.

Q.: That is the way to extract the false, assumed “I” and its tendencies from the true “I.” Self-Knowledge then shines.

N.: The only purpose in examining the thought content that constitutes the tendency is for the usefulness in the discrimination as to “This I am not,” in contrast to “This is what I am.”

Q.: Self-Knowledge ends the tendency forever because the discovery of the absence of the false identity is the uncovering of the veil that seemed to hide the Self, which when unveiled, simultaneously stands Self-revealed, always free of all tendencies.

N.: That is so. If the inquiry is not actually applied thoroughly, the tendency will recur. Someone may launch into an inquiry of sorts, saying, “Who am I?” but leave the tendency utterly unexamined or excluded from the inquiry, and such provides a large misidentification of a crude nature to which to return when the meditation is over. A chasm would be thus formed between the understanding that is inclined toward the Absolute and the experience that people refer to by that strange term, “everyday life.”

Another Q.: Is the key to see one's identity as divorced from the ignorance?

N.: One must be free from ignorance, from the root notion of an existent “I” or “mine” to everything streaming from the root, such as desires, fears, aversions, frustrations, and whatever attachment there may be. Unless one's inquiry is directed to the absolute nature of the Self, how will there be a final resolution of the various tendencies? Without inquiry, there may be some momentary, or

even prolonged, improvement of some kind, but there won't be complete liberation from the tendency. There will be a modulation or modification of it, but not destruction of it, unless there is an inquiry that drives the mind toward the absolute nature of the Self and liberates one's identity from ignorance.

If one attempts to meditate upon the Absolute, but he does not completely apply the inquiry to everything he experiences, he will be left with dual identities of an absolute Self, in which he believes, and himself, which somehow does not quite match the Self. He will be caught within a peculiar self-created chasm, which is unnecessary; if only he just inquires thoroughly all of the time, regardless of how big or small the particular aspect of illusion appears to be. No illusion is so big that you cannot destroy it or overcome it, and no illusion is so small that you should ignore it. The illusion that you ignore is that which will poke you, so to speak, and cause suffering.

Q.: My attitude should be: why not eliminate more illusion? The more one frees himself from delusion the better.

N.: There is no such thing as too much inquiry, and you cannot remove too much illusion.

Another Q.: It does not have a limited capacity.

N.: Turned inward, your inquiry has the capacity to simultaneously destroy all kinds of delusions, from the outermost and minor to the apparently innermost and fundamental. It can destroy the ego-notion and the attachment to the body and the attachment to some particular like or dislike, all at once. There is no rule that the liberating inquiry must proceed in a particular order. You will not become overwhelmed. If you feel as if you are about to become overwhelmed by the inquiry, it is very good, because that means that you are about to shift from the mentality of identifying with the mind to being the Self.

Another Q.: In the Maharshi's teaching and in other spiritual texts, it is stated that, if one were to truly inquire and know one's Self, there would be finality. One would not return to the previous illusion.

My experience in my spiritual practice is that it is an incremental movement. I couldn't even think now the way I used to think of myself five years ago. Where does it all end?

N.: What do you mean by, "Where does it all end?"

Q.: Where does the delusion end?

N.: Delusion ends where the "I" ends. The end is when there is no false assumption of individuality, no one to be deluded. The attempt to measure Knowledge in time is somewhat futile, because Knowledge transcends that which conceives of time.

Q.: The attempt to measure is a tendency, is it not?

N.: How are you going to obtain an accurate measurement?

Q.: The idea that I could measure is ignorance, is it not?

N.: Yes. One is accustomed to looking at things that have an objective character. How are you going to measure your Existence, which is the Consciousness that illuminates the measurer? You are trying to measure how quickly or to what degree you are dissolving into the Absolute. We speak of "dissolving," but we are That. It is like trying to measure the distance between where you are now and the satsang hall. You would have a difficult time measuring because you would be measuring from and to one and the same place.

Q.: You are saying that there is no distance to traverse. If I have been practicing in a way in which Self-Knowledge is being gained, what can I practice that would gain the whole Self - Knowledge or get rid of the whole ignorance?

N.: Egolessness. If the question is, then, "What will make this egolessness or attainment of Knowledge come about more quickly?" the answer is the intensification of practice, in every aspect of spiritual practice that shrinks the false sense of ego. This includes the destruction of attachment and the destruction of

misidentification, the intensity of the purpose of fulfilling the desire for Liberation, the sharpening of discrimination that discerns who you are and what you are not, the equanimity that is not moved by any kind of circumstance, so that the waves or ripples in the mind subside and no longer cloud the view, the very straight-forward, interior honesty that always declares what your experience is, from the position of experience, so that you have only one way of understanding, and that is experiential Knowledge, and the humility, in which one considers the vast Absolute and stands on the threshold of dissolution into it and in the awe of that which shrinks the personal importance to the size of nothing. In short, anything that removes the ego, which is so small but which, in delusion, like the tip of your finger held in front of your eye, seems to cover the whole view.

Another Q.: I have a fear of snakes. In India, I never know when these snakes are going to come in the garden.

N.: You will want to be a Vedantin, then, because every snake mentioned in Vedanta turns out to be a rope. (laughter) Some of those snakes might be afraid of you, too. What do you advise the snakes to do, besides to stay out of the garden where you might be? (laughter)

Q.: How am I going to get rid of that fear unless I am confronted with it? Why would I have to be confronted with every situation in life?

N.: What makes you say that you must be confronted with it? There may not be snakes at hand. The time of the year may not be snake-season. (laughter) Does that mean you must live in fear until the next available snake comes around to help you out? (laughter) You need not wait until circumstances present themselves to address tendencies. What makes you afraid of the snake?

Q.: So, I begin to analyze?

N.: Are you afraid of a snake just minding his own business a hundred feet away?

Q.: I don't think so.

N.: So, of what are you actually afraid?

Q.: I have not examined what the fear really is.

N.: Are you afraid of the snake crawling on you or biting you?

Q.: (looks aghast, and then starts to laugh)

N.: I think so. (laughter) Did we just hit the snake on the head? (laughter) [editor's note: this alludes to the saying "to hit the nail on the head," meaning an accurate ascertainment, and to the illusion of a rope appearing as a snake, which is a commonly utilized example in Vedanta] Why would the snake be on you rather than just on your body?

Q.: I am recoiling at the idea. So, it is just on the body, and it is not on me. I suppose you could even love it.

N.: You become inclined toward that when you realize that the snake is not her body. The snake is not her body anymore than you are your body.

Q.: I feel better when you say "her." All of a sudden, it does not seem so scary if it is a "her." (laughter)

N.: The fear is very much dependent upon the conception of yourself as being the body, and, consequently, conceiving of the snake as her body. When her body is on or near your body, you think she is on or near you. Are you afraid that the snake might bite, as well?

Q.: The fear is just of its presence.

N.: It is sufficient to see your bodiless nature. If you were concerned with the snake biting you, which might be a valid concern, since some snakes carry poisons that will bring about the end of life in your body, you would need further meditation to bring about the

realization of immortality. If, though, it is just the snakes' mere presence in the neighborhood, or the idea of the skins of their bodies' being in contact with your snakeskin, (laughter) for you can be considered as a snake with arms and legs and the snake can be considered to be a human without arms and legs, just seeing that you are not the body and that the snake is not her body will be sufficient.

Q.: I need to use discrimination.

N.: Yes, and, for that, you do not need to wait. For example, you already know that you have the fear, and you can discern very easily the ideas that constitute the fear. It did not take me long to point such out. You could have pointed it out to yourself more quickly. Once you discern the ideas, you are prompted to examine the identity that gives rise to those ideas.

Q.: They are because I think that I am the body.

N.: Yes. Once you inquire, you arrive at such a settled peace that you won't feel the need to test it. It will be certain. So, you will not have to run to the nearest snake and see if it works or not, but, if a friendly snake comes to say hello to you in the garden, it will be all right.

Another Q.: I was reflecting on the strong emotional content of my tendencies as another approach to destroy them.

N.: You will need to be more specific if you are examining this for yourself. It is fine to discuss it in generic terms, but to be free, you will need to be very specific and discriminate in the light of Absolute Knowledge.

Q.: In the Light of Absolute Knowledge, it becomes more of an impersonal nature.

N.: Yes, and what does that do to all of your flaming, raging emotions?

Q.: It shows me that they were formulated when I did not know myself.

N.: How important are they?

Q.: Not very important.

N.: Keep your eye on the goal, and perceive from there.

Q.: Keeping my eye on the goal would mean that I would be staying in my true identity.

N.: It can mean being determined to realize that which is vast, infinite, and eternal, and ultimately your real identity. With the determination to realize That, with That as your focus, knowing That is where your happiness lies, regarding That as the one thing that is really important, what will happen to all those other inflated emotions and to all those other troubles? You will find that you have far less with which to deal, and whatever remains can be dealt with very nicely through the practice of detachment and inquiry.



Shri Arunachala Padikam

G Kameshwar

Eleven Verses on Arunachala
Of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Verse-11

kiriyitu paramAk karutiya venpOR
keTTava rettanai kollo
virituya rAlip pizhaippinil vizhaivu
viTTuTal viTTiTta viraku
karutiyE tiriveer karuttinu LorukAR
karutiTak kolAmalE kollu
marumarun toNruN Tavaniyi latutA
naruNamA tiramena variveer.

Word split, and meaning:

kiri itu: Hill, this
paramA: As Supreme
karutiya enpOl: (Those, who) like me, thought of
kettavar: (Those who) perished
ettanai kollo: Oh, how many?
viru tuyarAl: due to ever increasing misery
ippazhaippinil: In this life
vizhaivu vittu: giving up all desire
uTal viTTiTta: to abandon the body
viraku karutiyE tiriveer: (you) who are wandering about, ever
thinking of some means
karuttinuL: inside one's heart (mind)
oru kAl karutiTa: Thinking of, but once
kolAmalE kollum: Kills without killing
aru maruntu onRu: One amazing medicine
avaniyil unTu: exists in this world
atu tAn aruNa mAtiram: And that, indeed, is the Aruna hill
ena ariveer: Know, that...

Verse rendering:

For thinking of this hill
As Supreme;
Oh, how many,
Like me
Have perished?

Oh ye
Who,
Due to the swell of sorrows
Losing all desire for this life,
Wander about,
Seeking some means
To discard the body;
(Know, that)
There is
In this world,
An amazing medicine,
That,
Upon just one thought
In one's heart,
Kills
Without killing!

Know, that That
Is indeed,
The Aruna hill!

Prose rendering:

For thinking of this hill as Supreme Reality, how many, like me, have lost their very "I"-identity? O, all of you people, who, drowned in a deluge of despair, have lost desire to live, and are stumbling around seeking some means of separating your body and life... Know this... There is, in this very world, an amazing medicine of Grace, that kills the "I"-notion of body-identity, without killing the body. Know, that that Grace-medication is indeed, this Aruna hill!

Notes:

In this verse, Bhagavan points out the misery of worldly existence. In one of the earliest recorded teachings of Bhagavan, the 'Vichara-sangraham' compiled by Gambhiram Seshayya, the very first question deals with this.

Disciple: Master! What is the means to gain the state of eternal bliss, ever devoid of misery?

Master: Apart from the statement in the Veda that wherever there is body there is misery, this is also the direct experience of all people; therefore, one should enquire into one's true nature which is ever bodiless, and one should remain as such. This is the means to gaining that state.

And how is one to cure this disease of body identification? Bhagavan, in this verse of *Padikam*, says that there is a medicine. And that is the constant meditation on Aruna hill, in one's heart.

This *Padikam* verse, '*kiriyitu paramA*', brings to mind several verses of Bhagavan's *Aksharamanamalai*¹, starting with the very first...

*aruNa calamena vakamE ninaippava
rakattaivE raRuppA yaruNAcala*

*Arunachala thought, those who have in their heart,
Their 'I-Notion' you uproot, Arunachala!*

*deivamen Runnaic cAravE yennAic
cEra vozhatta yaruNAcala*

*With you as God, verily, I meditated steadily,
You utterly destroyed me, Arunachala!*

*nontiTA tunRanait tantenaik kONTilai
yantak neeyanak karuNAcala*

¹English translation of the verses taken from 'Ramana Darshana Trayi' – by the author, published by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bengaluru

*Painlessly, me you slew, and gave me yourself in lieu,
You have been the death of me, Arunachala!*

*peyarninait tiTavE piTittizhut tanaiyun
perumaiyA raRivA raruNAcala*

*The instant I brought you to mind, you pulled and held
me in a bind,
Who can know your glory, Arunachala!*

*pautika mAmuTaR paRRaRRu nALumun
pavicukaN TuRavaru LarunAcala
malaimarun tiTanee malaittiTa vOvaruN
malaimarun tAyoLi raruNacala*

*May I lose attachment, to my body-bag of elements,
And behold forever your splendor, Arunachala!
You gave me delusion's cure, I shall be confused no more,
Shine as the medicine mountain, Arunachala!*

'kiriya parama' is the eleventh and last verse of '*Shri Arunachala Padikam*'.

Considering the oneness of Arunachala and Bhagavan Ramana, a fitting prayer to conclude this offering of translation of '*Shri Arunachala Padikam*', is a line from the *Ramana Ashtottiram* of Bhagavan Ramana :

bhavarOgabhisagvarAya namah

*Obeisance to Him, the best of medical doctors, who cures the
disease of phenomenal existence!*

Aksharamanamalai

Dr.Sarada

Anubhava, in that experience there is no I to attain or not attain. That is why in Ashtakam, Bhagavan says “*kanDanan enriDa karuttezhavillai.*”

He says *achalamA kanDEn*, I saw you but, I did not think that I have seen. There is no thought that I have seen, then there will be no thought that I have not seen. There is nothing to be seen or no one to see. The seeing and the seen, the searching and the searched for, the attainment are all in the realm of the mind, in the realm of duality.

So Bhagavan says this is the treasure attained without searching for it, *tEDAduTra*, it is always there with us. He gives us the story, in Sat Darshanam, of the ten fools. In days long gone by, when ten people were going from one place to another, they had to cross a river. All of them crossed the river confidently because they were all good swimmers. Nonetheless, after crossing they wanted to make sure that all ten of them had crossed over safely. It was twilight time, getting slightly dark, so they wanted to ensure that all of them were there. They decided to count themselves. Generally when we go on a trip to some new places and when there are many of us in a group, we do take a head count.

Hence the fools also started counting. One person started counting... one...two....three....nine. Oh! So sad, only nine are there. So, another person said, “No, no you do not know how to count, let me do it.” In this manner each of them counted, but each one of them counted only nine. They started to cry as they had lost the tenth friend. But nobody knew who was lost. There was no clarity as to who was lost. Normally, when we have a count, we would know who are the people being counted. But these fools did not know who was missing. They only knew nine of them were there and the tenth man is missing.

At that time, a wise man came that way and asked them why they were crying. After hearing the story, he looked at them

and said, "You are ten in number." But they did not accept and said that each one of them had counted and that they were only nine. The wise man asked all of them to stand in a line and stretch out their hands. He then tapped the palm of each person and asked them to count...one...two...three...four....ten. Oh! My God, the tenth man was found. Where had he gone all this time? Nowhere, each person had forgotten to count himself.

So Bhagavan asks 'during the search was the tenth man missing?' No, he was never missing. But they thought he was lost. So long as they thought he was lost, they had to search for him. During the search also, he was there, before the search also he was there, after finding him also he was there. Like that we also we forget this *nidhi*, this treasure which is our own Self, and we count everything else as valuable in this world, everything other than the Self.

This great treasure which is available to us without searching for it, we forget it. And we keep on talking about this and that, counting all the things we have. And what all do we count – name, form, man /woman, profession, vocations, abilities, money, family, friends....all these we count. But we do not count our own Self, which is available to us regardless of whether all other things are there or not there. When nothing else is there also this is available to us...that is why it is *tEDAduTra arulnidhi*. It is that treasure of grace, as it is spontaneously available, even without asking for it. Even without seeking it, it is available, it is that great treasure. But we don't value it, though it is available all the time.

What do we value? Some object or the other. And because of this we want to possess all those objects. We want to become something, we want to become good students, we want to become good parents, good children, good teachers. We want to possess something. And because all this is not available with us all the time, we have to put in the requisite efforts, we have to do *theda*, all the time keep seeking.....something or the other. When we need something that is not readily available, we have to seek it, and make the effort to attain it.

We keep on thinking, we think of a,b,c.... And we are all the time living in the belief that on account of these thoughts we

are going to attain something. And what is that? Happiness.... we are going to be happy by seeking something. Therefore we keep thinking about things. We move to 'a' thought....b thought.... c thought....d thought.....All these thoughts are our *theda*, our seeking. They come and go away. Each thought comes to us and goes away, every experience comes to us and every experience goes away. One minute we are sad, then the sorrow goes away, next minute we are angry, then the anger goes away, then we are happy and the happiness goes away. These are moving experiences like seeing a cinema on the screen. But we identify with each of the experience, which is I. I am now angry, I am now sad, I am now happy, I am now not satisfied.

Each and every experience of ours we make into the I itself. But it is a passing experience and it has come because of my seeking. It is there for a short time and then it goes away. Again I seek something, it comes and goes away. What is it that is there all the time? As the basis for all these experiences, that which is aware, that which knows, that which is aware of the sorrow, that which is aware of the anger, that which is aware of the joy is always there. What is that? That is what Sadhu Om Swami calls the *piriyaadu uravu*.....It is that true friend, it is that dear one who is always there.

To us every thought seems dear, but every thought passes away, they are all *piriyum uravu*. But that one is *piriyaadu uravu*, it is always there. *tiru aruLnidhi*....but we don't have the courage to get back to it says Bhagavan.

entiyakkam teertharul. I am shy, I am hesitant, I am not sure about the availability of this treasure, therefore remove this hesitation O' Arunachala, you remove this hesitation and give me the courage.

deiriyamODu un meiyaham nADayAn taTTazhindEnaruL aruNAchala

When I searched for your true nature, with courage then I am destroyed O' Arunachala. But how will that courage come to me? Why is there this fear in me? Because I do not have this association with you. If I have association with you, then how can I

not have the courage? So what you should do is, you should touch me. *toTTuaruT kai mei toTTiDAenil aruLnaTTamAvEm arul*if you don't do it, then I will be hesitant all the time. I will get destroyed all the time. I will keep destroying myself by association with a,b,c,d.... thousands and millions of passing experiences. So don't allow this to happen O' Arunachala. Don't allow this to happen, embrace me, touch me. First touch me.

Bhagavan is so compassionate, he has touched our lives. He touches our lives all the time. His presence is touching our lives, saying here I am. I am here for you. So he has touched our lives. And if we recognise that he is touching us all the time, then he takes us into his embrace. After that we don't have anything to worry about. But if we don't allow him to take us into his embrace, if we do not allow the Self as Ramana to swallow every movement which arises from it saying I, I....'I this', 'I that' if we do not question it and get back then we get destroyed.

Each time we have a thought, we are destroyed in fact. Because our true nature, our bliss is destroyed at that very moment when we move with a sense of doership. So, we become destroyed and O' Arunachala, don't find reasons for not embracing me, don't tell me that I have too many blemishes, too many faults. I know you are blameless, you don't have any blame, any blemish, you are not touched by the movements of creation. Although, I am creating so much rubbish, you are not touched by any of those. But then you will not be touched by it in any case. Therefore, unite with me. You are anyways blemishless, so unite, embrace with this Aham of mine which is a bundle of rubbish, meaningless. But it is not going to touch you because you are *tODamil*....you are absolutely without any form, without any creation, no *tOTRam* is there in you. So all the creation of this Aham, all this nonsensical pain is not going to touch you, this darkness which it is creating, is not going to touch you. Hence, *ahatODonRi sandODamonRiDa aruL* Arunachala. Let it be ever united with that bliss, which is your nature, blemishless, bliss of yours, let me ever be united with that, O' Arunachala. Bless me, let your grace take me back to that, let there be no reason for me to be apart from you, O' Arunachala.

Ramana is the Way of Ramana

Shyam Sundar

Who am I?

I am mind, I am a thought - thought as I.

Who is happy or unhappy?

Thought is happy or unhappy.

Who likes or dislikes?

Thought likes or dislikes.

Who am I?

I am a thought.

All problem is because thought is being taken as self and self is being taken as thought.

Both have nothing to do with each other.

Self is absolutely silent.

Thought is loud.

As Self we are never happy or unhappy, we never like or dislike so where is the problem?

Apart from the heart there is no "me".

Are we smaller 'i' or greater "I"?

In fact as smaller 'i' we should always desire to be swallowed by the heart which is source of everything, then the greater "I" reveals Itself. Such desire is a great and reliable means in itself.

"In deep sleep man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Everyone desires to sleep soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent in Man."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

I myself am myself.

I myself am what I am.

Apart from the seer there is no "I".

"The heart is another name for the reality and it is neither inside nor outside the body. There can be no in or out for it, since it alone 'Is'. One's own reality which shines within everyone as the heart itself, is itself the ocean of unalloyed bliss."

- Sri Ramana Maharshi

When we really begin to live as the heart itself leaving ego there remains no mind which divides itself into the seer and the seen, into the outer and the inner.

Smaller 'I' are many in the mind but greater 'I' is One in all hearts. Hence "Heart is Kingdom of God."

"The Self is always realised. It is not necessary to seek to realise what is already and always realised. For you cannot deny your own existence. That existence is consciousness, the Self."

- Sri Ramana Maharshi

It is difficult to believe that our own existence is the Self which is most deeply desired by us. We need not go anywhere in search of it. But he who has faith in the words of the Master is easily received by the ultimate truth.

"That in which all these worlds are fixed, from which they all arise, because of which they(all) come into being, and which they verily are."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

Hence existent is not existent in itself but existence.

Existence is true, existent is false.

Consciousness is true, conscious is false. (Conscious is not consciousness but consciousness is conscious of itself. Self is aware of itself.)

Bliss is true, blissful is false.

Heart is true, mind is false.

Greater I is true, smaller 'I' is false.

Ignorance (wrong knowledge) is not true, perfect knowledge is true.

"The Self (Atma, not ahankar), which is knowledge, is alone the reality. Knowledge of diversity is but false knowledge. This false knowledge, which is but ignorance, does not exist apart from the Self, which is knowledge, reality.

Ornaments in their variety are unreal.

Do they exist without gold, the substance?"

-Sri Ramana Maharshi.

-

"There is absolutely no "I"- thought in the Self. That is called silence."

Silence is true, silent is false.

Thought is 'silent'.

Thoughtlessness is silence.

That is the state, not that there is someone in this state.

I - thought tries to be in this state, but the state is without it. There is no I - thought in the state of Self hence it is silence.

"i" is connected with "I"(mind with heart) but "i" not "I".

"I" should merge into "I"(mind into heart).

That awareness is Self-awareness, not awareness of mind.

Mind is totally absent.

Heart is simply aware of the heart itself.

Then there is love.

"Love is the nature of the Self."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi.



Ramana's Song of Grace - 31

Revathi Sankar

Lord has created all of us and takes care of us. He is the one who moves and makes everything happen. Actually there is none other than him. But we assume different forms, names and limit ourselves and move far from this reality. We create an illusion and keep suffering in that illusion which is also an illusory suffering because there is nothing other than the Lord. When we meditate on the Lord's feet, this illusion is taken away and there comes clarity in thought and thus leads us out of illusion which is nothing but merger into the Lord, or becoming the Lord himself. This idea has been beautifully composed in the verses of Ramana Pada Malai by Siva Prakasam Pillai.

Siva Prakasam Pillai's Pada Malai has been set as Ramana Pada Pancharatnam – a unique musical piece which has been composed by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan on the lines of Saint Tyagaraja's Pancharatna Kritis. Smt. Sulochana Natarajan has very carefully selected the verses from Pada Malai and set the ragas of Nattai, Goula, Arabhi, Varali and Sri which are the same as Pancharatnam. We are meditating on the Nattai raga now. The eighth charana of the song goes like this:

*kAkkum ramaNan kai viDuvAno karuNaiyam perum kaDalanRO
pEraruLil oru kuraivilai ennum paraman pAdam vAzhgavE*

Tamil

*kAyuva ramaNanu kaiyanu biDuvanE karuNe tumbida kaDalavanE
daiva harakeyali korate illavemba paramana pAdake jayavAgali*

Kannada

Meaning –

Blessed be the Feet of the One who never leaves those who he decides to take care of, the compassionate one who is the Ocean of grace.

Blessed be the Feet of the One whose says the Grace of the Supreme has no shortcomings at all.

Bhagavan has been taken care of by many devotees from when he came to Tiruvannamalai. From when he was in the temple till when he was in Ramanasramam, his body was taken care of by many devotees. I would like to remember one of them at this juncture, Mudaliar Patti. Mudaliar Patti used to cook and feed Bhagavan from when she saw him for the first time in Virupaksha Cave in 1910. She took a vow that she will feed him every day till her last breath. And that is what she did, that is what Bhagavan allowed to happen also.

Bhagavan himself says that he is afraid of two people only in the entire universe. One was Ramanatha Brahmachari and the other was Mudaliar Patti. Bhagavan would be afraid of them because they wouldn't ask anything for themselves. Their only goal was to serve Bhagavan and they did so.

Mudaliar Patti when she came to Bhagavan itself, she was quiet old. But then, she used to cook for Bhagavan and bring the food. She sold almost all her property just to feed Bhagavan. As time passed, her eye – sight also dimmed and she couldn't see. But still she used to bring food and serve Bhagavan. In the process of doing so, sometimes she would step on the leaf plates where food had been served. So Bhagavan's attendants asked her. 'Patti why do you take the trouble of coming here all the way and serving Bhagavan? Any how you are unable to see, so send the food with us; we will serve it to Bhagavan. She replied to them, 'What if I don't see Bhagavan? Bhagavan's look is falling on me, that is enough.' Saying so, she brought the food without fail.

When Ecchammal passed away Bhagavan told the devotees, 'I have one more responsibility to fulfill', Bhagavan meant the responsibility was Mudaliar Patti. And on the day of merging, Mudaliar Patti enquired whether Bhagavan ate his food that she had sent to him. Once she got the confirmation, then she left her body.

So it is very clear that Bhagavan surely takes care of us and he knows the best for us, for he is the one who has created us. Will he not know what is best for us? He knows better than us, so there will be no shortcomings in his decision. We have to understand this and surrender to him and let him do what is best to us. Otherwise, we will end up being limited.

Bhagavan take away my ego which always thinks about various things other than you and make it think only about you. Let this mind of mine see you only and nothing else Oh Bhagavan.

Lord Ramana

Thank you Bhagavan

Your attention seeking Child :)



How Bhagavan Captured Us

By Smt. Sulochana Natarajan

Smt.Sulochana Natarajan had written a series of articles in this journal in an autobiographical manner also covering the biography of her husband, A.R.Natarajan, the Founder President of RMCL. In this recap we are putting together the memoirs in chronological order. Here she shares with us how Bhagavan laid the first deeper spiritual foundations of her life.

ARN had passed the Competitive Exams and was selected to the Income Tax Department. He was having his training in Calcutta when he came to see me first in July 1951 at Tirunelveli. He saw a few other girls also at Chennai before going back to Calcutta. At that time my 'to be' mother-in-law took to me very much. ARN had rejected all the other girls but had not given any reply to my parents. While at our place he asked my father, 'Why do you want to give her in marriage so soon? She is a child.' At that time I was 14 years of age. My father replied, 'If we postpone her wedding we will not get a son-in-law like you.'

The age difference between ARN and me was 9 years and 8 months. I only completed 15 a few months before our marriage in February 1952 and ARN's birthday fell a month and a half after the marriage. For half the year there would be a ten year gap between us! Though friends and relatives mooted different proposals for both ARN and me, my mother-in-law to be was of the very firm opinion that I was best suited for ARN as both the families were generally pious and religious. Ramana must have entered my mother-in-law's mind in the form of that thought for is He not the prime mover of all events?

However, ARN was back in Calcutta and had completely forgotten about marriage plans. He was fully occupied with his new official duties. Providence played its cards again and he was posted to Chennai as Income Tax Officer in November 1951. Our family would never miss the December Music Festival at Chennai and so the stage was already set for our second meeting. In the meanwhile, my father-in-law to be, who was then a Sub-judge at

Cuddalore insistently told ARN, 'You can't make a girl's family wait for such a long time. Either way, yes or no, you have to express your opinion firmly and soon.'

Both families had some common family friends. Through one such family ARN asked for my photo to be sent to him. ARN was deeply religious and respected tradition, at the same time he had a very modern outlook in his mind. My mother would have none of it and objected vehemently as it was not an accepted practice in those days to give the girl's photo to any boy before marriage. However, the family friend assured her that ARN was very trustworthy. The photo would be safe with him. Then the photo was sent to him.

My father-in-law to be told ARN to meet us when we went to Chennai for the December Festival and to convey his opinion to us. ARN rang up to talk to my father, but as my parents had gone out the phone was handed over to me. I simply passed on the message that my parents had gone out and that I would convey to my father that one Mr.Natarajan had called to speak to Justice Venkataraman. ARN did not say anything further to disclose his identity, nor did I remember the connection.

That day passed and I totally forgot to tell my parents about his phone call. Next day, when I suddenly remembered and told my parents they were almost furious. Then of course my father called ARN and he said he would like to meet us the next morning at the IOA Room where we were put up. He came and had a brief chat with us and left. That evening, 27th of December, 1951, he rang up appa and said, 'Yes, I will marry Sulochana.' For many many years thereafter my father used to go on repeating this sentence with the same tone!

There cannot be even an iota of doubt that ARN and I were brought together by Bhagavan's grace. Looking back I see all the possible directions that my life could have taken at that juncture had I married anyone other than ARN and I shudder to think that none of those would have likely led me to the feet of Bhagavan. It is amply clear to me that Bhagavan captured me in no small measure through my marriage to ARN.

My parents-in-law too were overjoyed to hear of ARN's decision to marry me. My father-in-law would never interfere with any of the decisions that his sons would take, giving them absolute freedom to choose their path. However, heart of hearts he too seems to have wished for this alliance for his son. My mother-in-law on the other hand was openly expressive of her happiness. On the way back to Tirunelveli we went to Cuddalore to meet my in laws and also to 'talk business' with them as is customary in practically every marriage in India even till date, especially in the arranged marriages.

My father broached the subject and asked my father-in-law, 'What should I do for my daughter?' My father-in-law was evidently unhappy with the question and answered sternly, 'We do not ask for anything or lay down any conditions'. My father was surely thrilled to know this and it was a truth that my in-laws simply welcomed me with no expectations whatsoever and with the warmth of love and affection. My parents told them they would get back with the suitable date, the Muhurtham for the marriage soon after consulting the family priests.

My uncles were at Madurai. Our family was also very familiar with Madurai as my father had been working there for 4 years prior to his posting to Tirunelveli. So my mother decided to do the major part of the clothes and gifts shopping at Madurai. As we drove from Cuddalore to Madurai with her customary efficiency she had already finished preparing the entire list of saris and dhotis that would be required for the wedding. No sooner did we reach Madurai, taking along my Mama and Mami at one go my mother finished 75% of the shopping for saris and dhotis. Next day we reached Tirunelveli. Immediately the purohits were called and the date was fixed as the 6th February, Wednesday, 1952. Hardly one month's time was there for the wedding, but in those days help was readily available in the form of relatives, friends and also workers. My son-in-law G.Kameshwar is never tired of quoting that not a single day passed in the life of Judge Thatha (my father) without his making some reference to the 6th February, 1952. Indeed it was not just a memorable event but practically an epoch making one. Entirely Bhagavan's Hand!

Sri Ramana Sahasranama Stuti¹

331. NAVINAH

Ever fresh. New.

The minds of ordinary persons are old. The content of the mind is the stored up experiences of past lives and the experiences of this life. The background governs one's outlook. Consequently the mind is incapable of a new look at anything. In contrast Ramana's mind was dead. The directional pulls of the residual experiences of the past were not there. Such a one lives from moment to moment with a mind which is always new and ever fresh.

Om navinAya namaha.

332. NASTA MANASAH

One whose mind is dead.

Yogis are of two categories. Those whose minds are suspended due to the spiritual practices they have been following. Their minds are stunned into silence for temporary periods. However, since the tendencies remain untouched they may erupt at any time. Ramana would discourage practices which lead to such yogic trances. For one is no wiser after such periods of lull. In contrast Ramana would emphasise the use of self-enquiry which destroys these mental tendencies.

The other yogis, who are rare, are those labeled as 'exalted yogis' by Ramana in his 'Upadesa Saram'. Their minds are dead like Ramana's. It does not matter if they are active or inactive, whether they are in company or alone, for their minds are free.

Om naSTHa mAnasAya namaha.

333. NAYANANDADAH

One who gives lustre to the eyes.

The eyes reflect one's state of inner awareness. The more one learns to move and stay within the more lustrous would be the

¹ Thousand (1000) Names in Praise of Ramana- Sanskrit composition by Sri Jagadeeswara Shastri. English Translation and Commentary by Sri A.R.Natarajan

eyes. When gnana dawns life will pour forth from the eyes as it did from Ramana's eyes. Since it is Ramana's grace which makes for success in the inner journey, one can say that he is truly a giver of life to the eyes of devotees.

Om nayanAnandadAya namaha.

334. NAMYAH

Worthy of worship

Ramana was the infinite in human form. Therefore he was worthy of universal worship. His teaching does not belong to any religion nor can his philosophy be classified as falling into this or that school. His teaching therefore transcended the barrier between religions. At the same time it underscores their essential unity. Small wonder that people of all religions – Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Zorastrians and others – are among the followers of Ramana and his teachings.

Om namyAya namaha.

335. NAMOCCARANA MUKTIDAH

Liberator of those who chant his name.

It has been said from time immemorial that the very thought of Arunachala liberates one. Viswanatha Swami in his 'Ramana Astottaram' similarly says that the thought of Ramana would liberate. In this attribute one goes further; the very utterance of the name of Ramana would liberate. This refers to the potency of the three words Ra – ma – na. In the puranas we have the story of Ajamila who attained mukti by uttering the name of Narayana. Likewise the name of Ramana would liberate the one who utters it.

Om namoccAraNa muktidAya namaha.

News & Events*Revathi Sankar*

Bhagavan's Aradhana was celebrated at Sri Ramanasramam. RMCL had the blessing of offering a song during the puja, a Musical Feature by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar and the Ramana Pada Pancharatnam









Mother's Day was celebrated at Ramana Shrine, Bangalore with a dance feature on Azhagammal by Revathi Sankar



Artistes of Bhagawan Sri Ramana Maharshi Research Centre and RMCL performed 'Ramana Nava Rasa Vaibhava' led by Smt.Rupa Hemanth at the Rama Mandira, Rajajinagar





ರಾಮ ಸೇವಾ ಮಂಡಲ (ಲಿ)
 3ನೇ ವಿಭಾಗ, ರಾಜಾಜನಗರ, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು-560010.



A second summer camp was held this year on the theme of 'Hamsa in Indian Heritage'. The Chief Guest was Sri H.K.Sridhar, Founder and MD, Vidhaatri Technologies Pvt. Ltd.









Some more glimpses into the second canto of the magnificent 'Arunachala Ramana', the 'Gnana Kaandam'.



















Special Programs in June

At the Ramana Shrine

9th, Sunday Prani Mitra Day

10.30 a.m. Bhajans, Self-enquiry

Talk by Sri N.Nandakumar

Prani Mitra Ramana - Dance Drama by Artistes of RMCL

16th, Sunday

06.45 p.m. Pournami Celebrations – Samskrithi Seva

Ashtottara Puja, Aksharamanamalai and Valam

At the Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium

29th, 30th Saturday & Sunday - Self-enquiry Workshop in English & Kannada

10.30 a.m. to 06.30 p.m.

Faculty: Sri N.Nandakumar, Dr.Sarada, Sri Venkatesh N.Deshpande, Dileep Simha

Guest Speakers: Sri K.G.Subraya Sharma, Smt.Vani Vasudev

Special Programs in July

At the Ramana Shrine

15th, Monday

06.45 p.m. Enlightenment and Guru Poornima Celebrations

16th, Tuesday

06.45 p.m. Pournami Celebrations – Samskrithi Seva

Ashtottara Puja, Aksharamanamalai and Valam

At Ramana Mandiram, Madurai

17th, 18th Wednesday and Thursday - Self-enquiry Workshop in Tamil

09.30 a.m. to 05.30 p.m.

Faculty: Sri N.Nandakumar, Dr.Sarada & Dr.Kala Rani Rengasamy,

Guest Speakers: Sri Pranatharthiharan, Dr.Niranjan

At Nagamalai, Madurai

20th, Saturday , 06.00 p.m. Ramananjali led by Dr.Sarada

At Lakshmi Sundaram Hall, Madurai

21st, Sunday, 05.30 p.m. Arunachala Ramana - The Theatre Extravaganza on Bhagavan Ramana's life

By Artistes of RMCL and RASA – led by Dr.Sarada and Dr.Ambika Kameshwar

Ramana Every Day

RMHC - Ramana Maharshi Heritage Centre - Sanjaynagar

RMS - Ramana Maharshi Shrine - Mekhri Circle

RSCS - RMCL Satsang Centre at South Bangalore

RSCR - RMCL Satsang Centre at Rajarajeshwari Nagar

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

Thursday: 6:00pm at RSCS

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

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

Saturday: 11:00am at RMS

Sunday: 10:30am at RMS

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

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

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

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

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 5:00pm - 7:00pm at RMHC.

Yoga classes [Contact - Uma (9538472026)]

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

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

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

Talks - English by Dr. Sarada Natarajan/Venkatesh Deshpande/Dileep Simha

Sunday: 11:30am at RMS

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

Sunday: 10:30am at RMS

Parayana of Bhagavans Sanskrit Composition by Ms. Savithri and Smt.

Ratnamma

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

Talks, Parayana and Puja by Sri Chandrashekar (9448839594)

Thursday 6:30pm at RSCR

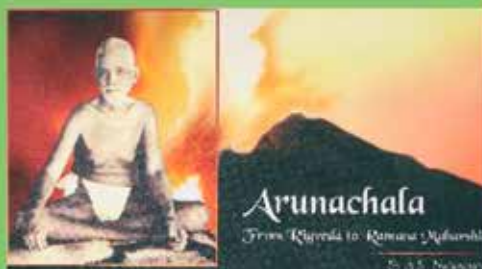
Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

84. In the same way that the wonderful scene that manifests in a fireworks display is already present in the [unlit] fireworks, all the gross and subtle scenes that manifest through the brain are already present within the Heart in the form of the ancient tale of *vasanas* [mental habits and tendencies] that manifest in such a way that they can be seen externally. You should clearly understand this is your mind.
- 85 God, the Self, manifests Himself as the world with its multitudinous names and forms. But unlike the potter who fashions a pot while remaining distinct from the mud that is the material cause for its creation, He does not remain as merely the efficient cause, performing the acts of creation, sustenance and destruction.



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.