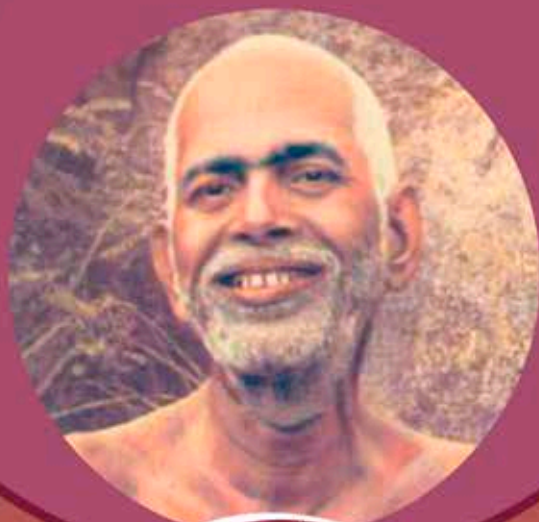


October 2021

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The Ramana Way

FORTY YEARS



Ramana
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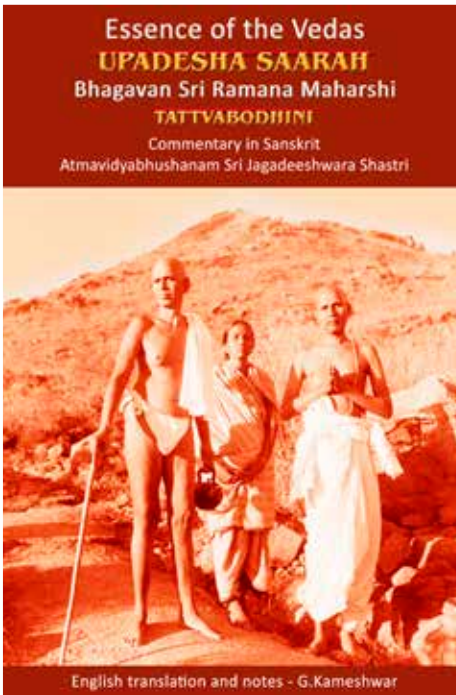
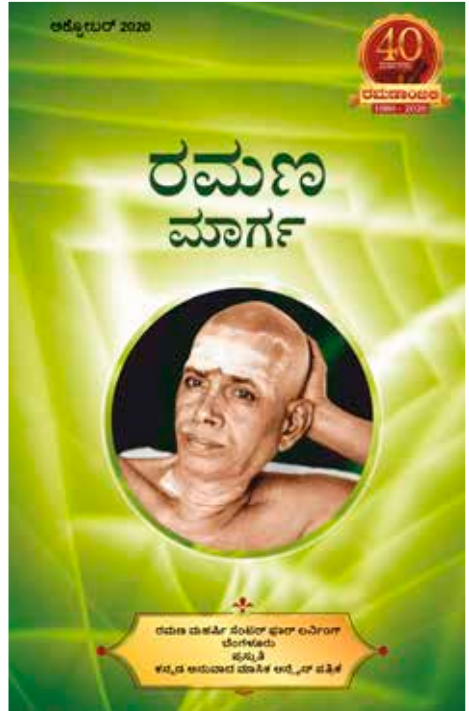
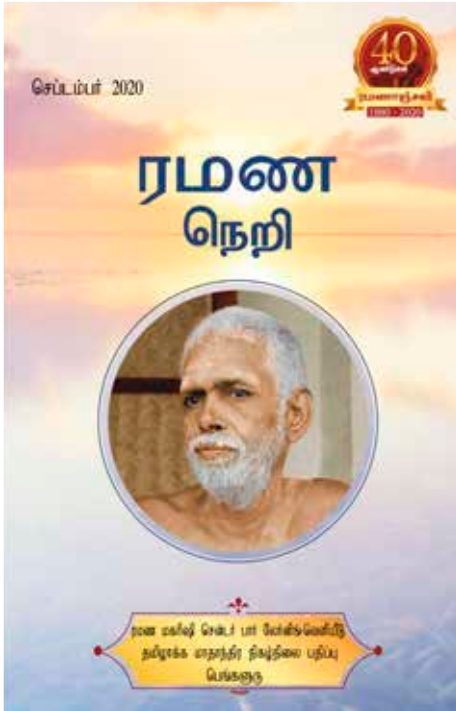
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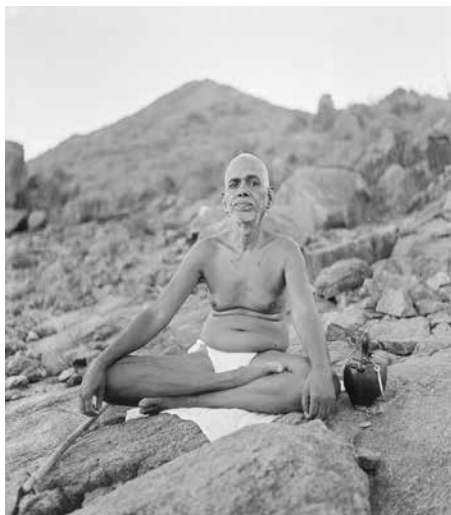


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THE RAMANA WAY

A Monthly Journal since 1981



Celebrating 'The Ramana Way' - 40 years

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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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The gates of the Heart are ever open. Yet we need a key to enter.

Ramana asks us to enter the Heart and remain there. 'hrdi visha ... Atma nishto bhava' he says in what is termed his 'eka sloki', the one verse in which the entire teaching is encapsulated. This verse is encrusted by Ganapati Muni as the second verse in Chapter 2 of the 'Ramana Gita'. In this verse Ramana describes the Heart as that space where the Self alone shines, all encompassing, revealing itself directly as the throb of 'I'-'I'. Therefore, enter the Heart, he says, by enquiring, investigating into the nature of your self or by merging into it, and remain seated unwaveringly in the Self. This is the only purpose of life.

The path has been given to enter the Heart space but having travelled there, when we are at the threshold will we find the doors barred? Would the doors to the Heart kingdom be locked? Never so, the gates are always open. Why then do we need a key to enter? And what is that key? It is attention. Attention is the key to all knowledge. Unless we pay attention to the fact that the Heart is ever welcoming us with the greatest love we would not run into its embrace.

More importantly, unless we pay attention to the Heart how would we know whether its gates are locked or open, or whether there are any gates or doors at all into that kingdom? So, in a manner of speaking we may say that we need to turn our attention to the Self. Only in a manner of speaking, because there is no division in the Self. It is not an object that one can turn one's attention towards or fix one's attention on. Besides, the Self itself is the source of attention.

To say that we need to pay attention to the Self is in a way like saying that one must focus a light on the sun or, even like saying that the sun needs to light itself. Ramana does say that seeking Grace or feeling one is caught up in suffering is like the Ganga saying she is thirsty. Nonetheless, in some mysterious manner we seem to be enmeshed in a sense of duality, we would certainly need to pay attention to the illusion in order to be rid of it or to pay attention to the fact that the Self alone is.

All spiritual practices are about gathering attention, shifting attention, fixing attention on a chosen object. In the Ramana Way, the practice is about understanding the very nature of attention and thereby turning to and experiencing its source. Asking ourselves what is attention in the first place is in fact asking ourselves what is the mind.

Attention is how we describe consciousness when it is fixed on an object. We say that we are paying attention to something. What happens when we do so? That object is lighted in our consciousness. We become aware within ourselves of that object. Not that we carry anything into ourselves physically, it is just that the object becomes visible to us mentally and continues to remain so until the next object becomes visible. Therefore, in his 'Eight Verses on Arunachala' Ramana points out that it is like seeing a motion picture. As long as our attention is totally on the moving pictures, we may well assume the movie to be real. But if we wonder wherefrom the pictures are coming and trace the light back to its source, we will recognize that the movie is a mere projection.

Whenever any object is lighted in our consciousness it becomes a movie within us. If we keep watching the movie and getting involved in the emotions that it plays out, we will completely lose sight of the light of consciousness that is the source and substance of the images. The moment we turn our attention back to the source, the grip of the movie on us will begin to diminish. As love for the source grows on account of experiencing the bliss that is its nature, attention will naturally slide back there repeatedly until it no longer moves away.

Turning attention back to the source can happen in one of two ways. The 'source' or the basis of thoughts may be seen to be the 'I' thought since all other thoughts are dependent on this thought 'I'. Further enquiry would gradually reveal, however, that the 'I' thought itself derives its light from somewhere. Wherefrom does it rise, where does it subside into? Asking oneself thus, to try and turn attention back on its source is paying attention to the Heart.

Since we believe that the 'I' is an inhabitant, or perhaps a prisoner, of the body, we need to look for the source of attention only within the body. But once one reaches the source one will

know that the reverse is actually true. The Self, that is the Heart, is boundless. Hence it is the body that is in the Heart, says Ramana in his very last composition, 'Ekanma Panchakam'. When there are no borders, no boundaries to the Heart, where would the doors be?

Hence, Sri A.R.Natarajan writes, "Wisdom demands, does it not, that one should harness the guru's immense power for progressing spiritually, for developing inwardness? For as Ramana told Paul Brunton the guru can give the devotee all that he needs. Both his worldly and spiritual interests are safe in his hands. They will be well looked after if only there is entrustment."

Sarada Natarajan

LETTER TO A FRIEND

Dear friend, do you not feel that you have lived through thousands of births, if not the famed eighty-four lakhs? One is not talking, as you may imagine, of life after death or before birth. One is not referring either to the strange phenomena where memories of 'previous births' actually tally on verifications with the historic occurrence of those events. No, one is very much on the known and 'immediate' plane of this very life. Do you not often times feel that this very life is an endless cycle of births and deaths? As your train moves away from the platform, after all the goodbyes are waved, do you not feel a birth ending, and another beginning? Every experience bears a lifetime in itself. Have you not lived the fear of jungle deer when in the night you are walking alone on a road? Or at a single leer, a predatory look from a co-passenger? Perhaps when you feel cornered, edged-in by an emotional trap? Have you not known the swift pounce of the tiger in your aggression? Do we not, each of us, sense the freedom of the sky in our joy and silence, the abandon of the waves in our dance and laughter? Have we not been through stony births in our spells of dead indifference? Are we not plants rooted to places and thing? Have we not been born at moments as flowers that spread the fragrance of love? Are we not at times the grass that nods with every breeze or yet again, birds that soar with single lofty ideals?

Have we not lived countless lives by sensing, seeing, hearing, feeling, sharing, identifying? We have been at least a score of heroes and heroines in the movies that we have lost ourselves in, a hundred protagonists in books that have engrossed us... Then there are the numerous births and deaths that we have lived through in relationships. So many people we have become dead to and so many who are as good as dead to us. Are these not deaths that we have experienced? One who was the dearest of dear now hates, perhaps, the sight of us, or it may be the other way round. Even hatred is alive, we may simply have become totally

* These editorials have later been compiled in the book 'The Wonderous Vigilance'.

indifferent, making no difference to each others lives. These are our deaths. And births too we have seen many in the blossoming of new friendships, in a sudden gesture of understanding, in a stranger's smile or word which makes them dear, until the next death, the next birth... so many roles we have donned, even those amongst us unacquainted with theatre and the stage.

Our daily dreams are new births and new deaths. And the quota of day-dreams would weigh heavily in the account of our 'incarnations'. Our very body is an eternal crematorium, a perpetual maternity ward and universe rolled into one. Every moment cells are born, cells are sustained, cells die. Limbs grow, decay, change, revive. Every moment I am a new person. So many times has there been destruction and rejuvenation, a new cycle, an endless pattern. It is the same with the mind, thoughts are born and die, ideas grow and rot, one moment active, alert, brilliant, the next second dull, disturbed, depressed. Is it the same mind or another of the thousand births? Of course, a little knock on the head and amnesia may make us dead to all that is dear and alive to new vistas. A little clot of blood in the wrong place and the system is transformed!

Is it not strange, dear friend, that through all this we have remained unperturbed, untrammelled, not for a moment wondering about our identity? How is it that through these unlimited mutations we still believe in our existence as one continuous entity? How do we look upon all that we perceive and most of all upon ourselves as permanent? Is there something that persists, unchanged? Who is it that has lived through these numerous transformations and transfigurations and remains intact, untouched, unbroken, all of a piece still? Who is it that has registered these vast changes, these repeated births and deaths, an unchanging witness to the metamorphosis? Who is it that creates a sense of continuity amidst all this flux? What is that entity? Who am I?

Sri Ramana insistently turns our attention to the search for this 'I' which is central to our existence. First, he establishes its centrality, saying: "Perception, memory or any other experience only comes to the 'I'. You don't have the experiences during sleep. And you exist now too (after sleep). That shows that 'I' continues while other things come and go." Having thus brought home to us the importance of the seer, he gently turns our attention in that direction. "Obviously the seer is more real, true and important

since the seen is dependent on it. So, turn your attention to the seer who is the source of your 'I' and realise that. Upto now you have been studying the object, not the subject. Now find out for what the word 'I' stands."

It is true. We have not stopped to wonder, to examine, to dive deep and catch hold of that 'I'-ness. But now, when we do pause, we are again carried away by the next wave that is rolling out, or the old one that is rushing in, by yet another change, by yet another movement. How we do love this momentary role play. And we take ourselves too seriously, don't we? Hence, time and again we lose that stillness which binds all this frantic activity, the substance that gives a semblance of meaning to the disparate medley of experiences that we are prepared to put together and call 'our life'. Have you waited and watched dear friend? Have you glimpsed that cloudless sky? Have you plumbed the depths of that waveless ocean? Have you walked the soft sands of that timeless shore by travelling that elusive unitary track that leads there?

If you have walked those sands, if you are still walking there or if you would like to start, then, come, let us walk together. If you have ever wondered about the 'I', if you have been puzzled by the way it disappears in deep sleep and reappears on waking, if you are perplexed by the way the sense of 'I' rules your life, if you are unsatisfied as to why you still know so very little about your very Self, then come, let us travel the 'Ramana Way', let us tread the path of self-enquiry and Self-knowledge.

FOCUS ON WHAT?

OR

TAXI TO TIRUVANNAMALAI

Suddenly you spot Arunachala, a mere dot almost, on the horizon. You are driving towards Tiruvannamalai. Excited, you drive on, keeping the glorious hill in sight. It grows as you draw nearer. Sure, it is dwarfed by the larger hills in the foreground. But for you they are all insignificant. Your sight is fixed on the Hill of light. Sometimes it disappears from view behind village houses and crowded groves, to reappear in all its sweetness once more just a little later. Sometimes it even plays hide-and-seek shifting

sides with a bend in the road and for a while you wonder whether you have lost it. You search anxiously and laugh as you find it again. How naughty the hill can be, playing thus, you think. As you come closer the other hills disappear altogether. Arunachala looms larger and larger. You arrive.

Arunachala stands magnificent. You run to the hill. You run up the hill and lie on the warm rocks. You cannot see the hill anymore. You do not see yourself anymore. There is only the silence that is Arunachala, all enveloping. There is no movement, no disappearance or appearance, no hide and seek, no play. And you know that Arunachala never played at all. Arunachala remained, as ever, unmoving, silent. But you were moving and in all your movements you saw the play of Arunachala. A mere illusion? Or a lovely game which kept your attention ever on Arunachala until you yourself ceased from moving too and were enveloped by that silence? It was great fun surely, every inch of the way, thanks to Arunachala keeping you company all along, thanks to the focus.

Would it matter so much if one did not see Arunachala along the journey? Would it not be enough if one was travelling the right road? Sure, once a regular road has been laid out, it is enough if one travels it. One has to take care only to keep to the correct turns, follow the proper signboards. Else one may have travelled many kilometres in the wrong direction before one realises one's folly and retraces one's move. There are also occasions when people have circled for hours in bye-lanes and alleys while being very close to their destination just for want of proper guidance. Of course, if the road map is accurate and the driver is competent one can sit back and enjoy every little view by the roadside. Then the journey becomes a different experience. Then one simply watches, listens, smells the world around as the vehicle races along.

Monkeys rollicking right in the middle of the road,
Chicks chuckling at choice moments beside them,
The sky pregnant with rain, a blue all alive,
Glancing with evening's gentle glow on the gray green below,
Dogs unamused by the motor's speedier pace,
Going great guns at the enemy's wheels,

A tiny bug meandering its black way on the white page one holds,

Sounds of a radio melodrama, snatches of human conversation,

A sole motorbike cutting into the silence of nightfall,

The smell of water on earth mixed with scents of red brick and smoke...

Then, as darkness envelopes and no sights can be seen anymore and there are not many sounds to hear either, the mind turns to its own sights and sound within. And gradually, but certainly, the thoughts revolve around the destination, around Ramana... Arunachala...

Memories of a young child playing all by herself

In an unsighted nook of the vast railway station

Unaware of filth, of noise, of poverty,

Where one alighted en-route.....

Thoughts of the summer showers

That have cooled and softened you...

Are all reminders of your love my best beloved

Awaiting me with the tenderness of a mother

That I may come

And rest my head upon your lap.

And with these comforting thoughts for company one may even fall asleep, secure, happy, to be woken up only on reaching the destination. The finale has to be the same. That which filled one's dreams now stands before the eyes. One simply walks up the warm steps and yes, rests one's head upon the lap of Arunachala. The silence prevails.

Apparently two ways. One with focus clear, effort geared to reach the goal. The other relaxed, allowing events to take you on to the goal. Yet, is it really so? Even in the latter, the purpose is clear. The road has been chosen, a roadworthy vehicle boarded, an able driver appointed and then alone does one sit back and forget about the destination. Forget? No, not even then. The thought of the heaven awaiting forms an undercurrent to all one's observations still. It also ensures that everything else is enjoyed

only from the insulated safety of the moving vehicle, moving swiftly, steadily to the destination.

The focus alone prevents one from stopping somewhere along the way and remaining there, or from taking some apparently more promising detours. It is the clarity of purpose which would make us prepared even to shift vehicles in the midst of the journey should any problem arise in the original one. The point is to reach Arunachala, at the earliest, safe and sound. One may keep one's sight fixed only on Arunachala or one may pay attention to all the passing vistas. But whatever one may do, it will be in order to reach the goal. That which does not interfere with the progress may be allowed and enjoyed, as the landscape and sounds perceived from a moving car. If anything is recognised to be an obstacle or a deterrent, it will at once be ignored or brushed aside. And the recognition itself will come by the clarity of focus.

And we are clear about our focus, are we not? We have finally and certainly decided that Self-knowledge is the only goal that really matters to us. Why? Because Self-knowledge means abiding bliss, because it is the source of all joy and because joy is the only thing we seek in any goal. So why chase shadows? Why pursue a thousand and one goals in the hope of attaining happiness when it is guaranteed that happiness is our very own, we only have to turn to it. This turning to our natural state, the recognition of awareness as it is, is termed 'Self-knowledge'. And this is all we need to seek in life. By seeking and attaining this 'knowledge' everything would have been attained. Hence Self-knowledge is our focus. Besides, we simply cannot have any other single-focus that governs life. Why not? No other purpose can remain continuous, nor can its fulfillment bring about the end of all seeking. Every other goal is by nature transient. Supposing one's goal in life is to do exceedingly well in academics. Fine, one may work hard and obtain first rank. One may even win six or ten gold medals for one's outstanding performance. Then, what next? Another course, more laurels won? Or a job and striving for promotions?

There is no completion, no full-stop. There cannot be. As soon as one purpose is achieved, one goal-post reached, another needs to be set up, one has to move on. Each and every one of the focuses we could set up for ourselves would be passing, transient. Again, it is not possible to treat any goal other than attaining Self-knowledge as all-inclusive. While one focusses on studies one

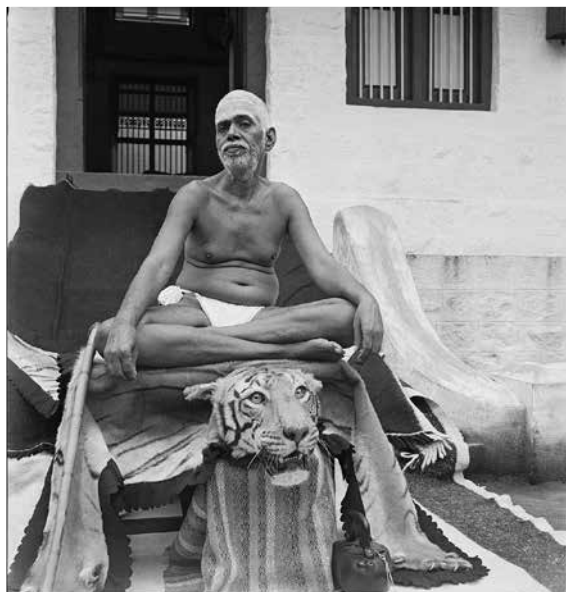
cannot totally ignore all other calls. One must necessarily attend to the needs of one's body. One may have to simultaneously strive to be a good friend, a loving son or daughter, brother or sister and so on. For instance, a good student may not necessarily make a good companion. It does not matter, or course, if one's approach is absolutely uni-focal. Yet, the fact remains that such a goal cannot comprise the entire purpose of life. What if one's purpose is loving someone, one's wife or husband, one's child or friend, one's brother or sister, one's teacher or beloved? Can this not become an all-inclusive goal? Would not everything in life become subservient to that purpose? Or else if one's purpose is to render service to the community, to the poor or the afflicted? Then too would not the whole of life be consumed by this fire? Would not all else merge into this focus? It might, provided one does not oneself remain apart from the goal.

So long as one remains separate then the focus cannot be unitary, can it? Obviously then the focus is dual to say the least. There is 'I' and there is 'my goal' – the two, and there is the I's pursuit of the goal, making it three. How then can one say that there is a single focus? Which is why Bhagavan gently yet firmly points out that dualities and trinities are dependent on something, they are sustained by something. The search for 'that something' will alone make all duality and multiplicity dissolve. Then there will be no more seeking, no disturbance, no movement. The one alone will remain. The single focus. The search for 'that something' is none other than self-enquiry. Because all goals, all purposes, all ideals are for me, they are mine, they are dependent on, sustained by 'I'. In all other goals other than self-attention, therefore there cannot really be a single focus.

What if one surrenders totally to one's goal, to one's focus? Then how can duality remain? Surely it cannot. There may, however, be a limitation in the object which would also be automatically transferred to us. Thereby, it may not be possible to hold on to that purpose or even to surrender to it. If our focus is on service and circumstances incapacitate us in some manner, how then could we hold on to our purpose? If we become physically weak, dependent, ill, how can we hang on to our ideal? We would then need someone to serve us. If our life's purpose be to love someone, what if that person spurns us? No matter, we could still live with our love. If that person passes away? No matter still, the

image would continue to live in our minds and nothing else would matter in any case. What if we suffer from a stroke, or succumb to a sudden bout of amnesia or some disease that swallows up memory and all known images are wiped away? Such happenings are not impossible, they are not even unknown, are they? Then what goal would remain with us, what purpose what ideal?

Awareness of the Self cannot be wiped away. It cannot be erased by anything. It is lost merely by not paying attention to it. Hence it will not go with the loss of limbs, it will not dissolve with the disappearance of memory. It alone is, ever is. It alone makes memory possible. It alone gives life to the body. The pursuit of Self-awareness is thus a goal, a purpose a focus that is not only all-inclusive, that is not just the basis of all other possible ideals and desires, it is the only truth. We may run from it through a million paths. We may hide ourselves with another million guises, yet, it meets us at every turn. It pulls away our every mask and laughing gently, warmly, ever so magically tells us time and again, 'I am waiting, I am waiting'. In every happiness that we find the Self sends us its fragrance reminding us to turn to the single focus, the only true focus, the only ideal that can govern our entire life and clothe it with meaning.



From the Founder's Pen: 1990-95

Insights

Is Surrender Possible Without Self-Enquiry?

D: Surrender is said to be bhakti. But Bhagavan is known to favour self-enquiry. There is thus a confusion in the hearer.

M: Surrender can take effect only when done with full knowledge. Such knowledge comes after enquiry. It ends in surrender.

- Talk 462, p 437

Devaraja Mudaliar, the diarist of the happenings in the presence of Ramana, had spent several years at his feet. As the years rolled by a fit of depression overcomes him. Why is it that there is no total transformation? Why is it that the mind is not anchored in the heart? Why cannot Ramana take over completely the job of cutting the attachments? So he decides he would have it out with the Sadguru who of course is always accessible. Mudaliar begins by reading from one of the works of Sivaprakasam Pillai who too had gone through this phase. Having thus prepared the ground he asks Ramana, "What do you intend to do with me?" This boldness was possible because he was sure that he had placed himself wholly in Ramana's hands, that he had surrendered himself unreservedly to him.

Ramana kept quiet for a few minutes and then said, "Whether I do or don't do anything, you have simply to surrender and keep quiet". Ramana had put in a nutshell the essential meaning of surrender. It implies the unquestioning acceptance of the wisdom of the Sadguru and the course of life which he charts out for us. If we imagine that we have surrendered and yet make a mental grievance of the events in life when they do not go our way or if we doubt that Ramana is not doing enough for us, then we are mistaken in thinking that we have placed ourselves in his hands. Subbaramayya records in his 'Reminiscences' that in one of the letters received by him from Sri Ramanasramam it was said, "So long as the mind keeps classifying the events as 'good' and 'bad', there is no real surrender."

For, a devotee should be certain that whatever happens is for the good since the omniscient and omnipotent Ramana has been put in charge. There must be faith, complete faith, “that he knows best what to do and also when and how to do it”. When this confidence is total, then the burden is shifted from our minds to the Sadguru. Till then with our load of worries we are no better than a traveller in the train carrying his luggage on his head. It is the train which carries us and our load but we seem to forget it. If the entrustment has been truly made, then the load of our ‘karma’ becomes his and he would be guiding us to the destination, freedom from the karmic cycle. As for the way, he knows best how to shield each individual devotee. Sometimes Ramana would say, “Why don’t you have as much faith in the guru as the first-class passenger in the guard?” All that the passenger does, even when he has to detrain in a midway station in the middle of the night, is to tell the guard of the train to wake him up and go off to sleep soundly. So sure is he about the duty consciousness of the guard.

Where does the fault lie? True, we are dull witted and turn to the Sadguru only in the hour of despair. But even so we find it hard to believe that we have any reservations about our trust in Ramana. He is all we have got. So this necessitates going deeply into the question of ‘surrender’, the question of unquestioning faith in the master.

The root of the problem is the sense of ‘doership’. As surely as we think we are a particular name and form we also feel that we are the actors. This sense of doership is the necessary inescapable concomitant of the sense of separate individuality. It is the practical expression of it. It is the purposive force of the ‘I’. We are convinced that the strength for actions and their results are of our making. Even if repeated failures cut at the assumption that we can shape the results of our action, we still cannot get away from the idea that it is our action.

Fine, if so what is the source of the intelligent principle which makes action possible? What is the source of consciousness in us? If this question is put as indeed it must be, then one goes back to the fundamental questions ‘Who am I?’ and ‘Whence am I?’. Questioning thoughts then and there, as conceptualisation takes place, focusing attention on the thinker one turns inwards to the consciousness within. It is this linking with consciousness which is the true source of strength for action, not the thought “I

am the doer". This idea is a superimposition and so long as it is not tackled, we have to carry the burden of our worries. For, these worries are the direct product of this notion.

All this would seem to suggest that self-enquiry and surrender are integral and not two alternative ways on the Ramana path. One might ask, "Has it not been said that either one should seek the source of ego so that it may disappear or one should let the Sadguru strike it down?" But this is only an apparent division. In practice it is not. This point would be clear if one refers to Ramana's statements like, "Surrender is to give oneself up to the original cause of one's being, one's source within. That makes you seek the source and merge in it". Or again he would say, "Surrender takes effect only after enquiry".

All this is to say that if we wish to give a practical turn to our love for Ramana, to our faith in his power of protection and guidance, we have to demonstrate it by steadfast adherence to self-enquiry. Then only 'I am the body' idea and its companion 'I am the doer' will be put to the sword. Otherwise we will be like the images on top of the temple tower which have a harassed look on their faces. They imagine that they bear the load of the tower, little realising that it is the foundation and masonry structure which matter. Wrinkles, long faces and a problem ridden life will be our lot if we miss out on self-enquiry. Should we not put Ramana at the helm to direct our endeavour of ending the sense of individuality which separates us from him? To the extent to which we do so we have learnt to leave things to Ramana.

Invigorating Positivism

M: All such thoughts as "attainment is hard" or "Self-Realisation is far for me" or "I have many difficulties to overcome to know reality" must be given up as they are obstacles created by ego. They are untrue. Do not doubt your reality; live in that understanding.

- Conscious Immortality p 58.

When we take exclusively to the spiritual path, there is a complete shifting of our goals, from 'worldly' achievements to becoming Self-aware or to be liberated from the karmic cycle. While our resolve or intellectual conviction is firm initially, due to the lack of experience to back it up one is likely to feel that he is at

a loose end. Apparently this is more so when pursuing the direct path of Ramana. Why so? For in it one is not clear about the role of the mind. If one is to be free of thoughts where is use or scope for the mind?

We generally feel that we are active only when the mind is having thoughts, when it is result oriented. In the straight way, the mind is used initially to ward off thoughts. That far the mind's functioning is not different from what we are used to. But it is only when we are off the mental movement, it is only when we have succeeded in creating the vacuum, that the problem arises. What happens when the thoughts are not surfacing? Are we to do anything further if we do not find that peace which must be felt when one is not asleep and thoughts too are absent? Should one consciously let thoughts come to the surface in order to be able to deal with them? Or else should one remain passive until one feels the peace which overwhelms?

It appears that there is the need for the mind to be fully operative by keeping the attention fixed on the source of thoughts till the natural and inherent joy is felt. Then, as Ramana told Cohen, one should do nothing to disturb that peace. One should 'do nothing'. This seems to be a twilight zone in the direct path which baffles and one might abandon self-enquiry labelling it as 'difficult'. Here lies the need to overcome such thoughts by meditating on the invigorating positivism of Ramana's counsel to various seekers.

Ramana would always counter every trick of the mind with strengthening suggestions for, these mental blocks, by dampening enthusiasm and effort, would deny one the joy of the natural state. As for the so-called difficulty Ramana would say that the very idea is wrong. It is only a self-imposed obstacle which will evaporate once effort is made. The notion would then be recognised as a mere myth. In any case we have only to scorch it with the question 'For whom is the difficulty?' When a visitor remonstrated, 'You say it is easy but we find it difficult', Ramana remarked, 'Find out who is weighing the path. Find out who it is that is finding it difficult.'

Time and again Ramana would emphasise the need for faith, the need for confidence in our capacity to deal with the hordes of tendencies which press in when a mental vacuum is created. 'Many have succeeded' he would say 'because they believed

they could'. What can 'vasanas' do when one is concentrating on their core? Or we draw encouragement from a conversation Ramana had with Subba Rao who complained of the power of the 'vasanas'. Ramana categorically told him, 'Your repeated effort will erase them'.

Some would be quite genuinely concerned about 'downfalls', about slipping back to old ways. One step forward seems to be negated by two steps backward when one is inattentive or even in spite of oneself. Here again Ramana would reassure. Things would be alright in the end. What can failures do against 'the steady impulse of determination'? Will it not put one back on his feet? Then, as one keeps at it 'success would beget success'. Ramana would also give the analogy of conquering a fort by laying siege of it, and destroying its man-power as they come out of it. Once the thinker is besieged, how long can distracting thoughts survive? Also, no effort is ever wasted, as he would say. What strength pours into us as we read of his assertion that "even a single effort to still a single thought, even for a trice, goes a long way to reach the state of quiescence"!

Sometimes there is the feeling that we are not fit or that circumstances will not permit steadfastness or success in attaining the goal. What is natural cannot be denied to us. Even so the doubt arises. An intelligent lady from an aristocratic family comes alone. She makes a short trip, puts some superficial questions and goes away. She returns soon to seek Ramana's guidance for a way out of her problems. She is a woman, and a married one at that, having many inescapable family obligations. Plaintively she asks, "Am I worthy of being a devotee?" Straight came the Master's succour, "Spiritual fare is common to all and denied to none, be the person old or young, male or female."

Ramana would also encourage by assurances of his protection, which knows no preference or limitations of time and space. He would say if a guru chooses to be gracious to a particular devotee because he is an ashram inmate or a frequent visitor, he could not be a jnani. As for the need to be near he would remark, "The frog stays near the lotus but it is only the bees which suck the honey of the flowers however far they may come from." As we learn to draw on Ramana's strength the 'difficult' direct path becomes what it is in fact, an 'easy' one.

Where Does Wisdom Lie?

D: Does the guru take control of the disciple's worldly affairs also?

M: Yes, everything.

D: Can he give the disciple the spiritual spark he needs?

M: He can give him all that he needs. This can be seen from experience.

- The Mountain Path

Ramana is an endless bestower of boons. You cannot turn to him in vain. Ask and it is given. Often he would refuse to acknowledge his miracles. Manavasi Ramaswami Iyer was a chronic dyspeptic who had lost all interest in life. He came to Ramana in the hope that he would work a miracle as Jesus had done and cure him. He said so quite truthfully. When he put his problem to Ramana, he simply replied, "I am neither a physician nor a magician. What am I to do?" Yet, shortly thereafter, Ramana cured this devotee by inviting him to a picnic in which a rich repast was served.

A lawyer devotee is not doing well in his profession. He comes to Ramanasramam for the sole purpose of seeking Ramana's counsel as to whether he should shift to another place for a more lucrative practice. "Consult an astrologer or a palmist. Why me?" says Ramana. All laugh including the person concerned. However, thereafter his stars change for the better and the need to shift ends.

Devaraja Mudaliar was suffering from skin trouble from his fifth year. It was a sort of skin ailment occurring on the foot and sometimes up to the knee. He used to take some medicine or the other in the fond hope that it would cure him. He kept changing from Allopathy to Unani and to Ayurveda. Doctors changed, the systems of medicine were substituted but the ailment remained.

In 1940 when he wanted to become a permanent inmate of the asram, he made an intense mental prayer to Ramana to be cured of it not only for his own sake but also for the sake of other devotees. Ramana suggested that he could try 'The Essence of Neem'. In a couple of months, he was better and within two years, he was radically cured. What baffled the leading physicians for fifty years was cured by Ramana, by adding his power to the rather innocuous ointment for external application.

Dr. Melkote, a reputed doctor of Hyderabad was in the Asram treating Ramana for eczema. Try as he did, he could not effect any improvement. The doctor had a sudden and urgent necessity to go home. How could he go when Ramana was still under his treatment? Another devotee Krishna Bikshu suggested a way out. He asked the doctor to silently pray to Ramana to cure himself. Dr. Melkote did accordingly. From that night, Ramana's eczema responded to his treatment. The doctor literally wept at this miracle which enabled him to leave without compunction.

One can go on enumerating the instances. But is it necessary? Have not all of us found the ready response of Ramana to our overt and silent prayers? Who has not had his share of Ramana's munificence? But then are we not being foolish in referring our daily worries, our day-to-day problems to Ramana? 'Why foolish?' One might ask. Whom else to ask if we do not turn to our "compassionate Sadguru? Who else would grant our wishes seeking nothing in exchange?" This would be our line of thought. All this is true. We have a host of minute-to-minute difficulties which we blow up. Sometimes we do also have seemingly insurmountable problems. It seems so rational that we should turn to Ramana for succour, for continued help. As experience confirms our faith in him as a benefactor without a parallel we are strengthened in our desire to ask more and more from him.

So life goes on till the appointed time when we are picked up by the merciless God of Death. When body's karma ends it has to fall off. The ego which gave rise to the body would abandon it and cling to another body. Where would we be then? Would we not have wasted the unique opportunity of Ramana's entry into our lives? Rather, should not our request be for the greatest of boons? That he should give himself fully to us. Should we not feel that he should bestow on us his own state of overflowing bliss? This is not to say that we should not pray for the things of the earth but to point out the danger of being caught in their endless grip.

Wisdom demands, does it not, that one should harness the guru's immense power for progressing spiritually, for developing inwardness? For as Ramana told Paul Brunton the guru can give the devotee all that he needs. Both his worldly and spiritual interests are safe in his hands. They will be well looked after if only there is entrustment. There can be little doubt that intelligent prayers should be for support in sadhana, for support in Self-abidance.

In Muruganar we have the best example of what Ramana does to one who seeks nothing for himself. In the first few years from 1923 to 1926 Muruganar used to pray to Ramana for his mother's liberation. He would keep composing songs pointing out to Ramana what he had done for his own mother, and for those like Palaniswami who had attended on his body with more than mother's care. He would then add 'please do the same thing for my mother'. This wish Ramana granted as Muruganar confirms in his later verse. Thereafter Muruganar just stopped asking anything of Ramana. Being in Ramana's physical presence all the time filled him with bliss. There he would sit open-mouthed, content to look, content to take in the ambrosial words of the Master. His eyes were for beholding Ramana's beauty. His mind was for soaking itself in the sacred words which fell from his lips. When thus there was no request, no prayer, Ramana, the giver of boons unasked to those who leave things to him, bestowed on him his own state. The state of steady wisdom became Muruganar's too by the grace of Ramana. So we find Muruganar specifically saying in one of his songs "Keerthi Tiru Ahaval" (Ramana Sannidhi Murai) that if one asks one is sure to find his wishes fulfilled. But if only one has the wisdom to be aware, to feel that Ramana knows best then he is sure to be clothed in his wisdom. It becomes Ramana's duty to ensure it.

Even granting the need for physical communication with the guru it is also necessary to remember that the physical frame of Ramana was only apparently time bound. Though his body was interred on the 15th of April 1950, in the holy place where Ramaneswara Mahalingam is worshipped, he continues to live physically in a very real sense. Is there any photograph of his which does not speak? And there are so many of them. Often one finds it impossible to turn away from those lustrous, serene and peaceful eyes. Can we help being captivated by the smile on the countenance? How can it mean so much to so many unless the life force is present in the photograph in some mysterious way? When one is in the spiritual mood there is nothing more alive, more deeply meaningful than Ramana's photograph which compels attention and makes one feel that he is very much there as if in flesh and blood. So why not let the photo do its work? When one has the living presence of Ramana, and his direct path to Self-knowledge why should one dissipate it and let go the unique chance? We have only to open the window of our mind and allow our hearts to become captive to the immense silence of Ramana.

Talk 101 (Excerpt)

A gentleman from Ambala asked: What is the rationalistic explanation of Draupadi's sari becoming endless?

M: Spiritual matters cannot be fitted into rationalism. Spirituality is transcendental. The miracle was after Draupadi had surrendered herself. The secret lies in surrender.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Surrender takes the sadhaka to the limitless Self when intellect is also surrendered. Bhagavan used to say to those questioning the meaning of Sri Akshara Mana Malai that chanting itself is its meaning. The technique involving body, breath and mind can be practiced with surrender to transcend even the intellect. Once while reciting Ribhu Gita in the Ashram, in the break, I suggested a new interpretation to a verse to Sri Chandra Mowli, the lead, who immediately pointed out that the intellect can give infinite number of limited meanings. Surrendered chanting without expecting results and with intellect in complete abeyance keeps the ego in the Self.

Talk 101 (Excerpt)

D.: How to reach the Heart?

M.: Where are you now that you want to reach the Heart? Are you standing apart from the Self?

D.: I am in my body.

M.: In a particular spot, or all over?

D.: All over. I am extending all over the body.

M.: Wherefrom do you extend?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Yes. You are always in the Heart. You are never away from it in order that you should reach it. Consider how you are in deep sleep and in the waking state. These states are also not yours. They are of the ego. The consciousness remains the same and undifferentiated all through.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: When asked, "Where are you", one usually replies, "Tiruvannamalai" or "Bangalore". Both indicate body-identity. The first step is to understand that I am within the body. Though I appear to be all over the body, I realise that this limits me

to its form. This means it limits one to time, space and subtle body. I originate from the Heart. "Who am I?", takes one to this Source beyond time, space and body. I experience my form-free existence of deep-sleep, here and now, in the waking. These states of deep-sleep, waking, here and now too are not "I-I". I Am.

Q: Bhagavan has made all spiritual information an open secret. Will I not wrongly feel that "I know" even though my knowledge is only intellectual?

A: That error is present in any spiritual instruction. Moreover, Truth will teach. In Akshara Mana Malai, Bhagavan says, "Veedu vittu eerthu ula veedu pukkup PAIYYA un veedu kaattinai en Arunachala!"

You enticed me away from my home (mind-intellect-ego) into your home of the Heart and slowly-patiently revealed your Mansion, Arunachala. There are many secrets to be unlocked. The path is an open secret. Dive in. Enquire 'Who am I?'

Talk 101 (Excerpt)

D.: I understand (that 'The consciousness remains the same and undifferentiated all through') but I cannot feel it so.

M.: Whose is the ignorance? Find it out.

D.: All this is so difficult.

M.: The idea of difficulty is itself wrong. It will not help you to gain what you want. Again I ask: "Who finds it difficult?"

D.: I see that I am coming round to 'I'.

M.: Because you are always that and never away from that. There is nothing so simple as being the Self. It requires no effort, no aid. One has to leave off the wrong identity and be in his eternal, natural, inherent state.

***GUIDANCE RECEIVED:** From past experience, the limited being registers tasks as simple and complex or easy and difficult. For instance, Bhishma Pitamah is said to have practiced Dharma or Ethics of brahmacharya and protecting his homeland for several decades before getting the identity, "I am a dharmi". Many challenges are faced. Millions of iterations of right action chosen seem to be required. Many other tasks, including slipping from this identity, appear easy. However, this concept of "difficult task", "hard earned" itself becomes a hurdle to Self-Knowledge as there is no "easy" or "difficult" in the Self. For instance, when asked to surrender before the Kurukshetra war, Bhishma Pitamah finds it "difficult". The difficulty is, usually, letting go of the past. For whom are these hard-earned titles of the past? For whom is the thought "difficult"? However,*

many million iterations may have helped the ego form the identity “I am a good man” which keeps one in heaven, how does it matter? A personality is only an accumulation from many limited experiences. It helps create an internal heaven irrespective of the sensory world or relationships being heaven or hell. Such identity and internal heaven do not extend to dream and deep sleep states. Even in the waking state, they are challenged when faced with total surrender (Sri Krishna) or the doubter (Duryodhana). For whom is this thought? Be the limitless Self.

Talk 102

He (The man from Ambala of Talk 101) returned with a request next day. He said, “It is said that one should receive instruction from a Guru. Mere reading of books is not helpful. I have read many books; but there is no practical help derived from such learning. Please tell me what I should do, how I should do it, at what times, in which places, and so on.”

The Master remained silent. His silence seemed to say, “Here and now, be at peace and tranquil. That is all”. But the questioner could not interpret it that way; he wanted something concrete.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: Whether one experiences a single thought or weak emptiness or the power of fullness, the “I”, the experiencer is always present. The ‘I’ permeates whatever it experiences. Hold the ‘I’ till all objective experience is consumed by the ‘I-I’. This instruction to “hold the ‘I’ and BE STILL” is best taught in Silence. The Guru’s Sannidhi directly touches the ‘I’ of the seeker and makes it still. Bhagavan has yielded to the request of the seeker and given him the Mowna Dhiksha. It will work.

Q: But you have had no Guru to give you this Dhiksha...

A: Arunachala and Bhagavan’s Samadhi constantly radiate this Sannidhi.

Q: But does Bhagavan not say that His Sannidhi is not limited by time or space...

A: To the one who believes this, Bhagavan gives Mowna Dhiksha anywhere, anytime.

Talk 103

The next day Sri Bhagavan said: These people want some japa, dhyana, or yoga or something similar. Without their saying what they have been doing so far what more can be said to them? Again, why

japa, its phalasruti, etc.? Who is it that makes the japa? Who gets the fruits thereof? Can they not look to the Self? Or again, even if instructed by others to do japa or dhyana, they do it for some time, but are always looking to some results, e.g., visions, dreams, or thaumaturgic powers. If they do not find them they say they are not progressing or the tapas is not effective. Visions, etc., are no signs of progress. Mere performance of tapas is its progress also. Steadiness is what is required. Moreover, they must entrust themselves to their mantra or their God and wait for its Grace. They don't do so. Japa even once uttered has its own good effect, whether the individual is aware or not.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED: *Swamy Chinmayananda records that when he had the experience of enlightenment in Uttara Kasi, in the Ashram of Swamy Tapovan Maharaj, he realised that the same experience was given to him by Sri Ramana Maharshi many years before when he visited Sri Ramana as a youngster. Bhagavan had given him Nayana Dhiksha - stilling of the 'I' of the seeker through the power of the Guru emanating from his eyes. Such experience given as Dhiksha requires to be followed up by sadhana. In this talk, Bhagavan is describing about the man from Ambala as to how his sadhana should continue till the experience is made natural. The sadhana should not be for some benefit. Continuity of sadhana itself is Grace. If a sadhaka has been performing japa and dhyana for decades, that itself is Grace. At the right time, the Japa, Dhyana or Self Enquiry will bestow enlightenment. Japa even once uttered has its own good effect. A single thought stilled even for a trice by the quest "For whom is this thought?" takes one a long way towards the Self.*

Q: *Is there any significance of this direct stilling of the 'I' that can be experienced in Bhagavan's Samadhi Shrine over the other Mantra Dhikshas?*

A: *The direct stilling of the 'I' allows one to continue whatever sadhana they were doing. Sri Ramdas of Kanjangad continued to chant Rama Nama till he found Sri Rama all around as omnipresence after receiving the Nayana Dhiksha from Bhagavan.*

Q: *What is the purpose of Mowna Dhiksha or Nayana Dhiksha, if it cannot be felt by the seeker at that moment?*

A: *Some seekers are not conscious of the experience at that time. Their conscious mind doesn't experience the Dhiksha. However, it leaves a mark in the Sub-Conscious mind which makes the seeker seek the bliss of stilling of the 'I' again and again till the 'I' vanishes and the 'I-I' - naturally still consciousness - shines.*

Ever Yours in Truth, Nome

We are blessed to begin a new series of excerpts from Master Nome's book of the above name, generously shared by him and SAT (Society for Abidance in Truth) for the benefit of readers of 'The Ramana Way'.

- Editor

Introduction

Covering a time span of 40 years, 'Ever Yours in Truth' is a spiritual treasure in the form of personal correspondence between Nome and other sages and seekers sharing their experience. With few exceptions, almost all of the correspondence presented here was written in response to letters written to Nome... Included with the early correspondence are a few verses composed at the time...

In most cases, the names of those involved in this correspondence have been omitted to help preserve their privacy. Editorial remarks in brackets have been added to present to the reader the context in which Nome's response occurs ...

For ease of distinction between Nome's writing and the seeker's, different fonts have been used...

Some of the correspondence is a sharing of and reveling in Brahman-Knowledge, while some is correspondence with Nome in which seekers pose various questions asking for directions back to their origin—Brahman. The questions come in many different forms, speaking of a variety of topics, but the theme of each of them is the same—how to return to the beginning-less beginning and abide in and as the peaceful silence of Brahman-Knowledge. Nome graciously responds with life-fulfilling Brahman-Wisdom.

May Brahman-Knowledge abide in the hearts of all, and peace endure eternally.

Sasvati

[This is a letter composed in November or December of 1974 by Nome. It was written to Joe Miller, a spiritual teacher in San Francisco who professed an interest in Sri Ramana Maharshi and who met with Nome a few times in 1975 following this letter.]

Dear Joe,

I, myself, am Realization. Being is Knowing. Existence and Consciousness are one and the same. I am the Self. How could I ever be apart or different from who I am? Thus, Realization, not being any sort of thing or state attainable, is just who I am, my very existence, which is not objectifiable at all. Who I am can never be seen, for it is the seeing itself. All objective attempts to define the Self are partial and incomplete. One could never hope to understand who he is by seeking in such a manner.

Realization can never be attained, for there are not two of me that one should reach the other. Realization is my ever-present Consciousness.

There is not even one of me, in the sense that I am not any sort of individual entity. The assumption of there being an individual entity causes all apparent suffering. This suffering is only an appearance and not real for a moment, for if we inquire "Who am I?", we see that the supposed entity is absolutely absent, thus revealing our eternal Existence-Consciousness, which is what the word "I" really indicates. People call this Realization. Actually, there is nothing attained and no one to attain it.

This simple, non-conceptual understanding of who I am, beyond all words and thoughts, is absolute freedom. There never having been bondage, there is no liberation for which to seek. There are neither sentient beings nor buddhas, neither disciple nor guru, neither path nor achievement.

Everyone calls himself "I," thus indicating our absolute unity.
Sincerely, Nome

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[This is a portion of a letter written by Nome to Shanti, who had supplied some books by Sri Atmananda to Nome and started a correspondence with him prior to her attending satsang for the rest of her life. This portion of the letter was written in a verse-like pattern.]

September 22, 1975

I, myself, am the Truth,
There is nothing to be attained. Self-Realization is Being,
Not being this or that, Just Being.
This is the wisdom of infinite depth And the Realization of all sages.

I have nothing at which to point; Being cannot be called a thing.
These words are spoken
From the Absolute Of the Absolute To the Absolute.
There is no person or entity On either side of this letter;
The absolute absence of “you” and “me” Is the absolute presence
of I.

I am this I am,
Existence-Consciousness,

Transparent, void, and shining. Un-nameable and inconceivable,
I am beyond all words and thoughts. Utterly nonobjective,
I do not admit of:
This or that, Here or there, Now or then,
Within or without, Form or formless,
Knowledge or ignorance, Freedom or bondage, Life or death.
For whom could these apply?

Without grasping,
Knowing myself to be the non-dual Reality, I rest in peace.
Not subject to time, I am called eternal. Not subject to space, I am
called infinite.
Never having been born, I am called immortal.
Timeless and infinite, Unborn and undying, I am.

There is not
A single objective thing.
Any such thing would depend On a subject,
Which, in turn, is another object. But this subject, when sought,
Is found to be naught. This absolute absence Of any thing
And any one.
To be enlightened or unenlightened Is the great Liberation and
The absolute presence of I.

Experience and Knowledge are inside. How can their objects be outside?

It follows that there is nothing outside. All is within.

What is within is my Self.

Therefore, the experiencer and the experience Are one and the same.

That is my Self. Relatively,

I, who am nothing, am everything. Absolutely,

I alone am.

When deeply inquired into, Ignorance and bondage Are seen to be Enlightenment and liberation; Why do some people speak Of teachings and practices

To flee from what has never been?

“You are Awareness.

Awareness is another name for you. Since you are Awareness,

There is no need

To attain or cultivate it.” (Sri Ramana Maharshi)

Those who conceive of a “condition” Have not awakened to the Truth Beyond conditioned and unconditioned. Those who are concerned With the “form of reality” Do not understand

That Reality is

Neither form nor formless. Those who think

In terms of union and attainment

Do not perceive the wonderful quiescence. Those who speak of states

Do not know who they are. One who views himself

As an individual entity Has not looked deeply Into the Truth

Of no-birth and no-death.

The absolute absence of a “me” Is the absolute presence of I. Truly, I am but there is no “me.”

Reality is not to be attained or gained. Absolutely nonobjective,

Beyond all effort and experience, It is realized as I.

Who can speak of Dual versus non-dual? Reality is as it is

And cannot be described in words. I alone am!

What need for further declarations?

Verse-7

inRaka menuninai veniRpiRa vonRu
minRatu varaipiRa ninaivezhi IArkkeR
konRaka mutitala metuvena vuLLAzhn
tuLattavi cuRinoru kuTainizhaR kOvE
yinRakam puRamiru vinaiyiRal canma
minputun piruLoLi yenunkana vitaya
manRaka macalamA naTamiTu maruNa
malai-yenu melai-yaRu maruLoLikaTale

Word split, and meaning:

akam enum ninaivu: If the thought of 'I'

inRu enil: were not there

piRa onRum inRu: nothing else exists

atuvarai: Until that time

piRa ninaivu ezhil Arkku: if other thoughts arise, then for whom?

eRku: 'For me'

akam utitalam etu ena onRu: Where does this 'I' rise from? And merging (at that source)

uL Azhntu: Having drowned within

uLattavicu uRin: if one reaches the royal-throne of the heart

oru kuTai nizharkOvE: O Emperor, with one umbrella shade

akam puRam iruvina: inside-outside; twin fruits of karma (favorable and unfavorable)

cenma iRal inpu tunpu: birth-death; pleasure-pain

iruL oLi enum kanavu inRu: darkness-light; these and such dreams will cease to be

itaya manRakam: in the golden-hall of the heart

acalamA naTamiTum: dancing, without moving

aruNamAmalai enum: known as Aruna the mighty hill

elaiyaRum aruL: limitless Grace

oLikkaTale: ocean of light, alone

Verse rendering:

*If the 'I' thought
 (Awareness of 'I')
 Were not there
 Nothing else exists;*

*Until that time
 (as that 'I' thought does not cease)
 If other thoughts arise,
 Then, for whom?
 (the answer would be)
 'To me!'*

*Now,
 If one were to seek
 From where does this 'I' rise
 And merge there
 Drowning within
 Reach
 The Royal-throne of the heart
 (one becomes)
 Verily
 The Monarch
 Under the shade
 Of the sole Umbrella-of-State.*

*(After which)
 The twosomes of
 Inside-outside; twin-karma (good and bad)
 Birth-death; pleasure-pain; darkness-light;
 Etc.,
 Dreams all
 Cease to be.*

*(And)
 In the golden-hall of the heart
 Dancing, without moving,
 That mighty hill known as Aruna
 The ocean of light
 Of limitless Grace
 Alone (Is).*

Prose rendering:

If the 'I' thought (the awareness of 'I' as a distinct entity) were not there, nothing else would be there as well. Until that time (i.e., until one realizes a state of Being where the 'I' thought ceases), if other thoughts come up, (if one inquires) for whom do these other thoughts arise? (To this question, the answer would be) 'To me!' Now, if one were to seek, from where does this 'I' rise, and merge there (at the source); drowning within, if one reaches the Royal-throne of the heart, (one becomes) verily, the Emperor-Supreme, the Sovereign, abiding under the shade of the sole Umbrella-of-State (i.e., one realizes one's identity as the Lord-Almighty, the overlord of all worlds, ruling under the shade of the One umbrella of unparalleled Grace). (After which) the twosomes of inside-outside, twin-karma (good and bad), birth-death, pleasure-pain, darkness-light; all these, mere dreams, will cease to be. (And) in the golden-hall of the heart, dancing, without moving, that mighty hill known as Aruna, (which is an) ocean of light of infinite Grace, alone exists (as the sole Supreme Sovereign Non-dual Reality).

Notes:

The first part of the verse spells out the path of Self-Inquiry. When the 'I'-thought exists, the world exists. Upon seeking the source of the 'I'-thought, the mind, diving within, merges in the heart; whereupon the notions of an individual 'I' and a distinct world ceases, and one is established in the Kingdom of the heart, as the Supreme Non-Dual Reality, the One Lord-Almighty.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says (2.4.14) :

*yatra hi dvaitamiva bhavati taditara itaraM jighrati
taditara itaraM pashyati taditara itara{lm+} shR^iNoti taditara
itaramabhivadati taditara itaraM manute taditara itaraM vijAnAti |
yatra vA asya sarvamAtmaivAbhUt tatkena kaM jighret tatkena kaM
pashyet tatkena ka{lm+} shR^iNuyAt tatkena*

*kamabhivadet tatkena kaM manvIta tatkena kaM vijAnlyAt |
yenedaM sarvaM vijAnAti taM kena vijAnlyAd vij~nAtAramare kena
vijAnlyAditi || 14 ||*

Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one hears something, one speaks

something, one thinks something, one knows something. (But) when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one smell and through what, what should one see and through what, what should one hear and through what, what should one speak and through what, what should one think and through what, what should one know and through what? Through what should one know That owing to which all this is known—through what, O Maitreyī, should one know the Knower ?¹

This process of Inquiry has been explained in the first part of the current Ashtakam verse.

A systematic exposition of this teaching has been given by Bhagavan Ramana in 'Upadesha Saram' as well.

ahamayam kutO bhavati chinvatāh

ayi patatyaham nijavichAraNam

(Verse 19 – Upadesha Saram)

Where does this "I"-notion rise,

When sought attentively,

Lo! "I" falls in expiry,

This is self-inquiry.

What happens then?

ahami nAshabhApyahamāhantayA

sphurati hRtsvayam paramapUrNasat

(Verse 20 – Upadesha Saram)

In place of "I" destroyed,

Throbs "I"-"I" luminous,

One, Self spontaneous,

Heart-Fullness-Consciousness.

Is this *paramapUrNasat* throbbing as 'I'-'I' different from *Ishvara*?

IshajeevayOrvEshadheebhidA

satsvabhAvato vastu kEvalam

(Verse 24 – Upadesha Saram)

¹ English translation from 'The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (with the Commentary of Śankarācārya)' by Swami Madhavananda

We should heartily accept our being as smaller 'I'.

No problem.

If smaller 'I' tries (or thinks) to be greater 'I', it creates obstacle.

Self is constantly flowing through 'I am the body thought'.

And 'I am the body thought' wants to possess It or resist It.

That is mind - ego - I thought.

Existent uses existence while existence is real, existent is unreal.

Who am I?

"Apart from the seer there is no seen."

I talk about God but I don't ask 'Who am I?'

"Silence is the Self."

Self abidance practice leads to self-denial.

It manifests real Self which is perfect egolessness.

Practice makes one surrender to heart.

When we are egoless we are automatically found in the heart.

We ourselves are heart.

'I' am 'I' in the heart - it is Self.

I am 'this body'(in the mind, intellect) - it is ego.

"I am body-mind". No.

"I am self." No.

"Self is". Yes.

Forever is in the Now

MEMORABLE DAYS WITH THE SAGE OF ARUNACHALA**Swami Desikananda**

It was divine grace that brought me to the presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana in 1927. On entering the Asram I saw the Maharshi seated on a couch with nothing more on than a loin-cloth and appearing to gaze at some distant void. He was surrounded by devotees sitting at his feet and the whole scene was reminiscent of sages of yore. I stood for a while in his presence. He looked at me casually and I made my namaskarams.

Next morning I again returned to the asram to sit at his feet as I found I could easily concentrate in his presence and had progressively longer spells of undisturbed meditation such as I have never been able to achieve before anywhere else. When I told the Maharshi about it and how enjoyable it was, he asked me whether I was sleeping at the time of meditation. On my replying in the negative he laughed and enquired about my method of meditating, which was to concentrate on a light in the heart and offer a flower to my Ishtam (chosen God) whenever the mind wavered as instructed by His Holiness Swami Sivanandaji. Maharshi said that it was all right for me and I could continue in this way.

The third day after a lengthy meditation in front of the Maharshi I told him about the picture of Jesus I had seen in a church surrounded by all sorts of animals at peace with one another. He replied that this was due to the fact of animosity having been conquered by the sage, even snakes would not harm anybody here in this Asram, and added that in the presence of sages, evil nature would be conquered and friendliness prevail. This is how the rishis of old used to live in forests and caves unharmed by wild creatures.

A visitor asked the Maharshi in the evening if he saw any form of God in meditation. He replied smiling that the Self or Atman was our real nature and has no form. He quoted a verse of Sankaracharya: "You are not the body, you are not the mind, senses or buddhi. You are beyond all these. You are the Atman." When one becomes perfected in meditation having discarded all desires and merges in the Self the mind loses itself in Atman.

This is what is called samadhi. This is the real nature of man and sublime happiness.

The highest goal of man is to enquire 'Who am I?' and realise the Self. If a human being does not try to realise this he lives in vain. This state in which he enjoys the highest peace and happiness is dearer than anything else in the world. It is in all beings in the innermost heart. Unless one realizes this state one will have to be born and die again and again. In this real state one goes beyond grief and sorrow. It makes a man immortal.

On the fifth day of my visit I saw a young woman with a small baby seated at Bhagavan's feet sobbing bitterly. She had recently lost her husband and was grief stricken. Bhagavan looked at her with compassion and told her: "Husband, wife and children are for the body. Go home and know who you are. Go home and do not weep." The words of a jnani have the power to transform. 'Home' can also mean spiritual Home, the Source. His command "Go Home and know who you are" might have taken effect in a heart one-pointed and purified by sorrow. In the case of another young woman, Echammal, heart-broken at the loss of her entire family, Bhagavan's very silence was enough to effect the transformation and lift her grief.

The remaining days went off as usual. Bhagavan's routine was to sit on a couch mostly in silence till noon and again after food and a little rest. He used to look through the mail twice a day and go for a short walk on the hill. He said on one occasion that since there was no mind at all there was also no concept of anything. All was one full expanse in peace and happiness. He quickly added that we cannot even say one expanse as there was no second.

When I was ready to leave I told Bhagavan so on the ninth day of my stay. Kneeling before him I wept profusely. He remarked "You can stay on. Nobody asked you to go." However, I took leave of him the next day and he told me to continue my meditation as usual and that everything would be alright in the course of time.

By Bhagavan's grace not only was I drawn into the fold of a sage who had the highest realization but was helped in every way to experience periods of supreme peace and bliss. This indeed forms the sheet anchor of my life that was, that is and that will be. The silent ministration of Bhagavan will indeed remain an eternal spring of spiritual joy and peace.

It is but appropriate that I close this account with salutations to Bhagavan Ramana who keeps on inspiring ever increasing numbers of seekers as time goes on.

How gracious art Thou Lord Dakshinamurthy

To have blessed mankind by Thy ministration in human form.

To Bhagavan who is but the form of

Satyam, Sivam and Sundaram

Do I offer my salutations again and again!

Om Tat Sat.

* * * * *

SRI BHAGAVAN

Dada J.P.Vaswani

It was my great good fortune to have had a darshan of Sri Bhagavan – to have sat in his purifying presence - to have gazed into the liquid depths of his mystic, luminous, compassion filled eyes - to have listened to his words of wisdom, which centred around the one question, which indeed is a question of all questions- the one eternal question, which if you one answer you will have no more questions to answers-the one question ‘Who am I?’ ‘Who am I?’ ‘Who am I?’ This happened in 1939. He sat in the Asram hall. He sat on a wooden couch. He sat in silence and at his feet sat a few devotees. Even as I went and sat in the midst of the devotees, I recalled to my mind a picture which I had seen several years earlier. It was the picture of Sanatkumar - the eternal youth, seated on a raised platform, and at the feet of this young teacher, sat a number of old rishis with white flowing beards and underneath the picture was written the words, “The teacher sits in silence. His teaching is silence and the disciples’ doubts are cleared”. Sri Bhagavan sat in silence. His teaching was silence. Many came to him - many from the East and some from the West. They came bringing a hundred questions and a hundred doubts in their hearts, but no sooner did they enter into his purifying presence than their minds were stilled. They were filled with a strange feeling of peace. They forgot their questions and their doubts. But from where can I bring the silence of Sri Bhagavan? His silence was so profound. His silence was so sublime. His

silence was so unique. These are the words of Sri Bhagavan - he says, "The guru's silence is more vast and more emphatic than all the scriptures put together." You may read all the sastras that are in the world. But what you will gain by study will be nothing as compared to what you will gain by a few words sitting at the feet of the self-realised guru like Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Sri Bhagavan's silence was not passive. His silence was utter and complete. It was the silence of the head and the heart put together. It was the silence of feeling and emotions and thoughts. We may stand in silence, but our minds are scattered and within us there is all the time the noise of unruly passion. Within us there is the clamour of conflicting desires. The master's silence was deep. It was the silence which is in the depths of the realized soul.

Sri Bhagavan realized God. But he did not forsake humanity. He came and lived in the midst of men to share with them the treasures of the spirit. He spoke in the language of the masses. He lived as the simplest amongst them. Look at his picture. It is there before you, clad in but one loin cloth, barely enough to hide his utter nakedness. From morn till eve and sometime late in the night the people thronged around him. Everyone was welcome. Everyone had free access to him. He was a friend alike of the sinner and saint, of the peasant and the prince, of the young and the old, of the educated and uneducated, of man and woman. Indeed, he was a friend of all creation. He was a friend of all who breathe the breath of life. He was a friend of the faithful dog. He was a friend of monkeys and squirrels and peacocks. He was a friend of everyone. He was a friend of all and of the hundreds of people who came to him. He showed to them that he was their intimate friend. He took personal interest in their matters, matters such as the train by which they came, the food they ate, the deaths or marriages that had occurred in their families.

Sri Bhagavan said all spiritual paths could be brought together under two main categories. The first is that category which is known as Self-Enquiry - Atma Vichara - ask yourself the question 'Who am I?'. Sitting in silence, entering into the silence of your Being, put to yourself the question again and again 'Who am I?'. And then as you come, see and stand on the battlefield of life - as you attend your daily tasks - as you fulfill your daily obligations, let this question, the question of all questions be there in the background of your consciousness 'Who am I?' 'Who am I,

Ko-ham?'. As you sit in silence you find that there is a seemingly endless procession of thoughts, thoughts which have nothing to do with this fundamental question. They come and crowd into your mind. Sri Bhagavan has given us an effective method of slaying this entire army of thoughts. Sri Bhagavan said "Whenever a question arises within you ask yourself 'To whom does this question arise?'. The answer naturally will be 'To me'. Then ask yourself again 'Who is that me?', 'Who is that me?', 'Who is that 'I'?'. Every time that you put this question you will find that a thought which has come to lead you astray will itself slink away. With this one question strike down every other thought until one blessed day you will find that the mind will be merged in the Heart, where shines the true Self – the divine Self - the real 'I' of 'I'. Through abhyasa- through persistent practice the mind can be merged in its source. The lower ego, the lower self, the empirical ego will vanish and alone the true Self will remain. This is the first path - the first main category. But there is another main category, which Sri Bhagavan called 'The way of self surrender', the way of Sharanagati. 'Surrender yourself to the universal' said Sri Bhagavan 'and you will be absorbed in the universal, you will become one with the universal'. In one of his most moving songs there are words on which I have meditated, and as I have meditated on those words my eyes have been touched with tears. Sri Bhagavan says, "I came to swallow you, but you have swallowed me. Now there is peace between us, Arunachala!"

Sri Bhagavan, it is commonly believed, was a jnani. It is true he was a jnani of the highest order that the world has ever known. Sri Bhagavan, it is true, was a jnani, but every true jnani, remember, is at the same time, a bhakta and a karma yogi. Sri Bhagavan said 'Cast all your cares on the Lord. Throw all your burdens at His lotus feet. Remember the Lord of the Universe is the one'. Those are the words of Sri Bhagavan and every word he uttered came out of the depths of his own realization. 'Remember, the Lord of the Universe is the one who carries all burdens, why must you carry your burden yourself?' I am reminded, my friends, of a little boy in our school at Poona. When the school was about to break for the summer vacation the talk was given to the students. They were asked to be kind and compassionate towards brother animals and birds. They were asked to see that horses and bullocks were not over-burdened and one of the students on the next day moved on in a tonga to the railway station. He had to

go to a place outside Poona. He was sitting with his mother and the mother found that this little boy carried his trunk on his knees and the mother asked him 'My boy does this contain something very precious that you have kept it on your knees?' The boy said 'No Mummy. Yesterday we were given the teaching in school that we must see that the horses are not over-burdened and I am therefore sharing the burden of the horse' and the mother said to him 'Foolish child! Do you not know that your burden and all the burden that you can carry is ultimately being pulled by the horse?'

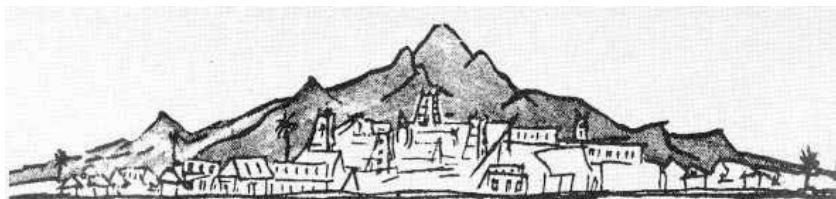
In this path of Self-realization there are four important things to be considered by everyone who treads the path. The very first is practice of silence. You must enter into silence. You may have a number of things to do, a number of works to attend to, but remember the work of all works, the needful work is this - practice of silence, practice of silence.

To Maharshi Sri Ramana, to Sri Bhagavan there came one day a Collector and a Deputy Collector. The Collector started speaking about himself, about all the books that he had read and the sadhanas that he had performed and yet he complained that he had not attained peace. He kept on talking for several minutes together and no sooner did the Collector finish speaking, the Deputy Collector started his story and he went on speaking for several minutes together. There he sat before the very picture of silence and the Collector seeing that Sri Bhagavan did not speak one single word, he was put out. He was a Collector after all. He said to Bhagavan 'What is this? We have spoken for about an hour, but not one word has come out of your lips. Speak to us at least a few words.' Maharshi Ramana with that beautiful smile illuminating his eyes said to him, 'I have been speaking to you in my language, but when will you understand?' The significance of this cryptic reply was understood by the Collector and immediately he prostrated before Sri Bhagavan. Then both of them sat in silence at his feet and when they arose they said their hearts were filled with a wondrous peace. As I said to you the very first point in the path, in the way of Self-realisation, is the practice of silence – practice of silence every day. And the second point that is emphasized in the way of Self-realisation - the second point, how shall I refer to it? The second point is tapasya. The physical body must be controlled so that it may become a worthy instrument of the Atman, it may become a channel for the flow of the forces of the spirit.

When the question was put to Sri Bhagavan 'What are the rules of conduct for a seeker and aspirant in the path?' Sri Bhagavan's answer, his answers were always brief and clear, said 'moderation in food, moderation in sleep, moderation in talk'.

The third point emphasized in the way of Self-realisation is longing, deep yearning of the heart. Longing is needed, deep yearning of the heart is needed. Yearning to behold the Self, the divine Self. You must cry out to the Lord even as a child cries to its mother, even so must you cry to the Lord and ask him to so bless you that you too may be able to behold the beauty and grandeur and effulgence and the radiance of the Self divine.

What wondrous love Sri Bhagavan had for the poor and broken ones, forsaken and forlorn! When the Asram had not yet been built, when only a few devotees were with him, he found that some low caste women came from their work every day in the heat of the noon day sun, but their throats were parched with thirst. They wanted water, but because they belonged to a low caste they were not allowed to draw water from the well. Sri Bhagavan himself - Sri Bhagavan - Sri Bhagavan - what was his stature! But he himself would come and stand there at the time when the low caste women returned from their work. He would come and stand by the side of the well and with his own holy hands he would draw water and he would pour it into the open palms of the low caste women and they would drink and quench their thirst. 'Samy, Samy, we are thirsty, give us a little water' and he gave them the water. I sometimes feel that I am like those low caste women and again and again turning to the gracious face of Maharshi Ramana, I say to him 'Samy, Samy, give me the water of life!' And he will give it to every aspiring heart.





Interview with Dr. Ambika Kameshwar

Ujwal Jagadeesh: In the video Archives of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning we have your first performance of the lecture-demonstration on 'Navarasa in Ramananjali Music'. I could see from the audience in the video and also heard from them that "you were there" (meaning the rasAnubhava was complete). We also have subsequent videos of your dance till date, several of which have been documented. I also notice that your dance has evolved. Can you share with us

what you perceive as the change and what is common till now?

Dr. Ambika Kameshwar: The common thread that has been there when I started off my journey as an independent dancer till date has been the ramaNAnubhava. Ramana as the essence of everything that I do and tangibly the essence of the art that I present. How it is tangible is not only doing the compositions of and on Bhagavan as in the Ramananjali repertoire. For me in my work and in my role play, I have been allowed to explore and express a lot of other compositions what many people in the dance field look at, know and perform. For instance, the bhaja gOvindam, nAgendra hArAya, theme of Navavidha Bhakthi, Rama Bhakthi Samrajyam and various



other themes, compositions and presentations from all over the Indian spiritual terrain has been allowed to be explored by me.

In all these the thread of rasAnubhava is very clearly that of the ramaNAnubhava. My foundation and my breath are that presence. So that will permeate everything that I do. It also tangibly permeates my Art, because somewhere related to every theme that I work on I will bring in a song of Ramananjali or bring in a story of Bhagavan or some connection to Bhagavan. In the Natya interpretation of the Ramananjali repertoire, seeing the years from 1985 right up to 2021, I would say that while this thread has been there, there has been a softening of the presentations. There would be a vibrance in earlier years and there would be a silence in the latter years. This is what I feel could probably be seen as a progressive difference in the presentations themselves.

U: Your experience and learnings in dance have now been structured and codified as “Lasyapriya Bani/style of Bharathanatyam”. What is the speciality of Lasyapriya?

AK: Bharatanatyam is a great treasure given to us by God's grace. It is available to us right here, right now, to experience and become one with the Supreme through that experience. Bharatanatyam today is an offshoot of the Natyashastra, which has been formatted into a pattern called Sadir by the Tanjore quartet a couple of centuries ago. As it is practiced today it is called the Bharatanatyam Marga or Bharatanatyam path which has got a certain specific structured presentation in that format leading to the sharing of the rasAnubhava between the performer and the audience. So, what is this format? What has the Tanjore quartet given us? The Sadir Margam has an opening number which is a Todaya Mangalam or a Pushpanjali or an Allarippu, which is the flowering of the limbs. A Jatiswaram follows which introduces the pure dance aspect into the presentation. Thereafter there is the Sabdam which introduces representative dance or expression of certain ideas through gestures. And then the Varnam which is the magnum opus which goes deeper into certain aspects of dance as well as content and the context of the representation through stories and other explorations. These are interspersed with passages of pure dance that are elaborate and demand a high level of energy in the dancer.

After the Varnam, in the second part of the Margam we go on to the emotive content expressed through the Padams

which could have highlights of certain emotions, ideas which are emphasized through gestural representation, facial expressions and body language. Padams could have predominant emotions like love, devotion, valour and so on. Then we go on to the rhythmic Tillana which is



a reflection of the cosmic dance of Siva. This format today with innovative thinkers moves into certain different kind of exploration, with Kritis, Slokas and other such compositions coming into play. Still the Margam is the Bharatanatyam sharing.



The various styles of Bharatanatyam follow the same structure but slightly different due to the interpretative element coming into being. So we have the Pandanallur Pani of Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai, Vazhuvoor style

of Ramaiah Pillai, Melattur Style of Bharatanatyam popularized by Mangudi Dorairaja Iyer, Kalakshetra Pani which was popularized by Rukmini Devi Arundale, to mention a few well known styles. Each of the great persons who has made Bharatanatyam their own and has interpreted it based on the original structure of Sadir, but through their own individual connect with the Sadir format, has given their own mould or their own communicating style creating so many styles.

At RASA Arpita we practice a style called Lasyapriya. Lasyapriya was the grace of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi because my whole exposure has come to me through that divine Grace. Lasyapriya is Bharatanatyam, it has the same typical Adavus, it has the same typical margam it has the same typical interpretations of Bharatanatyam but emphasizes more on the graceful aspect of Bharatanatyam. Lasyapriya lays emphasis on Bharatanatyam being a Sadhana to achieve spiritual oneness, Supreme Union with the great Lord. It becomes an interpretative style where each individual understands the structure of the Lasyapriya Bharatanatyam, but

makes it their own and is able to explore, experiment, define and project their own understanding of Bharatanatyam. It emphasizes Bhakti, Bhava, oneness with the Supreme and it emphasizes the one individual for whom it is that divine treasure.



The connect to Music and its interpretation through dance is paramount in Lasyapriya. Music is extremely important. It is so for all Bharatanatyam and all styles but here there is the immediate connect like the Ardanareeshwara tattva, the principle of Siva and Parvati being halves of one single body. In Lasyapriya both music and dance go hand in hand. It is dramatic music, it is melodious music and it is musical dance interpretation.

Although my grounding was in typical Pandanallur style and a little bit of Vazhuvoor, my research in Natyashastra and my own internalization of the Bharatanatyam format has allowed me to move into a format which today is termed as Lasyapriya. This is a legacy that is being carried forward by all my students and all their students.



U: How do you communicate the importance of Bhava and purpose of Natya as Rasanubhava to students?

AK: There are many ways, first and foremost, the best way is to be it. The very fact that I revel in that BhAvaprAdhanya and RasAnubhava communicates the importance of that to the students. Other than that, during the practice a teacher should easily be able to make out whether the intuitive fulness or the 'heart-centredness' is there in the student or not. If the heart-centredness is not there automatically, it needs to be looked at and probably discussed. The teacher must discuss with the student as to why it is not there. Was there some physical problem? Are they not able to relate

to the dance or the music? Is there something that is blocking them from understanding the importance of the rasAnubhava over there? Talk about the greatness of being heart-centred at every given point in time.



This need not be talked about if the student is automatically heart-centred. If the sharing of the Anubhava in the presence of the teacher and students is automatically there, it need not even be mentioned or talked about except to say enjoy your dance, feel related to it, feel good about it, have a heart-connect to every moment. This is enough because the Art itself makes a person very connected to the Heart. By nature, the discipline of the Art is such that it allows the individual to easily go into the deepest substratum, the Centre, that Bhagavan calls the Heart, the spiritual Heart.

U: You have been instrumental in drawing senior dancers from Chennai close to Ramana through the Dance festivals organized at Narada Gana Sabha every year. How has that experience been? What have the dancers who have participated shared regarding their experience of being a part of it?

AK: Every one of the Senior dancers whom I have interacted with have felt honoured to be a part of the Ramana festivals held at Narada Gana Sabha. They have all felt very fulfilled by their participation and every one of them feels blessed to have been part of such an offering. Whenever they get an opportunity to feel grateful about it and even express their gratitude for being a part of this, they do that. It has been a very beautiful interaction with all the senior artistes.





U: The purpose of Natya which is the essence of Veda is to attain Self-realization. How does it lead to Self-realization? What is the sadhana a dancer should do?

AK: I do believe in this concept not of mindfulness but of what Bhagavan calls a 'heart-based life', I could call it 'heart-centredness', where the individual presence dissolves into the presence of the universe. At that point of time the universe is the Art that we are performing. At any given point in time, the universe is the task that we are performing. The dissolution of the individual self into the universe's requirement of that individual self at that point in time is the Sadhana that one needs to do. I do not consider it different to be applied to performing, because all the time we are performing.



dhiyA sahOdEti dhiyAstamEti
IOkastatO dheep ravibhAsya
EShah |
dheelOka janma kShayadhAma
pUrNam
sadvastu janma kShaya
shUnyamEkam ||



When the mind rises there is the rise of individual identity that has a role to play and the universe allows that role play to continue till the laya happens again at the point of sleep. Then again it wakes.



So, this process of being heart-centred in anything that one does in the waking state is of primary importance. In the Sadhana of performance, everything is dance and everything is music. I always say “ADi pADi aNNAmalai kaithozha... (Dance and Sing and worship Arunachala...)” there is no need to literally dance. Of course we can dance and worship the Master, but every movement of ours is dance and every sound that we produce is music. That has to be dedicated in totality to the one who allows it and makes it happen. It is impossible for us to make it happen. It is impossible for anybody to make it happen. It just cannot happen on its own except for the Universal force making it happen. The Sadhana is to pay attention to that Self and surrender to it. So there are two parts to it, one is you could probably pay attention to that which allows the movement to happen, that which allows the sound to come at all times or you can just not be there and allow the niverse to dance and sing.



U: What is your message to young dancers who are pursuing or willing to pursue exploring Ramananjali Nritya?

AK: I have always emphasized that the vast repertoire of Ramananjali Sangeetham itself is for any music learner or Sadhaka. If anybody wants to understand nuances of Music, really enjoy and revel in the nuances of Music having a holistic overview of Carnatic music, I think visiting or delving deeper into or swimming or floating on Ramananjali Sangeetham gives the complete experience in itself. We don't need anything else. If we want only to learn music it is all there. If you want to learn about different Ragas or different talas it is all there. If you want to know or learn about how sahitya

and swara can merge together into such beautiful expositions of Sangeetham it is all there. The greatness of the sahitya from the outpouring of Self realized souls is there. Bhava which has come from different music composers as the Masters instruments in creating the particular music at that point of time is there. So, what is not there in Ramananjali Sangeetham? Everything is there.



If Ramananjali Sangeetham is so holistic then automatically Ramananjali Nritya also becomes holistic, because the two are truly not apart. Ramananjali Sangeetham is the foundation for the Ramananjali Nrityam. Those are the songs that are being practiced, choreographed, internalized and expressed. Those are the compositions which are creating the path for the learning of the highest truth. If Ramananjali Nritya is taken as explorations of songs by and on Bhagavan then as I said about Ramananjali Sangeetham every aspect of dance, the technique

is there, the variety of forms is there, the handling by different choreographers is there, the understanding of how each person must surrender and do it in their own way within the framework of what is being given by the choreographer is there, so every aspect of the ultimate rasAnubhava of Natya can be felt in Ramananjali Nritya. So I would just say “come one, come all” and enjoy the ambience, soak in the bliss of Ramananjali Sangeetham and Ramananjali Nrityam. Enjoy the Master’s presence, enjoy the moment that he has bestowed us with and revel in that joy.

Ramana – My Gracious Destiny

Saritha Ramesh



The students of the first batch of Ramana Bala Kendra were all full of eagerness, joy and love for Bhagavan. He made it so. It laid the foundation for the continuous and beautiful interaction with children at RMCL. In the 'Ramana Way' of 1981 Smt. Sulochana Natarajan (Sulochana Mami to the children) wrote, "It is very important that the young, fresh minds of children are turned to, exposed to the beauty of Sri Bhagavan, drawing them into the Ramana-fold. The Ramana Bala

Kendra children are Bhagavan's children and I feel very happy to be in their midst and help them turn to our beloved Bhagavan." And Dr. Ambika Kameshwar (Ambika Akka) added, "What fascinates me about Ramana Bala Kendra is the Ramana Bala Kendra – everything about it, and specially my association with the children."

The Ramana Bala Kendra developed another facet of becoming the theatre wing of RMCL as well, leading Sri C. Sudarsanam (Sudarsanam Mama) to quip, "Ramana Bala Kendra has become 'Drama(na)' Bala Kendra." In what thus became a children's performing troupe where every child was a good actor, Saritha still stood out as a star, with a natural flair for acting, an excellent stage presence and a capacity to adapt to different challenges on stage with the aplomb of a senior artiste.



Saritha's training under C. Sudarsanam for the role of Bhagavan's mother Azhagamma was no doubt a turning point in recognizing her potential. The Centre went on to make a docu-drama tele-film on 'Bhagavan Ramana and Mother' with Saritha in the lead, a moving narrative enjoyed repeatedly by devotees till date, scripted by Dr. Sarada and directed on film by H.T.Nagendra. Again one may say this was a first for RMCL with RBK paving the way as we went on to produce a 13 episode tele-serial 'Ramana Holey' with H.T.Nagendra televised on Doordarshan in four languages and later a 137 episode tele-serial 'Sri Ramana Leela' telecast on Sri Sankara TV.



Here we have Saritha's account of how Bhagavan has been graciously scripting and directing the drama of her life.

- Editor

"Whatever is destined to happen will happen, try as you may to stop it." - Ramana Maharshi

The greatest lesson I have learnt is life is one that I attribute to Bhagavan, which is the power of destiny. I consider myself beyond blessed for the curious twist of fate in my destiny that brought Ramana Bala Kendra to my school when I was 15 years of age. Young, impressionable and introverted, I had not yet matured into being



a true devotee. RBK was initially just an avenue of enjoyment for me, whether it was the regular chanting, storytelling, singing, dancing or just spending time with a group of energetic students.



From Wednesday evenings at school to Saturday afternoons at Sadashivanagar, I slowly started to devote more time to RBK and soon enough, it became a second home to me. I was so deeply immersed in the RBK classes that I began to stray away from academics, eventually reaching a decision to quit in order to complete my SSLC examinations. I took this loss so personally that I was unable to perform well and lost my enthusiasm and confidence. It was then that Sarada Akka took the time to visit my family and have a meaningful conversation with me about the importance of detaching oneself from his or her destiny and surrendering to Bhagavan. This was one of life's earliest tests of faith and Bhagavan had given me the nudge I needed in order to battle this season of doubt.



At this juncture, winning the Best dancer award and hearing words of praise from the RBK family greatly contributed to my self-confidence. Usually hesitant to take on opportunities and resistant to change, I found that Bala Kendra opened a door to a world of experiences that permanently changed my demeanor and attitude towards life. I can still recall being paralyzed with fear before every solo performance, diffident about my *Tala jnana* and emulating the Bhava required to portray the characters in Ramana's life.



Playing the widowed mother of Ramana Maharshi was a role that was beyond my emotional capacity at the age of 18, and

it was only onstage, in front of a huge audience that I was able to forget the whole world and truly devote myself to the complexity and intricacies of a strong female character like Azhagammal.



I am indebted to Sudarsanam Mama and consider it a great honor that I was the last young actor during his time at RBK whom he personally took under his wing, preparing me for the seriousness and responsibility that the role of 'bereaved Mother' required. The lessons he taught me in stage presence, discipline and decorum are ones that are deeply instilled in me. When the depth and divinity of the role finally dawned on me, I found myself in tears on stage, an milestone in my journey of coming closer to and surrendering to Bhagavan. These lessons have transcended into my own motherhood, and I will always honor Azhagammal's memory as an icon of perseverance.



Once, whilst performing an hour-long ballet in Mettur titled Ramana Prabha, I was given the opportunity to take Ambika Akka's role as Sutradhari when she was unable to travel. Never had I been that insecure about my abilities! But after the usual protest, I finally threw myself into the role with reassurance from Sarada Akka and it ended up being one of the most exhilarating learning experiences I have ever had. Ramana Lahari was another such instance where my role necessitated the depiction of Nava Rasas, which involved a great deal of hard work, confidence and an open mind.

Meditation has never been my strong suit, given a wandering mind and a frustrating lack of concentration and enacting Shanti

Rasa truly put this ability to test. Performing the scene in which the character realizes Bhagavan's presence within herself is one that was catalytic in my growth, be it emotional or spiritual. An added joy in the performance of Ramana Lahari was having Sarada Akka as a co-performer in some of the shows and giving a performance at Sri Ramanasramam in the presence of Kunju Swami, Sri T.N.Venkataraman and other senior devotees of Bhagavan.



Playing multiple roles was not a concept foreign to RBK students, as we were accustomed



to the whole production experience right from planning and designing costumes, repairing faulty props, frantic costume and makeup changes backstage amongst many others. Perhaps my biggest takeaway from this is that performances, much like life, must always go



on in spite of adversities. These reminders of a joyous past are like declarations that life has a great potential for happiness, satisfaction and spiritual contentment within oneself.

Whether it was passers-by that flocked around our stage rehearsals, the newspapers that documented our performances or the huge community of well-wishers and devotees, the Ramana family was never short of recognition for the work we did in telling Bhagavan's story and bridging the gap between one's mind and conscience. Travelling was a huge part of our mission of narrating and commemorating Bhagavan's teachings. Of all the places we travelled to, I still find myself drawn to Tiruvannamalai. The satisfaction, fulfillment, passion, energy and happiness that I experienced there are incomparable and I fondly remember weeping with everyone else every time we had to leave the idyllic environment of Tiruvannamalai and return to the reality of life at home. Being the elder sibling, I negotiated a great deal with my parents for the permission to enjoy these experiences, while my playful younger sister silently allowed me to face the brunt of their resistance! While they rarely attended our programs, they eventually embraced RBK with open arms and have never once missed a single performance by my daughter who continued to be involved in Ramana Bala Kendra!



Despite spending only 12 years in RBK, the lessons and memories I have gained will forever be a part of my life. Growing up from being an RBK student to teaching a new set of juniors was somewhat like completing a full circle. It gave me the opportunity to disseminate my

knowledge I had gained over the years, leading me to appreciate my love for learning and teaching. This eventually resulted in a 25-year long career of being a school teacher, during which I inculcated

Sadguru Ramana and his story with every last batch of students I had the privilege of teaching. Moving on to the next chapter of my life, marriage, meant letting go of something that had become such a huge part of me. The RMCL family was kind enough to give me the most beautiful documentation of my journey at RMCL from everyone I had interacted with. It is one of my most precious belongings, which till date is impossible to read without choking up and being overcome with a strong cloud of bittersweet nostalgia and gratitude.



Hearty thanks to the RMCL family including Sarada Akka, Natarajan Mama, Sulochana Mami, Ambika Akka, Sudarsanam Mama, Ganesan Anna, Srinivasan Mama, Murali Mama, Nikki Mama and Kumar Anna amongst many others whom I regard as my guardian angels. They continuously humored us kids with invaluable anecdotes from Bhagavan's life and redirected us towards Him during difficult times.

A special mention of Sarada Akka, who for the last 30 years has played the roles of both my second mother and my best friend, never once giving up on me. She was my strength, is my strength, and will forever be my strength.



We are a mosaic of everyone we've ever met, composed by the bits and pieces that people leave with us. The RBK family shares a powerful emotional bond, one that has imprinted me with a lifetime of good memories and undying trust in Sadguru Ramana. Granted, the journey of self-realization will never be linear. It was not one pivotal, epiphanic moment that made me realize His presence, but a series of obstacles and tests of strength that continuously bring me closer to Bhagavan and living my own truth.

Ramana is a sweet name which takes us to the highest state. It is the taraka nama which we can hold on to and cross any problem with ease. Holding on to this as a japa surely takes us to the Source.

Siva Prakasam Pillai is the first blessed person to get the instructions about Self-enquiry in 1901, documented as 'Who am I?' Later, Pillai composed a poem called 'Ramana Pada Malai' in gratitude and devotion to the Sadguru.

Smt. Sulochana Natarajan has set this 'Ramana Pada Malai' as Ramana Pada Pancharatnam – a unique musical piece which has been composed by her 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 in Pancharatnam. We will be meditating now on the second kriti which is the Goula raga. The last charana of the song goes like this

*jabikkin mantram chittam oDungum enbOn pAdam vAzhgavE
japam vichAra sAdanamennum siddan pAdam vAzhgavE*

- Tamil

*japisuva mantradim chitta aDaguvudu ennuva pAda beLagali
japa vichArakke bembalavennuva siddhana pAdake jayavAgali*

- Kannada

Meaning –

Blessed be the Feet of the Siddha who explains: 'By mantra japa the mind will become quiescent. Japa is a means of enquiry'

What is Japa? Japa is repeating of the name of the Lord. When you repeat a particular name many number of times, then it becomes japa. Tukaram is famous for doing Rama nama japa. Rama nama would actually throb in him involuntarily. A similar story is narrated by Bhagavan Ramana to us in the Spiritual Stories of Bhagavan Ramana. He mentions the instance of a very religious queen who is devoted to Siva who used to feel bad thinking that her King never used to participate in the offerings or pujas done by her. One night she found that the king was chanting the Lord's name even in his dream. It shows that the King was doing the Japa all through his waking hours, hence he could do the japa continuously, even in his dream.

How should we do this japa? Bhagavan Ramana himself has answered this question to Ganapati Muni in his first meeting. Ramana said, 'Find out from where the 'I' thought arises and merge at its source, that is tapas. Find out from where the sound of the japa (mantra) rises and merge at its source, that is tapas'.

So Bhagavan has given us clear instructions about how to do the japa. The process of this is look at the source of the mantra when it rises and when it sets. Before the next syllable of the mantra rises, hold on to the source. When japa is done like this, that becomes a type of sadhana again leading us to Atma Vichara. This has to be like the flow of the ghee, Bhagavan says in Upadesa Saram, AjjadhArayA srtOtasA samam.

It should happen continuously, without any gap.

Poonjaji used to perform Krishna japa day and night. He came to Tiruvannamalai and then he saw there was no japa or parayana being performed in the presence of Ramana, so he was not very happy and left the place. After a point of time, his japa stopped. He came to Bhagavan seeking an answer to why this had happened. Bhagavan explained to him. The dialogue goes like this.

B: How did you come to Tiruvannamalai?

P: By train.

B: How did you come from the Railway station to Ramanasramam?

P: By a horse cart.

B: Where is the cart now?

P: I have paid the cart driver and sent him away.

B: Until you have arrived at Ramanasramam, all the modes of transport were required. Once you have come here, you need not have any of those. Likewise, until you get to the Self, your japa, parayanam, all sadhanas are required, when you have reached the goal, all drop away by themselves.

So that was how Poonjaji was blessed by Bhagavan. Likewise, Bhagavan has come to my life as a saviour for all the problems of life, the taraka nama. Holding on to the nama always, let me attain that which is the Ultimate state which is not affected by anything at all.

Lord Ramana

Thank you Bhagavan

Your attention seeking Child :)

How Bhagavan Captured Us

Smt.Sulochana Natarajan

Gradually, the story of our life at Delhi became in a way, the story of Ramana Kendra and the Ramana Movement at Delhi. But before I go on to recall that beautiful journey, I would like to put down a few other memories. I have already mentioned that all through these years our association with Ramakrishna Math and the Swamis there also continued in a strong manner. Very often visiting Swamis from the South, especially Bangalore or Chennai, would come home for a meal. We would go to the Math on special occasions and be invited for the feast. Around the early 70s we visited Mathura and Brindavan. ARN drove us down in our Standard Herald car.

Swami Ekatmananda was then the President of the Math there and received us with great love and affection. After lunch, he joined us as we drove through the town to have a glimpse of the place. Suddenly a young girl darted in front of our car and ARN could not bring the car to an immediate halt. The child got hit by the car but by the Grace of Guru Maharaj and Bhagavan, she was not injured badly. She was more in a state of shock it seemed. However, an angry crowd gathered and it looked as if they were ready to give ARN a severe thrashing. Swami Ekatmananda stood in front of him like a lioness protecting her cubs. Seeing Swamiji, with great respect the crowd restrained themselves. He told them, 'He is one of us. He is a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna. No harm will come to your child. One of you come with us. We will take her to the hospital now.' Then, after getting the required treatment for the child, Swamiji also went with ARN to the police station where a case had been registered and vouched for ARN. Such is the great love that sages and saints have for the devotees.

I also remember the great love which Professor K.Swaminathan showered on every member of our family. ARN would have several discussions with him, sometimes heated as well, on various topics varying from Bhagavan's teachings, various details regarding the Ramana Kendra and the approach to the case on Sri Ramanasramam. Regarding the last, both ARN and Professor had full faith in Bhagavan's Will and stood solidly by

Sri T.N.Venkataraman, then President of Sri Ramanasramam. Little Ambika would often tell TNV Mama, as we called him, 'Unga kittEndu appakku dinamum post card varumE (We would get a post card from you to my father every day).' And TNV Mama would affectionately pat her and ask how she knew it and she would say that it would be written in green colour ink. In later years TNV Mama would lovingly recall this both to remember the love which ARN had for him and to reaffirm his own preference for green ink.

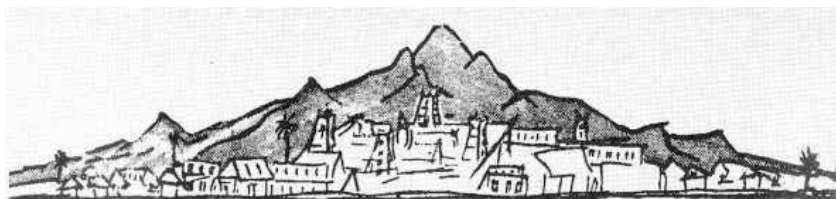
My own bonding with Professor Mama was through the songs of Muruganar. He encouraged me to compose music for the Ramana Sannidhi Murai and would readily translate the verses which I set to music. These compositions were published by Ramana Kendra as what we called 'Song Book 1' and 'Song Book 2'. In later years, after we moved to Bangalore and the Ramananjali Music Movement was at its height, I would regularly ask Professor for translations of verses from Sannidhi Murai and he would never fail to oblige. His daughter, Mahalakshmi Suryanandan, Maggie to all of us, would sometimes affectionately tease me saying that 'Sulochana is appa's favourite. He may not translate a verse of Muruganar if we ask him to do so, but he will never refuse Sulochana's request.' This was of course Bhagavan's doing and hence, over the years I could gather English translations from Professor for practically every title in Muruganar's 'Ramana Sannidhi Murai'. These translations were compiled and published by Sri Ramanasramam as 'Homage to the Presence'.

So much was Professor's fatherly concern for me that when I fell in the bathroom and fractured two of my ribs and was bedridden for two to three weeks he remarked, 'Bhagavan does not spare even Sulochana.' During our last few years at Delhi ARN had to sell our car and for a period of two years we travelled by the public transport to Ramana Kendra and other places. Professor and ARN would address each other as 'sir'. He told him, 'Sir, it is alright for you to travel by bus, but it is not right for you to take Sulochana by bus.' ARN smilingly reported this to me.

Bhagavan may not have spared me from the suffering entailed on fracturing my ribs but His protection spared ARN's life and Sarada's as well. ARN always seemed to have a delicate stomach, a fact that was repeatedly indicated to me by my mother-in-law as well. No investigation was done as to why it was so. In the summer vacation of 1970, when I had gone to Chennai with

the children, one night ARN suffered from severe vomiting and in the morning he went to the CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme Clinic). Such was Bhagavan's hand that the doctor on duty there had the expertise to detect the problem right away and he insisted that ARN consult a surgeon with no further delay. ARN then drove to the Wellington Government Hospital and met the surgeon. After finishing the physical examination he asked him, 'How have you come?' 'I drove here', said ARN. 'Give me your car keys', said the doctor and taking away the keys he added, 'We have to perform an emergency appendectomy. You have a very severe case of appendicitis and it may burst at any moment which would be critical to your life itself. You can make a couple of phone calls from my telephone before you get admitted.'

ARN called a couple of my close friends and told them about the situation and asked them to inform me that there was no danger but he was going in for surgery. Those were days when communication between cities was only by trunk calls. I was, of course very worried and so were my parents and parents in law. As always, our recourse was holding on to Bhagavan. Soon after the surgery, we received another trunk call that the operation had been completed successfully and ARN was fine. I could get a flight only the next day to Delhi as flights were not so many or so frequent then. In the meantime, ARN of course was in the excellent Government Hospital and all other needs were taken care of by our friends. As I had mentioned even earlier, Bhagavan was with us during those years in several forms and this included those of our friends and the many good and kind doctors who kept our bodies healthy during those years as well.



Sri Ramana Sahasranama Stuti

391. NIRVYASANAHA

Free of thoughts.

Thoughts surface only if tendencies are not completely erased. For Ramana whose mind was steadily Self-aware, there were no vasanas and hence no thoughts. Ramana once told a devotee that it was as difficult for him to have thoughts as it is for us to be free of thoughts.

Om nirvyasanAya namaha

392. NIRYOGAKSHEMA CHINTANAH

Unconcerned about his welfare.

Ramana was totally unconcerned about his body. At the same time he would be eagle-eyed in protecting the devotees. In the later years when Ramana's body had grown weak the devotees suggested with one voice that he should take more nutritious food and take vitamins. Ramana would refuse, for it went against his principle of samatva, equality. Nutritious food and medicines could not be shared equally. Hence Ramana's refusal of any preferential treatment.

Om niryogakshema chintanAya namaha

393. NIRBIJA DHYANA SAMVEDYAH

One who can be understood only through spontaneous tapas.

Ramana was always abiding in the natural state. His mind was merged in the source. The state of such a person cannot be comprehended by our limited and fragmentary mind. It is only when we go beyond the mind and lose the wrong identification with the body that we can be aware of his true state of supreme yoga.

Om nirblja dhyAna samvedyAya namaha

394. NIRVADAH

One who does not enter into disputations.

Logic, disputations, spring from attachment to ideas and the consequent desire to establish one's own viewpoint as the only correct one. It is in the realm of the mind and its dualities. Ramana was established in a state where the mind as we know is dead. He was unconcerned about convincing anyone about any matter, even if it be about self-enquiry being the infallible means for Self-knowledge.

Om nirvAdAya nama

395. NISSIRORUHAH

One with a clean-shaven head.

One might recall that on 1st September, 1896, on the first day of Ramana's arrival in Tiruvannamalai, a barber near Ayyankulam shouted whether he wished to have his head shaven. Ramana's renunciation was total after his death experience on 17th July, 1896. Hence there was no necessity for any external symbol of it. Even so when the barber called out to him, Ramana readily agreed, for it was a matter of utter indifference to him. Simultaneously Ramana threw away into the Ayyankulam tank his sacred thread and the eatables given by Muthukrishna Bhagavatar's wife.

Om nishshiroruhAya nama

394. PANCHAKSHARAMANUDHYEYAH

One who should be meditated upon with the five syllables - 'NAMASSIVAYA' (Salutations to Siva).

Ramana was the human embodiment of Arunachala Siva. Hence, it is only appropriate that he should also be worshipped by the sacred five syllables by which Lord Siva Himself is contemplated upon.

Om panchAksharamanudhyeyAya nama

395. PANCH PATAKA NASANAH

Destroyer of the five heinous sins.

The five heinous sins are said to be 'asatya' (telling lies), 'surapana' (alcoholism), 'gurudroha' (betraying guru's trust), 'kalanjana' (meat-eating), 'brunahatya' (destruction of

life). Ramana's gracious glance is so powerful that even those abominable sins are washed away. No one can turn to Ramana without being purified by his very look.

Om panchapAtaka nAshanAya namaha

398. PANCHA SKANDHIMATABHIGNAH

Aware of five-fold knowledge.

In one of the doctrines of Jainism called 'Sarvadarsana Samgraha' there is reference of five-fold knowledge, 'rUpa' (form), 'vignAna' (intellect), 'vedana' (understanding) 'samskAra' (tendencies) and 'samgna' (symbolism). One whose knowledge is comprehensive so as to know all these is the all-knowing one. Only a jnani like Ramana who was immersed in the fullness of consciousness could be deserving of this attribute.

Om pancha skandhImatAbhignAya namaha

399. PANCHA KOSHA VILAKSHANAH

Apart from the five 'kosas', the five-fold bodily sheaths.

The five sheaths are annamaya (gross body), prANamaya (the life force), manomaya (subtle body, mind), vignAnamaya (intellect) and Anandamaya (bliss). The Self is said to be covered by these sheaths. A jnani transcends all these sheaths because he ceases to be identified with his body or mind.

Om panchakosa vilakshaNAya namaha

400. PANCHAGNI VIDYA MARGAGNAH

Knower of the science of five – fold fires.

The five – fold fires are: Gahripatya, Agnindriya, Ahavaniya, Marjaliya and Dakshinagni. Jagadeeswara Shastri is listing out one by one the kinds of knowledge enumerated in the scriptures and says in the attributes that Ramana had knowledge of those fields of learning also. If one were to use the attribute that Ramana was a 'sarvajna', all knowing one, it would be sufficient. But only when there is enumeration, it is easier to comprehend the magnitude of that state.

Om panchAgnividyaA margagnAya namaha

401. PANCAKRTYA PARAYANAH

Engaged in five – fold activities.

The usually mentioned activities of the Supreme One are creation, sustenance and destruction of life in the universe. The two more which are added are maya, the veiling power, and benediction without which life would be intolerable. Ramana, the great God, is engaged in all these activities.

Om panchakRtya parAyaNAya namaha

402. PANCA VAKTRAH

Five – faced, God Siva.

Ramana has been identified as Arunachala Siva. Hence to worship him as Siva is only proper.

Om panchavaktRAya namaha

403. PANCHA TAPAH

Performing tapas after conquering the five senses.

Each sense is by itself sufficient to distract one from inwardness, the deer by the sound of the hunter's horn, the elephant by touch of the female elephant, the moth by the sight of fire and so on. With all the five senses working individually and collectively to externalize the mind one would have to battle against odds. Ramana's self – enquiry is the most appropriate weapon for waging this battle.

Om pancha tapase namaha

404. PANCHATA KARANODDHARAH

One who makes for deathlessness.

The body made up of five elements must dissolve into these elements when the karma which gave rise to the body's birth ends. Body can never be deathless. The mind would have continuity through lives unless the tendencies which give rise to conceptualization come to an end. It will not end till the mind is submerged in its source, the Heart. Then only would the mind be dead. The death of the mind is possible only by self – enquiry which sets in motion the in-turning of the mind and the steady merger of it in the source.

Om panchatA kAraNoddharAya namaha

News & Events

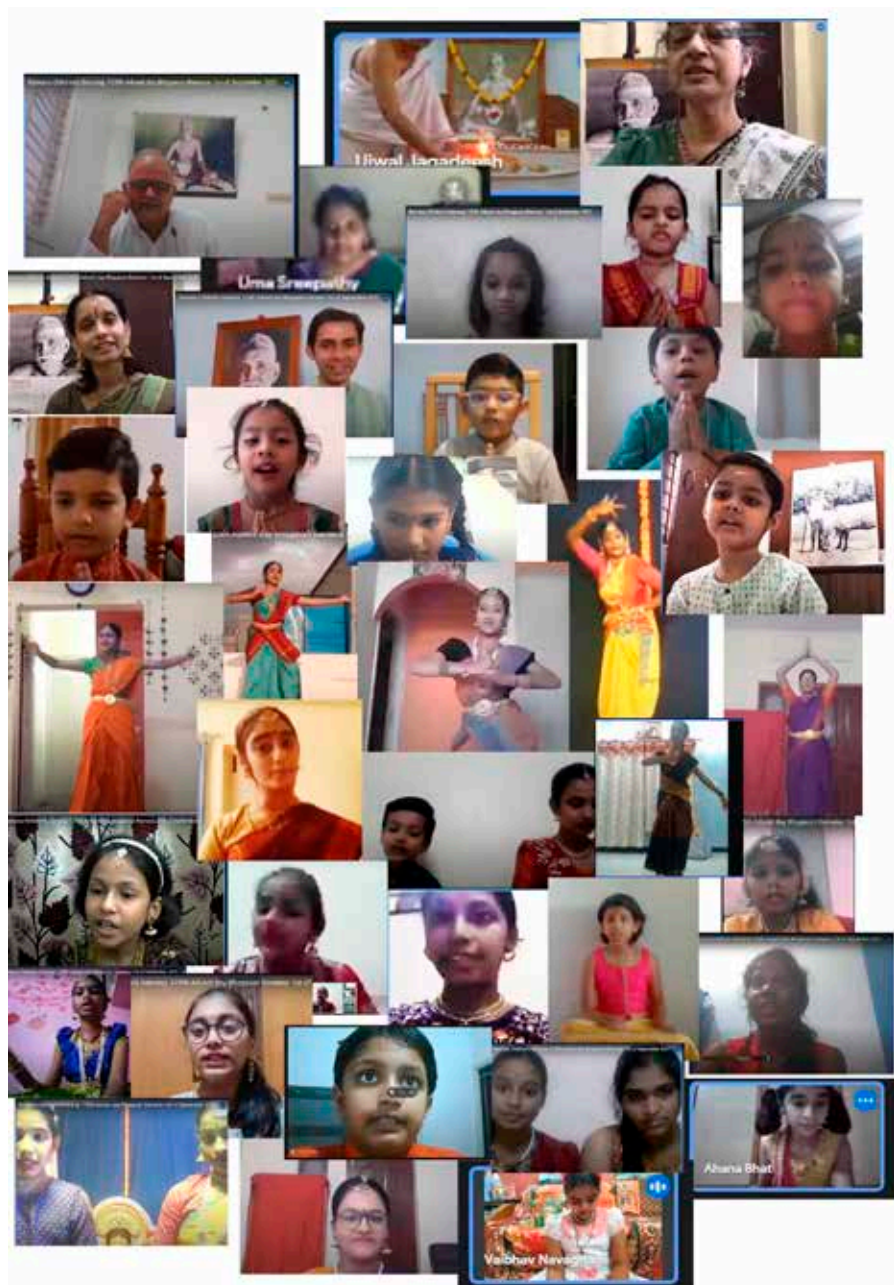
Revathi Sankar

Independence Day was celebrated with hoisting of the Indian flag, singing of patriotic songs and sharings on the significance of the day.

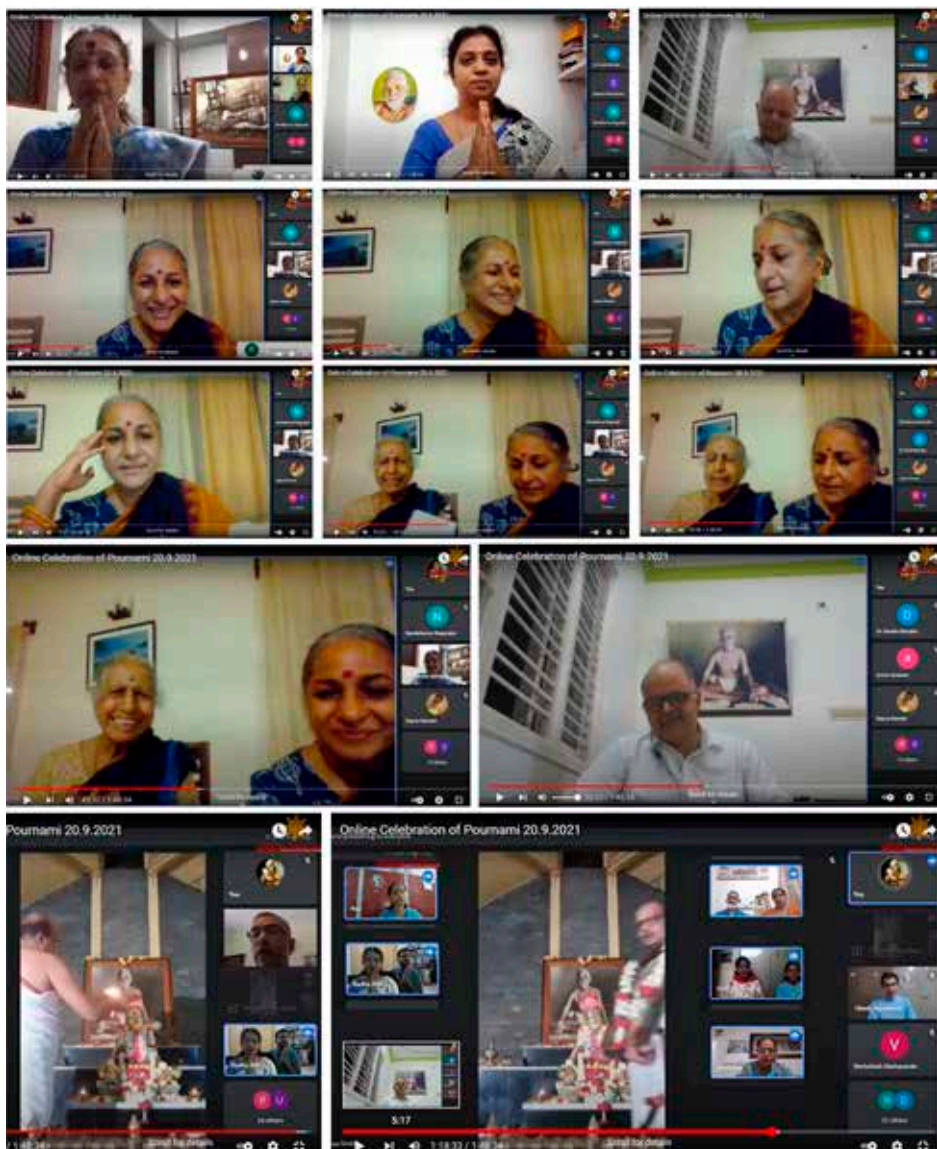
In August, Pournami was celebrated with a special talk by Sri G.Kameshwar, followed by puja at the Ramana Shrine and chanting of Arunachala Aksharamanamalai by devotees.



Aruna Vijaya Day – the Advent of Bhagavan Ramana to Arunachala on September 1st 1896. This year, the 125th year of the Advent, RMCL celebrated with a special Children's Satsang. The students of Ramana Bala Kendra, Bharatanatyam and Music classes joined.



In September, Pournami celebrations began with chanting of prayers followed by Dr. Aruna Ramkumar's sharing on Bhagavan's life and teachings. Ramana Music was offered by Smt. Sushila Ramanan and Dr. Aruna Ramkumar. A session of self-enquiry by Sri N.Nandakumar, Ashtottara puja by Sri Dileep Simha, chanted by Sri. Venkatesh Deshpande and Aksharamanamalai chanting by devotees concluded the evening.



Special Dates in October and November

- » **Navaratri Celebrations**
7th to 17th – Ramana Pada Malai
Series of Talks by Ramana Charana Teertha Sri Nochur Venkataraman
- » **20th October – Pournami Celebrations**
- » **Offline Programs – October and November**
31st October – Ek Bharat, Shreshta Bharat – Ramana Maharshi Heritage Campus
Ramananjali Music, Classical and Folk Dance, Puppet Theatre and Dance Dramas
- » **19th November – Karthigai Deepam – Ramana Maharshi Shrine**

Special Online Dates

Below are the forthcoming online programs in the coming two months. To know the exact dates and timing of the programs please subscribe to Ramanacentre Bengaluru YouTube channel.

Ramanacentre Bengaluru – YouTube Channel (*Subscribe for program details*)

44th National Seminar and Global Online Festival – Ramananjali 40+

Features:

- » Ramananjali Cultural Programs
- » Down Memory Lane - The History of Ramananjali

Special Talks and Interviews:

- » Sri K.V.Subramonyam on Ramana Kritis
- » Dr.T.N.Pranatharthiharan on Muruganar's Ramana Puranam
- » Robert Butler on Muruganar's Sri Ramana Guru Prasadam

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

To register for Online sessions contact

Uma 9538472026 or join on <https://meet.google.com/kwx-bdoa-gtf>

Online Self Enquiry sessions

Thursday: 7:00 pm to 8.00 pm at RSCS

By Sri Nandakumar ji

Friday: 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm at RMHC

By Dileep Simha and Dr. Sarada

Everyday: 5:30 am to 5.45 am, 9:30pm to 10:00pm (online)

By Sri Nandakumar ji & others

(Chanting and Self-enquiry)

Online Satsang

Chanting, Reading, Music, Talks, Puja

Saturday: 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at RSCS

Every Sunday 7.00 pm to 8.40 pm Kannada Satsang

Every first Sunday 11.00 am to 12.30 pm Tamil Satsang

Online Music and Dance classes

[Contact - Uma (9538472026)] at RMHC

On site Talks, Parayana and Puja

By Sri Chandrashekar (9448839594)

Thursday 6:30 pm at RSCR

40 years of The Ramana Way

The journal, though a slim folder of six pages, began to evoke responses from devotees across India. Sri Guruswamy wrote from Delhi in 'Voices of Family Members' "Chi, Rengasamy and Sow, Kala are very happy about their visit to Bangalore for the Seminar and their memorable stay there; listening for four days to the soul stirring speeches, enjoying the colourful cultural programs. Hearing their happy narration, we were greatly moved."

Another devotee carried a review of the journal in a Delhi daily, "The establishment of the Ramana Family - a milestone in the 'Ramana

Movement'. It is heartening to the devotees of Bhagavan that 'Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore' is bringing out a monthly 'family' journal, 'Ramana'. The Bangalore Centre has given a direction to the 'Ramana Movement'. Maharshi's devotees are members of the same spiritual family. They have all been tied together in the thread of confidence." Dharam Paul, 'Daily Tej', New Delhi.

Within the very first six months of its inception, in June the journal had the honour of carrying a special colour supplement on Ramananjali's tour of Mauritius. Working day and night for several days to complete the design in target time was the first of many such experiences to follow in RMCL's history.



Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

129. Like a person who, through delusion, interprets the comings and goings of the vehicle he is riding on as his own movements, those who have not realised their true nature will impose upon themselves the samsara experienced by the ego – self and suffer.