

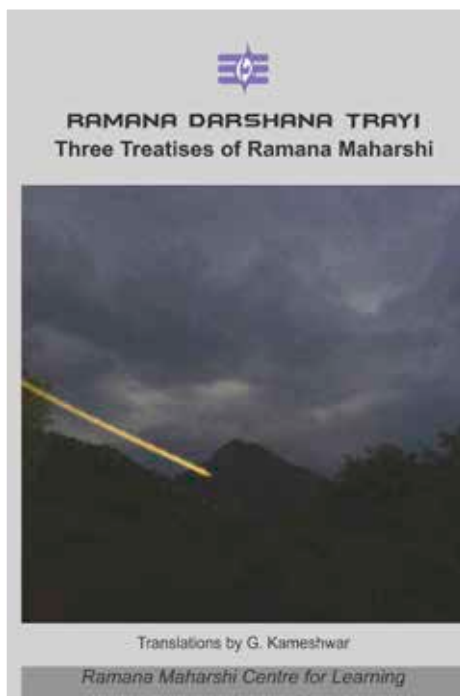
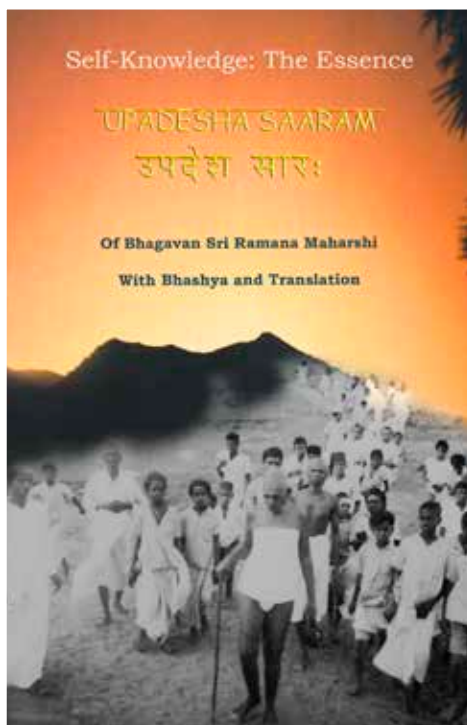
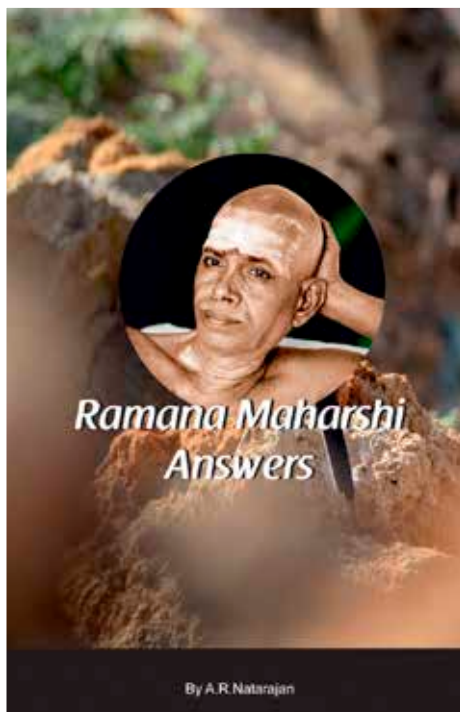
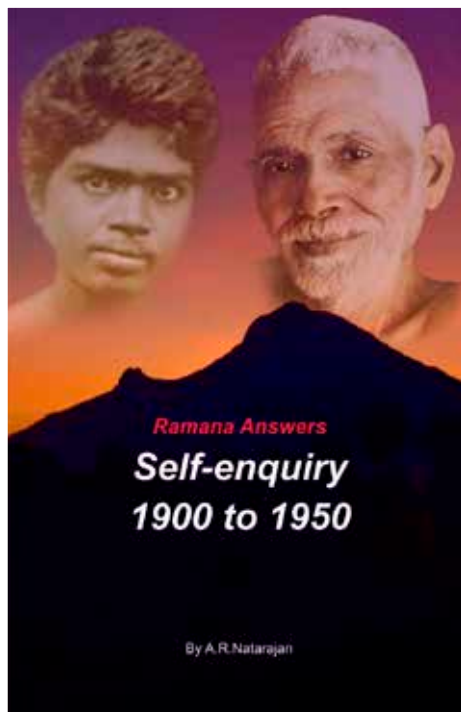
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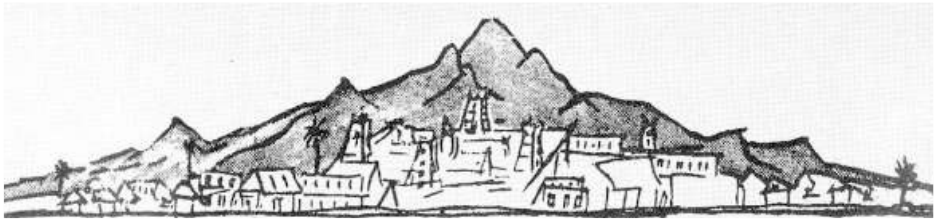
NEW Publications



THE RAMANA WAY

A Monthly Journal since 1981

Celebrating Ramana Rasa Anubhava



Editor: Dr. Sarada

Associate Editor: G. Kameshwar

Assistant Editor: Dileep Simha

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

- Ramana Gita X, 10

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RMCL – Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning

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Editorial*Dr. Sarada*

The mind moves. It moves ceaselessly. In fact, the definition of the mind is 'that which moves'. Well then, what if it moves? Four of the five elements move very often and of these the wind is movement itself. Hence the mind is often compared to the wind. It is the element of space alone that does not move and cannot move because it is all enveloping. We do not wonder why the earth moves or water moves or the wind moves. We do not seek to quieten the wind. Yet, we seek to quieten the mind. Why is it so? Are we happy with the movement of the mind? We believe we are. Why else would we allow the mind to move? What, in fact, is the 'movement' of the mind? It is the movement of attention towards an object. Attention moves and grasps an object, say, a beautiful sight. In the meantime it hears a sound that it recognises as good or bad and shifts away from the sight to the sound. If it stays intensely with the beautiful sight the sound would pass unheard and there would be no movement of the mind. But when attention moves away from one object on to another, a new thought arises. Attention may be on one's sorrow. Suddenly a sweet infant comes prattling and there is joy. Attention has shifted away from sorrow and moved on to joy. In the very next moment it may turn back to the sorrow. Such is the movement of attention which we call the movement of the mind.

As objects keep rising and setting in our mind we say that thoughts come and go. It is in truth more like objects being lighted by the rotating light of a lighthouse. One object after another is caught by the moving light. It is the light that moves, not the object. So it is our attention that keeps grasping one object after another. When it stays with a single object for a long while there is a lull in its movement. But why does it move to an object, any object, in the first place? Why does the light of our attention seek an object? This is because we see ourselves as objects to begin with. We see ourselves as a body that is limited and therefore seek something that we perceive to be outside of us.

If we do not see ourselves as a body there would be no division between the 'I' and the 'Other'. This is the undifferentiated state that we experience for ourselves every day in deep sleep. It is a state in which we have no body awareness, no needs, no fears. It is a state of peace and thereby of joy. However, we do not see this as our natural state. On the other hand, we attribute this state also to our identity as the body and say, 'I slept' by which we mean that the body was asleep. And later, 'I awoke'.

Despite the fact that there is no awareness of the body in the state of deep sleep, we believe that even the experience of sleep is for the body. Yet, when is it that we say so? Only on waking. We take only the waking identity to be the truth about ourselves and attribute all experiences to this identity. We dismiss our dream experiences as 'mere dreams' since we see them to be passing in relation to our waking identity that we presume is continuous.

Ramana also says that every experience of ours springs only from identification with the body or the 'I am the body' notion. If there is no body, there would be no division between the 'I' and the 'other'. There would be no experiencer and hence no possibility of the rising of experience either. In the waking state we experience the world through our identification with the waking body. In the dream we experience the world through our identification with the dream body.

As all our current experiences have only the body notion as their basis, we may be worried to question the validity of this notion. However, in deep sleep we do not experience a world as we do not identify with any body whatsoever. And we are happy with that state. We long to go back to sleep although we are bereft of experiences in that state. On waking we tell ourselves that sleep gives us joy not in itself but only because it provides the necessary change from waking, it provides rest. Thus we ignore the fact that we have got an indirect glimpse of our true nature in sleep. We continue to rely unquestioningly on our waking identity to bring us experiences which we are convinced are the source of joy.

Somewhere along the line, however, we begin to question this premise. We begin to see that the endless movement of

attention towards objects has surely not brought us lasting joy, if at all it has brought any happiness. We see that in truth joy lies within us, it is our true nature. Even when we seem to experience joy from objective experiences, that joy is in fact experienced within us. We realise that the movement of the mind does not bring us joy, rather, it takes attention away from our natural happiness. We do not become happy on attaining objects that we seek. We become unhappy the moment any seeking begins and that unhappiness merely ends when the object is attained as the mind ceases to move at that point.

The cessation of movement makes attention rest, unknowingly, in its own true nature. Happiness shines forth. But the very next moment attention moves in the form of a thought saying, 'The attainment of that object brought me happiness.' When grace shines forth in our lives it reminds us that the joy that we seem to experience in objects is a mere illusion. On the other hand, the movement of the mind is the cause for sorrow. When there is no such movement, we rest in or as our own Self which is the fount of infinite and perennial joy. The movement of attention on to objects takes us away from our natural bliss. Hence it drags us into the realm of sorrow.

Recognising this is one of the significant turning points in our lives. At this point we wish to bring a halt to the movement of the mind. But then, says Ramana, we have already defined the mind to be movement. How can we bring a halt to it? Wishing to do so maybe like waiting for the waves to subside before bathing in the sea. Rather, he says, one must learn to duck under the waves and thereby learn to swim in the sea. What does it mean to duck under the thought waves? It means that one recognises that the moving mind, the moving thoughts are not one's true nature. Ramana says, don't run with the running mind.

As Sri A.R.Natarajan quotes, "Some wonder at the strong words used by Ramana in his guidance to his early disciple Sivaprakasam Pillai about thoughts. To him, he labelled all thoughts as deceitful friends, waiting for an opportunity to drive the dagger into the friend (the thinker). Viewed from the angle of

their distracting capacity to take one away from one's own source of light, no words can be too strong."

Yes, attention moves and grabs an object, gross or subtle. At that point of time we become completely identified with that object. Ramana comes to our aid and helps us to duck under the wave by moving back from the object, by questioning it. As soon as attention grabs an object it manifests as thought. So Ramana asks us to enquire, 'For whom is this thought?' The answer comes, 'For me. It is my thought'. This reminds us that it is only our attention that has given life to the object. It makes us realise that we have the freedom to draw our attention back from that object.

The moment we do so, our attention naturally rests with the Self. The bliss of the Self is experienced. Once this happens the mind would automatically seek to return to the Self. It would strive to make the Self its object of attention and by doing so it would fall silent repeatedly until there will be no further need to rise at all.

Sarada Natarajam

HOLISTIC MEDITATION-V* *A. R. Natarajan*

THE GRIP OF THOUGHTS:

We had referred to the pernicious and ghost-like grip of ceaseless conceptual thought-movement. There is need to have a closer look at this fast movement in order to be able to get out of its way. Freeing oneself from this fast pace of the thought-movement is a must for holistic perception and linking with the one power source within us, the spiritual heart.

Even though the energy centre of the mind is the thinker, the 'I', it gets well and truly entangled in the dark forest of endless series of thoughts which do not stop. Until one understands the mind, until one learns to dyke fresh and continuous inflow of thoughts the thinker will be caught in the whirlpool of his own thoughts. The 'I' is like the deer caught in the hunter's net. The identification momentum is so fast that without one's knowledge the thinker becomes the thought; 'One is what he thinks'. In that lies the danger. For once the 'I' gets caught in the thought current it will be swept away.

THE POWER OF THE PAST:

There is such a forest like growth of thoughts because the twin objectives of all actions are enjoyment from the objects and avoidance of pain. When action is done with this motivation it leaves behind a memory mark of that experience. These are called tendencies. Such tendencies give a directional push to thoughts, which individually and collectively are now geared for maximising enjoyment. Repetition of the same action would further strengthen such directional pushes. For any action done over and over again makes the mind crave for the same. Their grip becomes firmer because particular thoughts have been repeatedly energised by the thinker's attention. Since the direction of the mind which is sunk in enjoyment is outside it drags the mighty 'I' in its own way and away from the roots of the 'I', the Heart within.

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

PAST IS OUR PRESENT MISERY:

This heading is a quote from Ramana. For thoughts represent Time; experience of several lifetimes that have been carried forward, and those of the present action. When they are added together they become a dead weight of experience. Yes; dead weight, because they pull the mind away from the source of light, within, to outward objects. This pull is entirely in the opposite direction and therefore one is caught up in the darkness of 'worldly' thoughts. It is unfortunate that one should be distracted or enticed away from his consciousness centre into the dense forest of thoughts, each thought having become a mere flicker of energy due to their innumerable numbers.

THE ENEMY WITHIN:

In course of time one gets addicted to thoughts. One cannot be without the company of thoughts. The value and the joy of a mind that is uncluttered, is lost on such a one. The consequent energy impoverishment is so much that if one talks about 'Mental space' or 'Heart space', it is like Greek or Latin to those ears. Some wonder at the strong words used by Ramana in his guidance to his early disciple Sivaprakasam Pillai about thoughts. To him, he labelled all thoughts as deceitful friends, waiting for an opportunity to drive the dagger into the friend (the thinker). Viewed from the angle of their distracting capacity to take one away from one's own source of light, no words can be too strong.

In this context one might refer to a story which Ramana narrates about the ego, the first thought, 'I am So-and-So'. He calls it, "Thief turned policeman". For it pretends to be the Self, the true subject. This false impression is there in the mind because ego continues throughout the waking hours. To illustrate this, he would narrate a story. "Once an expert in robbery gave a notice to a rich person in West Veli Street, Madurai, that he would burgle his house on a specified night. Since the owner was warned, he took all precautions and a number of policemen were on vigil. The thief came as announced, skillfully avoided everyone, and stole all the

jewels. But just when he was about to escape, someone noticed the theft and raised an alarm. Everyone started shouting, 'Catch the thief, catch the thief'. The thief too joined in the shouting group and in the pretext of giving a chase to the thief, he escaped".

It appears that other thoughts can easily outsmart the ego thief for this basic identification gets buried under the weight of other thoughts, other identifications which collectively take one away from the source of light within.

DEATH OF THE BODY AND CONTINUITY OF THE MIND:

Tendencies based on memories of pleasure-pain based thoughts and actions are the enemies within. What happens to them after the death of the body? Do they automatically end? Strange as it may seem, the answer is 'no'. These entrenched tendencies continue from life to life until the dawn of knowledge about the subject, until one becomes Self-aware.

There is however, need to clarify because there is a lot of confusion about the mind. It seems to have the same pattern as the body; virility, growth, decay and senility. Therefore one puts the mind in the same bracket as the body. But since one has not understood the real nature of the mind, these imbedded tendencies do not end. Their power to harass and deny joy of living in the present continues through lives in different bodies.

Should not this make one realise the value of Holistic Meditation and the urgent need to sound the death-knell of these memories?



The 'Talks' as a Guidance to Self Enquiry

N.Nandakumar

Q: How do you say that we are directly holding Ishwara or God in Self Enquiry?

A: Free-will and God's-will both arise as thought from within. Without differentiating between "thoughts I can control" and "thoughts beyond my control", when one enquires "For whom is this thought?" one goes to that Self beyond free-will and fate.

Q: I cannot understand that everything in the outside is ephemeral.

A: Ephemeral means "short-lived" or "changing" or "impermanent". One can also understand that there is no "real good" or "real bad" in the outer world. A heart surgeon gives extended life in the body to a person who can use that extended life for good or bad. Kanchi Maha Swamigal records that once he turns over a beetle as it is being eaten alive by eight to ten big ants. As soon as it is set aright, the beetle promptly eats all the ants! Bhagavan teaches about the ego going beyond all good and bad and merging in its Source. This knowledge too can be used for good or bad in this world. So, one shares this knowledge too with the humility that the intuition to use it rightly or to deceive another (oneself) is within the listener. Abiding in the Self beyond the intellect alone is beyond all ephemeral "good" and "bad" outside of oneself.

Talk 29. (Excerpt)

Has the discrimination between Reality and Unreality (Sat asat vicharana) the efficacy in itself to lead us to the realisation of the one Imperishable?

M.: As propounded by all and realised by all true seekers, fixity in the Supreme Spirit (Brahma nishta) alone can make us know and realise it. It being of us and in us, any amount of discrimination (vivechana) can lead us only one step forward, by making us renouncers, by goading us to discard the seeming (abhasa) as transitory and to hold fast to the eternal truth and presence alone.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : The intellect may discriminate between cause and effect; good and bad; Sathya (permanent) and asathya (transitory). It leaves the false ego un-enquired into. One feels falsely happy as "I know the cause/effect; I am a dharmic, righteous person; I am a renouncer of the transient". The Self is to be held directly by stilling the ego.

Q: Why do I feel "truth/ falsity" and "permanent / impermanent" as two different enquiries?

A: The intellect feels it can know the truth without eliminating all impermanence. Truth should be taken as identical with unchanging and false should be identical with all transitory things including the ego.

Talk 29. (Excerpt).

D.: It is said that Divine Grace is necessary to attain successful undistracted mind (samadhi). Is that so?

M.: We are God (Iswara). Ishwara Drishti (i.e., seeing ourselves as God) is itself Divine Grace. So we need Divine Grace to get God's Grace.

Maharshi smiles and all devotees laugh together.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : Creation is perceived by me. Without perception and me, there is no creation. Perception and non-perception, knowledge and ignorance are for me. Who am I?

Q: So, now I can create a better world?

A: How can that be Ishwara drishti? In Ishwara's Self there is no "Anniya Bhava" (creation apart from I) says Bhagavan in verse 8 of Upadesa Saram. Ishwara drishti is absorbing of all creation (non-self) in the Self (I-I).

Q: Then what is the "use" of God Realisation?

A: There is no "use". It is Unconditional Love of the world as it is. It is limitless Consciousness that absorbs all creation. It is Eternal Existence.

Talk 29. Iswara/Guru Anugraha and Prasadam

D.: There is also Divine Favour (Iswara anugraham) as distinct from Divine Grace (Iswara prasadam). Is that so?

M.: The thought of God is Divine Favour! He is by nature Grace (prasada or arul). It is by God's Grace that you think of God.

D.: Is not the Master's Grace the result of God's Grace?

M.: Why distinguish between the two? The Master is the same as God and not different from him.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: When trying to reach a goal for oneself or one's team, one feels the need for Iswara's favour (Anugraha). Bhagavan says that to discover that thinking of Iswara or Enquiring, "Who am I?" is the highest goal and that all else follows automatically, itself is by Grace. That leads to Iswara Prasada or Arul or Grace. Once the sadhaka realises that all sadhana is by Grace, Anugraha merges into Prasada or Grace. Guru and Iswara are identical.

Talk 29. (Excerpt) Break in Spiritual Effort

D.: When an endeavour is made to lead the right life and to concentrate thought on the Self, there is often a downfall and break. What is to be done?

M.: It will come all right in the end. There is the steady impulse of your determination that sets you on your feet again after every downfall and breakdown. Gradually the obstacles are all overcome and your current becomes stronger. Everything comes right in the end. Steady determination is what is required.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : Will my spiritual effort succeed or will my downfall and break in sadhana completely defeat me? That Ramana Sadguru who has consumed the whole of creation in the ocean of Eternal-Awareness seated firmly Here and Now, gives this Absolute Assurance, "EVERYTHING COMES RIGHT IN THE END. STEADY DETERMINATION IS WHAT IS REQUIRED". SATYAM EVA JAYATE. SHRADDHAVAN LABATE JNANAM.

Talk 30. (Excerpt)

Mr. N. Natesa Iyer, the leader of the Bar in a South Indian town, an orthodox Brahmin, asked: "Are the gods Iswara or Vishnu and their sacred regions Kailasa or Vaikuntha real?"

M.: As real as you are in this body.

D.: Do they possess a vyavahara satya, i.e., phenomenal existence, like my body? Or are they fictions like the horn of a hare?

M.: They do exist.

D.: If so, they must be somewhere. Where are they?

M.: Persons who have seen them say that they exist somewhere. So we must accept their statement.

D.: Where do they exist?

M.: In you.

D.: Then it is only idea that which I can create and control?

M.: Everything is like that.

D.: But I can create pure fictions e.g., hare's horn or only part truths, e.g. mirage, while there are also facts irrespective of my imagination. Do the gods Iswara or Vishnu exist like that?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is He subject to pralaya (cosmic dissolution)?

M.: Why? Man becoming aware of the Self transcends cosmic dissolution (pralaya) and becomes liberated (mukta). Why not God (Iswara) who is infinitely wiser and abler?

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : If man, here and now, being part of this phenomenal world, by being aware of the Self crosses Pralaya (cosmic destruction) and gets Mukti, why doubt or discuss about other liberated beings and liberated states of existence? Enquire, "For whom is bondage and liberation?"

Upadesha Saarah Bhashya – Introduction

G Kameshwar

Editor's Note:

This is an introduction to Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning's recent publication. This is a very valuable work, which is an English translation of two commentaries on Upadesha Saaram. There is a Sanskrit commentary by Kavyakantha Vasishtha Ganapati Muni which in turn has been translated into Hindi by Sri Swaroopananda Saraswati, Dwaraka Peethadeesha. Both have been translated into English by G.Kameshwar with great care and reverence. The book also contains several photographs of Bhagavan Ramana.

About Upadesha Saarah

'Upadesha Saarah'¹, of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, is a sublime treatise of Vedanta, conveying the essence of the Upanishads, shining as the Tiara worn by the Goddess of Self-Knowledge. Composed first in Tamil under the title 'Upadesha Undiyaar', the work was rendered in Sanskrit poetry as 'Upadesha Saarah' by Bhagavan himself. He also, later, composed the treatise in Telugu and Malayalam languages.

The genesis of 'Upadesha Undiyaar' would be well known to readers of Ramana literature. Bhagavan Ramana composed the 'Upadesha Undiyaar' on the earnest request of Sri Muruganar. Muruganar was a great Tamil scholar who attained the highest of spiritual bliss of Self-Realization by the grace of Bhagavan Ramana. And his state of supreme bliss found expression as some of the finest poetry in Tamil spiritual literature.

One of his works is 'Ramana Sannidhi Murai'. In this composition, there comes a portion that describes the *leelas* of Lord Siva. One of them describes the Rishis of *Daruka* forest, who

¹ Also referred to as 'Upadesha Saram'

are ever intent on the performance of *yagnas*, having complete faith in '*Poorva Meemamsa*', or '*Karma Marga*'. They believe in the supremacy of Vedic rites, and the inherent power of these rites to provide the desired fruits. Lord Shiva, out of supreme compassion, decides to show them the correct path and therefore appears in front of them. Upon seeing Lord Siva, the wives of the Rishis get distracted. Enraged, the Rishis try to kill Lord Siva by propitiating a demon from the sacrificial altar. Lord Siva makes short work of the demon and quells the pride of the Rishis. On the earnest request of the Rishis, He gives them *Upadesha* about the Supreme Truth.

When Muruganar reached this point of the treatise, he turned to Bhagavan Ramana and earnestly requested Him to spell out the *Upadesha*. Bhagavan Ramana yielded to Muruganar's entreaty and composed the crest-jewel among spiritual teachings – '*Upadesha Undiyaar*'. In thirty terse, lucid, pithy Tamil verses the Supreme Truth was laid bare in all its resplendence.

It is this Tamil work that Bhagavan himself rendered in Sanskrit as the treatise '*Upadesha Saarah*', which is also known by the name '*Upadesha Saaram*'.

The Message of Upadesha Saarah

To quote from a book on "*Upadesa Saram*" by Sri A R Natarajan²:

Upadesa Saram seems to have two distinct parts. The first half deals with Karma, Bhakthi and Yoga, or Action. Devotion and Union, respectively. The distilled essence of the traditional wisdom on these paths is set out. But when it comes to the fourth path of Gnana or Knowledge. Ramana treads altogether new ground. The 'straight path' of self-enquiry, an enquiry into the nature of the mind of the individual, is explained, particularly in verses 17 to 21 and in verse 28. The tools are quest for the mind and understanding of the true import of 'I' through the questions

² *Upadesa Saram: English Translation and Commentary* by Sri A R Natarajan, and Word by Word rendering by Viswanatha Swami, Published by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore, 1984

‘Whence am I?’ and ‘Who am I?’. If persisted in with keen intellect, and unflagging interest, then Self-knowledge would result. The natural state beyond dualities of Knowledge and, Ignorance, Bondage and Liberation would be restored, when the individual and divine unite. The bliss of consciousness, as an ‘I — ‘I’ throb of the Heart, would be here and now.

A brief outline of the treatise is attempted below.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi starts with a summary dismissal of the idea of ‘Karma’ being Supreme.

‘Karma’ is inert, and is incapable of bestowing any fruits. It is the Almighty Lord who bestows fruits for different activities done by one and all. Indeed, an activity has no power of its own. Actually, activities done with a desire for specific outcomes, lead to a fall in spiritual life. Fruits of such activities are ephemeral. Such acts are an obstacle to spiritual progress. However, activities that are dedicated to God and done without selfish desire do aid in spiritual progress.

As such spiritual activity is of three kinds – as distinguished by whether the ‘act’ is done by body, speech or mind. By body one offers physical worship. By speech one does ‘*japa*’. And by mind, one meditates. This is a spiritual progression. Each of this is better than the preceding one.

Bhagavan points out that there is one other type of activity which is equivalent to the highest form of worship. This is the act of serving the manifest universe, viewing the entire universe as the form of God.

Now coming to Bhakti – devotion....

In active worship, in comparison to singing or chanting aloud holy hymns (from Veda-s etc), it is better to do *japa*, either aloud or mouthed silently. Even better is mental ‘*japa*’, which is but meditation. Bhagavan emphasizes that such meditation should be continuous, like a flowing stream or a sticky flow of oil, with no breaks.

In comparison to meditating on a distinct object, meditating on oneness with the meditated-object, devoid of any notion of difference, is considered spiritually holy and cleansing.

However, abiding in the pure “I am” being-ness by the power of meditation, absolutely free of any thought, is the highest form of Bhakti.

Indeed, by firmly anchoring the mind, in its source location, namely, the heart, one is assured of attaining the highest of Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Hatha Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Bhagavan asserts that this is certain.

How is one to control the mind?

One way is that of (Hatha) Yoga - by restraining one's breath. Like netting a bird, one can immobilize the mind by restraining one's breath. Actually the 'mind' and 'breath' are two branches rising from the same energy source – namely, the power of the Lord-Almighty. Rising from one source, the two, however, serve different functions. , The 'mind' is associated with 'awareness' while the 'breath' is associated with 'activity'. (But, as they are two aspects of the same source, the control of one automatically results in the control of the other).

Mind-control can be attained by two means. One, the immobilizing of mind (by breath control). And the second, by the annihilation of the mind. The former, does not result in permanent mind-control. After a spell, the mind resumes its movements again. In the case of the latter, as the mind is destroyed, it does not surface ever again.

So how is the mind to be destroyed?

The mind that is immobilized by breath control, should focus on the Unity of the Self and the Supreme Brahman, which results in destruction of the mind. For the great Yogi who has thus destroyed his mind, and abides, thereby, as the (non-dual) Self, there remains nothing else to do.

This then is the path of (Hatha) Yoga, with breath-control as the primary means.

There is also the path of Yoga of the mind.

Here, one reverses the outgoing mind, turning it away from all external objects, and focuses the mind on the Self. Thereby, one realizes the Effulgent-Self. This realization of Consciousness-Self, is the realization of the Supreme Reality.

Another way to attain Self-Knowledge is to inquire about what the mind really is. Upon such inquiry, one will realize One's own Self as the underlying reality (of the mind), and that there is no (distinct) mind in reality. This is the straightforward path to Self-Realization.

How is one to inquire about the reality of the mind?

When one deliberates on the nature of the mind, one finds that mind is nothing but a mass of thoughts. And the origin of all thoughts is the notion of individuality, the "I"-thought. Therefore, the "I"-ness is indeed the mind. When one, with total attention, seeks the origin of the "I"-thought, one finds that one's individual "I"-ness drops off. This is Self-Inquiry.

So, what happens when the "I"-notion vanishes?

Upon the dropping off of the limited, individual, "I"-ness, there shines forth another "I". the real Self. This is in the form of an eternal throb of "I"-"I". This is the Heart, Fullness (having absolutely no limitations), Consciousness-Existence-Being.

Actually the term "I", in truth, refers to this (boundless) Self. This 'Self' is ever existing. It exists even in deep sleep, when the limited, individual "I"-ness is absent.

Indeed, the limited "I"-notion is totally invalid. One is not the body, senses, mind or breath. Nor is one the dark-ego. All these have no life, no consciousness, no self-luminosity. How then can they be one's true Being, the Effulgence-Consciousness-Self?

Now, a question.

Is there a 'Consciousness' distinct from one's Being, which illumines it?

No!

Because Effulgence-Consciousness is by itself of the nature of Existence. And one's 'Being', the Self, is of the nature of Effulgence-Consciousness.

So, now... What is the difference between the one's Self and God?

The difference lies in terms of form and intelligence. That of the individual is limited, whereas that of God is infinite.

However, in terms of their core 'Being', they are but one in substance.

How is one to realize this oneness?

When one's body identification ceases, one sees one's true identity, as God Almighty, who is of the nature of one's own Self.

Actually there is no 'seeing' in this God/Self Realization. There is just 'Being'. For the 'Self' is not an entity that is apart from the Seer. Just 'Being the Self' is Self-Realization. There is not a trace of duality there.

This then is Jnana, true knowledge. This is Consciousness that is free of mental-knowledge and ignorance. Nothing really exists apart from this, and so what (other) is there to know (or not know)?

(To conclude...)

By Self-Inquiry, when the Self is realized, one realizes Deathlessness, Reality, Allness, Awareness, Bliss.

The individual being attains, here and now, Supreme-Bliss that transcends bondage and liberation; which is Divine, free of body identification.

With the dropping of "I"-notion (body identification), the Self shines forth. This is penance Supreme.

This is Ramana's word.

Om!

Preface to the subject commentaries on Upadesha Saarah

Kavyakantha Vasishta Ganapati Muni, the great scholar-sage devotee of Bhagavan Ramana, wrote a brief, flowing commentary in Sanskrit, on the Sanskrit 'Upadesha Saarah' treatise in the year 1928 CE. This was published by Sri Ramanasramam in 1941. This Sanskrit commentary was translated into Hindi by Dandi Swami Swaroopananda Saraswati and published by Sri Ramanasramam in 1957. Swami Swaroopananda Saraswati had earlier written a Hindi commentary on Sat Darshanam³, based on a Sanskrit Commentary written by Sri Kapali Shastri. That Hindi work was published by Sri Ramanasramam in 1955⁴. It is our great blessing that the young Dandi Swami Swaroopananda Saraswati who wrote these commentaries in the 1950s, has gone on to adorn the Dwaraka Peetham of Adi Shankara, as His Holiness Jagadguru Shankaracharya.

The current English translation attempts to bring to the English reading world, the Sanskrit commentary of Ganapati Muni, supplemented by the Hindi translation done by Swami Swaroopananda Saraswati. The Hindi commentary of Swami Swaroopananda Saraswati helps in deepening our understanding of the purport of Bhagavan's words, in light of his lucid translation and elaboration of Muni's commentary.

In terms of structure, we give each Sanskrit verse, the associated Sanskrit commentary of Muni, and the related Hindi rendering of Swami Swaroopananda Saraswati. This is followed by English transliteration and an English verse rendering⁵, composed by this translator. After that, the translation of Ganapati Muni's

3 Sat Darshanam is the Sanskrit version of Bhagavan Ramana's 'ulladu narpadu', as rendered by Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni

4 By the supreme compassion of Bhagavan Ramana, this translator has, earlier, rendered an English translation of Swami Swaroopananda Saraswati's Hindi commentary on Sat Darshanam. This has been published under the title 'Self Abidance' by RMCL, Bengaluru in the year 2000.

5 English verse rendering of Upadesha Saram has been published in the book 'Ramana Darshana Trayi', written by this translator, and published by RMCL, Bengaluru in 2016.

Sanskrit Commentary is given. That is followed the translation of Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Swaroopananda Saraswati's Hindi commentary.

The translation of commentaries written by such supreme scholar-sages, is a daunting challenge. The subject itself is one of unfathomable depth, and the commentaries, even though they are brief, use terminologies and references that sweep across the landscape of Vedanta, leaving the lay, uninitiated student, floundering. We can only approach it with baby steps, with great trepidation, holding on to the finger of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, who showers His compassion equally on high and low, the scholar and the ignoramus, man and beast. It is our conviction that learned readers will forgive the inevitable shortcomings in this translation endeavor, and in this translated dilution of water in milk, sift and partake the milk alone.

With prayers to the most compassionate God Ganesha, we present this translation, offering it at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, who shines as the Self in all Creation.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya!

G Kameshwar
August, 2017



Saddarshanam*Master Nome*

Ajnasya vijnasya ca viSvamasti
 pUrvasya drSyam jagadeva satyam
 parasya drSyASraya bhUtam ekam
 satyam prapUrNam pravibhAtyarUpam || 18 ||

For the ignorant and for the wise, the universe is (exists).

For the former, the seen universe, indeed (alone), is the real (the true).

For the other, the seen the resting place has become; the One,

The Real (the Truth), the completely Full, shines as formless.

(or: For the other, the One that has become the resting place of the seen,

The Real, the completely Full, the Formless, shines.)

N.: The slight variance in the verse in the last line depends on whether we consider the presentation of Knowledge as a description of that which has become all this or as a description of that into which all this dissolves. The essence is the same. It is the formless Reality, which is the perfect Fullness.

“For the ignorant and for the wise, the universe exists.” In light of the previous instruction by Sri Ramana, what is meant by this declaration? “For the former,” that is, for those who are ignorant of the Self, “the seen universe,” which is the objective world, “indeed, is real” and “that, alone,” is seen to be “true.” The objective portion of one’s experience is regarded as the reality, even though it is not actually the Reality at all.

“For the other, the seen the resting place has become” signifies that the seen has been absorbed in its substrate, which is naturally the nature of the Seer. “The One” refers to the indivisible Existence, and to “the Real” which is the Truth. It is the “completely

Full,” because its nature is Bliss, as well as Consciousness and Being. This shines formlessly. All of this creation is but the Uncreated. This entire universe is absorbed in, and abides as, only the Formless.

“For the other” means for the wise. “The One that has become the resting place of the seen” means that the one Existence, the one Reality, became the substrate upon which all the seen is displayed. That very One, which is the Real, which is the completely Full, and which is the Formless, shines. If the substrate is formless, such tells you something about what is upon it. What is real, perceived or misperceived as the universe, is actually the formless Existence, which is perfectly full, utterly One, and indivisible. It never becomes other than what it is.

Just as in the preceding verse, it is the Self that is the emphasis. The Self has never actually become embodied. It is unborn. So, verse seventeen deals with the Self, in terms of it being the Unborn, and verse eighteen deals with the nature of no- creation. The Maharshi is very thorough, though his verses are extremely pithy. The Unborn removes any false impression of identity; the Uncreated removes any false impression about what is real. The Knowledge of identity, Self-Knowledge, is the Knowledge of Reality, Sat-Darshanam, the vision of the Real, the vision of the True. The verses are arranged by Muruganar in this order because, if we are thoroughly disidentified from the body, the comprehension of what the universe is, or how there is actually only this perfectly full Existence and no universe as such, naturally follows. From clarity of Knowledge of one's identity, comes the Knowledge of Reality.

Both the ignorant and the wise regard all “this,” the universe, as existing. In a state of ignorance, one thinks that the world is real as it is and that the seen objects are what is. This is the corollary of thinking that the body is what I am. Thus, the vision, or experience, of existence, is limited to the appearance of the body and the world. For the wise, however, it is different. “The One that has become the resting place of the seen” refers to the substratum, which is the abode of the seen. “The seen”

is every objective thing. Where does everything that is objective exist? In what “space” does all “this” occur? In what “space” do even space and time occur? In what “abode” is all “this”?

First, you see that the seen rests upon a substratum or is encompassed in some space-like Existence. Then, you see the substratum, or Existence, as alone being the Reality. So, the Maharshi declares, “For the other, the One that has become the resting place of the seen, the Real, the completely Full, the Formless, shines.” All the form of this universe is really only the formless Existence. The form of this universe appears only in this formless Existence. This Existence, being formless, is without differentiation. Therefore, where you may think that you perceive form, there is really only the Formless. Precisely where you think that you experience the universe, there is actually only the infinite, unformed Existence. This is the Vision of Truth.

Q.: You say, “the Unborn” and “the Uncreated.”

N.: Yes. The point of these verses is not that the body is really existent or the universe is really existent. Sri Ramana begins by saying that they exist, or that they are the Self, for the wise and for the ignorant, but then he explains that, for the wise, the emphasis is on the Existence, or Being, and not on the form at all.

Q.: The Unborn and the Uncreated seem similar.

N.: It is the same Self, but, in the Maharshi's spiritual instruction, he explains it in terms of the body and the universe to reveal identity and reality. In both verses, however, the conclusion is that this one indivisible Existence, or the Self, alone is what is.

Q.: If one is unborn and one is uncreated, it seems that it would be hard to create something from what is unborn.

N.: It would be impossible. So, for those who have the realization of the Unborn, the realization of No-creation is identical with it. This truth is explained in two passages, one following the other, which is well arranged by Muruganar. Perhaps, you can see the reason for the order of the arrangement. The verses deal with one

topic. Only if one thought he were dealing with separate topics would there be confusion, but that would be a division between jiva and jagat, which, Sri Ramana said, are parts of a triad that appears as a triad only so long as the ego is taken to be real. Jiva is the individual life, and jagat is the universe.

Q.: It seems that this point is extremely important. If this is not realized, even if ignorance dissolves, it can re-form somehow. If the unreal ignorance is not thoroughly and clearly seen as such, it appears to persist or form again.

N.: Why plan for that possibility? (laughter) Rather than anticipate that ignorance will not be entirely destroyed, be thorough in the Knowledge of who you are, in which there is no possibility of ignorance, no you, and no world, which is just perfect Fullness, and which is of the nature of Being-Consciousness. That is what you are; That is all that there is.

On the level of phenomena, your body will be as before; likewise the universe. It is not that the realized have different bodily sensations; nor do they experience different objects in the world. They see, at all times, the Existence of the Self, which, alone, is actually there.

Q.: That is a big difference.

N.: It is the difference between the unreal and the Real, darkness and Light, death and immortality, suffering and ultimate Bliss. Sri Bhagavan treats this as very matter of fact because it is the Reality.

Aksharamanamalai*Dr.Sarada*

*Tirumbi ahantanai dinamaha kaN kAN teriyum enRaani en
Arunachala*

Bhagavan after bringing us the tattuvam, after bringing us to the essence in the preceding verses, is bringing us to his direct teachings. First he says this truth is not something that is to be known. There is no duality in this truth. Therefore, without any knower being there, without knowing anything there is fullness - tattuvam teriyAdattanai uTRAi tattuvam iduven Arunachala. So he points to the non-dual truth and then he goes on to say that it need not be known because it is itself the truth. The Self is the truth. There is nothing apart from it to be known, since there is no object, there is nothing apart from it to be known. And this is revealed by itself says Bhagavan – tAnE tAnE tattuvam idanai tAnE kATTuvAi Arunachala.

There is no existence apart from the consciousness, the Self itself is the consciousness. Just as the sun is itself light. The compassion of the Supreme is such that in our existence we are given examples which can point to the truth. Although these can be never be the entirety of truth still there are a number of experiences in our daily life, in fact every moment of our life is graced by the Supreme to point to the truth, if only we would take the clue. The clues are plenty. They are constantly there in all the elements, in all our manifestations, in all our experiences of waking, dream and sleep, there are many pointers to the truth. This Self is as it is. Bhagavan says - Is there anything else apart from it to know it? How is one to know it?

How to know it when it remains without any movement, it remains without any other? For us to know something with the mind it has to be apart from us. Everything that we seem to know with the mind, everything we take to be knowledge, everything that we are assuming to be truth, is outside of us. We have divided the truth into inside and outside. And this is how we perceive the

world - we take the inside to be true and the outside also to be true. But we have this division. But Bhagavan says there is no division.....taane, taane tattuvam, the Self alone is the truth. And it does not require any external agency to reveal the truth.

It is self revealed. But we ask – Why am I not experiencing it? To me this relative world seems to be real. You are saying that without any separate knowledge of it the entire knowledge is revealed. But Bhagavan I am not able to comprehend it. Out of compassion Bhagavan says – ‘Oh! Is it so? It is because you have made a division. You have made a division as Self and other than self. The Self is actually complete and not divided. But what have you done? You have said self is somewhere and everything else is somewhere else. Where do you experience yourself? The Self is truth, about which there can no doubts. There is no second question about it. So, let us come to your experience about the Self. Tell me how do you experience the self? Where do you experience it?’

When Bhagavan asks us thus we recognize that most of us believe that we experience the self inside. We believe that there is an inside, there is an outside. And the self is inside, inside the body.

Bhagavan says that everything is inside the Self. But we say that the Self is inside the body. Alright says Bhagavan as he is very compassionate. ‘But what you need to do is to be in tune with yourself. Get into harmony with your own nature. So tirumbu..... turn. You say Self is within, so pay attention to the Self – tirumbi ahantanai dinam ahakkaN kAN teriyum enRanai en Arunachala.

Then what should I do Bhagavan? Turn where?

‘Turn within obviously, because you are not paying attention to the Self you are not aware of it. It is actually revealing itself. tAnE...tAnE..... It is revealing itself but your attention is not on it. Where is your attention then? It is on something outside, something which you do not consider to be self. It is on objects, not on the subject. So tirumbu....turn within and see the self.... daily, always.’ This is what Bhagavan tells us.

Turn within always....In Appalam song also he says practise this always, santatam.... But how long do I do this? I may be feel bored, tired. The mind is always seeking change. Why does it constantly seek change? Because its own existence is dependent on change. It is of the nature of change. It will not remain. If it remains it will disappear. Bhagavan says if one stays with a single thought then the mind gets destroyed. Bhagavan says just hold that single thought. He has laid great emphasis on continuous practise. He says let your practice be like a continuous stream, remember continuously. Not with a sense of burden. Santatam – always, but do not get tired, salippaRa. And practice joyously – santOshamAgavE. When you are enjoying the practise then you will not feel the burden.

‘Turn back and try to see the Self. That alone is the truth. Try to see the Self.’

How will I see it? With the power of the same Self. By the mind we have to see the mind – ahakkaN kAN. Bhagavan has also told us that the Self cannot be seen because there is nothing apart from it to see or know. It is by itself. If you call it Supreme then become food unto That to know it. If you call it Self then being the Self is knowing the Self. But here he says see the self with the self. Therefore it means see the mind with the mind. We cannot pay attention to the Self. But when we pay attention to what we assume to be the self then automatically the truth is revealed.

So what are we trying to question when we ask ‘Who am I?’ We are trying to introspect what is that I. And by what is that seen? By the very mind because the mind is by nature divided. Its nature is division. It is itself the subject and itself the object. There is no other subject or object in the mind. Say we are having an experience.....say eating something tasty, a mango. Now the experience of the tastiness, the experience of the mango or the thought of the mango is also in the mind. So in that mind there is an experience of tastiness. There is also the experience that I am eating this myself, the experience of enjoying the mango is also there. Both are in the same mind. Same mind is the subject which is enjoying and the object which is enjoyed.

Same mind is divided into subject and object. But where is our attention normally? Our attention is normally on the object because of continuously thinking that objects alone are the source of happiness. So in every experience there is the subject and object. The mind is divided into subject and object. I am eating, I am happy, I am sad, I want....So, 'I am' is there and the object is continuously there in our waking and dream experiences. Because we believe that through our objective experiences we are going to become happy. Because we believe this, one after the other the 'I am' is getting linked to objects.

What Bhagavan says is that if the I is capable of paying attention to objects it means it is also aware of itself. So turn its attention back to itself instead of turning it on the objects turn back to the 'I' in every thought, in every experience. In every experience the sense of I is there, but we don't try to pay attention to it, we don't try to seek it. We don't wish to know its nature, we are not interested in it at all. We are interested only in the object. Although both are the same, both are in the same mind, both are the mind, they are of the same nature.

We think that the object is very significant but the subject is meaningless to us. So when we turn the attention back to the subject part of every experience then it will be revealed. This is what Bhagavan says. He is giving us the same assurance that was given to him by his Father Arunachala. What has Father told him? Go and tell people pass it on to people. Bhagavan had attained the Self at the age of 16, but he kept his body for 54 years just to do his Father's job. He is asserting that if you turn within it will be revealed. When our attention to that becomes spontaneous and continuous it will be revealed.

But, says Bhagavan, speaking for us, I don't have the courage to pay such attention, so give me your grace O' Arunachala for this search - dIramilahattil tEDi undanai yAn tirumbavuTREN aruL Arunachala. We need courage to understand continuously that the objects are meaningless. The objects to which our attention is turning are meaningless and we are not attaining anything through these thoughts. We are not attaining anything,

anything at all through this thought world that we are living in. We are not getting Atmanubhava, this we know. But do we know that we are not getting any other experience either? We lead lives like zombies imagining that we are undergoing some experiences yet totally unaware of what is happening. Only the spirit of enquiry can give us true insights and make life meaningful – tupparivillA ippirappen payan oppiDa vAyEn Arunachala. We think we are enjoying the sense experiences, but what we are actually doing is remembering them, not living them. Each experience is clouded with so many memories of experiences. Even at a physical level we are not enjoying anything. We are only living in the mental experience of that object.

This is why we are eternally afraid of losing something or the other. If we really enjoy something, every moment has to be full, because every moment sense experiences are coming to us. So if that is the source of joy then our lives should be full of joy. But that is not the case because every experience is really blocked or veiled by our mind. At the same time we are not getting our natural bliss because we are caught up in this world – the whirl of thoughts. If we ask ourselves ‘What am I achieving by this continuous stream of thoughts?’ the answer will be, ‘Actually nothing at all’.

If we look at it from another perspective, in the physical realm, things happen mechanically. What are we in control of? If by our thinking things could happen we would have destroyed the world by our thoughts. Bhagavan has saved the world from our thinking. So what have we achieved by our thinking? The best part is we think of something but we are somewhere else.... Bhagavan says thinking takes us away from our natural bliss. So why should we be caught up in this? When we recognise this, then we begin to feel desperate because though we believe we do not want to be caught in thoughts yet we continue to be so by force of habit. Bhagavan I don't want this.... I don't want to be caught up in this whirlpool, we plead.

I am holding on your feet Bhagavan. I am helpless, what else can I do? I recognise the meaninglessness of this existence,

of being caught up in this objective realm. But at the same time I am unable to escape from this net. So I hold on to your feet. I want to be absorbed in that true Self in which those pure of mind and speech are ever reveling – tUymana mozhiyar tOyumunmey aham tOyavE aruLen Arunachala.

When we hold on to him in this helplessness he destroys all the confusion. He kills all the sense of duality. He finishes us off as it were – deyvameNRunnai sAravE ennai sEra ozhittAy Arunachala. After completely destroying our separate sense of limited existence he shines forth as the teDAduTRa nal tiru aruL nidi. When he thus stands revealed we realise that it is not our search which has taken us there, it is because it is already there and it is revealed by its own grace.

Having talked about the search, having talked about the need for the search, having talked about the continuous need for the search he says you are that great treasure of grace that is ever available. It is only after intense searching that one can truly know That which is available without searching. We can then say that it has come to me without searching because the one who has searched has disappeared. So how can one say that I searched and I found you? And where is room for any hesitation on my part when you alone are? By revealing this, bring an end to all my doubts, all my excuses – ahattiyakkam tlrtharuL Arunachala.

So in these beautiful verses Bhagavan has given us the crux of self enquiry and revealed to us that self enquiry is the greatest devotion and devotion to Bhagavan automatically manifests as steadfastness in self enquiry.

Om NamO Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

Ramana is the Way of Ramana

Shyam Sundar

"The essential purpose of the Vedas is to teach you the nature of the imperishable Self and to declare with authority 'Thou art That'."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

Sri Bhagavan says that the whole of Vedanta can be compressed in four words

Deham-The body

Naham-I am not

Koham-Who am I?

Soham-I am He(Supreme Consciousness).

"That which is the source of everything, is the Self. Without seeing his own Self, what is the use of a man seeing other things?"

"To know oneself and to be able to remain true to oneself, is 'siddhi' and nothing else."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

Self abidance practice is free from comparison with other things in the shape of thoughts.

"Atma is always there, at all times and all places. Instead of looking at the Self which is real and permanent if one looks upon the body etc.as one's own self, it is suicide."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

Killing one's body is not suicide, taking oneself as body is suicide. Hence no one should be taken as body. Everyone is basically heart, Self and the existence itself.

I am eternal.

I am as I am.

I am where I am.

Where can I go?

Be as you are.

Then where can you go?

Mother Azhagamma – A study¹ (part 34)

G Kameshwar

(Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya!

Continuing the story of Mother Azhagamma's grand-nephew, Viswanathan, who went on to become one of the great sage-devotees of Bhagavan Ramana, attaining the supreme state of Self-Realization...)

We saw in the last issue of this series, how Viswanatha Swami was blessed with the highest state of spirituality, Self-Realization, when he was with Bhagavan Ramana during the final moments of Mahanirvana.

After Bhagavan's Mahanirvana, the Asram had gone into a period of loneliness. Many old devotees left the Asram, and influx of devotees trickled down. The Asram too was facing a number of challenges in keeping the operations going....

Viswanatha Swami's mother, Ammalu Ammal, was then living in Dindigul. And she was seriously ill.

Sri V Ganesan writes:

"After Bhagavan attained Mahanirvana, Viswanatha Swami received a call from Dindigul that his mother was ailing and bedridden. There was nobody to attend her. Viswanatha Swami went home and saw that there was nobody to even serve her food. He attended to her day and night. He cooked for her, bathed her and nursed her for months. During this time, he remembered what Bhagavan had said: 'You have work to do.'² His mother always kept

1A journey that started based on a presentation made by the author, during the Annual Seminar of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bengaluru, in Jan 2009

2 The reference to this is from a conversation that Viswanatha Swami had with Bhagavan earlier. This was when Bhagavan's body had been diagnosed with the dreaded cancer disease... Sri Ganesan writes "He (Viswanatha Swami) got a rude shock when Bhagavan's health failed and he had to be operated on. This caused him deep pain. He went to Bhagavan and said, 'Bhagavan, permit me to serve you day and night and to be with you.' Bhagavan turned to him and said, 'You have work to do.' Saying this, he politely declined his request."

a small and special notebook with her. Before she passed away, his mother opened her notebook in which Bhagavan himself had written *Sri Ramana Ashtottaram* in his small, beautiful handwriting. She had been chanting the names every day. In her last moments she said, 'Viswanatha, I bless you,' and gave him that notebook."

"Sometime after this, when he was still at Dindigul, he had a dream in which Bhagavan appeared to him and asked him to come to Ramanasramam. When he went there, he found that Chinna Swami was ailing. For the next six months, he attended on him day and night."

Readers of Ramana literature would know that Chinna Swami was a hard manager... Running an Asram, with meagre resources at one's disposal, is an extremely challenging task, and Chinna Swami came to acquire the reputation of being rough in his dealing with people around. Consequently, many devotees were at the receiving end of some issue or another, with respect to Chinna Swami.

Sri Ganesan writes:

"Viswanatha Swami was the worst affected by Chinna Swami's tough demeanour. He once had to go without food for three days. One of the kitchen assistants took him inside the dining hall through the kitchen and made him sit along with others. When he was about to eat, Chinna Swami came in and pulled him out. Bhagavan witnessed all this without objecting to it. Strangely, during Chinna Swami's last days, it was none other than Viswanatha Swami who assisted him. Surprised, I asked him, 'How could you do that after being so deeply hurt and insulted?' He replied, 'When I was in Dindigul, Bhagavan appeared to me in a dream and asked me to come to Ramanasramam. I immediately left for the ashram. It was 1953 and Bhagavan had already dropped his body. I had no idea why Bhagavan asked me to come. When I arrived, I found Chinna Swami fatally sick and with nobody to attend to him. I felt that this was the purpose for which Bhagavan had asked me to come. I waited on him day and night, nursed him and bathed him. One day, Chinna Swami held my hand and begged for forgiveness. It is sad,

but Chinna Swami suffered gravely for his actions. Bhagavan had noticed all his mistakes and made him physically suffer and expiate. Chinna Swami spent his last two days looking at Bhagavan's picture, all the time chanting, "Ramana, Ramana, Ramana." At the time of his death, he stretched out his arms with his eyes closed, his face serene, happy and luminous. Bhagavan had come to take him and get him absorbed in Arunachala. Viswanatha Swami said, 'I could feel it - Bhagavan came and took him and helped him get absorbed in Arunachala.' "

So it is, that Viswanatha Swami was blessed to be present when Bhagavan Ramana dropped his body, as also when Bhagavan's brother, Swami Niranjanananda was absorbed in the Light of Bhagavan.

After the death of Chinna Swami, Viswanatha Swami left the Asram, and could not be traced for many years.

Sri Ganesan writes:

"When Chinna Swami died in 1953, Viswanatha Swami disappeared from Ramanasramam. Knowing Viswanatha Swami's greatness, I kept searching for him after I came to Ramanasramam in 1960. However, he kept eluding me. I could not find his whereabouts. One day, I was walking on the streets of Chennai when an old friend of mine met me and told me in great joy, 'Ganesa *anna*! I am so happy because I am just returning from a meeting with Viswanatha Swami.' My joy knew no bounds. 'Viswanatha Swami is here?' I asked incredulously. My friend provided me the address and I immediately went there. He was living in his brother's rented house. When I walked in, he was in the kitchen, cooking for the family. I prostrated before him right there in the kitchen. I cried, 'Swami! Is cooking your job? Is not your place in the abode of Bhagavan? Is not Ramanasramam your home?' He replied, 'Ganesan, what is wrong in being a cook? We need only a little food for the stomach. That, I get here by working here. The inner food, Bhagavan has already given.' I begged him to come back to the ashram and he did."

*** To be continued ***

Ramana's Song of Grace - 26

Revathi Sankar

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

Siva Prakasam Pillai's Pada Malai has been set to music by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan as Ramana Pada Pancharatnam – a unique musical piece 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 will be meditating on the same.

The third charana of the song goes like this

*Asai uDal nAn alanen jnAnam aLipOn pAdam vAzhghavE
ISan mEleccumaiyum pODenDrisaipOn pAdam vAzhghavE*

- Tamil

*Aseya dEha nAnallavendare jnAna koDuva pAdake jaya
ISwarana mEle ellava biDu nl endu hELuvana pAda beLagali*

- Kannada

Meaning –

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

Bhagavan always reminds us that we are not the body. We identify ourselves with the Non – Self and make life complicated and lead a confused life. In all the three states Bhagavan makes it clear and clearer that we are not this body or the dream body. We are not what we see, what we hear, what we touch, what we taste,

what we smell, and not what we experience also. 'We are that', if we say so, then we are not that because there is somebody to say that also.

If we see ourselves in the waking state, we take different forms from when we are born till we die. We may be chubby and fat when we are young, we may lose weight as we become older, or vice versa. And even in one day we assume different roles and we play those roles. Actually which one of those are we? So do we really know ourselves?

We take unknown, unseen, unheard of forms in our dream. When we really think about these, we may feel scared also sometimes. But the fact is we are not any of those forms which we assume in our dreams as we are not worried about changing any form whereas we worry, feel sad when it happens in the waking, 'real' world.

In dream, do we really remember having a form at all? But we say we exist in all three states of life. Actually speaking, which is the form which we think we are? What do I do now? I don't know myself.

If we want to buy a thing from the market itself, we become so careful and want to know everything about it. We make sure that we get the right product; we will have a full idea about what we buy in the market, we enquire, enquire and enquire and then only buy. But for this 'I' of mine, I don't know who I am and live with a stranger every day. We don't worry, we are not even bothered to question once about who we are. We assume that we know about ourselves completely. Truly we don't know who we are.

'Is it possible for us to know ourselves?' we ask. But from the heart of hearts I may not want to know myself because if I am keen on something, I won't stop until I get it. But since I don't want it deeply enough I keep postponing this search.

But Bhagavan is the compassionate one who reminds us at all times about questioning this ego and getting back to the source. He came to this Earth just to give this to all of us and

make us realize the true Self which is shining within us as the resplendent Sun. He took the form, played the leela of winning over death just to tell us that it is possible by all of us also to attain that Self here and now. And even after that, when he got his enlightenment at the age of 16, on July 17th, 1896, he never left his body. He stayed in that body for 54 years with lots of difficulty to the body but he was not moved by any of these limitations to be connected to the Self always.

He says it is possible by us also, so he revealed that at all times, everywhere, we have the chance to attain that true Self. It is for us to decide when we want it and just have to grab that anytime. By the grace of Bhagavan I have realized the goal of my life, Bhagavan please help me in attaining the same by holding my hand till I attain it. Make me work hard for it Bhagavan. But for your grace, what can I do?

Oh! Lord Ramana

Thank you Bhagavan

Your attention seeking Child :)

Smt.SN – Best of the Best *K.S. Raghunathan*

I used to call Sulochana Amma as *udan piravaa sahodari*, my sister, though not by birth. Because the day I met her, she was introduced to me by her father Justice Mama, Justice K.S.Venkataraman, who was like a father to me. He was a very close associate and a friend of my Carnatic music master, Sangeetha Kalanidhi G.N,Balasubramaniam. GNB was a well known name those days. Justice KSV Mama called me to his home and assigned to me the task of supporting Sulochana Amma in her LP recording of Ramana Music. I was working in HMV and in 1980 we did the recording of Ramana Music. First Sulochana Amma came to HMV Studios to record the LP 'Ramana Vaibhavam'. Later I was invited by Sri A.R.Natarajan to record the Aksharamanamalai which was a part of the now most popular album 'Ramana Amudam'. We recorded this at Prabhath Studios, Bangalore, where I did the orchestration for Sulochana Amma's music and later the editing of the album as well.

That's how Bhagavan blessed me to become a Music Director in Ramananjali Music. At that time Ramananjali was taking shape as the first Cassette and LP. Sulochana Amma had done the music composition for the first cassette and LP and after that I composed music for some of the songs in Amudam. Later many famous film music personalities like Dr.S.Rajeswara Rao, Ilayaraja, Vijaya Bhaskar, S.V.Venkataraman, Ranga Rao, C.Ashwath, L.Krishnan, L.Vaidyanathan and many others did the musical score for Ramananjali. In those years the contribution of H.K.Narayana and Raj Kumar Bharathi to Ramana Music was also very significant.

After the early 80's Bhagavan Ramana did not call me to his service for two decades until 2001. Then I was called to do a part of the music for the dance-drama 'Ramana Leela'. After that my association with RMCL has become practically a full time passion for me for several years. I called her my sister and yet, now that she is in the divine abode of Ramana perhaps I should say she has been promoted to being in the position of my mother. What else can I say? From another perspective Sri A.R.Natarajan is like an elder brother to me and in that sense today's function is

like paying obeisance to my Anna, Manni - who are practically as if they are sitting here before us, the divine couple. Such people bless youngsters and people of all ages to do the best of their Service, and Amma's blessings would be in plenty for Ramana Music. This is so simple to understand because Sulochana Amma's heart is filled with love, its filled, resplendent with abundant love, that's why she was able to do all that she did.

Some people wondered what could be the secret of her immense energy, her dedication and perfection which enabled her to document the huge volume of Ramana Music and to contribute significantly to every aspect of RMCL as well. Whatever other secret may be there, the greatest secret is, Bhagavan was dwelling inside her spirit and he has made all these things happen. Kameshwar has done some research and discovered that the day she passed away was exactly on the same date as per the Tamil calendar, as Bhagavan Ramana started his epic journey to Arunachala 120 years ago. And the day her ashes were immersed in Tiruvannamalai was the date when Ramana reached Arunachala 120 years back, in 1896, calculation you see. So these mystic things happen when the planets are so placed, certain things will have a style of occurrence, and the same occurrence will get repeated once, twice thrice four times.

As a musician I found in her something special. What was that special thing? She had imbibed the qualities of three great female vocalists who were very prominent and popular in our early years. Sulochana Amma had imbibed the powerful Shruthi shuddha of M.S.Subbalakshmi, MS Amma, whose Centenary is going on through this year and I am giving many interviews on her. Sulochana Amma also had the musical prowess of M.L. Vasanthakumari. M.S is also a Vidushi but MLV was spoken of among the Grammarians of Carnatic Music as a powerful Vidushi, a Vidushi who could handle any raga, including Melakarthis, including Janyas, Abhangs, languages and Pallavis. It requires a special laya jnana.

Sulochana Amma had imbibed all that because it is proven in her music. Her musical composition of the Ramana Pada Pancharatnam alone can stand testimony to this, not to mention the numerous melakartas, janya ragas, rare ragas, raga malikas and types of items that she has composed for Ramananjali Music including varnams, swarajathis and thillanas. Third and most

importantly Sulochana Amma had Sahitya Shuddha which is missing in most of the Carnatic Musicians, especially nowadays where they declare that the music is more important than the lyrics, the Sahityam.

Now D.K.Pattamal was the first among the Carnatic Musicians who excelled in Sahitya Shuddha. There were Seergaazhi Govindarajan and K.B. Sundarambal, but they belonged to the Tamil cult. But D.K.Pattamaal, especially the Sanskrit Deekshitar Kritis that she sang, the praasa lakshanam would be exactly as the spoken words, the kala pramanam, as you express a word, the phrase when you speak it, same phrase will be sung, in its own kala pramanam. This is a rarity among musicians and D.K.Pattammal was an adept at it. Now imagine that's how Sulochana Amma sent her daughter, Dr. Ambika Kameshwar to study under D.K.Pattammal, she herself being an exponent of this. I found this in abundant quantity whenever she used to give me lyrics and then tune prasa lakshanam. She used to compose such beautiful tunes so that you don't ask for a second time, put it like this, put it like that.

Like I was telling one of my friends, this is the way I learnt from Sonti Narayana Rao which I am telling in every lecture of mine, who taught me Carnatic Music when I was very young. He was the grandson of Sonti Venkataramana Bhagavathar, Guru of Sri Tyagaraja Swami. So, he used to tell me exercises like 'Ramuni toka pibarundo adavikki vellanu'. You tell me, he would insist. If I made a mistake with a bamboo he would strike my hand. That sort of punishment he used to give me, he would correct me, 'Not like that, Ramuni to kapivarundo, like that you have to sing'. That has gone deep into my veins and I have that punch in it, when I listen to music from somebody else, especially vocalists, I look for this quality. This was there fully in SN Mami's musicianship, very rare thing I am mentioning.

So, now revising everything, you see the quality of three people for the shruti jnana, the laya jnana and the sahitya bhava, she has imbibed from three great Maestros of those years. That's how I was attracted to her music and I had all admiration for her. You can put down all the 26 letters of the English alphabet. She had a virtue for every letter. And I am happy, I am very proud that I have been associated with her as one of her family, a Ramana Bandhu.

News & Events

Revathi Sankar

Poorna Ramana dance ballet at Institute of World Culture



Talk by Ujwal Jagadeesh at Meditation and Study Circle



Rangollaasa – by Vincent Paul, disciple of Guru Rupa Hemanth





Gnananjali 2018 – Classical dance performances by senior artistes and their students at Narada Gana Sabha with narration by Dr.Ambika Kameshwar









125th Theatre Production by RMCL 'Arunachala Ramana Bala Kandan' :
Some glimpses of the mega production













Guru Poornima at Ramana Shrine – Ramananjali, Ramana Nritya by Revathi Sankar and distribution of certificates to students who have cleared different levels of the dance exams of Gandharva University with distinction









RAISE – Cultural programs by students of Ramanashree English School trained by Ujwal Jagadeesh, Veena Sudhindra and Venkatesh Murthy.









Special Programs in August

At Other Venues

4th and 5th Saturday and Sunday 9.30 a.m.

Self – Enquiry Workshop in Kannada at Ananda Foundation, Gandhi Bazar

4th Saturday 6.00p.m. ‘Ramana Lahari’

- A Dance Ballet by artistes of BSRMRC led by Smt. Rupa Hemath at Divine Life Society, Bangalore

Coimbatore

21st, Tuesday and 22nd, Wednesday

Self-enquiry Workshop at Coimbatore

At Ramana Shrine

18th and 19th Saturday and Sunday 10.00 a.m.

Self – Enquiry Workshop (Kannada) at Ramana Shrine, Bangalore

26th Sunday 6.45 p.m. - Pournami Cultural Festival

Puja, Aksharamanamalai, Valam

Special Programs in September

At Ramana Shrine

9th, Sunday 10.45 a.m. Aruna Vijaya Day Cultural Festival

24th, Monday 6.45 p.m. - Pournami Cultural Festival

Puja, Aksharamanamalai, Valam

Sri Sankara TV telecast continued

Watch RASA Web TV (www.rasawebtv.com) for Ramana episode.

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

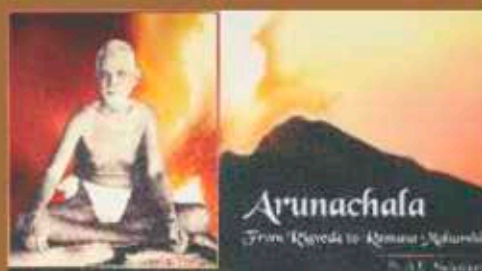
Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

64. 'Though this world seems fragmented to the senses, its fragmentary nature does not invalidate its reality'. So argue some people. We refute their assertion by questioning, 'Is not indivisible wholeness [paripuranam] also a characteristic of reality?'
65. Those who have known the truth as it really is will not declare this world, which is forever undergoing destruction by the wheel of time, to be real. Only the plenitude that shines uninterruptedly at all times and in all places, transcending time and space, is the nature of reality.



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.