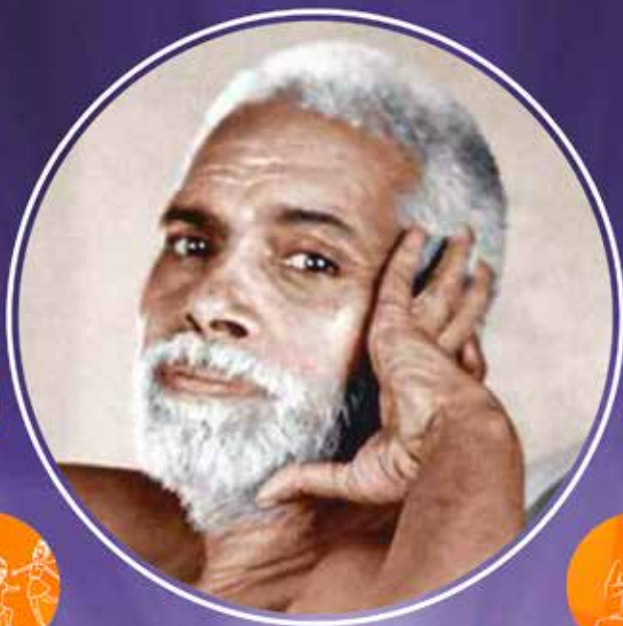


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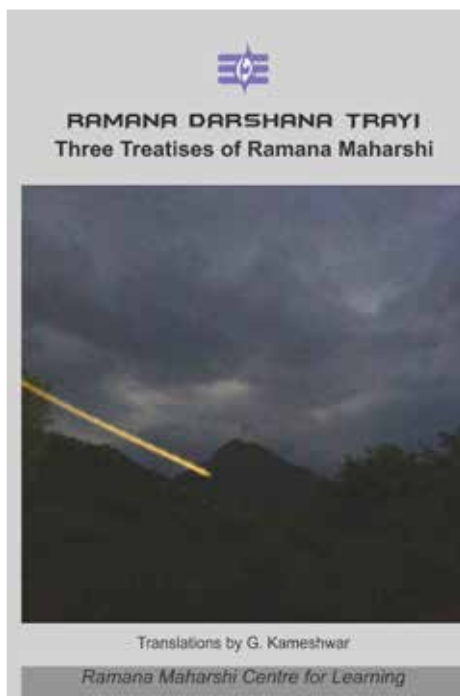
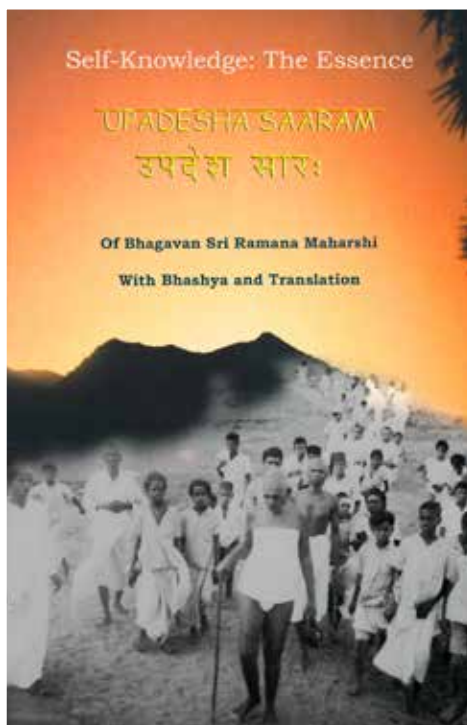
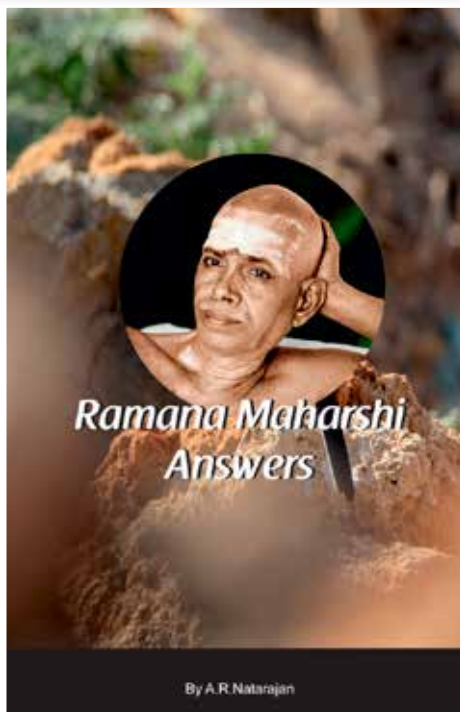
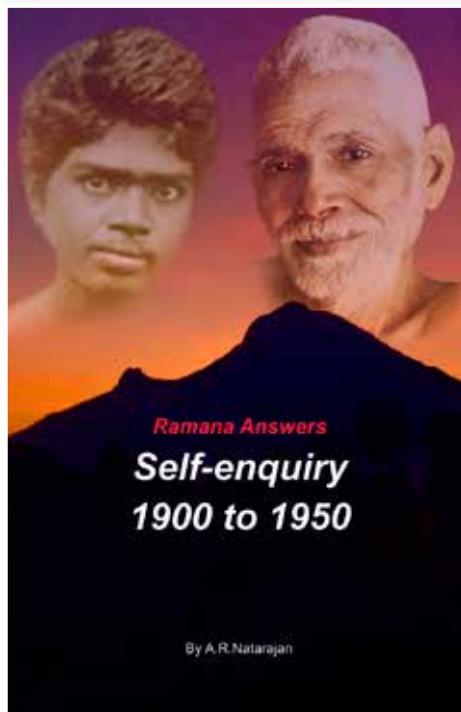
# The Ramana way



Ramana Bliss

A Monthly Journal published by  
Ramana Maharshi Centre  
for Learning  
Bengaluru

# NEW Publications



# THE RAMANA WAY

*A Monthly Journal since 1981*

*Celebrating  
Ramana Rasa  
Anubhava*



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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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**Editorial***Dr. Sarada*

It is a strange life that we lead, not knowing who we are and where we are going or why we are going wherever we think we are going. That we wish to go somewhere is certain. That we are never satisfied with wherever we are is also clear. For, if this were not the case why would we wish to move at all? We are always longing for something different from what is. Better health perhaps, better economic circumstances maybe, achievements for ourselves or our dear ones, people around us to be different from what they are, for them to be more considerate, more sincere... anything may be the case. We may want our politicians, our bureaucrats, our teachers, our doctors, our sportsmen to perform better. We may want people to be more sensitive to the environment, more considerate to one another.

Or, we may let the world be taken care of by the One who created it and want to be better human beings, better practitioners of the inward path. The bottom line is that we look forward to a situation that is not the same as the situation today. How many of us would say that we want absolutely nothing to be different tomorrow than it is today. Perhaps a handful of us at the most may say so.

The fact that we are dissatisfied is firstly an indicator that we are not happy with whatever the Supreme has provided as of now. We feel our circumstances can be better in some way than what is given. The spirit of surrender is wanting. Secondly our discontent is also a pointer to the fact that we do not believe Ramana's words that happiness is our own nature. We prefer to believe that it lies outside of us in some future situation or event. We further believe that it is in our power to somehow create that situation or bring about the happening of the event. Therefore we not only rely on our power to act we become pathetically addicted to action.

This dependence on action is only because of the desperate hope that action will yield results, results that we believe will bring us happiness. There is a constant need to think of something or

the other because of the belief that by thinking and planning we will be able to act in the best possible manner. By acting in the best possible manner we are bound to achieve the results that we aim to achieve through those actions. This is what we believe.

Hence our lives are like constantly rotating merry-go-rounds where a wooden horse appears to be chasing a wooden bird and the wooden bird appears to be chasing the wooden fish and the wooden fish appears to be chasing the wooden elephant and the wooden elephant appears to be chasing the wooden lion which in turn appears to be chasing the wooden horse. The movement may be fast and exciting but does not get us anywhere.

If we enjoy the movement we may go for one more round and again for another round. We may take any number of rides on these wooden figures. We may worry that someone is ahead of us. Yet who is ahead and who behind in the circular merry-go-round? We may change from the horse to the fish thinking that the performance of the horse is dissatisfactory. Yet the story can never be any different. Even if we take a million rides on each of the different animals in the merry-go-round we would never have got anywhere. We would always be moving around in the same circles.

Ramana says in 'Upadesa Saram' that action takes us around in circles. It does not lead anywhere. It certainly does not lead us to our goal which is unwavering bliss. On the other hand, it merely leads us to further action. But we seem to have forgotten whether our goal is bliss or the power to act. If someone tells us, simply be and everything will be done for you, will that be acceptable to us? Doesn't it seem more like we want credit for our actions and their results? Are we ready to wait and watch? Are we ready to be silent?

There are those of us who will ask, 'If I don't act who will take care of my duties?' Or 'Should I become lazy?' We hardly ponder on whether we are capable of staying without action. And in this context we need to remember that the primary action is thought. The question is whether we are capable of remaining still, without moving physically and mentally and yet not giving way to

slumber. Can we remain in dynamic silence? If so, for how long can we remain thus? Isn't there something in us that seems to be constantly impelling us to action? Let us face facts. Aren't we head over heels in love with our own sense of doer-ship?

In this process, somewhere along the line we seem have lost sight of our real goal. There is a universal search for happiness. Ramana says every living being wants to be happy all the time. We see this. Yet, do we really see it? We forget that what we are seeking is happiness. Instead we begin to seek the results of actions. We are deeply saddened if we do not achieve the goal that we are aiming at. We are elated when our desire appears to have been fulfilled.

Whenever a need for action arises do we ask ourselves, 'Why do I have this need? Is this need for the end that I seem to want or is the need for happiness? Is happiness there in the result or is happiness within me? Is happiness in objects and situations or is it my own nature? If happiness is my nature why am I postponing experiencing the bliss of the Self? Why am I wasting time pursuing goals through my actions?'

But if happiness is not my own nature is it ever possible to be in a steady state of happiness? It would be impossible because anything that is outside of me including the health and life of what I call 'my own body' and 'my own mind' is variable. Everything external to me is subject to change so it can never be a constant source of joy. If happiness were not to be my nature the pursuit of unbroken happiness would only be a dream. However, the irony is that though happiness is my nature, I seem to convert that into a dream by insisting on searching for it.

Whenever we seek something we have assumed that it is lost. It may be the case of ten fools thinking that one of them is lost because each forgets to count himself while taking a head count. It may be the instance of a lady searching for her necklace when she is already wearing it. Very much in this manner we are endlessly engaged in searching for happiness while it is all the time available as our Self. Even if we were to come face to face

with our own happiness perhaps we would turn away just for the pleasure of seeking it once more.

We are not tired of playing hide and seek with happiness again and again. The excitement of surfing on the waves seems to entice us away from the joy of diving into the depths of the ocean. Somewhere within us is hidden a thought that we don't want to be happiness, we want to attain happiness and know happiness and taste happiness. I want to taste chocolate, not be chocolate, it is said. We do not pause to see that it is only because I am I that I enjoy the taste of chocolate. It is for the 'I' that we seek the chocolate and not for the chocolate that we seek the chocolate. Forgetting that everything that we do is only for the sake of the 'I' we are lost in imagining that we are performing actions for something or someone other than the 'I'.

Strange are the lives that we are leading, are they not? We wish for happiness yet negate it from moment to moment. We long for freedom, or so we would have others and ourselves believe, but we are ready to bind ourselves interminably with the shackles of action. If we wish to break free from these bonds what can stop us other than our own conditioning? If we wish to remain bound who would wish otherwise for us, who else is going to long that we should become free? Are not our lives strange in the dogged pursuit of sorrow, of darkness and bondage while declaring all the time that we wish for joy, for light and freedom?

Strangest of all is the fact that we do not even know whose goals these are, whose actions these are and who in truth is the experiencer of the results of actions. I may perform actions with my body but is it the body that enjoys the fruits of the actions or is it 'I'? Does the hand that holds the fruit enjoy the taste of the fruit or the eyes that see that enjoy it? Can we even say that the tongue that tastes the fruit enjoys it? No, it is clearly I who enjoy everything. Who is this 'I'?

Truth is that we never enjoy anything other than ourselves at any point of time. When we think that we are the body we wish to enjoy things that are related to that body. We seek physical,



sensual experiences. When we think that we are the mind we seek experiences that are related to the mind. We revel in emotional experiences. When we think that we are the intellect we enjoy intellectual experiences. These give us a high – it may be logic or chess or philosophy for instance. It is what we believe we are that defines what we seek outside. In fact, we try to seek ourselves outside in this manner. Why is this so? Because we do not see that it is ourselves we are seeking all the time.

Further, we do not recognise that we are only seeking since we are identifying ourselves with something that we are not. As we are not the body we need to seek bodily experiences, they are not natural to us. As we are not the mind we need to seek mental experiences, they are not natural to us. They come and go. Since these experiences pass away, we have to seek them all over again. As we are not the intellect we need to seek intellectual experiences. These experiences need to be sought and gained and sought and gained all over again as they will necessarily vanish from time to time. They are not the 'I' and hence can never remain with us steadily.

As Sri A.R.Natarajan quotes from Ramana, "When some one says that he took a bath in the same river twice, he is wrong because, when he bathed for the second time, the river was not the same as it was when he bathed for the first time. On seeing the brightness of a flame, a man says that he sees the same flame but this flame is changing every moment."

Only the Self is ever available. Why then are we unaware of its glorious presence? It is because we are too busy with other things. The Self is very unassuming. It will not exhibit itself. It is the fullness of love, it will wait endlessly for us to turn to it. Therefore when we do not seek anything else its subtle fragrance will waft to us from within and envelop us in its embrace.



Sarada Natarajan

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**THE NEW DAWN\****A. R. Natarajan***NO ONE BATHES IN THE SAME RIVER TWICE**

When some one says that he took a bath in the same river twice, he is wrong because, when he bathed for the second time, the river was not the same as it was when he bathed for the first time. On seeing the brightness of a flame, a man says that he sees the same flame but this flame is changing every moment.

**Bhagavan Ramana.**

The waking and dream states are a flow of thoughts. Each succeeding thought has no essential connection with the previous one and they are disparate. Therefore this moment is not the same as the previous one and the present moment also will not be the same when it is replaced by the next moment which will occupy its place. There is only a succession of present moments.

If this is the correct position, why do we say that the past is never behind us? Don't we get linked to the past moments and coming future moments? Yes, of course. What one does is to bring the past or future into the now. A fresh lease of life is given to the dead past or the unforeseen future by such action. We simply do not allow the caravan of thoughts to pass on. Why? Because we keep re-living the past or anticipating the future by constantly pressing the rewind button or the fast forward button.

It would be wonderful if only we could stay in the now experiencing its beauty. To the extent to which one succeeds in remaining with the present moment and not losing it by allowing thought interference from past and future one will be able to experience the fresh air of freedom. The capacity to stay clear of past and future and abiding uninterruptedly in each succeeding moment is labelled by Ramana as the most difficult penance. For in such alert living there is no room for sloth or slightest mental laziness because the focus remains undistracted on each

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

succeeding moment, on the present. One might call this timeless living and its beauty and enchantment are hard to describe.

In a way it could be said that the crux of Ramana's teachings is to arm one against clinging to the passing show, to this life of thoughts and action based on pleasure pain, experiences. Quite obviously the ability to let go of an experience is not there as long as one is attached to it through memory of that experience which is over. The solution lies only in a spiritual practice which enables the understanding of the true nature of the mind. Ordinarily one takes the mind to be a permanent and separate entity like one's body. Ramana begins by pointing out that because there are thoughts we assume that there is a mind from which they emanate. Ramana asks, "Take away thoughts, then where is the mind?" This statement is only to point out the truth that when every thought is changing and is different and is in fast motion there must be a common or linking centre which alone can be called the mind.

Ramana's solution is alert watchfulness of thought at its moment of birth. For, such attention would put an immediate stop not only to that thought but also to the proliferation of that thought into hundreds of related thoughts. This practice of paying attention to the Self, called self-enquiry begins by focussing attention on the subject 'I' and by not allowing any distraction which would happen whenever there is slackening of attention to the rising thought. Such attention would allow the movement of thoughts from one moment to another without being clogged. As a result the mind would be spacious.

This freedom would be a growing freedom. It arises from steadfast practice that is a result of detachment from nagging and obsessive thoughts. Thought will arise and subside naturally depending exclusively on the need of that moment. This dropping of the thought load by diligent and persistent practice of Self-attention would open up a whole new world hitherto unknown to us. It is like the relief enjoyed by a labourer carrying a heavy load when he drops that load at the destination. The mind which is now fragmented and enervated, would be alert, attentive, powerful and unitary. For the mind is consciousness and is of the same nature as the Self.

In this context one can appreciate the repeated assertion of Ramana that the nature of the mind is pure like ether and its power is the power of the Self. The individual and separate subject, separate 'I' will cease to exist naturally when its associations with experiential thoughts are cut and it exposes itself to the magnetic force of the Self.

In understanding the true nature of one's own mind, one would have discovered one's own immortality by freeing oneself from the shackling thoughts. For the sake of communication and understanding one might say that the mind which we now know would cease to be and be replaced by the pure, unitary mind enabling one to be in the state of natural happiness.



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

N.Nandakumar

### Talk 54. (Excerpt)

An Andhra Pandit - an elderly gentleman - had some doubts regarding Kavyakantha's exposition of Advaita. He has found it in books that Brahman is free from sajatiya, vijatiya and swagata bheda. Such conditions are satisfied in vivarta vada but not in parinama vada. In the latter, swagata bheda is bound to be. The Master pointed out that Dakshinamurti did not teach anything of the kind. He did not say that Brahman is related to Sakti or not related. All that was, was only silence; and the doubts of the sishyas (disciples) were cleared. The significance is that there is nothing to be learnt, discussed and concluded. Everyone knows 'I am.' There is the confusion that the 'I' is the body. Because the 'I' arises from the Absolute and gives rise to buddhi (Intellect). In buddhi the 'I' looks the size and shape of the body, na medhaya means that Brahman cannot be apprehended by buddhi.

Brahman → aham ('I-I') → buddhi (intellect).

How can such buddhi crossing over aham discover Brahman? It is impossible. Just get over the false conception of the 'I' being the body. Discover to whom the thoughts arise. If the present 'I'-ness vanishes, the discovery is complete. What remains over is the pure Self. Compare deep sleep and wakefulness. Diversity and body are found only in the latter. In the former the Self remains without the perception of body or of the world. Happiness reigns there.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: In the Self there are no differences - of different kind of objects (vijatiya); of same kind of objects through separateness (sajatiya); or within the same subject matter raising as cause and effect (swagata beda presented by parinama vada in Advaita). Bhagavan points out that there is an intellect which gets back to the Self or that Brahman became the two states of waking and sleep is not admissible in vivarta (the seen is an illusory projection). For whom is the difference between seer and seen?*

**Talk 54**

The Sruti vakya, 'Aham Brahmasmi', relates to the state and not the mode of mind. One cannot become Brahman by continuing to repeat the mantra. It means that Brahman is not elsewhere. It is your Self.

Find that Self; Brahman is found. Do not attempt to reach Brahman as if it were in some far off place.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Brahman, world and the Individual are posited by the scriptures. Self Enquiry makes one seek to know the truth of the individual. Brahman is not far off. It is the reality behind the "I". This makes the search for the unknown Brahman and extraordinary diversity and multiplicity of the world unnecessary. Hold the "I" to find the truth underlying and the truth behind the "world" and 'God or Brahman' is found.*

**Talk 54. (Excerpt).**

The Pandit remarked that thoughts are so persistent that the aham cannot be reached.

The Master said: The Brahma akara vritti helps to turn the mind away from other thoughts. Either some such practice is necessary or association with sadhus should be made. The sadhu has already overcome the mind and remains in Peace. His proximity helps to bring about such condition in others. Otherwise there is no meaning in seeking a sadhu's company.

Deho aham (I am the body) is limitation and is the root of all mean and selfish actions and desires.

Brahma aham (I am Brahman) is passing beyond limitation and signifies sympathy, charity, love etc., which are divine and virtuous.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: The Brahma akara vritti or Sphurana is stand alone and exists by itself. As one seeks it through sadhana like self enquiry, it is felt as the primal cause, ultimate goal and substrate of everything. Though it may initially appear nearly impossible to hold the "aham" amidst the persistence of thought, one should make the quest. What initially appears impossible, starts becoming clear as the original cause, ultimate goal and substrate of life. The stand*

*alone nature of the Brahma akara vritti or Sphurana consumes all goals, causes, substrates and the seeker. The stand alone Sphurana is beyond even "shining" or "vritti". The Self alone IS. This truth is inescapable, all-pervading and bound to reveal itself. Enquire, "*

#### **Talk 54. (Excerpt)**

D.: How does a grihasta (householder) fare in the scheme of moksha (liberation)?

M.: Why do you think you are a grihasta? If you go out as a sanyasi, a similar thought (that you are a sanyasi) will haunt you. Whether you continue in the household, or renounce it and go to the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thoughts. It creates the body and the world and makes you think you are a grihasta. If you renounce the world, it will only substitute the thought sanyasi for grihasta and the environments of the forest for those of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there. They even increase in new surroundings. There is no help in the change of environment. The obstacle is the mind. It must be got over whether at home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? Therefore why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, in whatever environment you may be.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Self Enquiry is to be practiced irrespective of one's identity as a grihasta or sanyasi. The problem of mind-ego is deeper than these identities and cannot be directly addressed by merely changing one's environment or identity. Self Enquiry takes the consciousness beyond the limitations of environment, mind, identities and ego. Who am I?*

#### **Talk 54. (Excerpt)**

The environment never abandons you, according to your desire.

Look at me. I left home. Look at yourselves. You have come here leaving the home environment. What do you find here? Is this different from what you left?

Even if one is immersed in nirvikalpa samadhi for years together, when he emerges from it he will find himself in the environment which he is bound to have. That is the reason for the

Acharya emphasising sahaja samadhi in preference to nirvikalpa samadhi in his excellent work Viveka Chudamani.

One should be in spontaneous samadhi - that is, in one's pristine state - in the midst of every environment.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Not disturbing the non-self leaves one undisturbed by the non-self. Samadhi is spontaneous and natural - Sahaj - whether non-self called environment or circumstances or thought or darkness appears or not.*

#### **Talk 54. ((Excerpt)**

Later on Sri Bhagavan said: "Control of breath may be internal or external."

The antah pranayama (the internal breath-regulation) is as follows:-

Naham chinta (I-am-not-the-body idea) is rechaka (exhalation).

Koham (who am I?) is puraka (inhalation).

Soham (I am He) is kumbhaka (retention of breath).

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: From whichever path one comes to Self Enquiry, one can understand that Self Enquiry is only the internal subtle practice of what was thought of as external. Exhalation or rechaka is the letting go of thought (I am not this subtle body too). Inhalation or puraka is "Who am I?". Holding the breath within or kumbhaka is "being still" or "Soham - I Am".*

*Similarly one can reason out letting go of result (I am not the body), holding the karma (who am I?), the nishkama Manas underlying both (I Am). Surrender of action itself or the I (I am not the body), holding on to the known form or name of God (Who am I?), the Absolute Nameless and Formless God underlying both (I Am).*

#### **Talk 54. (Excerpt).**

Bahih pranayama (external control) is for one not endowed with strength to control the mind. There is no way so sure as that; or a sadhu's company. The external practice must be resorted to by a wise man if he does not enjoy a sadhu's company. If in a sadhu's company the sadhu provides the needed strength, though unseen



by others, Pranayama need not be exactly as described in Hatha Yoga. If engaged in japa, dhyana, bhakti, etc., just a little control of breath will suffice to control the mind. The mind is the rider and the breath the horse. Pranayama is a check on the horse. By that check the rider is checked. Pranayama may be done just a little. To watch the breath is one way of doing it. The mind abstracted from other activities is engaged in watching the breath. That controls the breath; and in its turn the mind is controlled. If unable to do so, rechaka and puraka need not be practised. Breath may be retained a short while in japa, dhyana, etc. Then, too, good results will follow.

*GUIDANCE RECEIVED: For those who cannot directly control the mind treating all paths as only the letting go of thought and holding the Self, Bhagavan gives the support of Bahih Pranayama. Direct control of the mind is also possible in the company of a sadhu. Elsewhere, Bhagavan says that the way to know a sadhu is the peace of mind felt in his company. Here, Bhagavan is explaining how the Sadhu helps in bringing that peace - directly helps push the mind inward. We can learn that a Satsang is to provide this loving push inward of each other's mind and that of the seekers. Bahih Pranayama can be just the observation of breath. The mind concerning all sensory activities and the sensory world is subdued. This can be directly felt by a little Japa or Dhyana as "Ramana-Ramana". Japa or Dhyana is the same as bahih Sadhu sanga. With such an inward turned mind, the quest "Who am I?" can be pursued.*

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**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.



## Shri Arunachala Ashtakam

*G Kameshwar*

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

G Kameshwar

#### Introduction

In the previous issue, we saw some background information on how 'Shri Arunachala Ashtakam' came to be composed by Bhagavan Ramana. We also saw the first verse and translation. In this issue, we shall continue with the same verse and begin with some commentary notes.

#### Verse-1

aRivaRu kiriyena vamartaru mamma  
vaticaya mitanceya laRivari tArkku  
maRivaRu ciruvaya tatumuta laruNA  
calamikap peritena vaRivini laGka  
vaRikila natanporu Latitiru vaNNA  
malai-yena voruvarA laRivuRap peRRu  
maRivinai maruLuRut tarukini leerokka  
varukuRu mamayami tacalamAk kaNTEn

#### *Verse rendering:*

Oh mother, what a wonder  
Standing silently  
As a hill, of knowingness nil,  
Is this (Arunachala)  
Of deeds so amazing,  
Transcending all understanding!

In my mind, shining  
From my early years

When my knowledge was naught  
Was this understanding  
That Arunachala  
Is something of greatness amazing.

And even when it was  
That I came to know  
From someone  
That 'that' (Arunachala)  
was actually (this) Tiruvannamalai  
I still realized not  
Its significance.

And later when  
Spellbinding / Stilling my mind  
It drew me near  
I saw it then  
As Stillness Absolute –  
A hill so still.

*Prose rendering:*

Look! There Arunachala stands as if an insentient Mountain. Yet, mysterious is the way it works, beyond all human understanding. From my unthinking childhood, Arunachala had shone as an immensity in my awareness. But even when I learnt from someone that it was Tiruvannamalai, I did not realise its real meaning. However, when it stilled my mind and drew me to itself and I came near, I saw that it was stillness absolute!"<sup>1</sup>

*Notes:*

It has been mentioned that the uniqueness of Arunachala Ashtakam is that it is considered to be a spiritual autobiography of Bhagavan. Giving a graphic description of his 'Arunachala Experience', the imagery of the verses is beautiful.

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<sup>1</sup>Prose translation: By Prof K Swaminathan, 'Five Hymns to Arunachala and Other Poems of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi', published by Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, 1977

The first verse begins with his childhood.

Here Bhagavan says right from his infancy, he had this feeling of wonder about Arunachala, that it was something immense, awesome. But he knew little more. And then, during his teens, he came to know from someone that Arunachala was actually a place on earth, known as Tiruvannamalai. Even then he did not realize its greatness. Later, he was 'drawn' (attracted / dragged) by that Arunachala to its presence. And it was then that he went there, and saw Arunachala to be 'Absolute Stillness', transcending the world of words. He speaks of Arunachala with wonder, as a force whose deeds are incredible, and as something which is simply beyond all understanding...

As the readers know, Ramana was born in Tiruchuzhi, on 30th-Dec, 1879. His advent on earth was very special, because of the magic of Arunachala.

The Ramana Ashtottiram (the litany of 108 names of Sri Bhagavan) ends with the prayer –

*yaH sthANOraruNAchalasya padayOH smRtyA janim  
prApyata-  
-ddivyAnugraha supravAha vivashastAdAtmabhAvam gataH*

*He, who was born with the constant remembrance of  
Arunachala's holy feet  
And who then, swept away helplessly/involuntarily, by the  
flood tide of that Divine Grace  
Attained Oneness as That-Self...*

This verse of Ashtottiram beautifully mirrors what has been expressed in the first verse of Ashtakam.

The thirteenth name in the Ramana Ashtottiram is – '*shree shONAchala mahOleena mAnasa*' – One whose mind was merged in the effulgence of Arunachala'. In an explanatory note, Sri Viswanatha Swami says – '*From childhood, Bhagavan was haunted by the name, light and glory of Arunachala*'.  
'



Incidentally, Bhagavan himself has pointed out that the Ramana Ashtottiram composed by Viswanatha Swami is also biographical.

In this first verse of Ashtakam, Bhagavan says that:

*'aRivu aRu ciru vayatu atu mutal , aruNAcalam mika peritu ena, aRivin ilaGka' - 'From my unthinking childhood, Arunachala had shone as an immensity in my awareness.'* The phrase is – *'aruNAcalam mika peritu'* – literally, 'Arunachala is something very big...'

Now, take the word '*Brahman*'. In Vedanta, Brahman is the Supreme Consciousness, Absolute Reality, Supreme Divinity – the Non-dual effulgence that pervades and permeates all space, time and matter. It is derived from the root '*brRh*' – which indicates 'to swell/expand/grow/enlarge'. The word '*brHat*' (meaning something that is immense) is derived from the same root. The Ashtakam phrase '*mika peritu*', brings to mind '*brahman*'. Without actually realizing the supreme significance, Bhagavan, as a child had the intuitive realization that Arunachala was something that was '*brHat-chaitanya*' – an immensity, shining in his mind.

Later, the boy Ramana came to know that Arunachala was actually a place!

Ramana's biography states –

"One day Venkataraman met an elderly relative whom he had known in Tiruchuzhi and asked him "Where are you coming from sir?" The relative replied, "From Arunachala." The realisation that Arunachala was an actual place that men could visit, overwhelmed Venkataraman so much that he could only stammer: "What! From Arunachala? Where is that?" The relative, wondering at the ignorance of the callow youth, explained that Arunachala was identical with Tiruvannamalai. The schoolboy Venkataraman had read no religious books. Yet he had always felt deep in his heart, that Arunachala must be a very sacred place. In his heart he associated it with a heavenly realm. Sri Bhagavan referred to this event later in the first of his Eight Stanzas to Arunachala. "Hearken! It stands as an insentient hill. Its action is mysterious,

past human understanding. From the age of innocence, it had shone in my mind that Arunachala was something of surpassing grandeur, but, even when I came to know, through another, that it was the same as Tiruvannamalai, I did not realise its meaning. When it drew me up to it, stilling the mind, and I came close, I saw it stand unmoving.” This meeting took place in November 1895, when Venkataraman was almost sixteen years old.”<sup>2</sup>

Nothing would be the same anymore for Venkataraman. Arunachala had sent his ‘calling card’ – His Name. The spell had been cast...

*\*\* To be continued \*\**



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2 ‘Arunachala Ramana – Eternal Ocean of Grace, Book 1, Biography

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## The Inspiring Life of Sri Viswanatha Swami

V.Ganesan

*We are happy to start a series of articles based on the talk by Sri V.Ganesan at the Ramana Shrine, Bangalore, on 9th June, 2019*

I am going to share with you some aspects of the life of one of the great Mahatmas I had the great opportunity to move with very closely. Ours is Rishi Marga. From Rishi is our source. Our sustenance is by the grace of the Rishis and we will all be absorbed into the Rishis. It was Viswanatha Swami who told me that ours is the Rishi Marga, 'It begins in you, matures in you, develops in you and ends with you.' Yet we should not forget our origin. I belong to Parashara Gotra, Viswamitra Gotra, and so on. Our lineage begins with Mahatmas, not with kings or grandparents. So we are going to share some glimpses of one of the greatest Mahatma who lived in our midst. The Mahatmas are those who have come to wake us up.

Self awareness looks like now like a dream. Yet the only qualification you need, if at all qualifications are needed, is an intense desire to know the truth. What is this morning? What is this evening, what is sleeping? What is the meaning of doing so many other things? There is a higher purpose. The only purpose as Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi said is to realise the truth, the Self. He did not stop there. The next sentence is guidance for us, 'All other activities are a waste of time'. Bhagavan is not condemning anything, but is trying to tell us that the only purpose of life is to realise the Self.

It was my good fortune, I could move with 100 devotees of Bhagavan. When these devotees heard of Bhagavan, they came to him leaving behind everything, their youth, their comforts, their name, fame, everything. The same Viswanatha Swami whom I am going to speak about - I would keep questioning him, 'Ungala patti sollungo Swami, unglapatti sollungo'. 'Tell me something about yourself, tell me...' 'I want to know about your relationship with Bhagavan, what bound you to him?' Because at that time I was

only 20 - 22 years of age. We know how bubbling with activities and distractions we have lived. Yet he had dropped everything and come to Bhagavan. He told me that in those days, in the 1920's if one could earn 30 rupees a month, a middle class family of husband, wife and two children could happily live for one month. He said, 'At that time Ganesa, I had the capability to earn 1000 rupees per day. I came to Bhagavan, just saw him. Finished, I was begging in the streets'.

Capability is per day he could earn 1000 rupees. They were all, the people who came to Bhagavan and even now coming to spiritual life, are not lazy people... most energetic, most active, most capable... Arthur Osborne was a gold medalist, had won 10 gold medals in Oxford, when even to obtain one gold medal in Oxford is next to impossible. Just as Viswanatha Swami told me about the 1000 rupees (that he was capable of earning), Arthur Osborne said, 'I had earned 10 gold medals at Oxford and my teacher had not even completed school. But Ganesa I was like a puppy before my Teacher.' So I have complete reverence for every devotee of Bhagavan who lived with him.

The greatness about Bhagavan is not just that he was great, but he said 'You are great'. In later years I was in correspondence with Paul Brunton and he wrote, "Ganesan, I had been totally dedicated to Jesus Christ till I saw Bhagavan. When I saw Bhagavan it is not that I felt he is equal to Jesus. I felt - Here is God, true God." So, when Brunton was seated with Bhagavan alone on the Hill in great ecstasy, emotional ecstasy he said, 'Bhagavan, I know you are God. But...' Brunton wrote to me that he started saying 'But...' and wanted to add 'I am a sinner'. So he started saying, "Bhagavan, you are God, but...." Bhagavan said, "Stop Brunton! If this is Bhagavan (pointing to himself), then this is also Bhagavan (pointing to Brunton)'. That is our Bhagavan.

Tat tvam asi, of the four Mahavakyas 'tat tvam asi' is the most prevalent at Ramanasramam. Because Bhagavan always pointed out, 'You are the truth. Wake up, you have forgotten, wake up.'

We are going to share about such a giant of a devotee who had the capacity to earn 1000 rupees a day but was begging in the streets. He was not a beggar. As Bhagavan says 'Oru kuDai nizhal kOvE'. They are monarchs, monarchs under the umbrella of Bhagavan, under the umbrella of Truth. So it is Bhagavan who has commanded me to reveal more about Viswanatha Swami through this talk. Cohen used to say, "The greatness of Bhagavan is he is the most grateful Guru I have ever even heard of. Others demand slavery, surrender from you. Here it is the reverse. Bhagavan has blessed every devotee who came to him till he got the emancipation.

So here we are going to share about a unique devotee. For, to whom else has Bhagavan given the assurance of taking the responsibility of that person's complete spiritual growth? It was only for Viswanatha Swami. When Viswanatha Swami's father wanted to take him away, Swami was only 23 or 24 years of age. Brilliant! So his father wanted him to become a brilliant lawyer. Then Bhagavan protected Viswanatha Swami. 'Ramaswamy, you leave Viswanathan here. I will take the entire responsibility of Viswanathan, Viswanathan's spiritual growth.'

Then what is Viswanathan's role? Young Viswanathan after hearing this, shedding profuse tears, applied himself from that moment to complete spiritual practices. From 1923 to 1927 he was with Bhagavan wherever Bhagavan was going. Bhagavan would say, 'Viswanatha vaa, come...' during his walks wherever he was going and explained to Viswanathan every verse composed by Bhagavan on jnana and Bhakti. It is not that Bhagavan says 'I will take up his responsibility' and then ignore him ... complete responsibility.

I will share with you what Viswanatha Swami himself told me about the initial relationship between Bhagavan and himself. He once told me, "Being alone with Sri Bhagavan, my sadguru was the greatest boon that Bhagavan gave me." He recalled that one day when he was alone with Bhagavan cutting vegetables, Bhagavan said, "Vishwanatha you should be capable of making use of even the dust, at the same time you should be capable of

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\*This incident is described in detail by Sri V.Ganesan in his article on Viswanatha Swami in his book 'Ramana Periya Puranam'. The soft copy of this book is available online.

rejecting the entire cosmos as mere dust”. To me this is a unique upadesa that I have heard ‘Everything you should make use of in the entire existence, yet treat it as dust’.

The guru bestows his best attention to the disciple. Which disciple? The disciple who applies himself entirely to the guru. Bhagavan used to say that the effort of the seeker and the grace of the guru are simultaneous and synonymous. There is no gap. Viswanath Swami was very, very serious in his practice. Bhagavan had taken him to a small cave behind the Asram on the hill slopes. There is enough space to only sit in the cave. From there you can see Arunachala and nobody can see you. See the master’s attention. Because on his arrival Bhagavan had told him, ‘Viswanatha, don’t mingle with people who come here. Most of the time be silent.’ Bhagavan had given the order ‘Don’t mingle with people. Don’t talk to anyone. Most of the time be alone and in silence’. Bhagavan had to help the disciple and to protect him also. So he took him to the small cave. ‘Sit down here, morning and evening. Do your practise’. Viswanatha Swami said that Bhagavan had approved of what he was practising at that time, which was the chanting of the Gayatri Japa. And look at guru’s grace, ‘Naan vandu paapen. I will come and see whether you are engaged in the practise’.

And look at the disciple’s seriousness. After months Viswanatha Swami went to Bhagavan. Bhagavan asked, ‘Enna Viswanatha, sadhanai pannindu irukkeya? Are you doing your sadhana?’ ‘Yes Bhagavan, aanaa...but’ ‘Enna aanaa? What is the doubt?’ ‘Ninga vandu paakkarennu sonnel paakkave illaye... You said you would come and see but you did not come and see.’ ‘Who said so. I came three times.’

Bhagavan coming and standing in front of the cave Viswanatha Swami did not notice. That the application you have to do, guru sol padi nadakka vendum. We complain about God or guru, He gives grace to everyone, only not to me. This is our brain’s sabotage. We complain about lack of attention from Guru, but the Guru looks after us more than we can attend to him.

*\*\* To be continued \*\**

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## Ramana is the Way of Ramana

*Shyam Sundar*

What happens when you are perfectly relaxed, forgetting all tensions of ego, each and everything? You are automatically received and possessed by the heart, by existence-consciousness and bliss there. You become that, you cannot separate yourself. You are in the ocean of consciousness. The wave forgets its name and form. No limitation can be imposed.

"Only a person who is nobody can abide in the Self."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

'I am this', 'I am that', belief does not allow one to be simple, easy and composed. He is always something and as something he wants to abide in the Self which is Atma, God, Guru.

"Pure consciousness is free from all thoughts. It is pure, unbroken awareness of your Self, rather, of being. There is no mistaking it when it is pure."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

Feel and hold on to "I am" (Self, being, it will give power of freedom from pleasure and displeasure), do not hold on to 'I am this or that' (mind, intellect, wrong belief, it will lead you nowhere).

Give no chance to any arising thought. It is easy to stick to I-thought if we do not give importance to other things.

Who am I question says –

Sink deep within yourself and get relaxed infinitely.

You are not a wave but the Ocean itself.

"Seeing the Self is being the Self."

Can we stand before ourselves being crest-fallen?

Then we are taken in.

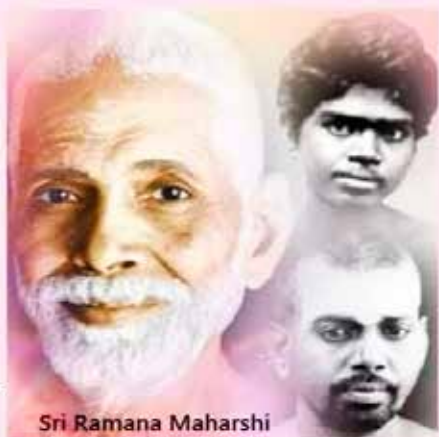
"Pleasure and pain are aspects of the mind only."

"Happiness is our real state. When we are happy, we don't seek unhappiness."

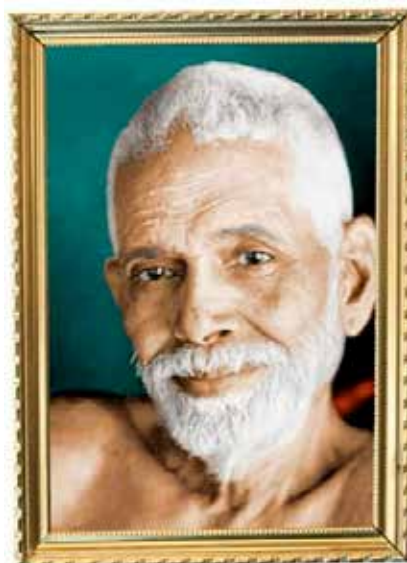
"The cause of your misery is NOT IN THE LIFE OUTSIDE YOU, it is in you as the ego. You impose limitations on yourself and then make a vain struggle to transcend them."

-Sri Ramana Maharshi

If we remove all  
the rubbish,  
all the thoughts,  
from our minds,  
  
the peace will  
become manifest.



~Day By Day, 31-1-46.



**Everything  
is within.  
There is  
nothing  
without.**

- Talks 278

*Sri Ramana  
Maharishi*

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## Of Craziness, and Ramana

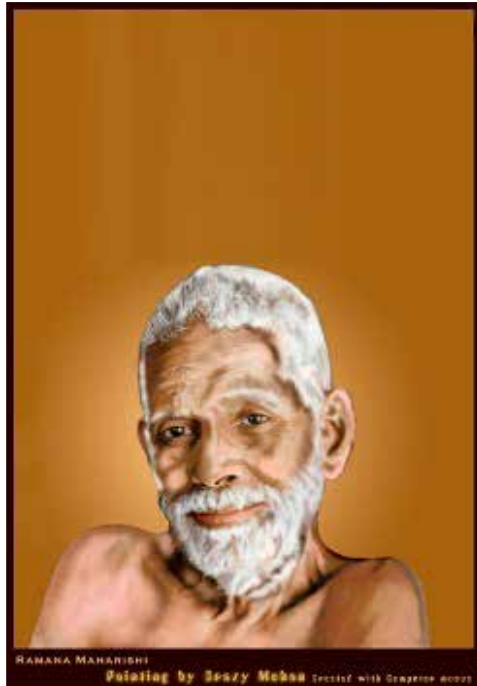
*Dr. Sarada*

*A Foreword to Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning's publication 'Crazy About Ramana' carrying the compilation of Crazy Mohan's articles carried in the Ramana Way under the same title for three years from 2012.*

'Crazy about Ramana' is a humorous and candid record of a persistently earnest on-going spiritual journey. By the light-hearted approach the record captures one of the most important aspects of any spiritual journey, an aspect often overlooked,

the aspect of not taking oneself too seriously. It is often forgotten that earnestness about the goal does not imply a proportionate passion for the one who is pursuing the goal. The malady which most of mankind suffers from is to give supreme importance to one's own experiences. A sure fire cure for this disease of self-concern sometimes bordering on self-pity is to be able to laugh at oneself.

That may be well, but can one make light of something that is 'spiritual'? Is it not sacrosanct? The very word 'spiritual' normally conjures before the mind's eye a subject that is ponderous, heavy, serious, not for the lay populace that is engaged in making the best out of life and most importantly something that is sacred. Would it not be impudence to serve this spiritual feast plentifully



seasoned and dressed with humour? But what is the essential purpose of the spiritual pursuit? It is to discover one's true nature which lies wrapped up in dark shrouds of ignorance, shrouds that have been intricately woven by lifetimes of unquestioned habit.

The spiritual journey is all about having the courage to look ourselves in the face and continuously wonder about truths that we have taken for granted. What better means than to be able to laugh at our littleness, our follies, our pretences and our greatest pretence of acting as if we are a known and independent entity? It is only when we are aware of something that we can laugh about it. It is only if I know that I have a crooked nose that I can joke about it. Humour, therefore, has its foundation in great honesty. 'Crazy about Ramana', by being humorous, gives us all along the joy of reading an honest report. How many of us are capable of being honest about ourselves and even more so, of sharing these honest findings with the whole wide world?

Let us suppose we do acknowledge our limitations, are we capable of laughing at them? Even if we are aware of our own faults are we not defensive about these? Are we not quick to defend ourselves one way or the other when anyone chances to point out a deficiency? Do we not constantly make excuses for ourselves? Do we have the strength to perceive the absurdity of our manners, our pursuits, our life itself? If we do, if we can begin to laugh at ourselves whole heartedly, laugh at everything about our lives, then life itself would be a long joy-ride.

We can choose one of two options in our attitude to life – the tragic or the comic. We could see our lives as a great tragedy and cry about our problems, little and big, or we could laugh at the circumstances that life presents to us from moment to moment. More importantly, we could laugh at our own responses to these events and circumstances. The laughter is not frivolous, it is not laughing 'at' someone or something that is outside of us. On the other hand it is laughing at oneself.

That, in fact, is the true spirit of humour and blesses us with a great degree of detachment. This spirit of detachment in

turn makes it possible for us to pose to ourselves the all important question, 'Am I actually what I have taken myself to be?' In other words, 'Who am I?' The first answer that Crazy Mohan appears to have found to this question, which he shares with us, is:

*"Ah yes! The entire universe is His play, and in that you and I have a part to play!  
The whole thing is crazy!"*

He declares that the universe is 'crazy', perhaps irrational, perhaps ridiculous. And the way that he has found to deal with this crazy universe is to be crazy himself. Maybe it is the concept of using another thorn to remove one that has injected itself into our foot. Then again, it could be a move to 'join them' if one cannot 'beat them'. If one is crazy oneself, the craziness of the universe will not trouble us, will it? Also, it is easy to label the universe 'crazy' as if one can stand in judgement standing apart from it. When one says the world is bad, or crazy, or when one adds any adjective to the world, does one recognise that one is also a part of this very same 'world'? But here we find the statement 'The whole thing is crazy'. Thus, one takes responsibility for one's part in the whole.

However, the seeking does not stop with the awareness that this 'crazy universe in which we have a crazy part' is the play of the Supreme. The search goes on. The question still remains, 'Who is the 'I' who is playing this part?'

Ramana comes to us in the form of this question which haunts us until it dissolves into the answer revealing itself within. Hence the search continues throughout the book and Mohan remains as crazy about Ramana at the end of this record as at the beginning. One may even say that his craze keeps growing and may well continue to do so until it swallows all other crazes.

After all, the book is about the 'craziness' only in relation to Ramana. It is not about craziness for cars or houses or any other experiences physical or mental. It is 'Crazy about Ramana'. So who or what is Ramana about whom the author is crazy?

Ramana, we have said, is the incisive enquiry, the question that takes us deeper and deeper into our own true nature until all that is 'not I' melts away, as the illusions of night's half-light melt away with the shining of the sun. Ramana is also the goal of the search as Ramana is but another name for the Self that he 'radiates terrifically'. Ramana says that being the Self the Sadguru pulls one within, and from without the Sadguru pushes one in. So Ramana is very much the companion along the way, prodding one constantly, pushing, pushing one within, a companion very intense and serious at times but one who is equally brimming with humour.

People know of Ramana as the silent sage of Arunachala, who taught through his unbroken Self-abidance radiating from his very presence. Some know of his poetic works and writings. Few know that he has answered practically every question about the spiritual path while replying to queries of seekers from all walks of life and that these answers are available in the records kept by them and now printed in the form of books. Very few know about Ramana's perfect humanness, living amidst all as one of us, talking, walking, eating, sleeping, caring, crying and laughing. Inspired by this most beautiful humanity of Ramana, Crazy Mohan has written an epic poem 'Ramanayanam'. Surely Mohan must have found a kindred spirit in Ramana as a humourist.

The instances of Ramana's humour are so many that were they to be compiled they would make a separate book in themselves. To recall a few instances, there is his endearing description of his matted hair being forcibly washed and also being shaven in the early years. He says that the hair had not only collected much dust and dirt but even small pieces of stones and so when the hair was shaven, 'For several days I felt as if I had no head'. How humorously he reminds us of the unnecessary loads that we carry and makes us long to be 'headless' too! Or it may be the instance when his towel and loin-cloth were both torn and tattered and he would secretly wash and dry them lest the devotees felt saddened on seeing their condition. Ramana describes how a cowherd boy asked for this tattered towel saying the Governor wants it for himself and how he refused to part with it as it was his most precious possession. Do we not also hold on to tattered or battered trinkets thinking they are ours while the great treasure of the Self lies in wait?

Most significant is Ramana's very last composition, the 'Ekanma Panchakam' wherein he laughs even at the path of self-enquiry which he has revealed as the direct, infallible path to Self-knowledge. In these verses he almost mockingly equates the practise of self-enquiry to the state of a drunken man asking 'Who am I? Where am I?' Why does he do so? Ramana has been unrelenting in saying that every concept, every thought should be questioned, burnt by the fire of enquiry until one is totally absorbed in the silence of the Self. He has said the enquiry 'Who am I?' will be the last thought to go, but go it must. Lest we hold on to it as too sacred, he himself has written about it jokingly. Is he not Siva who destroyed the three illusory cities, the Tripura, with a mere smile?

Mohan's spontaneous expressions on this journey have been carried in the monthly journal of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 'The Ramana Way' for almost three years now. For this purpose they have been translated into impeccable English by G.Kameshwar, the Associate Editor of 'The Ramana Way', without losing the flavour of the original as is evident to those who understand Tamil and who are familiar with Crazy Mohan's style of speaking. In keeping with the best tradition of those who have kept records of experiences, events and dialogues, Kameshwar is completely absent from this narration and only Crazy Mohan is heard by us throughout.

Let us enjoy this great adventure and laugh unashamedly as we become more and more crazed by drinking in the heady spirit of Self-awareness, for who can question a crazy person's laughter? That is why Mohan takes us along with himself on this crazy journey of and to Ramana.

Dr.Sarada Natarajan  
Editor, 'The Ramana Way'  
Bengaluru  
05.07.15

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## Ramana's Song of Grace - 32

*Revathi Sankar*

When there is creation in this world, there should be a creator who has created the whole creation. When the creator has created this creation, will he himself not take care of his creation? It is his creation, we are only puppets. His creation is obviously dearer to him than our love for this limited body. So when just so much as think in this manner, the burden on our heads comes down. So says Siva Prakasam Pillai in his beautiful work called Ramana Pada Malai.

Let us pray to Bhagavan and meditate on the 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 ninth and last charana of the song goes like this

*talaivanum Ana tarpara ramaNa sadguru pAdam vAzhgavE  
tAy tandai Ana iNai iIA ramaNa azhagan pAdam vAzhghavE*

Tamil

*nAyakanu Ada tatpara ramaNa sadguru pAda bALali  
tAyiTandeyADa anupama ramaNa sundarana pAda bALali*

Kannada

Meaning –

Blessed be the Feet of the One who is the Master, who is everything, Teacher – Guru. Blessed be the Feet of the One who is beautiful, who is both mother and father and has no equal.

Bhagavan Ramana not only treats Arunachala as his father and mother but also teaches us to treat Arunachala as our father

and mother. And if we see Ramana is no different from Arunachala. Ramana was the one who taught us how to lead our lives by his own life. It may be enquiry or surrender. He enquired into the nature of death and got enlightened leading us also to do the same with the help of enquiry. If we enquire to whom the thought is when every thought arises, we will get to the source. So Bhagavan is a leader to us on the path of Self – Enquiry.

When he went to Arunachala, in his journey he was so surrendered that he never even knew about the details of the train, whether he had to enquire from somebody about the correctness of route which he had taken. Apparently by chance a moulti gave him directions. He simply followed the directions. With no food, water, exhausted by walking part of the way, he reached Arunachala. Till he reached Arunachala, he was so surrendered to the Lord that he just moved like a puppet in the hands of Arunachala. Later he has explained to his dear friend Rangan that a great force had dragged him to Arunachala. And that continued to be with him always as the aham sphurana. So Bhagavan says that Arunachala is the Heart. He also refers to Arunachala as the Sadguru. We can learn from Bhagavan's life that the Sadguru is within as the Self and without as Ramana.

He was a mother to so many devotees. To Muruganar's wife, Meenakshi mami, Bhagavan said, 'I will take care of you', when Muruganar never cared for his wife, forgetting himself in the bliss of Ramana's presence. Bhagavan Ramana looked after Meenakshi Mami like a Mother. He would prepare dosas for her saying she would get hungry on the way while doing Giripradakshina.

He was a father to a devotee who went to beg for alms and brought a mango to Bhagavan which he had got while begging for alms and gave that to Bhagavan to eat alone. Bhagavan as a father scolded that devotee saying he would never accept such preferential treatment. Like a father giving knowledge on the right path, Bhagavan Ramana is always with us. It is impossible for anybody to be like Bhagavan Ramana. It is a matchless comparison; He is more than a mother, father, a friend, teacher and a leader. He is the only one. He is always there with us in the form of his name

– Ramana and the form of Ramana - a beautiful form. Whenever any difficult situation arises, just chanting his name and thinking of his form will get us to the state of bliss and silence. Such is the power of the Self, Ramana, Arunachala.

I pray to you Bhagavan to get back to the source without any movement, not going far away. There is not much time for us. We shall 'BE'. We shall lose ourselves and truly find ourselves in the process.

Lord Ramana

Thank you Bhagavan

Your attention seeking Child :) ????





## How Bhagavan Captured Us

*By Smt. Sulochana Natarajan*

As the Judge's Quarters was always a huge bungalow it was usual for relatives of both my father and mother to stay with us frequently. At that time my paternal grandfather and his younger brother were staying with my parents. Both of them were connoisseurs of Carnatic music and would be present during my daily classes with O.V.Subrahmanyam. They enjoyed the process thoroughly and their joy was in itself a great source of motivation for me, not to mention the many nuances of Carnatic music that I unknowingly and spontaneously picked up during those interactions. For, when one looks back at the fund of knowledge and understanding that one has been blessed with in the Carnatic music field by a great grace, one wonders where one actually learnt so much. Only part of one's learning in any area of knowledge is based on formal learning, much of it is often that which comes from the atmosphere in which one grows. There is no doubt that Ramana saturated me with an atmosphere of music, giving me the necessary inputs from time to time to make me ready to dive into the ocean of Ramananjali music and come up with rare pearls and sparkling gems.

During this year, my father and I learnt Sanskrit and Hindi from Sri N.S.Thathachari a renowned Sanskrit and Hindi Pandit. Hindi would stand me in good stead in the years we spent at Delhi when ARN was posted there on deputation. Hindi also was to be an important part of Ramananjali Sangeetham in later years and I could both sing and compose music for some songs of the Hindi repertoire. Sanskrit was very dear to me and I have had great love for Muni and his compositions. Indeed, when I later set to music Ganapati Muni's compositions on Ramana, during the audio recording in the studio the Muni's presence shone directly on me throughout the two days. I have also enjoyed the blessing of setting all of Muni's compositions on Ramana to music. Looking back it becomes amply clear how Ramana wove the warp and woof of our lives with meticulous care and love.

My father had built a small temple for Pillaiyar (Ganesa) at the Judge's Quarters in Tirunelveli, he now built one at Tanjore

as well. As my father-in-law had taken over charge at Tirunelveli, he improved the temple there and had a gopuram built for it. They planned a Kumbhabhishekam for the temple. That year was our first Deepavali after marriage usually celebrated in a grand manner and called 'Talai Deepavali'. However, as ARN was away in the US it was decided that this celebration would be held the following year. Perhaps it was this precedent, ARN was never particular about celebrating any family event on the very day of that event, be it a birthday or an anniversary. He would always see to it that the celebration happened, the date did not matter so much. This was very convenient when the Ramana Movement took off in full swing as we would never worry if a Ramana event clashed with a personal event, the personal event would often be celebrated before or after.

Karthigai Deepam is a very important celebration for people belonging to the North Arcot district of Tamilnadu. It is but natural as in those days Tiruvannamalai came under the jurisdiction of North Arcot. Now, of course, Tiruvannamalai has grown into its own district and is growing larger and larger by the day. My mother-in-law wanted my mother and me to go over to their place at Tirunelveli for the celebration of Karthigai Deepam and they combined the Kumbhabhishekam of the Ganesa Temple with that occasion.

Despite a heavy cyclone we made it for the event. In the short period of three months my mother-in-law had made a number of friends at Tirunelveli and had arranged a grand function. I as the new daughter-in-law would light the first lamp in a nine-yards sari worn in the typical Tamil fashion. At that time I had no idea of the significance of the Deepam festival. I did know the Puranas and about the Avatars of Lord Vishnu, the Vamana Avatara, Mahabali Chakravarthy etc. I also knew about Lord Subrahmanya and that His star is Krittika. I knew many songs on Subrahmanya which I sang then. Even when I had darshan of Bhagavan it was one of those songs that I sang to myself in my mind, not because I knew that many see him as an incarnation of Lord Subrahmanya but simply because those were the songs that I had learnt newly at that time because we were to visit Palani and I wished to sing the songs there. So Bhagavan had arranged everything without my knowledge, including what I was to sing to him in my mind.

My mother and I returned to Tanjore after a few days stay at Tirunelveli.

ARN used to write to me three times a week and I too would reciprocate. There was a great beauty in writing and receiving letters. At that time I was reading Swami Ram Tirtha's 'In the Woods of God Realisation'. What made me read those books at that juncture in my life is absolutely inexplicable. Even if I were to have chanced upon the books nothing could have really induced me to read them for I had no reading habit. Later in life after the entry of Sri Ramakrishna and Bhagavan in our lives I made it a point to religiously read every bit of the important literature connected with their lives and teachings but I would always read from cover to cover more as a matter of duty.

Yet I read Swami Ram Tirtha's book at that time, all the eight volumes. I remember clearly that the first chapter was entitled 'Happiness Within'. And the books evidently had a deep impact on me, even as the reading of Periyapuram was a prelude to Bhagavan's submission of his life to Arunachala. I also wrote to ARN about the non-reality and meaninglessness of the worldly life. Perhaps he was a little shocked and worried by these thoughts from his very young and newly-wedded wife. What he could he do to convince me otherwise, far away as he was then? He did write to me though, in his own inimitable manner, saying that God does not disallow the pursuit of a dharmic wedded life and in fact blesses it. Little did either of us know that not many years thence, in 1956, a great spiritual yearning and pursuit was to govern our lives completely.

*\*\* To be continued \*\**

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## Sri Ramana Sahasranama Stuti<sup>1</sup>

### 336. NAGASWAMYANUJAH

Younger brother of Nagaswami.

It was the barbs of his elder brother Nagaswami which made Ramana see the futility of continuing at home after his death experience. Ramana was given imposition in Bain's English Grammer but he gave up the assignment half way through as he was overwhelmed by the inner current. Nagaswami remarked that for one like him all this, meaning education, home etc. was not required. To Ramana it was the voice of Arunachala beckoning him to come to Tiruvannamalai.

Nagaswami died prematurely. The last occasion when Nagaswami saw Ramana was when he accompanied his mother Azhagammal when she tried to persuade Ramana to return home. This was during the Christmas season in December 1898.

*Om nAgaswAmyanujAya namaha.*

### 337. NAGASUNDARA JYESHTATAM GATAH

Elder brother of Nagasundaram.

Nagasundaram was the younger brother of Bhagavan, who joined him at Skandasramam in 1918. Known as 'sarvadhikari' he was noted for his dedication to the growth of Sri Ramanasramam.

His single minded efforts were largely instrumental for the beautiful Matrubhuteswara temple over the Samadhi of Bhagavan's mother Azhagammal.

*Om nAgasundara jyeshTatAmgatAya namaha.*

### 338. NADA BINDU KALABHIGNAH

Knows the esoteric secrets of Nada and Bindu.

Even though Ramana had not studied the Agamas he was an authority on the same. About the Sri Chakra, he had also had the advantage of discussion with Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni

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

who had installed a Sri Chakra in mother's shrine. Ramana had gone into the details of the installation of Sri Chakra Meru in the mother's shrine before the kumbhabhishekam of mother's shrine.

*Om nAda bindu kalAbhignAya namaha.*

### **339. NADA BRAHMA PRATISTHITAH**

Established in the primal sound.

The primal sound according to Ramana is the heart throb 'I' – 'I', the awareness of the fullness of consciousness. Ramana was constantly aware of this throb.

*Om nAda brahma pratisThitAya namaha.*

### **340. NADA PRIYAH**

Enjoyer of primal sound.

This attribute should be read along with the preceding one.

*Om nAda priyAya namaha.*

### **341. NARADADI PUJYAH**

One who is worshipped by sages like Narada.

Ganapathi Muni had divine visions which confirmed his belief that Ramana was the incarnation of Lord Subramanya, since he was born to teach the Brahma Vidya or the knowledge of the Self. In a previous incarnation of Lord Subrahmanya as Sanat Kumara he had taught the same knowledge to Narada.

*Om nAradAdi pUjyAya namaha*

### **342. NAMA VIVARJITAH**

One without a name.

Ramana of course was known by that sweet name. He was also known by the attributes of Bhagavan and Maharshi. But since Ramana is the universal consciousness he has no particular name. Venkataraman, the name given by his parents, ended with his death experience in mid – July 1896. While writing to his brother when leaving his home for Arunachala, Ramana could not sign any particular name. He merely indicated a dash – against his name.

*Om nAma vivarjitAya namaha*

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**News & Events***Revathi Sankar*

The annual workshop on self-enquiry was conducted in the last weekend of June at the Ramana Maharshi Heritage Campus.









Guru Poornima and Bhagavan Ramana's Jnanodaya Day was celebrated with a solo theatre presentation by Kum.Uma Sripathy depicting life transforming incidents from six male devotees of Bhagavan Ramana.

Smt.Radha and the Ramana Bhajan Class students performed as part of the celebration.













Gnananjali Festival at Madurai – Workshop at Ramana Mandiram...











Ramananjali at Nagamalai. Young dance students of Dr.Kala Rani Rengasamy performed joyously on the occasion.







Bala Kaandam and Gnana Kaandam were staged at the Lakshmi Sundaram Hall, Madurai





## Special Programs in August

### *At the Ramana Shrine*

#### **14th, Wednesday**

06.45 p.m.      Pournami Celebrations – Samskrithi Seva  
 Bharatanatyam Presentation by Srinivasan Rajendran,  
 Artistic Director, Aditya Hridayam Space for Arts,

07.30 p.m.      Ashtottara Puja, Aksharamanamalai and Valam

## Special Programs in September

### *At the Ramana Shrine*

#### **13th, Friday**

06.45 p.m.      Pournami Celebrations – Samskrithi Seva

07.30 p.m.      Ashtottara Puja, Aksharamanamalai and Valam

### *At the Ramana Maharshi Heritage Auditorium*

#### **11th, Wednesday**

**06.30 p.m.      Inauguration of the renovated Auditorium**

### *At Narada Gana Sabha, Chennai*

#### **15th, Sunday**

06.00 p.m.      Arunachala Ramana – Mega production on Bhagavan  
 Ramana's life

The third part 'Yaatirai Kaandam'

Conceived and presented by Dr.Sarada and Dr.Ambika Kameshwar

Along with artistes of RMCL

#### **16th, Monday**

06.00 p.m.      Classical dance feature by Guru Smt.Rupa Hemanth and  
 artistes of BSRMRC

Presentations by other leading gurus and their disciples.

## 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



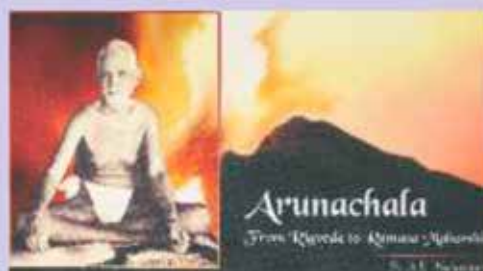
## **Guru Vachaka Kovai in English**

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

### **Investigation into Truth**

88. The form of the snake is not different from the thought of it. When one studies the matter, is it not that thought which causes the separate snake to be created in that rope, which sustains it as the cause of one's suffering, and which makes itself dissolve [when the truth of the non – existence of the snake is realised]
89. The seed, the sprout, the plant and the tree are each in turn the cause of the next, yet each of these effects fights against and destroys its cause. They are not created as an effect, each from the one that preceded it, except in the imagination of the deluded mind.



### **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.