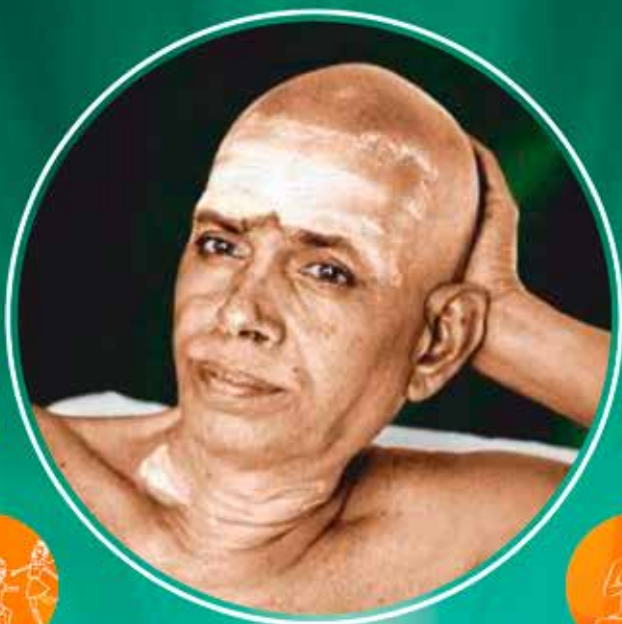


September 2019

The Ramana way



Ramana Bliss

A Monthly Journal published by
Ramana Maharshi Centre
for Learning
Bengaluru

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THE RAMANA WAY

A Monthly Journal since 1981

*Celebrating
Ramana Rasa
Anubhava*



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

- Ramana Gita X, 10

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Editorial*Dr. Sarada*

For others I am a mere thought. If they think of me, I am there, I come alive for them. If they do not think of me – at that point of time I am non-existent for them. No matter how much they love me or care for me, it is only when they think of me that I exist for them. But am I a thought for myself?

Whether or not anyone else in the world thinks of me or remembers me, do I not exist for myself? Ramana says, if I think of myself as others think of me then I become a thought for myself. If I think of myself as a name then I am merely thinking of myself as others do. Others need a name to know me by. Others need a name as an identification for me. Do I need a name to be myself, to exist?

I may accept that I don't need a name to know myself. What does this mean? It means that I am not my name. I may be ready to accept this as well. But what about my form?

Others need a form know me by. The form may be subtle. When the leaves move we see the wind but there is something visible. We hear the wind, we feel the breeze and the wind on our face or our body. There is something auditory and tactile. That is the form of the wind and hence we can identify it.

The mind cannot grasp that which has no form. Hence if others need to identify us with their minds, if they need to think of us, they need a form by which to think of us. This form may be the physical one that is seen. But even then it is really only a mental form because it varies completely depending on the perspective of the seer. For a doctor we may be an eye or an ear or a kidney or some bone. For a beautician we may be skin and hair. For the cook we are the tongue and the stomach. For a child we may look huge. Because we look huge we may also seem frightening, yet if the person who is the mother or the father of the child the very same person does not seem intimidating.

For someone far larger or taller than us we may look puny. If someone views us from a height we look puny for them. Funnily enough, if we are seeing them from the ground, they look puny for

us too. But they do not look puny to themselves and neither do we to ourselves. We may look ugly or beautiful too, depending on the perspective of the viewer. Yet, no matter how we look to them, this much is clear, that we have some form with the help of which they identify us.

As there are numberless people and beings seeing us, viewing us and grasping this sight with their thoughts, which is further interpreted according to their prejudices, their likes and dislikes, we actually have thousands of forms. And none of these forms would exist if no one is thinking of us. Does our form exist if no one else thinks of us? Yes, it would if we think of ourselves as they do, as a form.

But even if we do think of ourselves as a form do we believe we are all the numberless forms that we are seen as? Obviously we don't. We see ourselves only as that form which we see in the mirror each morning. Though the form changes and we are very well aware that it changes, we are not too worried about this fact. We pay less than no attention to it. We do not wonder which of these forms we really are – the one that was in the early months in the mother's womb even before we grew into the shape of a human child? Or are we the form with which we were born? Or is it the one that came to be when we were 5 or 10 or 15?

When we look back at all the different forms that we were, we know that none of them exist right now, don't we? We know that they are all merely thoughts for us at this point of time. All the different forms that we had up until now, where do they exist except in our minds? Yes, we know that our earlier forms are thoughts for us. What will happen to today's form tomorrow or a year ahead? This too will then be a mere thought then, will it not? Then why do we believe that it is not a mere thought even now?

For those who are visually challenged there is no visual form of their own with which they can identify. There is no mirror or photograph in which they can see themselves. Their image of themselves is not visual at all while ours is. Do they not see themselves as a form, as a body? How would they see their body? They would see it as a tactile image. And this too would evidently

be changing from moment to moment. For one who is hearing impaired there would be no auditory images of themselves or of anything else in the world.

Yet, is it not clear that with or without an image to go by, with or without some sounds to go by, with or without any defined boundaries or image of myself whatsoever, I would still exist? In some movies we have a situation in which a particular character gets the power to become invisible. Evidently that character is not seen by anyone else, the character has become 'formless'. Let us for a moment imagine that we are that character. Obviously no one can see us then and if we do not make any sound no one can hear us either. If we do not reveal our presence in any manner we would be perfectly non-existent for them. But would we be non-existent for ourselves? Obviously not.

My thoughts of myself as a form are no different from how others see me. But is my existence dependent on these thoughts? Can it be? How then do I feel an unbroken continuity about myself despite the constantly changing thoughts?

Looking at the ever changing panorama of thoughts and recognising that I am witness to this moving caravan, I may begin to accept that I don't need thoughts to exist. I may see that the thinker is independent of his or her thoughts. When this is the case am I not independent of the thinker as well?

The physical world is purely dependent on the mind. The mind, which is thoughts, is dependent on the thinker or the 'I'-thought. But is the 'I' independent? Is this the basis of my existence? If that is the case what is this 'I' in the absence of thoughts? Unless I try to see what this is how will I be able to say with my own experience that I am independent of thoughts? I can see that I am not dependent on any one particular thought because each and every thought passes and I continue to exist. Some thoughts may come back and some may not. Yet, every thought passes and I continue to exist. So it is very clear that I am not dependent on any of my thoughts.

Is my existence dependent on the thought that I am Sarada? We may believe that it is but we find that this 'Sarada' varies with age of course and even daily in dreams. So it is not

what Sarada is that seems to define my existence so much as the fact that there is something that can be called Sarada from time to time. Anything will do, but I need an identity in order to exist. I could even be something subtle like an emotion. I could be anger or peace, sorrow or joy, love or hatred, fear or courage. I could be knowledge or confusion. I could be any of these but at each of these moments something tells me this is what I am, this is what I am, this is what I am.

Something tells me 'Now I am anger' 'Now I am love'. It may be a changing identity but it is an identity nonetheless. Something also tells me that I am not any of these because each of these pass and I don't lose myself when any of them passes. Yet I don't pay any attention to that which is continuously my sense of 'I'. I don't even bother to see if there is such a thing. It is only when I begin to enquire about my true nature that slowly each of these facts begins to reveal itself to me as my own experience.

When through enquiry I cut off my belief that I need a physical form to exist, I may move on to the belief that my existence is dependent on a subtle form, on thoughts. For many of us it is next to impossible to accept the fact that our existence is not dependent on thoughts. We would at least try to hold on to the concept that though we may exist without thoughts, such an existence would be purposeless as we would not be able to perform any actions without thoughts and without performing actions we would not get any results, hence our existence in itself is meaningless without thoughts.

Sri A.R.Natarajan points out how erroneous such an approach is. He says that Ramana puts before us two options. "The first option is to follow the path which would reveal the true nature of the mind. The other is to stay, caught up in the field of thoughts and action with all its allurements based on memories of experiences of past action. If one chooses the path of enquiry about the mind's true nature then one would have taken the flood tide which would "lead on to fortune" of a blissful life. If one allows the past to grasp oneself then one will be caught in the endless sea of thought and action."

Ramana says that it is the Self that is responsible for all actions in the first place. Hence we need not worry that we would

become idiots or incapable of action if we do not have thoughts. This he assures to Paul Brunton who worries about what would happen in the total absence of thoughts. Secondly, Ramana also points out that the purpose of all endeavour is to attain happiness, unchanging bliss. As this bliss is the nature of the Self and not the nature of anything that we see as separate from the Self, it is not thoughts that enable actions which lead to joy. On the other hand, thoughts lead us away from the Self and away from our own bliss. So, without fear we can try to experience our own true nature independent of thoughts.

Are we an entity that is witness to the thoughts and to the absence of thoughts? Not so either. Ramana points out that in deep sleep there is no entity that records the absence of thoughts. However, no one feels that they ceased to exist in deep sleep. Hence our existence is not dependent on any identity whatsoever. Who is that I? Do I not need to know myself as that, as my essential nature? Or should I remain satisfied with seeing myself as one passing image after another? Am I satisfied with a mere world of images in my head? Am I happy enough to be a mere thought in the minds of people? How does it help me that I am a thought in anyone's mind? And am I happy living with mere thoughts about myself, never actually experiencing myself as I truly am?

If I not happy anymore with being a mere image for others and more so for myself, then Ramana has the answer for me. It is a simple answer. It is the question 'Who am I?' that I need to ask myself. In fact it is a question that is bound to rise in me the moment the fact stares me in the face that everything else is a mere thought and nothing else. It is a question that I cannot answer because answers are thoughts. Yet, it is a question whose answer will call out to me from within when I am done with all images, when I am no more enamoured of any concept. For the answer is Grace and Grace waits for me to want it and want it alone. And thereafter it will wait no more.



Sarada Natarajan

THE NEW DAWN**A. R. Natarajan***THE OPTIONS**

Ramana places before us a series of options and sub-options. All these options have to be viewed against the backdrop of the purpose of life. According to Ramana the purpose of life is to discover for oneself his own state of natural happiness and inherent peace of mind. What if we assume the opposite? That there is no goal to life, one must necessarily be victims of time, just be driftwoods moving hither and thither as the circumstances toss one around. Let us therefore proceed on Ramana's statement of the purpose of life. This is also what is stated in the scriptures. The second general proposition which Ramana emphasizes is that the mind is ever free and never bound. It follows from this that one is provided in the divine scheme with the capacity, which is untrammelled and unqualified, to be able to fulfill life's purpose.

Let us look at the options against this background. The first option is to follow the path which would reveal the true nature of the mind. The other is to stay, caught up in the field of thoughts and action with all its allurements based on memories of experiences of past action. If one chooses the path of enquiry about the mind's true nature then one would have taken the flood tide which would "lead on to fortune" of a blissful life. If one allows the past to grasp oneself then one will be caught in the endless sea of thought and action. Though the options are clear and one would imagine that the obvious choice is the road to bliss, in fact the vast majority take the road to the never ending grind of action. It seems so illogical but there it is. This is because of the latent tendencies of the mind which looks to pleasure from the action. Hence Ramana draws our attention to two sub-options.

One could go on acting as he is doing now, egged on by desire and the confidence that he is the architect of his own fortune. The fallacy in this is that results are ordained by God.

*An excerpt from the Publication of RMCL of the title - "The New Dawn".

Though every effort must necessarily yield its result, the when of it, the timing of it is in God's hand since he alone can be aware of the total picture of an individual's actions. Also the very satisfaction of a desire strengthens the need for more of it. Hence the escape route is to be found in dedicating the action and its fruits to God. This will have the effect of purifying the mind and making it fit to do self-enquiry effectively. This sub-option is however only a lesser option. The best option and the only infallible option would be to investigate and find out the true source of the 'I' consciousness.

Are we right in locating the 'I' consciousness in the body or the mind? Ramana points out that this body did not exist before it was born, is made up of five elements which must dissolve and it would one day or the other become a corpse. Since one does not doubt his own existence, it would not be correct to locate it in the body. What about the mind? Though apparently it seems to be like a permanent entity if one examines it one would find that it is only a rapid movement of thoughts, each thought giving place to another. Minus the thoughts there would no such thing as the mind. Why then this feeling that the mind is a separate and independent entity like the body? This is attributable to the 'I' thought which links and binds the fast movement of thoughts resulting in creating such a false impression though in fact each thought is rising and subsiding when another thought takes its place.

If one continues the enquiry using the mind itself one would find that 'I' thought must have a source for it does not exist in sleep. Self-enquiry would essentially mean an enquiry into the source of the 'I' thought or the mind. To facilitate this one has to shift attention from the thought flow which is preventing attention on the 'I'. Once one recognizes the significance and importance of being focused on the 'I' thought as a doorway to a joyous life and powerful mind, one's attention would be increasing by focused on its source. This uni-focus on the mind's source called Self attention would lead one back to it. As a result the sense of separate 'I' which is fragmentary consciousness would be merged in the fullness of consciousness. After a river merges in the ocean can it be identified separately as Ganges or Cauvery?

To many this merging of the mind in its source would seem to be like a point of no return. The fear of “loss” of thinker and the thoughts is quite real and gripping. This is what prevents the last assault to reach the pinnacle to discover life’s purpose. At the point when the mind is free from thought proliferation, the attraction of the Self, of Truth, is strong like the attraction of a magnet for iron filings which are free from dust. At the same time the habit of moving out towards objects in search of pleasure will die hard. It is because of this that “many are called but few remain”.

Ramana handles this fear by pointing out that what has been removed from the mind by self-enquiry is only the self imposed limitation which has in fact denuded it of its strength by fencing it with many limitations. The mind is there, very much there, only it is transformed. The fragmented, desultory, overactive or dull and lazy mind gives place to the mind in all its glory, in all unified power. This mind can be termed as the pure mind. Thoughts will appear and disappear according to the need. Action and Inaction would happen as the circumstances demand. The response would always be right because all factors which warp one’s judgement have dropped like the natural dropping of a ripe fruit from a tree.

In this context one has to remember that Ramana Sadguru’s strength is available all along the path for that is the very purpose of his advent. The human form of the divine Ramana acting as guru is to guide earnest seekers of truth on the royal road of self-enquiry; the journey from bondage to freedom is ensured by his grace to all those who are steadfast in their faith and practice of Self-enquiry and Self-attention.

The 'Talks' as a Guidance to Self Enquiry

N.Nandakumar

Talk 55.

D.: Can advaita be realised by japa of holy names; say Rama, Krishna, etc.?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is it not a means of an inferior order?

M.: Have you been told to make japa or to discuss its order in the scheme of things?

Silence.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: The ability of the intellect to doubt naturally leads to a loss of faith. Faith is necessary for all efforts holding on to objects, emotions, relationships, Mantras and Nama Japa. As the intellect develops its capacity to doubt, it creates all psychological problems in its wake. The medicine for a doubting intellect is Self Enquiry. For whom is the doubt about the efficacy of holding on to God's Name?

Q: There is a teaching that the Being Aware of Awareness is Self Realisation. Is this also subject to doubt?

S.: There is a teaching by Sri Arunagirinathar, quoted by Bhagavan, which says, "Arivai ariyum arive porul" - the Awareness that is aware of awareness is the supreme being. However, this too can be claimed by the ego as a possession. "I am aware of awareness". The Self alone IS.

Talk 56. (Excerpt).

A youth of twenty asked how to realise the Self. He sat down in silence and waited more than an hour and then was about to leave. While doing so, he asked:

D.: How to realise Self?

M.: Whose Self? Find out.

D.: Who am I?

M.: Find it yourself.

D.: I do not know.

M.: Think. Who is it that says "I do not know"? What is not known? In that statement, who is the 'I'?

D.: Somebody in me.

M.: Who is the somebody? In whom?

D.: Maybe some power.

M.: Find it.

D.: How to realise Brahman?

M.: Without knowing the Self why do you seek to know Brahman?

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: In the quest of TURN INWARD and search WHO AM I, one comes to the point of blank or "I do not know". One is not able to hold to the quest there as "Who is it that does not know?" To cross self-ignorance one has to patiently and gently hold on to this blank till that light beyond knowledge and ignorance shines forth as "I-I". However, if the mind rises from that blank with answers like, "somebody in me", "some power" or "Brahman" one should put aside that thought with the quest "For whom is this thought?". Ramana Maharshi is helping the seeker in putting aside even the concept of Brahman being held by the ego of the seeker.

Q: Why is it that it is said that those practicing the seeking of Brahma Jnana should not cross the seas?

S.: In crossing the time zones, the body rhythm called circadian rhythm gets disturbed temporarily. Those in the stage of apprehending the thought-free Consciousness sporadically may mistake this disturbance for loss of contact with the Source. It is an unnecessary challenge to the seeker. The price paid is too high. Naturally, those established in the Self have laid out as a general rule that one seeking liberation or Atma Jnana should not cross the seas. However, in times as today, the duty of those established in the Self is to assure the sincere seeker that the contact with the Self will not be lost and one should pursue enquiry relentlessly.

Talk 56. (Excerpt).

D.: How to realise Brahman?

M.: Without knowing the Self why do you seek to know Brahman?

D.: The sastras say Brahman pervades all and me too.

M.: Find the 'I' in me and then there will be time to think of Brahman.

D.: Why was I born?

M.: Who was born? The answer is the same for all of your questions.

D.: Who am I then?

M.: (Smiling) Have you come to examine me and ask me? You must say who you are.

D.: In deep sleep the soul leaves the body and remains elsewhere. When it re-enters I awake. Is it so?

M.: What is it that leaves the body?

D.: The power, perhaps.

M.: Find out the power.

D.: The body is composed of five elements. What are the elements?

M.: Without knowing the Self how do you aim at knowing the elements

The young man sat awhile and left with permission. The Master remarked later: "All right. It will work."

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Here the Maharshi is pointing out that in the Maha Vaakya, "Aham Brahmaasmi", it is necessary to find the meaning of the known "Aham" before one can know the "Brahman". The Sadguru is helping the sadhaka in holding the "I". Even when the seeker mentions about his feeling that in sleep he goes somewhere and gets back to wake up, Bhagavan helps by making him hold the "I" here and now which transcends sleep and waking. It appears as though the sadhaka is not convinced. Bhagavan is assuring the listeners in the hall at that time, and the reader of this work, that even if one thought is stilled by holding the "I" for a moment, one is going a long way towards the thought-free Self. Especially, when helped by Bhagavan, as he says, "ALL RIGHT, IT WILL WORK".

Saddarshanam*Master Nome*

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

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

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

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

Q.: So, I begin to analyze?

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

Q.: I don't think so.

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

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

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

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

N.: I think so. (laughter) Did we just hit the snake on the head? (laughter) [editor's note: this alludes to the saying "to hit the nail on

the head,” meaning an accurate ascertainment, and to the illusion of a rope appearing as a snake, which is a commonly utilized example in Vedanta] Why would the snake be on you rather than just on your body?

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

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

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

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

Q.: The fear is just of its presence.

N.: It is sufficient to see your bodiless nature. If you were concerned with the snake biting you, which might be a valid concern, since some snakes carry poisons that will bring about the end of life in your body, you would need further meditation to bring about the realization of immortality. If, though, it is just the snakes' mere presence in the neighborhood, or the idea of the skins of their bodies' being in contact with your snakeskin, (laughter) for you can be considered as a snake with arms and legs and the snake can be considered to be a human without arms and legs, just seeing that you are not the body and that the snake is not her body will be sufficient.

Q.: I need to use discrimination.

N.: Yes, and, for that, you do not need to wait. For example, you already know that you have the fear, and you can discern very easily the ideas that constitute the fear. It did not take me long

to point such out. You could have pointed it out to yourself more quickly. Once you discern the ideas, you are prompted to examine the identity that gives rise to those ideas.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

N.: How important are they?

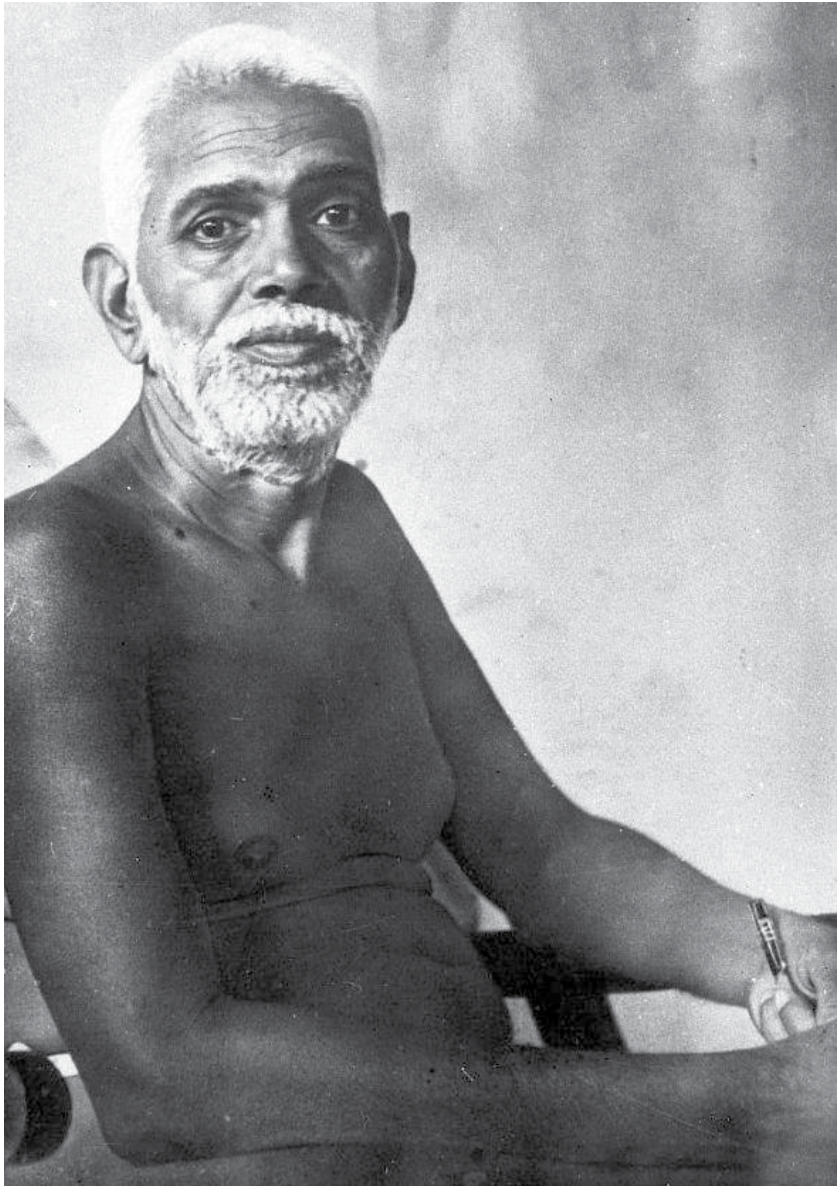
Q.: Not very important.

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

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

N.: It can mean being determined to realize that which is vast, infinite, and eternal, and ultimately your real identity. With the determination to realize That, with That as your focus, knowing

That is where your happiness lies, regarding That as the one thing that is really important, what will happen to all those other inflated emotions and to all those other troubles? You will find that you have far less with which to deal, and whatever remains can be dealt with very nicely through the practice of detachment and inquiry.



Shri Arunachala Ashtakam

G Kameshwar

Eight Verses on Arunachala Of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

Introduction

In the previous issue, we began with some commentary-notes on the first verse of Arunachala Ashtakam. In this issue, we continue with some more exploration of the verse.

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 leercka
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!"¹

Notes:

Let us explore the last part of this verse.

aRivinai maruL uRuttu : Stupefying my mind
arukinil eerokka : when it drew me to its vicinity
aruku URum amayam : the moment I reached near it
itu acalamAk kaNTEn : I saw/realized it to be unmoving, still, hill,

Bhagavan says here that it was Arunachala who stupefied his mind and drew him to Himself.

¹ 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

In Aksharamanamalai, Bhagavan speaks of this spell cast by Arunachala. He says:

*yArum aRiyAtu en matiyinai maruTTi
evar koLai koNTatu aruNAchala ! (verse 89)*

*Unseen to any eye, who managed to stupefy -
And loot me completely, Arunachala!²*

Meaning: It was Arunachala who did that. His mind completely bound in the spell, like iron attracted by a magnet, he was drawn by Arunachala. Indeed, it was in obedience to this call of Arunachala that young Venkatraman set out from Madurai, on 29th of August 1896.

In his parting note, he wrote (in Tamil)³:

in search of my Father and
"I have, in obedience to his command, started from
here. This is only embarking on a virtuous enterprise.
Therefore, none need grieve over this affair. To trace this
out, no money need be spent.
Your college fee } Thus,
has not yet been paid. —
Rupees two are enclosed
herewith."

The "Father" in this note is Arunachala Siva.

In the Ramana Ashtottara (108 names of Bhagavan Ramana), this journey to Arunachala is expressed as follows:

pitRu-padAnvEshiNE namaH
*Obeisance to the one who seeks the abidance of his
Father*

indumoulinA pitRumatE namaH
*Obeisance to the one who is the son of crescent-
crowned God, Shiva*

² English translation, taken from 'Ramana Darshana Trayi' – by the author, published by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bengaluru

³ 'Arunachala Ramana – Eternal Ocean of Grace, Book 1, Biography', p 39

piturAdEshataH shONashailam prAptAya namaH
Obeisance to Him, who, in obedience to his Father's
command, reached Arunachala (mountain).

It is clear from the Ashtakam verse that the whole magic of transformation was entirely the doing of Arunachala. It was Arunachala who *'stilled his mind and drew him near'*. While Bhagavan, even as a child, always felt that Arunachala was something immense, he did not realize its significance even when he heard that it was actually a real place on earth. It was only when Arunachala, mysteriously, stupefied him, stilled his mind, and then simply dragged him to Himself, that he saw and realized that the absolute stillness of his own Self was the Arunachala hill in front of him.

Now, how did all this happen? It was not as if young Venkatraman had learnt the Veda-s, or studied the Upanishads, or read any *prakarana grantha*-s, or heard discourses on Brahman or Self-Knowledge. It was the sudden *'death-experience'*, the *'great awakening'*, that completely transformed him *'outside-in'*, and put him in a state of what he referred to as *'avEsham'* (possession)... When asked by a devotee on whether Bhagavan had gone through periods of Sadhana (spiritual effort/practice) to realize this state, Bhagavan said:

"I know no such period (of purgation or sadhana). I never performed any pranayama or japa. I knew no mantras. I have never done any sadhana. I did not even know what sadhana was. I had no idea of meditation or contemplation. Only long afterwards I came to know what sadhana was and how many different kinds of it there were...

*The fact is, I did nothing. Some Higher Power took hold of me and I was entirely in Its hand..."*⁴

The story of Ramana brings to mind the story of the *'death-experience'* of young Nachiketas, as told in Katha Upanishad. The Upanishad, explaining *'who gets Self-Knowledge'*, says:

4 'Arunachala Ramana – Eternal Ocean of Grace, Book 1, Biography', p 35

*nAyamAtmA pravachanEna labhyo
 na mEdhayA na bahunA shrutEna.
 yamEvaiSha vR^iNutE tEna labhyaH
 tasyaiSha AtmA vivR^iNutE tanUm svAm*

“This Atman cannot be attained by studies of the Vedas, nor by intelligence, nor by much hearing. He whom the Self chooses, by him the Self can be attained. To him this Atman reveals its true nature.”⁵

Explaining this verse of the Upanishad, Swami Krishnananda, says:⁶

“nAyamAtmA pravachanEna labhyaH: Disquisition, argumentation, verbosity and academic investigation cannot enable us to know this Atman. na medhayA: By intellectuality this Atman cannot be known. Na bahunA shrutEna: By immense learning we cannot know this.

How will we know it? Another intricate passage comes here, which is interpreted in two ways by the universalists and the dualists. How do we know this, then? yamEvaiSha vR^iNutE tEna labhyaH. The devotees, the Vaishnavas, say only that person who is chosen by the Ultimate Being can attain to that glorious state. God has to choose us as a fit person to know Him, and we have to wait until He chooses us. So our destiny is in His hands, not entirely in our hands. People say that man is the master of his own destiny. The Vaishnava devotees do not believe this. God is the master of the destiny of everybody; we are not the masters. We are helpless people, and therefore only he knows the Ultimate Reality, the Atman, whom the Atman chooses. Whom the Atman chooses, only that person will know the Atman. This is the devotee’s interpretation of this verse: yamEvaiSha vR^iNutE, tEna labhyaH.

But Acharya Sankara has another interpretation. He does not bring in the factor of division between God and devotee. He

4 Katha Upanishad, 1.2.23; English translation by Swami Sivananda

5 Commentary on the Kathopanishad, by Swami Krishnananda https://www.swami-krishnananda.org/kathopanishad/katha_05.html

wants to unite them both. So his interpretation is that it is known by the seeker who seeks it as non-different from his own self, it is known by the knower only, it is sought by the one who seeks, and it is the attainment of That which itself is the seeker of That. Here the path and the goal are identical. The path which leads to the goal is itself the goal. If the path is totally different from the goal, it cannot lead to the goal. A cannot be B; this is the law of contradiction in logic. If the path is different from the goal—if A is different from B—it shall always be different. So, Acharya Sankara says that the one who seeks That is itself That, and finally it is That which seeks itself. This interpretation is read into this passage: yamevaisa vrnute, tena labhyah. tasyaiSha AtmA vivR^iNutE tanUm svAm : In the case of that blessed one, the Atman reveals itself."

Indeed, both the interpretations find their home in Bhagavan Ramana... From this opening verse of Ashtakam, we see that it was Arunachala Siva who chose Venkataraman, and drew him to Himself. And then again, Arunachala Siva was none other than Ramana's Self, and by drawing him to Himself, the One Self revealed its true nature. Thus, whether we see it from the point of view of Bhakti, or from Jnana, Bhagavan Ramana's journey, is a clear exposition of either path, one hundred percent.

*** To be continued ***

Scan the adjacent QRL in your Mobile QR code scanner App to watch the video song of Ashtakam.



Upadesa Saram

Ujwal Jagadeesh

jnAnavarjita ajnAnahinachit jnAnam

Awareness devoid of objective knowledge and free from ignorance is real knowledge

Long ago in the days of yore there lived a sage called Roma Maharshi. He had a great desire to attain the Supreme Knowledge. He learnt that by studying all ancient scriptures one can attain the Supreme Knowledge. So he decided to learn all the Vedas, Upanishads, Agamas and Puranas. He started studying from the first chosen text in wide gamut of scriptures. He was at his work with great concentration and was memorizing all the verses. After many years of study he realized that he was not even half way through the first Veda. So he decided to perform penance to get an extension of his life, to complete the endeavor of learning all the scriptures. Gods were pleased by his penance and determination, so they granted an extension to Roma Maharshi's life to one more life span.

Roma Maharshi was happy by this boon and he continued his studies. Even, at the end of his extended life span, he felt there was lot of text to be covered and he had only finished learning a minuscule part of the Vedas. Again he performed penance requesting extension of his life. Once again, his wish was granted and he got an extension of another life span.

This continued for four times his life span, but Roma Maharshi felt there was many more texts to study and was deciding to again perform the penance for the extension of his life. That night Roma Maharshi had an interesting dream. In his dream, he saw a big ant rushing towards a huge mountain of sugar crystals. The ant was picking up one crystal at a time and carrying it and placing it elsewhere, near its home whereby making a small heap of sugar. The ant was repeating this action again and again. The huge sugar mountain was nowhere near getting exhausted, but the

ant was not stopping its work. Roma Maharshi woke up from the dream and realized his mistake. At that very moment he attained the Supreme knowledge.

The big ant signified Roma Maharshi. His endeavor of learning all the scriptures or gaining any objective knowledge in the world was illustrated by the carrying of the sugar crystals from the big mountain to the small hillock. The big mountain suggests all sources of information like the books, internet and others. The small hill represents one's own mind or memory. The running of the ant carrying the load of sugar crystals represents the unending task of attaining complete knowledge of any field in the universe.

The example of Roma Maharshi is given because he has a very long life span. Whenever, a hair in his body falls down, it signals end of one Brahma's lifetime. Brahma's lifetime extends to crores of years in human calendar.

If the knowledge of all the scriptures cannot be attained even after millions, billions and trillions of years, how then did Roma Maharshi attain the Supreme knowledge? How can we attain the Supreme knowledge without any knowledge of scriptures? Ramana gives a sweet answer by telling us - the ant should stop working for a while and taste the sweetness of one sugar crystal. He says one can taste the sweetness of the whole huge hill by just tasting one crystal in it.

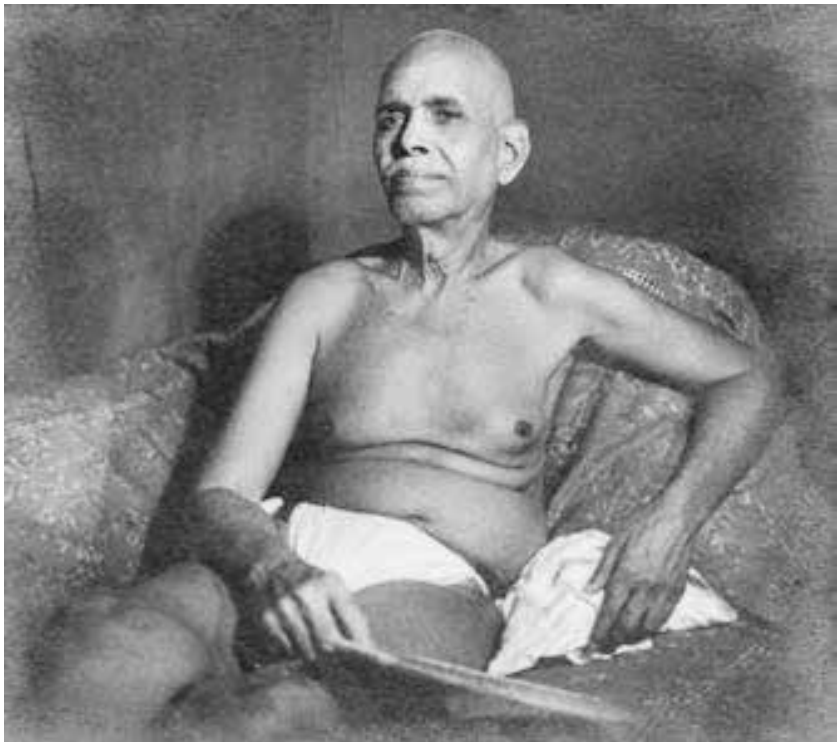
How do we taste the sugar crystal which represents all learning or knowing? Ramana says "You say 'I know' or 'I don't know'. The 'I' is common in both. Find out what is it in you which makes you learn, understand and know. Find out what is the awareness in you which 'knows' that you 'don't know'. Who is the one who says 'I know' or 'I don't know'? The answer is "me". Then, who am I? With diligent enquiry when we get back to our true nature which is the basis of all knowing and non-knowing or knowledge and ignorance, the Supreme knowledge is attained.

We can see this in the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, a jnAni who was ever abiding in the Supreme knowledge. He was referred to for clarification by scholars of all scriptures. He could speak with ease about science, about philosophy, about geography about any subject under the sun. Yet, he was by no means a scholar in the traditional sense of the word. He had only the basic academic formal education and no scriptural education in the formal sense.

Hence the Supreme knowledge includes and transcends all knowledge and ignorance too. So, Ramana says

jnAnavarjitA ajnAnahinachit |
jnAnam asti kim jnAtum antaram ||

Awareness devoid of objective knowledge and free from ignorance is real knowledge. After knowing that is there any difference?



The Inspiring Life of Sri Viswanatha Swami

V.Ganesan

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

Viswanatha Swami was applying himself so seriously to his sadhana as directed by Bhagavan. I asked him, 'Did you not have any problems?' He said, 'Problems will come up. In the beginning there will be problems and you should get them clarified from the Master'. At a particular stage in his sadhana young Viswanathan felt the need for further clarifications. So, he went to Bhagavan, "How can I raise above my present animal instincts? All the efforts have been futile. I deeply feel that a superior power alone can transform me."

So, seekers who are experiencing difficulty, it is not because of your foolishness or incapability, it is part of the process. You want to reach the top, your room is on the first floor, you have to climb 40 steps. Only after the 40th step, you can reach the room. After 2 steps, we want to know if the room has come. I am not ridiculing anyone, very sincere sadhakas do feel that if I climb the steps the room will come. We expect results. Our whole material world is based on the barter system. I give you 10 rupees, give me a pencil. This is our life, give and take. So, when we are told, go by the steps, you will reach the room, on every step we expect the room. That is foolishness. We should wake up. So, he asked Bhagavan.

Bhagavan said, 'Yes, Viswanatha, you are right'. That is the beauty of Masters. He will not say, "Ey poda muttal", no snubbing, no discouragement, no comments, no reaction of anger or irritation. Going along with you. Even Muruganar had told me this about Bhagavan. Everyone starts with ignorance, with immaturity. That is why we go to a Guru. And here is the Guru, Muruganar said he will go along with your foolishness, like a car taking a U turn, he will come along and take the U turn.

Like how here Bhagavan tells 'Viswanatha, you are right. It is by invoking a higher power mightier than one's own senses and the mind that these basic elements can be subdued'. Bhagavan

agrees with him. 'If you awaken and nurture the growth of that higher power within you everything else will unfold from within you.' We find that Bhagavan indicating to the sadhaka by this that, 'the importance is about you, it is not coming to me. You have to do it, if you invoke and nurture that higher power within you the guidance will come. For that to take place one should sustain the power of meditation uninterruptedly. Meditation, moderation in food and similar restraints taken up judiciously and studiously will be helpful in sustaining the inner peace. The ball is in your court.' Bhagavan always puts the ball in our court. When Brunton said, 'Bhagavan, I am a sinner.' Bhagavan said, 'Stop Brunton, if I am Bhagavan, you are also Bhagavan'. After coming to Bhagavan, you have no escape, he will take you to the corner and pin you down.

Viswanatha Swami told me, 'Ganesha, Bhagavan's greatest instruction is abide by the Guru's words, you too Ganesha, abide by Bhagavan's words, his instructions, his teachings and his blessings will pour on you.' Such blessings from old devotees is what you see here. Then Viswanatha Swami quoted a verse from Muruganar from Guru Vachakai Kovai – the meaning of which is – When even in the worldly affairs success is impossible without proper zeal in one's endeavour, one should not allow the zeal in doing spiritual sadhana to diminish. Continue to do the sadhana till one becomes one with the limitless supreme. Viswanatha Swami said, 'Ganesha never look back, never feel you are incapable, you are immature, these are from your brain. Brain is filled with thoughts, Bhagavan says thoughts are your only enemies, no 'bhoota', no 'pishash'.

Bhagavan never uses harsh words, here he specifically uses the words – thoughts are your only enemies. Gods operation through human beings is through avarana or vikshepa. Avarana is hiding, vikshepa is projecting. The truth within you which is confirmed and emphasised by mahatmas we feel we do not know, we say we do not know the Self, the truth. This is because of God working as avarana or hiding. Vikshepa is projecting this world, anything that is seen by you to be truth, that is untruth, the truth within you is hidden, and the untruth that is around you is made to be true. When he spoke this truth, many people in the presence of Bhagavan slapped the floor with their hands and asked, 'How can we say this is untrue?' Bhagavan very compassionately says to that

man who banged the floor, 'Find out when you are asleep here if this hard ground is there'. Do it, immediately put it into practise. We take it to the brain, we argue. Bhagavan says do it. How to do it?

As Viswanatha Swami said it is not possible without the presence of a higher power. That higher power is saying here that the presence of a guru enables you to give up the untruth and plunge within and be the truth. That U turn takes place in the presence of a true Sadguru. This is what happened to Viswanatha Swami.... Like all other devotees of Bhagavan, this turning about, this diving back, this turning back into the heart happened. Nochur Ramana has written about it – he calls it Theertha Kshetra. When a river takes a U turn towards the source, that place is very holy. In Varanasi Mother Ganges takes a complete U turn and this is why Kashi is absolutely sacred. Even people like Guru Nanak, Ramanuja all the teachers holding to different schools of thought, without fail went to Kashi. To be in that Theetha Kshetra. The point where the flow is arrested and takes a U turn. Our whole attention and mind are out turned. That is how God has created. If I ask you to close your eyes and meditate, you will say you are not able to. You are not bluffing. Unless you seek a Guru it will not happen. This Theertha Kshetra has to take place. Even Bhagavan agrees, a higher power is necessary.

Exactly this has happened to all the old devotees of Bhagavan. This is what Bhagavan told Brunton, 'If this is Bhagavan, that is also Bhagavan'. Take a U turn, to do so, come to the shrine, sit alone. Go to Ramanasram, go to Arunachala, go to Tirupati, go to Meenakshi temple, go to any samadhis of mahatmas, there effortlessly the U turn will take place.

When Viswanatha Swam came to Bhagavan, he was so eager, he was a scholar even then, he was a scholar in three languages. Very rare in those days – Sanskrit, Tamil and English. He had already read all the scriptures. And he had all the energy of being equipped with such knowledge. It only needed a right about turn. When he came to Bhagavan this Theertha Kshetra took place.

*** To be continued***

Power of the Word

Sanjay Lohia

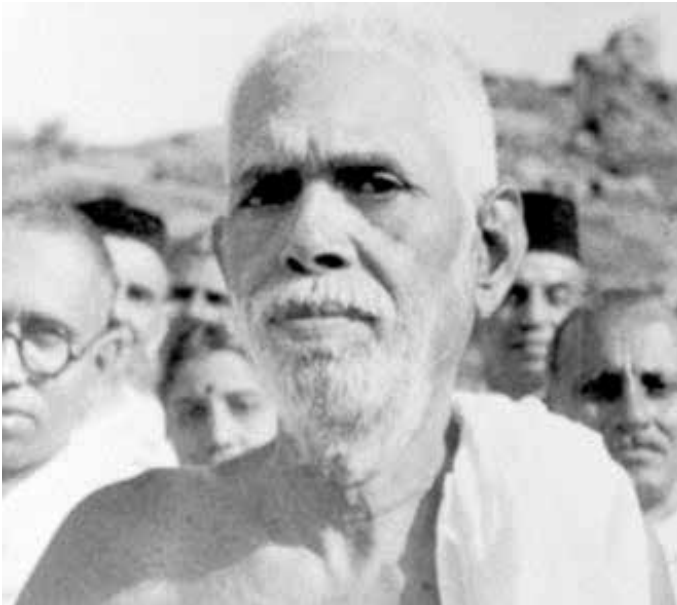
The nature of ego

(Verses from Ulladu Narpadu)

Verse 23: This body does not say 'I'. No one says 'In sleep I do not exist'. After one thing, 'I', rises, everything rises. Contemplate by a subtle mind where this 'I' rises.

Verse 24: The insentient body does not say 'I'; being-awareness does not rise; in between one thing, 'I', rises as the extent of the body. Know that this is the awareness-insentience-knot, bondage, soul, subtle body, ego, this wandering and mind.

Verse 25: Grasping form the formless phantom-ego comes into existence; grasping form it stands; grasping and feeding on form it grows abundantly; leaving form, it grasps form. If it seeks, it will take flight. Investigate.



The Father's Care

Savithri Krishnan

Adi Sankara, in his 'Viveka Chudamani', proclaims that three things indeed are very rare and are made possible only by the Grace of the Supreme - Human birth, thirst for the Supreme Knowledge and to be under the protecting care of a Sadguru. What can we say of this Grace except call it the Mother's Love and the Father's Care?



Bestowed with human birth, as a species our attitude towards this aspect is generally "Indifferent". What it takes to manifest in this form is sung in great detail by the Saivite Saint Manickavachagar in 'Siva Puranam'

pullAgi, pUDai, puzhuvAi, maramAki,
 pal virugamAgi, pravayAi, pAmbAki,
 kallAi, manitharAi, pEyAi, gaNangaLAi,
 val asurarAgi, munivarAi, dEvarAi,
 sellA nindRa ittAvara jangamattuL,
 yella pirappum pirantu iLaitEn, yen perumAn

Oh Lord by becoming grass, small plants, worms,
 trees,
 Several types of animals, birds, snakes,
 Stone, human beings, ghosts, different types of devils,
 Strong asuras, sages, devas,
 And I traveled all over this spectrum of moving and not
 moving things,
 And took all types of births and became tired.

As we ponder over the above verse, we wonder in bewilderment about our journey over numerous births as various species through to Homo Sapiens!

To the one who blessed me with human birth – my heavenly Father, Lord Siva– my gratitude! To be blessed to be born in an environment which fosters the second aspect stated by Adi Sankara – quest for Supreme Knowledge is a bonus, my *Pranams* to my earthly Father, Sri B.G.Krishnan, for being the Karma Yogi that he was, speaking ever through his actions, never postulating, not once, much like my Mother! The extended environs – RMCL and the high school “Acharya” Adiga Sir who virtually plastered the divine language Sanskrit on us and soaked us in Values – all noble.

Fortunate I was, along with many others to be exposed to the tenets of Jnana Marga through the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana who entered my life at a very tender age through RMCL/ RBK. The role of parents too is very relevant in that without their approval or encouragement it would not have been possible to continue with RBK classes...There were some who missed this bus of Supreme Knowledge as elders in their families felt that spirituality was to be reserved for another day (later years!) and for sure not in the formative years. We live in a world of ideas and views – don't we??

I was blessed to have had an encouraging father and equally, if not more, encouraging mother. He never once reprimanded me or my siblings for returning home late evening after spending long hours at RMCL almost every other day, or taking part in the cultural activities even during our school/college exam times, except on one occasion which is narrated later. In fact, although we his children might not have noticed it, he would have quietly imbibed the teachings of Bhagavan because both he and my mother were avid readers and he was one of the first few members of ‘The Ramana Way’.

He was very pious, a true Karma yogi, and was more inclined towards Karma and Bhakti marga. I was able to imbibe a lot from him by merely watching his highly disciplined life, unflinching in his duties with a “na IchchayA kritam” attitude as Bhagavan says in ‘Upadesa Saram’, with no expectation whatsoever, who hardly missed his daily hour long Parayanam, and never ever missed Gayathri/Sandhyavandanam till his very last day.

On the third aspect – “Protection of Sadguru”, we are indeed blessed to have Bhagavan as our Sadguru. The greatness

and beauty of Bhagavan is his extension of concern and care to his devotees' near and dear ones as well, though they may not seemingly be devoted to Him. The first anecdote that comes to my mind is the case of his childhood friend Ranga Iyer. He would often be away from home for long spells spending time with Bhagavan. Bhagavan with concern would discreetly enquire if he had made sufficient financial arrangements for the basic needs of his family... On realizing his financial problems, Bhagavan enquired if it would be sufficient if he earned ten thousand rupees (a princely sum during those days). Rangan remained silent but after he took leave of Bhagavan and moved to Madras, he was surprised to land in a job which fetched him exactly a ten thousand rupees!

Another instance is that of Muruganar. He would often lose himself completely in Bhagavan, utterly neglecting his wife Meenakshi. She would break down inconsolably in front of Bhagavan complaining that as a result she may be denied the basic requirements like food, clothing and shelter in her life. Moved by her plight, Bhagavan assured her that he would take care of her and her basic. In later years she was supported financially by Bhagavan's devotees to the extent of her basic needs and she would recount with tears of joy how Bhagavan was fulfilling His promise.

Also, Muruganar in his early years at Sri Ramanasramam would perform the ceremonies prescribed for the death anniversary of his mother. On one such occasion when Muruganar came early to the kitchen for preparations, Bhagavan enquired if he had made all the required arrangements for feeding two Brahmins etc. Before Muruganar could reply, Bhagavan volunteered to be one of the Brahmins, and suggested one Sri Ranga Rao to be the other Brahmin. Muruganar was moved at Bhagavan's gesture of planning even the minute details of what he had to perform on that day, though Bhagavan did not consider rituals important. The very instant when Bhagavan tapped his own chest and volunteered to be one of the Brahmins, Muruganar knew that not only his parents but several generations of his ancestors would have attained liberation, and he never again felt it necessary to perform the annual rituals. Yet he tried to perform the rituals in a subsequent year, but was dissuaded by Bhagavan stating it was no longer necessary for Muruganar.

Yet another instance is that of Ramanatha Brahmachari, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan. He would beg for alms in the streets of Tiruvannamalai, and would get it to Virupaksha Cave to share with Bhagavan and other devotees. One day as he was bringing alms thus collected, he met his father on the way. His father said that he was very hungry, and asked Ramanatha for some food. Thinking that it would be disrespectful to feed anyone, even his own father, before Bhagavan was served his share, he requested his father to join Bhagavan and other devotees for food. His father was uncompromising, and hence Ramanatha refused. Bhagavan who observed this insisted that Ramanatha should feed his father first. Finally, though reluctantly, he had to relent and feed his father first as Bhagavan refused to partake of food otherwise.

This shows how lovingly Bhagavan took care of the near and dear ones of his devotees. I have a first hand experience of this!! Those familiar with ICWA/CS exams would be able to better appreciate my account. Not many are full time students pursuing these courses. It's done only as a correspondence with part time/evening coaching while being gainfully employed during day time. Therefore preparations for the exams are restricted to very few days, in most cases only on the exam days. .

However bright a student is, it's usually not possible to clear the exams without devoting sufficient time preparing for the same. My brother though very bright would hardly get through, as his preparations for the exams would not be even for a week. And often he would take off from work only on the days of exams, and none prior to it for preparation. His preparation literally would be restricted only to the preceding weekend, and the whole night preceding the day of the exam. On one such occasion, my father was aghast to see my brother leave for RMCL for working the whole night to help Sri A.R.Natarajan Mama with his urgent work on the book 'Timeless in Time' a comprehensive biography of Bhagavan. The book was slated for release four days later and the deadline couldn't be met without the part that my brother too was called to play in the nth hour. He never even told ARN Mama that he had his exams the next morning. On this one occasion alone my father simply couldn't digest his utter lack of seriousness, and couldn't help muttering and complaining to Bhagavan that He alone should take care for this act of my brother. And lo!! My brother cleared the exams that time round becoming a qualified professional.

What surprised me though was that my father who was an introvert and extremely reserved, who never aired or articulated his devotion for Bhagavan, actually penned this incident which was featured in the Ramana Way and later in one of the publications of RMCL. There is a composition of Muruganar in which maidens are playing a game. The game requires that whatever one maiden says has to be contradicted by the other and yet she should end up praising Bhagavan. In one of the verses the first maiden praises the greatness of Bhagavan. Now what will the second maiden do? She has to negate the praise and yet praise Him. So she says, He may be great but He doesn't know his own greatness. Thus she brings out the true greatness of Bhagavan which is both his non-dual nature whereby he cannot see his own greatness and also his humility.

My father's humility makes me feel he followed Bhagavan in this. He was a mathematician par excellence, a trained veena player and had very good proficiency in the English language and yet he wore his accomplishments very lightly. In fact, he seemed completely unaware of his own excellence in several fields.

I have no doubt that he has entered Bhagavan's fold and remains in Bhagavan's ever loving embrace as he was fully conscious till his last breath, and the very last word to enter his ears was 'ARUNACHALA!' And as suggested, am sure he would have uttered the same within himself, amidst the chants of Rudram in the wee hours of a Monday, auspicious to Lord Siva. The thought of Arunachala is sufficient to liberate and that thought can come only by Grace.

Grace and Grace alone can bestow all the three rarities that Adi Sankara extols! Is not Arunachala Ramana the caring Father for us all whose Grace is abundant, no, extravagant?

Note: Heartfelt thanks to Sarada Akka, the editor of 'The Ramana Way' for prompting me to pen a tribute to my beloved father for publication and thereby to remember Bhagavan's all encompassing love that has allowed us to come to Him because of our parents and drawn our parents into His net of Grace through us.

Sri Ramana Ashtottaram

Sri Viswanatha Swami

14. Om swarna hastakAya namaha

To Ramana, the one with golden hands, we offer the fourteenth flower.

When he was a young boy, Ramana used to win in all the games in which he participated. He would then show his hands to his playmates and jocularly remark, do you know what these hands are, they are golden hands. Since then he has been called by this name, tangakkai., Little did his friends know that it was one of Siva's attribute, Hiranyabahu. One of the vedic chants praising Siva says this hand of mine is auspicious, the best among my many attributes, it is life giving which aptly describes Ramana's attribute as Swarnahastaka

15. Om Srimad dwAdaSAnta mahAsthale labdha vidyodayAya namaha

To Ramana, who attained Enlightenment in the holy Madurai, we offer the fifteenth flower.

Madurai is the renowned place where Siva played his leela, known as the Tiruvilaiyaadal. Ramana Siva also chose Madurai to begin his divine play. 17th of July, 1896, at 11, Chokkappa Naiakan Street, the street coming down directly from the Southern tower of the Meenakshi Amman temple. Ramana was alone. He combatted a sudden fierce fear of death through intense Self – Enquiry. This resulted in the immediate transcendence of death and in an unbroken natural awareness of the immortal bliss of the heart. Madurai is significantly called dwadaSAnta sthala. In the yogik chakras, dwadaSAnta is the most potent peeThA of Shakti

16. Om mahA SaktinipAtena prabhuddhAya namaha

To Ramana, who became steadily Self aware by the grace of divine power, we offer the sixteenth flower.

The operation of grace for spiritual ripening is called Sakti nipAta. Bhagavan says that from the moment of Enlightenment he was in the grip of a divine current which he calls Avesam. Every

activity of his thenceforth happened by this current. Later when his classmate and friend Rangan asked him, why did you not divulge your plans of leaving Madurai even to me? Bhagavan answered; did I come to Arunachala like any traveller? I was dragged here by a great power.

17. Om paramArthavide namaha

To Ramana, who has realised the truth, we offer the seventeenth flower.

Ramana has described his state after the enlightenment. He says that from that moment onwards, he may be performing any activity, but all the while his attention was centred on the Self. Other notes may come and go, but the 'I' remains as the central Shruti note.

18. Om teevrAya namaha

To Ramana, who is intense, intensely active we offer the eighteenth flower.

Though a Jnani may appear to be still and inactive, the most dynamic and powerful activity of Self Awareness goes on unbroken. So while Bhagavan lost interest in studies and sports after his Enlightenment, his attention was constantly abiding in the Self. This intensity found expression then as a spontaneous flow of tears when he stood in front of the Goddess Meenakshi and the nayanmars in the temple. Later Bhagavan participated in every activity in the Asram from cooking to book binding and each perfectly. To complaints about lack of time for spiritual practice he answered, let the hands and legs do the work, keep your head cool in solitude.

19. Om pitrpadAnveSine namaha

To Ramana, who went in search of his father, we offer the nineteenth flower.

On 29th August, 1896, when he set aside an imposition in Bain's English Grammer, and became lost in the bliss of the Self, his brother Nagaswami admonished him. This, he took as a call from Arunachala. While leaving home, Ramana left a letter reading, I have, in search of my father and in obedience to his command started from here.

How Bhagavan Captured Us

By Smt. Sulochana Natarajan

The Madras Music Academy season was approaching. They had announced a competition of special Tyagaraja Kritis. These were some of the heavier pieces which were less known at that time. From among these O.V Subramanyan taught me 4 kritis and prepared me thoroughly in them. He was certain that I would bag the first prize in the contest as I was singing the compositions perfectly.

But I was very low in self-confidence, rather I was highly diffident by nature. The moment I sat in front of the judges I could not perform to my best ability. I stood 6th in the contest only because of the dint of practise and no thanks at all to the manner in which I rendered them at that point of time. ARN being an ideal husband, reposing great faith in me and also guiding me helped me gain a great degree of confidence in myself in later years. The amazing part was that in Ramana Music alone, in the journey of 'Ramananjali', from start to finish there was no diffidence at all in me. Such was Bhagavan's play of grace in the very first recording and even the first live performance, where we faced an audience of thousands. For the first time in my life when I faced an audience of great magnitude, I was completely unaware of myself and lost myself totally in the music. This first Ramananjali live performance was on the 3rd January 1980, the birth centenary celebrations of Bhagavan at the main pandal for the event at Sri Ramanasramam.

After the first Ramananjali also, each time I have gone on the dias for the more than 500 live Ramananjali programs Bhagavan has literally possessed me and made me forget all fear for the entire duration of the program. Prior to Ramananjali commencing in my life, I can literally count on my fingertips the occasions on which I sang confidently. One was a concert, a solo classical kutcheri, at the temple at Sri Sankara Vidya Kendra, New Delhi, on the occasion of Navaratri. That day, somehow I was not diffident.

From my childhood Dassera was a very special event in my family and I used to get dreams of the Goddesses, the three Devis,

Durga – Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati. Being an ardent student of music I used to sing songs on each of the three Goddesses for three days each of the festival in sequence. That is to say, I would sing all the compositions on Goddess Parvati on the first three days of Navaratri. The next three days would be given to songs on Goddess Lakshmi and the last three days to songs on Goddess Saraswathi. My mother would invariably buy me a lovely new dress to be worn on the Saraswathi Puja day. Navaratri was also the occasion when we would visit friends and also have many friends visiting our house to see the way we had arranged the dolls. As Navaratri was thus my favourite festival and surely due to gracious blessings of Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Mahaswami, the then Jagadguru of Sringeri Sharada Peetham, I believe I sang fearlessly on that one occasion.

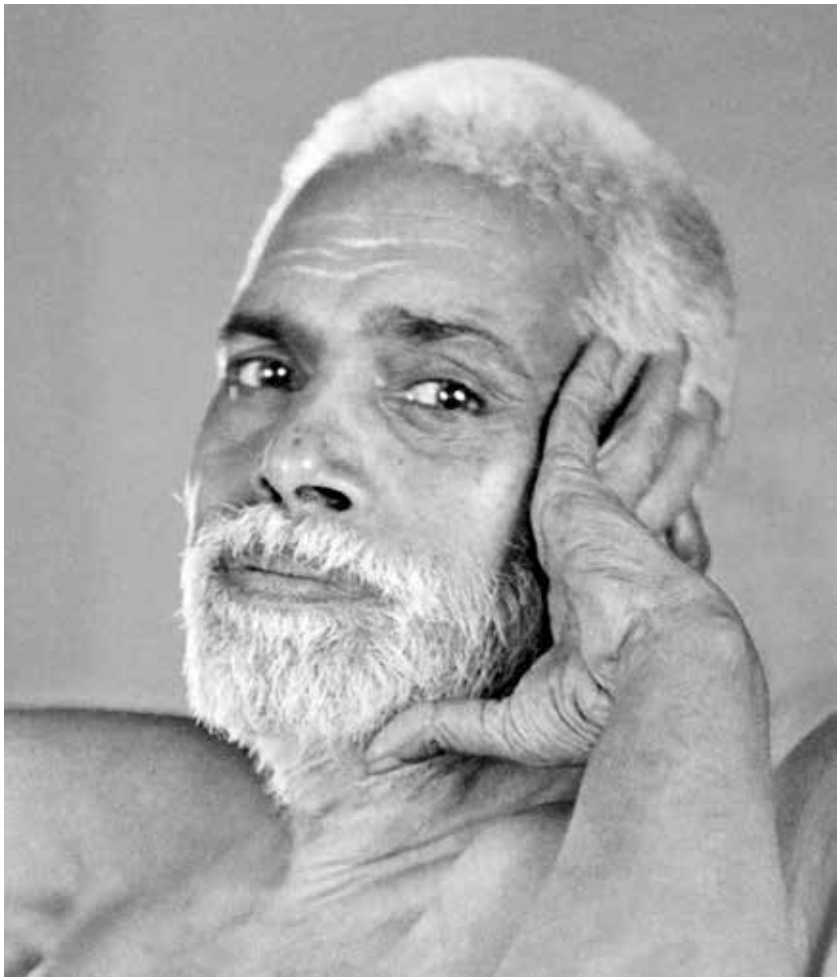
I had managed to somehow muster up enough courage to pass the audition of All India Radio. Although I should have been able to get an 'A' grade directly, I only got a 'B' grade and not even a 'B High'. I would be given opportunities to sing on AIR once a year. Each time was a great test for me. Although I would be completely and thoroughly ready for the concert just three days after I received the intimation regarding the date of recording, I would practise for two and a half hours for a whole month prior to the broadcast. My thought was that I should practise to such a degree that the music would take over automatically and fear and self-consciousness would not play a role.

True self-confidence in a public performance came with Ramananjali when Bhagavan took over completely.

Coming back to the Madras Music Festival, which was then mainly held at the Music Academy, Madras, my memory is that I started attending the festival at the age of six. This festival which is almost a month long one held every year in the Tamil month of Margazhi, I have attended for 36 years without a break from 1942 December to 1977 December. I would travel all the way from Delhi during ARN's tenure there for 12 years. Morning Discussions, Demonstrations, Noon Competitions, then Junior Kutcheri, Sub-senior Kutcheri, evening Senior Kutcheri and the night performance

– this was the daily routine for us. We used to go home for lunch but the morning breakfast and evening tiffin would be at the Academy Canteen. Night dinner would be carried packed and eaten in the car in-between the evening and night concerts.

Such was the intensive training and background which Bhagavan gave me in Karnatik classical music to be able to encapsulate the entire Karnatik music in Ramananjali Sangeetham. Such is Bhagavan's play in every life without a doubt. It is indeed by His Grace that I have been made aware of the presence of that Grace.



News & Events*Revathi Sankar*

Sri Ramana Leela was performed at Divine Life Society, Bangalore, during the celebrations of Swami Sivananda's Aradhana.





Sri Srinivasan Rajendran, Artistic Director Aditya Hridayam Space for Arts, performed a thematic Bharatanatyam feature 'Aikya – Union' during the Pournami celebrations in August.





Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning had a joyous sharing at Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Society, Malaysia with satsangs and singing of Ramana Pada Pancharatnam at Ramana Sharanalayam, a day long workshop on self-enquiry and a cultural sharing of the dance drama 'Sri Ramana Leela' at the Soma Auditorium.













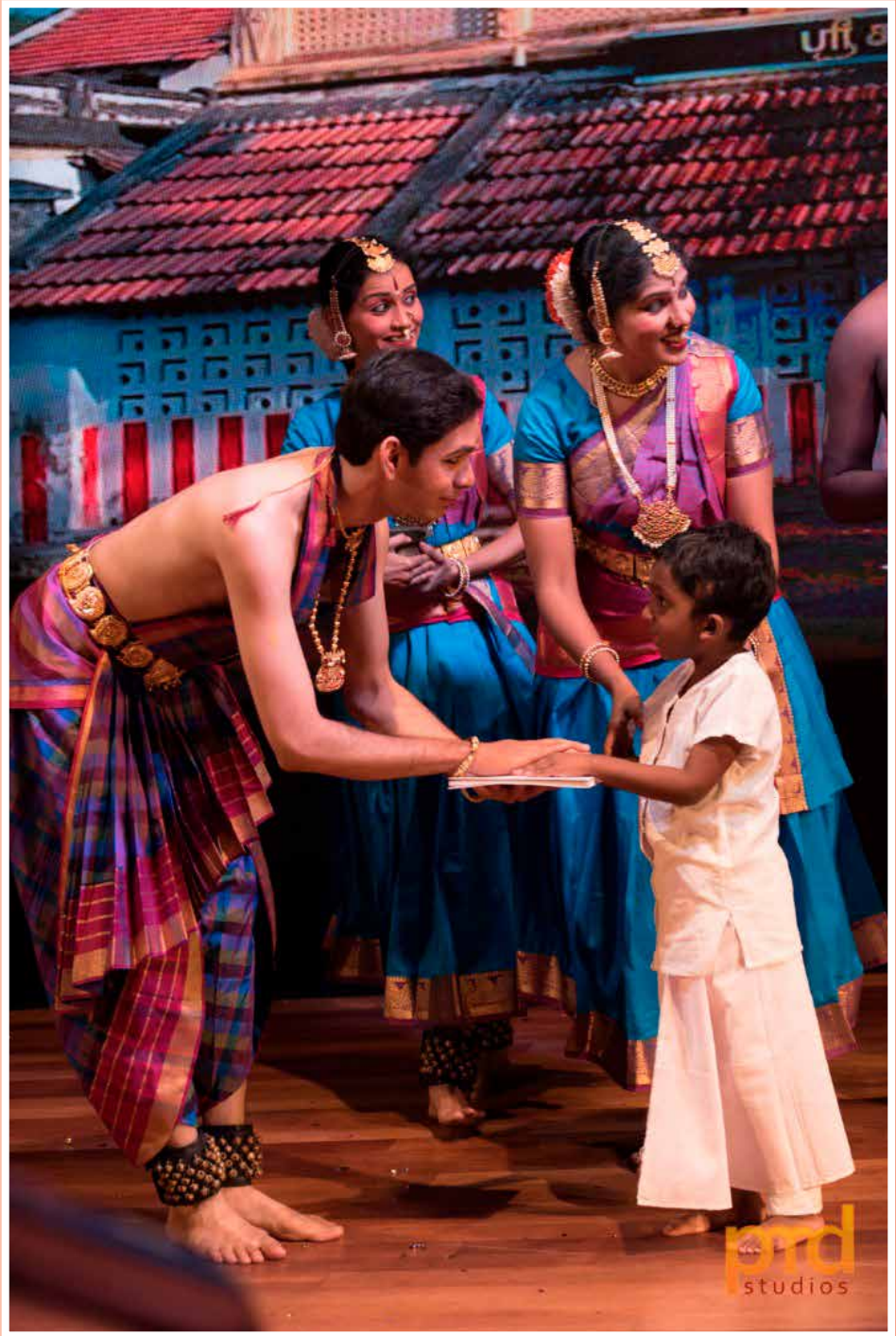




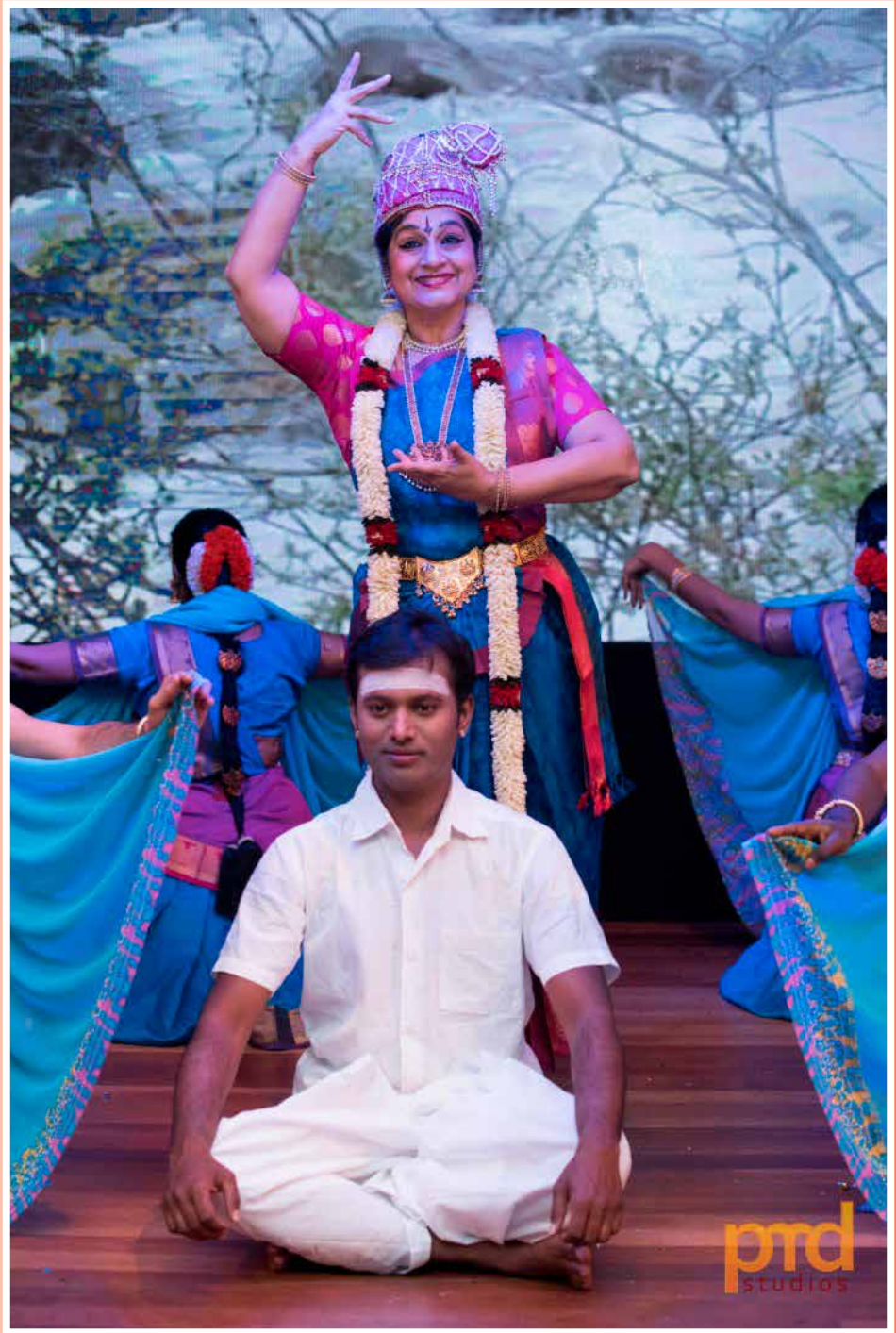








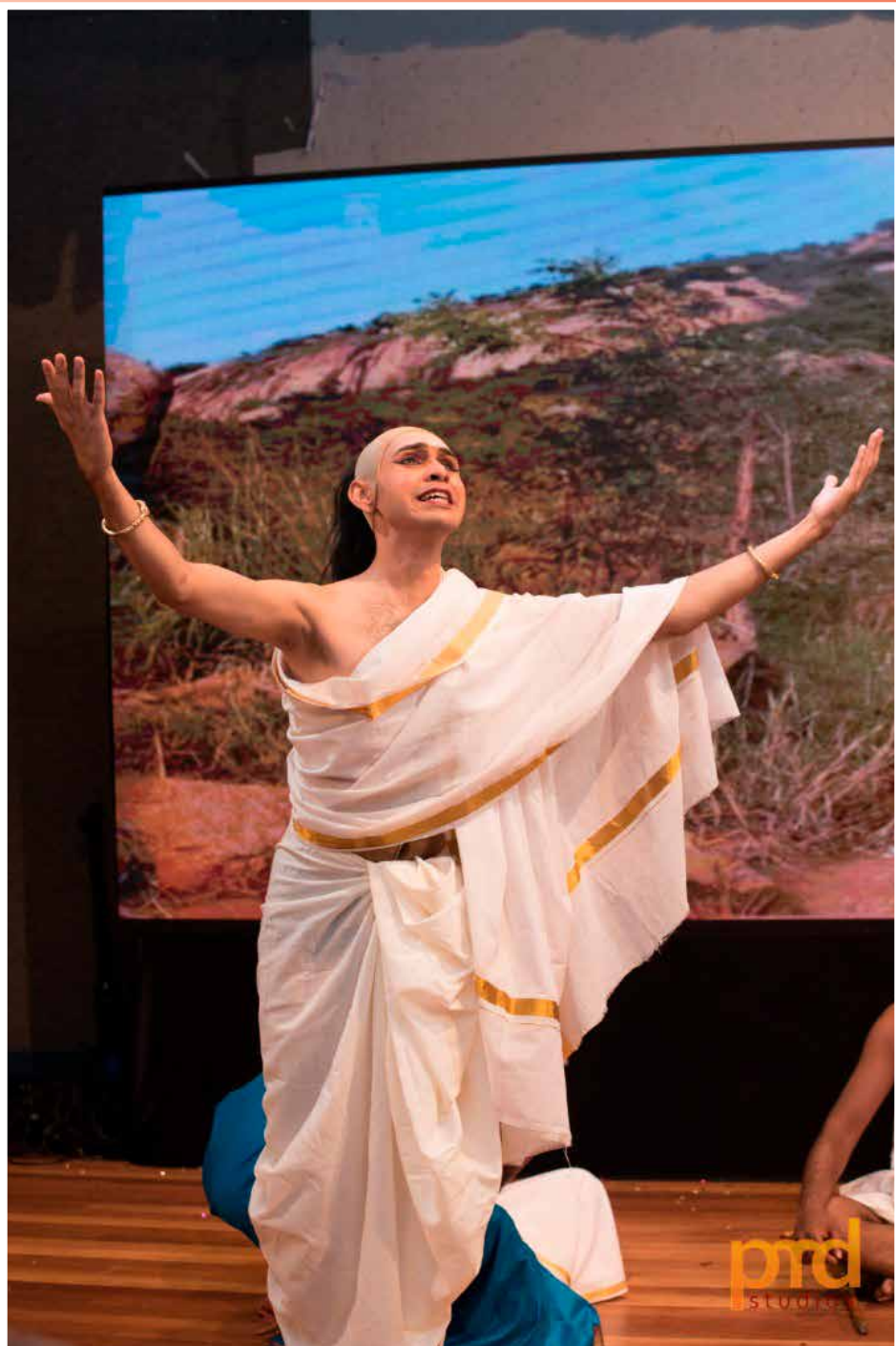










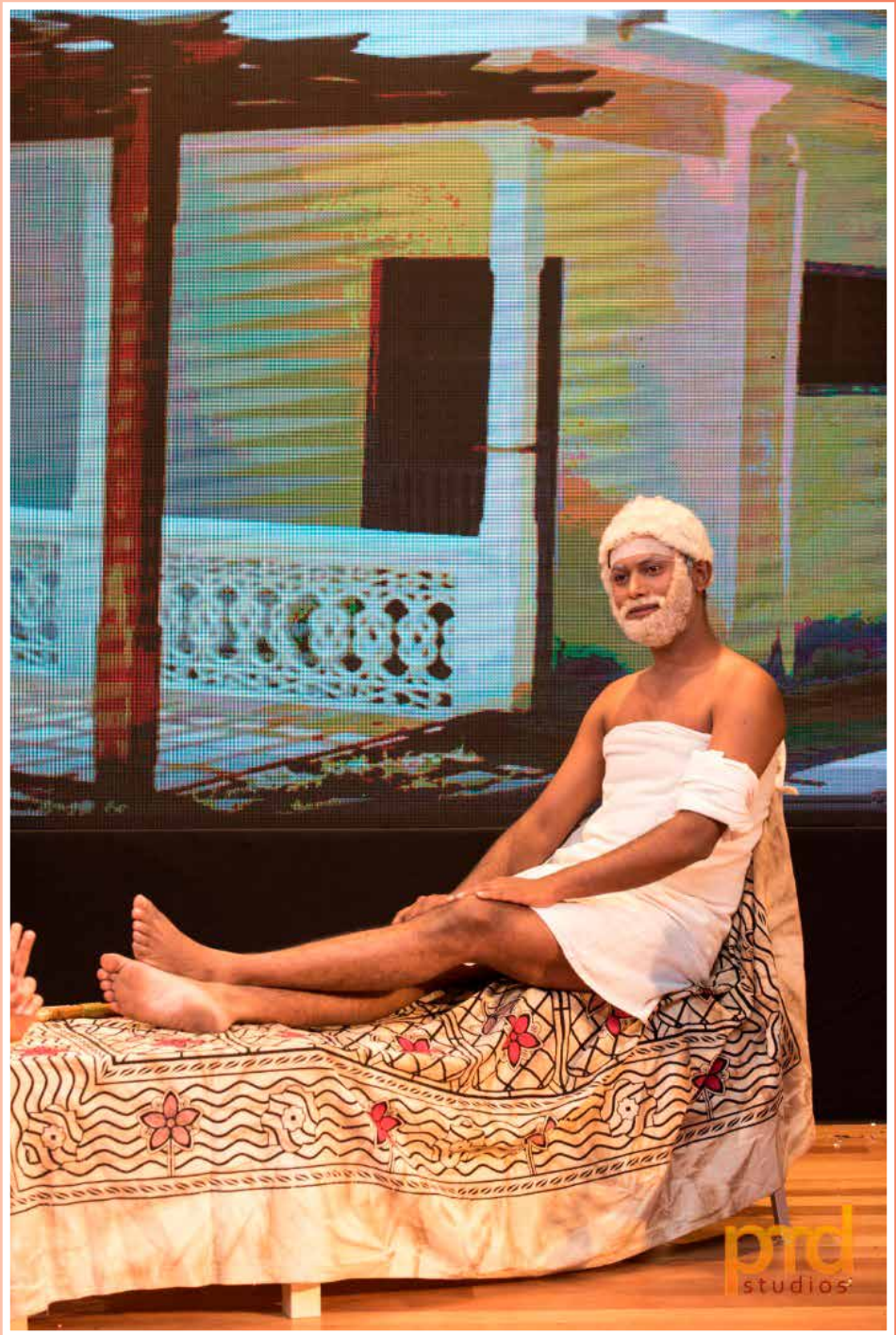












Special Programs in September

At Ramana Shrine, Mekhri Circle, Bengaluru

Every Sunday Satsang, 10.45 a.m. Chanting, Self-enquiry, Bhajans, Talks

1st September Talk by Dileep Simha
 8th September Talk by Subramanyam
 15th September Talk by Venkatesh Murthy
 22nd September Talk by N.Nandakumar
 29th September Talk by Dr.Sarada

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 September 2019, 6.15 PM

Arunachala Ramana - Yatthirai Kaandam
 Story of Ramana – An inner Journey – Part 3
 by
 RMCL Bengaluru and RASA ARPITA Chennai
Concept & Presentation
 Dr. Sarada Natarajan
 Kalaimaamani Dr. Ambika Kameshwar

16th September 2019, 6.15 PM

Arunagiri Ramanan
 Bharatanatyam Presentations
 By
 Young Leading Dance Gurus with their Disciples
 Smt Divyasena S, Smt Nandini Suresh, Smt Padmalakshme
 Suresh,
 Smt Sindhu Shyam, Smt Uttra Ramesh,
 Sri Ujwal Jagadeesh and Revathi Sankar

Special Programs in October***At the Ramana Shrine, Mekhri Circle*****Every Sunday Satsang, 10.45 a.m. Chanting, Self-enquiry, Bhajans, Talks**

5th October Talk by Dileep Simha

12th October Talk by Subramanyam

19th October Talk by Venkatesh Deshpande

26th October Talk by N.Nandakumar

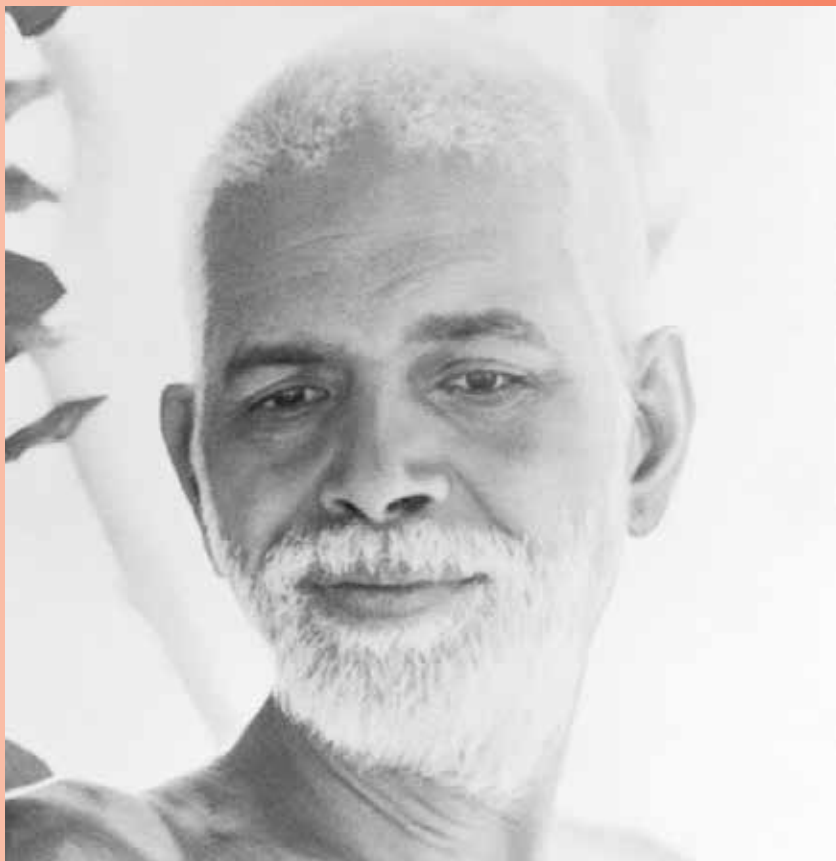
12th, Sunday

06.45 p.m.

Pournami Celebrations – Samskrithi Seva

07.30 p.m.

Ashtottara Puja, Aksharamanamalai and Valam



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

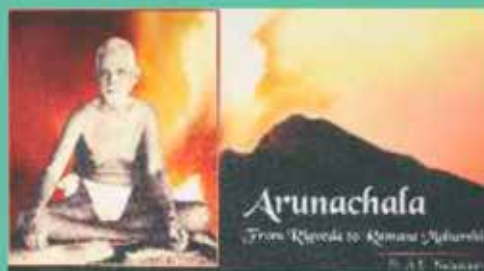
Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

90. The reality that is consciousness is indeed the Self. The world is objectified – consciousness, a distortion [within consciousness]. If a rope [truly] existed as consciousness, would it seek someone else – a separate being – to become a snake.
91. 'Did the Self move, losing its nature of [unmoving] being? Or else, how has this world come to be?' If this be asked, [the answer is,] 'The Self [apparently] experienced movement only through ignorance, which is itself unreal. There never was at any time movement for the Self'.



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.