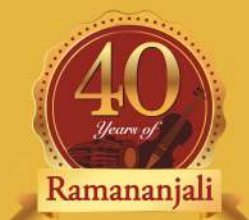
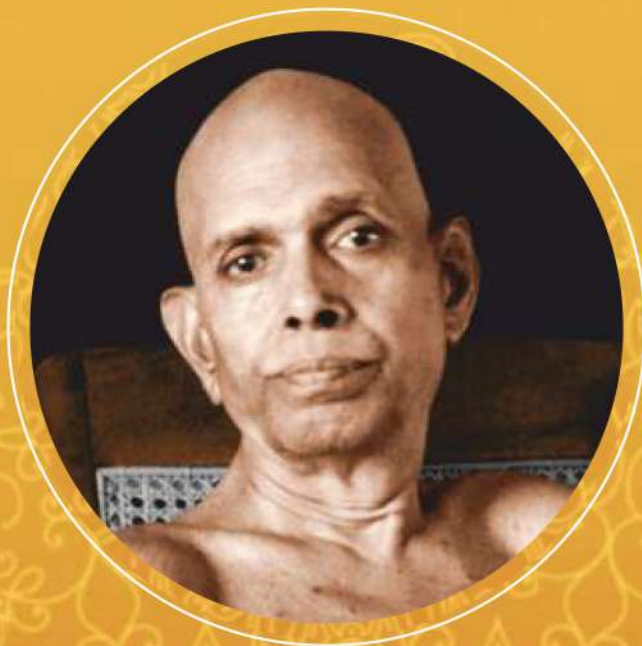


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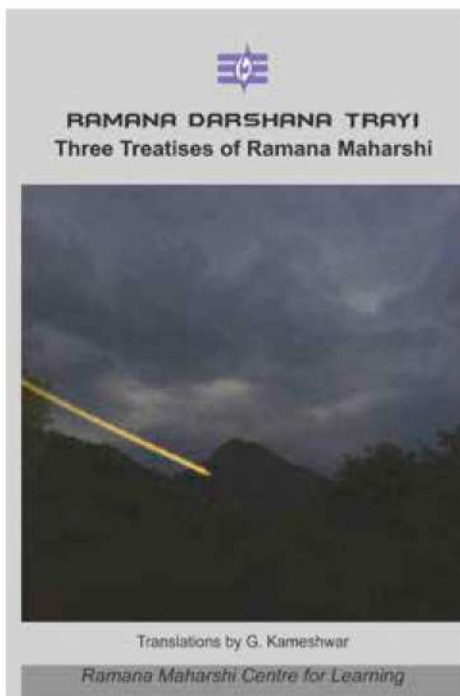
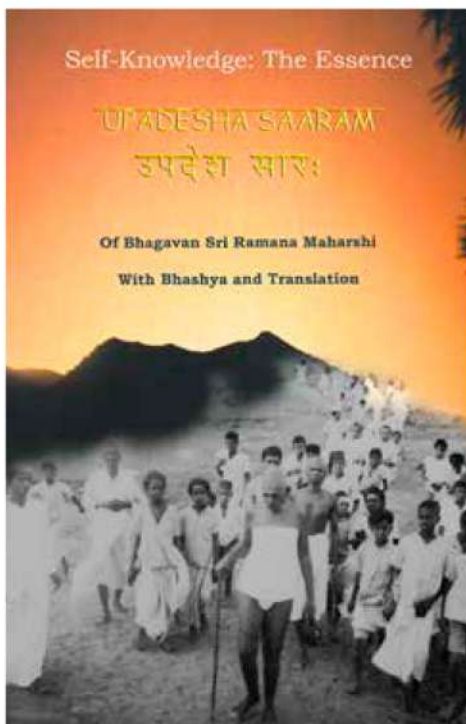
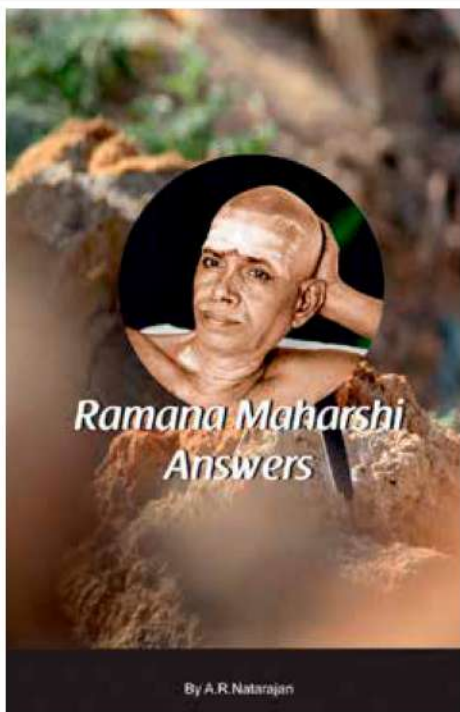
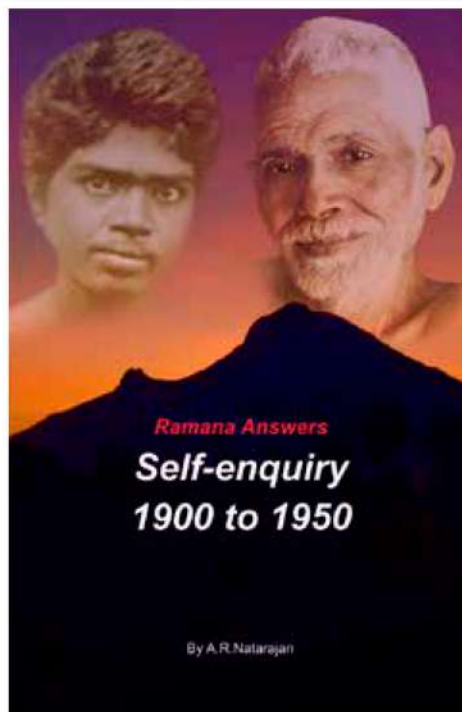
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The Ramana way



A Monthly Journal published by
**Ramana Maharshi Centre
for Learning**
Bengaluru



THE RAMANA WAY

A Monthly Journal since 1981

*Celebrating
Ramana Rasa
Anubhava*



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

- Ramana Gita X, 10

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Editorial*Dr. Sarada*

Ramana says that it is very simple to be the Self. Because one is already the Self. In fact, one can never not be the Self. In order to be someone or something other than what one already is, effort and practice is needed. But what of being what one already is? Do we need an effort to be aware that we are human beings? Ramana also says that man does not need to remind himself that he is a man.

Yet, probably because of our preoccupation with our strong habit of identified existence, Ramana's statement does not convince us outright. It seems to be like the baffling instruction of a master that the best way to climb a mountain would be from the top. This has us wondering about how such a thing is possible. But surely, the master must know what he is saying. So, one may begin to ponder about the statement and may come up with many answers. What if one is already at the top? Then would it not be best for us to climb from the top, or to simply remain there? The master says start from the Self because he knows that one is already the Self. Simply be the Self, he says, start from the top.

'But', we say, 'we are at the bottom master. You are at the top, I am not yet at the top.' 'Is that so?' asks the Master. 'Tell me what makes you believe you are not at the top?' 'I can see it', I answer. 'How do you see this?' asks the Master. 'With my eyes', I reply. 'Close your eyes and see where you are. Can you do so?' guides the Master. 'Yes', I say with confidence. 'Good!' says Master sweetly, 'now can you with your eyes closed see yourself at the top of the mountain?' 'Yes, I can,' I confirm. 'So where are you now?' smiles the Master. 'In my mind I am at the top of the mountain but physically I am way below', I insist. 'Do you see yourself as two people? Are there two of you? One who is below and one who is on top?' asks the Master intently. I pause. I ponder.

Are there two of me? Can there be? One who is the body and one who is the mind? No, I do not see myself as two disparate entities. I see myself as one whole. In that case, which part is true?

The Master continues, 'When you close your eyes and see yourself on the mountain whether somewhere near the bottom or right on top, where is the mountain then?' 'It is in my mind, in my thoughts,' I say, holding my breath. 'So,' asks the Master, 'Are you on the mountain or is the mountain in you? Where is the top? Where is the bottom? Where is the climber? Where are you?' 'Master! I am within me, but the mountain is also within me! In fact, the entire universe is within me!' 'Who are you then my child?' asks the Master with the immense love that he is. Silence is the answer.

Yet the mind moves again. 'But when I open my eyes I am still at the bottom of the mountain,' I protest. 'Who tells you that you are at the bottom of the mountain? Does the mountain that you wish to climb say so? Does it say to you, 'You have a long climb ahead'? Does the earth below your feet tell you this? Does it say to you, 'I am under your feet'? Or does the sky above you speak to you and say that it is above you? Don't you see that the same power that can hold the mountain and the entire universe within you is now telling you that you are standing on the earth and about to climb a mountain that is very high? Is it not that same power which now sees you as apart from, different from the mountain?'

'It is not very clear to me', I insist. 'Well then', says the Master, 'Forget about the outside. First sort out what is inside you. Within you, you could see yourself and you could see the mountain on which you were standing whether at the bottom or the top. Right?' 'Yes, I could' I reaffirm, 'And I can do so once again.' 'That's good,' says the Master, 'Now tell me, when within yourself you see yourself standing on the mountain, are you the you who is standing on the mountain within you, or are you the you who is seeing yourself standing on the mountain?' I am foxed again! But it is suddenly very clear as well, beautifully clear. 'I am the one who sees.'

‘So,’ says the Master, ‘When you see yourself within yourself, in your mind, it is clear to you that you are the one who sees. Why do you say so?’ ‘The moment you put the question to me Master, it became evident. But if I am to define why I say so, I would say that it is because within me one moment I can see myself at the bottom of the mountain and the next minute at the top. The third minute I can even see myself flying among the clouds and the mountain would be below me. All these are the sights that I see. It just so happens that I am also in those pictures. But they are ‘my’ imaginations, ‘my’ thoughts. Suppose I was seeing within me a scene in which I do not feature at all, then that ‘I’ which I see within me would cease to exist. But I who sees that scene in which I am not there would still exist.’

‘Very good!’ says the Master. ‘So, you recognize that within yourself you are the power that sees. You are not that which is seen. Tell me, does that power have a form or a name?’ I can see that I actually don’t want to answer this question, I would prefer to evade it. Yet, if I look at my own ‘within’ it has to be evident that the power which sees or knows all my experiences within me, all my thoughts within me, that power doesn’t seem to have a form or a name. If I say that the power has a form and the Master asks me to paint a picture of that form, what picture will I paint? I remain silent.

The Master continues, ‘You have never defined or tried to define what you keep calling ‘I’. You have never tried to see who that ‘I’ is. You are busy with one experience after another. You are busy climbing peak after peak hardly pondering on how meaningless it is simply because it is relative.’ Master continues with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, ‘Do you want me to give you an example of how things are relative?’ I nod. The Master questions, ‘Do you know what happens when you set out to climb a mountain called Arunachala? Do you know what you will find when you reach the top?’ I indicate with a shake of my head that I do not know. He continues, ‘Let me tell you, right on top of Arunachala you will find the feet of Arunachala.’

‘The feet of Arunachala, on top of Arunachala!’ I exclaim. ‘Yes,’ says the Master, ‘and if the feet of Arunachala are on top, where

would the peak of Arunachala be?’ ‘It could be way up above that, unreachable. Or it could be the reverse as well. If the feet are on top, the head could be at the bottom,’ I say, and it is now my turn to smile at my capacity to understand what the term ‘relative’ means and to joke about it as well. ‘That means, when I am standing at the base of Arunachala, I am actually at the top already!’

Master questions once again, ‘Does this also not indicate that it is impossible to discern either the feet or the peak of Arunachala, the beginning or the end? Is not the peak of Arunachala a purely relative concept in your mind? If you reach the top and find the feet there, you may decide that the peak is way above and keep flying to reach that peak, if you could. Why, if you first saw Arunachala from the sky as a bird does, where would the peak of Arunachala be, above you or below you?’ ‘Yes’, I say, ‘If I were first air dropped and came sailing down in a parachute to land on Arunachala, I would actually be starting from what is the peak but the peak would be below and not above’.

‘And what if you were a mole that lives way below the earth?’ ‘Even if I happened to strangely find myself in a tunnel below the earth, then I would have to climb a great deal even to reach the base of the mountain. And while climbing the tunnel I could even come out midway from a cave having climbed the mountain from within without even being aware of it. Or I could come out at the very top if there is a tunnel within that goes all the way to the top,’ I concede.

But there is a sudden concern. ‘Master, if everything is relative, are you saying it is impossible to get to the peak of Arunachala?’ ‘Yes and no’, says the Master who seems to be in a mood for riddles. ‘It could well mean that it is impossible to reach the peak of Arunachala. Yet, it could also mean that the feet of Arunachala are everywhere, even at the peak. Similarly, the peak of Arunachala is also everywhere. So, wherever you are, there are the feet of Arunachala. And wherever you are, there is also the peak of Arunachala. And where you see yourself to be would depend on who you are. Therefore, everything depends on who you are. Without really knowing who you are there is nothing that you can really discern.’

I am somewhat convinced and yet I resist. 'What you are saying seems perfectly true. Yet, when I open my eyes and see the mountain in front of me, I cannot help feeling that this is the truth.' 'Some time ago you said that within your mind you could see the mountain and yourself standing at the base of it, did you not?' 'Yes, even now if I close my eyes, I can imagine the mountain and myself within me.' I agree. 'Can you do so with your eyes open as well?' 'It is a wee bit more difficult but not impossible. If I get into the mood of it, I will forget that I have my eyes open and begin to see myself within me doing anything, including climbing the mountain.' 'In that case,' says the Master, 'can you prove to me that this is not exactly what you are doing now?'

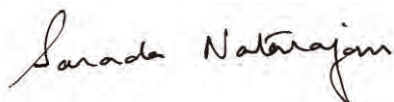
'I do not very well understand your question,' I say. 'You said that you can with your eyes open, within your mind, see yourself standing in front of a mountain at its base. I am asking you whether that is not exactly what you are doing now. Are you not merely imagining that you are standing at the base of a mountain? Can you prove to me that this scene is not happening only in your mind?' 'But I see myself standing here,' I protest. 'You just affirmed that you can see yourself standing here even in your imagination. Can you prove to me that this is different? You are simply saying that it is so. What proof is there for this statement of yours?'

I recognize that I can offer no proof. No matter what I say about 'reality' there is always the possibility that it is happening in my mind. I can only repeat that it is real but there is no way I can prove it. There may be some character in my imagination, or I myself in my imagination who says, 'How real this is!'. But there does seem to be one point of difference. 'Master, when I imagine something then I am aware of both that which is imagined and the fact that I am imagining it. I am at the same time aware of myself apart from my imagination. But that is not the case now.' 'What if you get so lost in your imagination and its experience that you forget 'yourself' and your actual physical surroundings for some time? Is that an impossibility?' 'No, it is a possibility,' I concede.

'What if you have forgotten the truth about yourself right now and are totally lost in the imagination?' questions the Master. 'Then I need to be woken up from it. It would be more or less like a dream where I have no awareness that I am dreaming.' 'But you are being told that this is a dream. If you recognize the truth of this statement, you will no more take this to be the reality.' 'I may accept that this is a dream but how do I get back to the waking?'

'Is there any point asking this question in the dream? The more you concern yourself with the dream person in any manner whatsoever, what will the result be?' 'Only the continuation of the dream,' I say softly. 'So simply try to seek the truth of your nature. All these questions pertain to the one who has these doubts. Seek to know that one and your doubts will cease. You will find yourself awake. And until you seek that one, there will never be any end to questions, doubts and problems. Either you simply see here and now the truth that you are the Self and nothing else. Or, if you believe that you are something else and there is a Self to be attained, then try to find out who that I is who claims not to be the Self. Who says that you are an 'I' and there is a Self to be attained? Who is this I? Seek it, seek it, keep seeking it until it reveals its own non-existence.'

So, what is the only duty cast on us? To keep at the practice of self-enquiry untiringly with joy and love not wondering about where the goal is or when it will be reached. As Sri A.R. Natarajan writes, "Ramana literally takes the load off the disciple's shoulder. He not only guides him firmly on the inward path, never abandoning him in spite of his innumerable failures, but also takes charge of his material welfare. Therefore, a duty is cast on every disciple to be steadfast in his devotion, unflaggingly earnest in the practice of self-enquiry and to remember the truth that Ramana Sadguru is the indweller in every human heart."



Sarada Natarajan



THE NEW DAWN**A. R. Natarajan***BEING A DISCIPLE OF SADGURU RAMANA***Can the lotus blossom unless it sees the sun?**Shine as the sun which makes the heart-lotus blossom fair.***- Bhagavan Ramana**

Many people from all over the world are drawn to Ramana. This number is ever increasing. For it is easy to relate to him as Eswara, God incarnate. This is because of his boon giving power and the miracles he keeps performing in the lives of the devotees. One might say that he combines in himself the wish fulfilling capacity of the celestial cow 'Kamadhenu', the heavenly tree 'Kalpataru', and the priceless gem 'Chintamani'. He is unmatched in his record as a boon giver. Given the fact that there are so many problems in one's daily life, countless desires to be fulfilled, one flocks to Ramana as the first and last resort.

However, the Godhood of Ramana is one aspect of his glory. In fact, one may assert that there is greater glory in his role as Sadguru Ramana. The difference between god and guru is that guru alone can transmit his enlightenment to a disciple by initiation. Self-knowledge is a boon of the guru in the sense that it is only the grace of the guru which can make it possible. There is a pre-condition. One should have a strong and irresistible urge to become Ramana's disciple believing that it is the only thing which matters. There can be no half-heartedness. It must be an all-consuming passion.

Though there are many gurus, Ramana is called the Sadguru. Why? Because he has in him all the hallmarks of a Sadguru which are, as he has himself said, 'steady abidance in the Self, looking on all with an equal eye, unshakable courage at all times, in all places and circumstances' to mention a few. There are many outstanding

disciples of Ramana by going into whose lives we can understand the significance and primacy of being initiated by Ramana as a disciple. In this one has to remember that the guru and disciple relationship is the most intimate spiritual bond.

Vasishta Ganapati Muni was the first to recognize the role of Ramana as Sadguru. Looking at the biography of Sri Ramana one finds that it was given to him to proclaim the glory of Ramana in both the aspects, the aspect of his being an incarnation of God and another, even more important, his role as Sadguru.

Briefly, Ganapati Muni was drawn inward from his tender age as a result of his intense penance at several places. He had also mastered the scriptures. He had uttered the sacred mantra 'NamahSivaya' over a crore of times. Yet the peace and bliss of Self-abidance deluded him. Under the compulsion of a divine intuition, he recognized the cause of his restlessness to be the need to surrender to a Sadguru who was established in the Self. Immediately, in the hot afternoon sun, on Monday November 18th in the Karthigai festival season, he climbed up to the Virupaksha cave. He surrendered to Ramana appealing thus, "I have studied and understood the lessons of the sastras. I have repeated the great mantras with contemplation; many austerities have I performed. Missing still is the Lord's grace. Were there lapses in my tapas? Have I missed its very nature? Though learned I am ignorant. I surrender to you, All-knowing one. **Accept me as your disciple and bless me**".

Comprehending his spiritual agony Ramana showered upon him the 'soothing rain of grace and bliss from his fully open compassionate eyes'. Here it may be noted that there is mysterious power in the look of the guru in the cases of initiation by him. This is mentioned because many have received Ramana's blessing through his look. It is only when one receives this mysterious operation of guru's grace called initiation by look that one is accepted as a disciple.

Then we have the life-giving instruction of Bhagavan, the very first spoken one, given to the Muni, “When the mind enquires from where the notion ‘I’ arises and dissolves right there at the origin of its birth, that is tapas. On the enquiry as to the exact origin from where the sound of mantra arises the mind dissolves at the origin (of the sound) itself, that is tapas”.

The Muni having received this initiation declared that Ramana, known till then as Brahmana Swami, should be thereafter known as Bhagavan Sir Ramana Maharshi.

There is another important event among the various series of events concerning the same point, the need to surrender to Ramana as a sadguru and his acceptance of the person as his disciple. This comes out in clear light in the life of Paul Brunton. Brunton had come to India in the early thirties in search of the saints and seers of India.

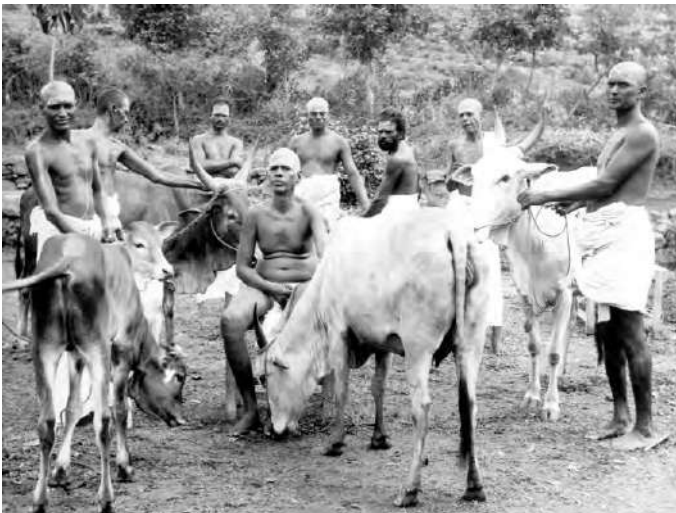
In the course of his search he had also a memorable meeting with Ramana and got several clarifications regarding his doubts. Unfortunately, he was still in the mode of a traveler wishing to finish his journey soon. His attitude was not one of surrender to Ramana. Therefore he failed to establish any worthwhile personal contact with the Maharshi. By divine grace he recognized this failure just before returning to Europe. He came back to Sri Ramanasramam, this time wishing to be a disciple of Ramana. This time his was an attitude of prayerful surrender and openness to receive the initiation which happened later.

Again, running through the events we come across the case of Arthur Osborne who had wrongly believed that Ramana had no disciples, until he himself became one. Even though he was regularly meditating in Ramana’s presence in the Old Hall, initially he developed only the highest regard. As he progressed in the awareness of Ramana’s true glory, on one festival day Ramana gave

him a piercing look, a look of grace. Instantly Osborne felt that he had been accepted by Ramana as a disciple. After that Osborne classified all ideas about Ramana not being a guru as 'spurious theories', which have no validity.

Even when Ramana was in the body he was ever the bodiless Self. Therefore his role as Sadguru has not ended on his Mahanirvana on the 14th of April 1950. From then till now, and in the coming centuries as well, people can and will relate to him as their sadguru provided they yearn to be his disciples. And Ramana in his graciousness bestows that unique blessing for those devotees.

In accepting anyone as a disciple, Ramana literally takes the load off the disciple's shoulder. He not only guides him firmly on the inward path, never abandoning him in spite of his innumerable failures, but also takes charge of his material welfare. Therefore, a duty is cast on every disciple to be steadfast in his devotion, unflaggingly earnest in the practice of self-enquiry and to remember the truth that Ramana Sadguru is the indweller in every human heart.



The 'Talks' as a Guidance to Self Enquiry

N.Nandakumar

Talk 80. (Excerpt)

D.: How will it (delusion) end?

M.: That which is born must end. The delusion is only concomitant with the ego. It rises up and sinks. But the Reality never rises nor sinks. It remains Eternal. The master who has realised says so; the disciple hears, thinks over the words and realises the Self. There are two ways of putting it.

The ever-present Self needs no efforts to be realised, Realisation is already there. Illusion alone is to be removed. Some say the word from the mouth of the Master removes it instantaneously. Others say that meditation, etc., are necessary for realisation. Both are right; only the standpoints differ.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : The intellect is always caught up in finding causes and effects. It feels that finding the cause or knowing the effect will make sadhana better. So, it wants to know the cause of Self Realisation too. Can there be a cause or effect in the Self? To appease this it is said to be due to Guru's words or due to sadhana. However, the intellect should free itself of this cause-effect delusion itself. For whom is this search for cause or effect?

Talk 80. (Excerpt)

D: Is dhyana necessary?

M: The Upanishads say that even the Earth is in eternal dhyana.

D: How does Karma help it? Will it not add to the already heavy load to be removed?

M: Karma done unselfishly purifies the mind and helps to fix it in meditation.

D: What if one meditates incessantly without Karma?

M: Try and see. The vasanas will not let you do it. Dhyana comes only step by step with the gradual weakening of the vasanas by the Grace of the Master.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : To that ego which is not able to look at its habit or vasana of using intellect to know cause and effect, the Sadguru answers according to its vasana. The good vasana of Dhyana or Nishkamya Karma is not discouraged. When caught up in such vasanas, the ego asks whether it cannot become effortlessly free, the Grace of the Guru points out that the vasanas will make even Dhyana impossible when Nishkamya Karma is known and believed to be the cause for liberation. For whom is this thought? Who am I?

Talk 81.

Dr. Bernhard Bey, an American Chemist who had interested himself in Vedanta for the last twenty years, now in India, came on a visit to the Master. He asked: "How is abhyasa to be made? I am trying to find the Light." (He himself explained abhyasa as concentration = one-pointedness of mind.)

The Master asked, what was his abhyasa till now.

The visitor said he concentrated on the nasal base, but his mind wandered.

M: Is there a mind?

Another devotee gently put in: The mind is only a collection of thoughts.

M: To whom are the thoughts? If you try to locate the mind, the mind vanishes and the Self alone remains. Being alone, there can be no one-pointedness or otherwise.

GUIDANCE RECEIVED : So far as I am the sensory body, there are sensory objects outside and subtle world of thoughts inside. I have to concentrate on the inside as the subtle permeates the coarse. So far as I am a thought, I have the thought worlds outside and the causal world of ignorance inside. I have to concentrate on the inside as the causal permeates the subtle. When the body form of "I" thought is dropped, there is no "inside" or "outside" in that limitless Self. To eliminate the "I am the body" thought, self enquiry is the direct path.

Saddarshanam*Master Nome*

The Vedas, specifically the Upanishads (Chandogya Upanishad), state the identity of the Self, you, “tvam” and Brahman, “Tat”, by proclaiming that That is what you are. This is the consistent, supreme message of the Upanishads. “Still,” the Maharshi points out, abidance as the Supreme Self is not to be completely attained.” Hearing it from the Veda, reading it in the Veda, studying it, remembering it, reflecting and contemplating upon it, one does not attain the steady abidance as the Supreme Self thus. In the previous verse, Bhagavan elucidated the inconceivability of such abidance. Therefore, even the finest thinking will not reach it. Even the most glorious words, though an expression of it, do not, in themselves, bring about the Realization.

“More inquiry is weakness of the mind.” The word is vicarah. It can mean inquiry, as in “Atma-vicara,” Self-inquiry, but it can also mean an inquiry into the meaning of the text. More studying of the text, such as the message found in the Vedas, Sri Ramana declares, will just be weakness of conviction, feebleness of mind, or lack of strength. That is not what is needed. If we interpret “vicara” as “Self-inquiry,” what is needed is depth of inquiry and not more repetition. It is not that one is prohibited from repeating the inquiry, for, obviously, if the inquiry was not pursued deeply enough the first time, one should inquire again and again. What is really necessary for Self-Realization is the depth of inquiry that removes the false sense of individuality.

“That always, as one’s own Self, indeed, shines.” “That” means Brahman, the Absolute. As the Self, itself, it shines. Brahman is the Self. There is no other kind of Brahman. The Self is Brahman. There is no other kind of self. To truly inquire is to realize this by direct, first-hand experience, which is not knowledge through words and thoughts, but immediate Knowledge. This is the Knowledge that is identical with your own Self.

Q: As so often has been imparted, to say, “I know, or I do not know,” or to say, “The Self is obscured, or the Self is not obscured,” appears to me as equally absurd statements in the deepening recognition of the very absence, or nonexistence, of that “I.”

N: They are equally absurd because the Reality ever is as it is, and there is no second “I.” This utter Nonduality is, indeed, the emphasis in the teaching. This brings us to the next verse.

navedmyahammAm-uta vedmyahammAm –
 itipravAdomanujasyahAsyah|
 drg-drSya-bhedAt-kim-ayamdvidhAtmA
 svAtmaikatAyAm hi dhiyAnabhedah || 33 ||

“I know not me,” or “I know me,”

Thus, expressions of man are to be laughed at.

**From the difference of the seer and the seen, is this
 Self divided in two (twofold)?**

**The Oneness of oneself (the true Self), indeed, is the
 understanding (knowledge)**

[that there are] no differences.

N.: Being is forever undivided. Considering anything else, there is a “seer” and a “seen,” or a “knower” and a “known.” Dive deep within your own nature. Who sees what? There is no such division. Sri Ramana says that the ideas, “I know myself,” and “I don’t know myself,” are funny, for they make no sense. When viewed from wisdom, they are just pure silliness. There is no separate “I,” nor is the Self ever an object to itself. So, how can we say, “I know,” or “I don’t know” in relation to the Self?

“The Oneness of oneself, indeed, is the understanding that there are no differences.” What happens in spiritual practice? You do not make differences. The practice consists in the dissolution of differences. The dissolution of differences comes about by seeing

that differentiation is but ignorance. It is a product of ignorance and nothing more. When ignorance is removed, there is no division in you. There is no “individual self and the absolute Self.” If, in the depths of meditation, you feel that you go into the Self and come out of the Self, what actually happens? You are not going in and out. There are not two of you. The illusion of differences vanishes and then is imagined again. Seek the root of this imagination, which is the individual or “I,” and you find that the “I” does not exist. The imagination by something nonexistent cannot produce a real effect.

“I know not me,” or “I know me” are expressions “to be laughed at,” the Maharshi says. They are absurd. Our real nature is the Self; our real nature is God. “I know myself,” “I do not know myself,” and similar expressions are “expressions of man,” that is, a human being. You are not a human being; you are the Supreme Being. The human being does many silly things, among which are thinking in terms of “I know myself; I do not know myself.” The Supreme Being, Brahman, which is the Self, has no such false notions.

“From the difference of the seer and the seen, is this Self two?” There are not two selves, a seeing self and a seen self. In Self-Realization, there is not one who realizes and the Self that is realized. Even speaking of “a Self-realized being” is a loose description mentioned for purposes of spiritual instruction. In Truth, there is no such thing as “a Self-realized being.” Nor is there “an unrealized being.” There is Being, which is the Self, and the Self, itself, constitutes the Realization. The Realization is not an event or an occurrence that happens to someone. The Realization is in the Knowledge that there is no such being as that someone.

“The Oneness of oneself, indeed, is the understanding that there are no differences.” Every difference is rooted in the single assumption, “I.” It is the first supposed difference. With that difference, there can be any number of differences. At the beginning of the text, the Maharshi spoke of the assumed distinctions between

the individual, the Supreme, and the world or universe. Again, he addresses the Truth of “no difference.” Here, the difference addressed is that of the realizer and that which is realized.

In the Self, there is only the Self. There is no individual outside of the Self. There is no individual inside of the Self. You attempt to realize the Self. The Self cannot be approached objectively. It is not an object. It is not the seen. You must look into the Heart of the seer. If the seer be examined, the seer is no longer a seer, but is just the infinite expanse of formless Consciousness.

This Consciousness is utterly indivisible. Its Oneness can never be fractured. Since it is absolutely One, who is it that would say, “I now know this.” Or, who is it that would say, “I do not quite know this.” Can you be an ignorant one? If you cannot be an ignorant one, can you be a knowing one? Do you recall the earlier verse in which the Maharshi negated both ignorance and knowledge as two different states, but spoke of true Knowledge as abidance as That?

The Self is not distinguished as a seer and a seen. There is no such division. The Realization of no-differentiation is inherent in the non-conceptual Knowledge of your own true Self. If a difference appears, ask yourself, “For whom is the difference?” Being unreal, the “you” vanishes. The idea of two states, of knowing and not knowing the Self, vanishes with the “I.” This teaching by Sri Bhagavan is directed to those who are avid for Supreme Knowledge, which is Self-Realization. For this Self, there is nothing to be done, and, for this Self, there is nothing to be known; nor is there anything left unknown.

Upadeshasaram

Ujwal Jagadeesh

aham apetakam nijavibhAnakam

The sparkling of truth devoid of 'I'

“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players.” So we are all part of this mega play called “Life”. But have we ever wondered what role we are playing? Are we the protagonist? Or are we playing the role of a supporting character? Or are we a crew member helping back stage? Or are we the light designers throwing spot lights on the part of the scene on stage which is important? Or are we just a member in the audience? Or are we the stage on which the play is being enacted? Who are we?

Without knowing our own role, we are busy acting. Acting in order to attain something. While acting we forget we are only playing a role and we are carried away by the emotions our character is playing.

Although the body gets tired of acting at the end of the day, the mind continues to work in waking and also in dream. The divine grace takes over in deep sleep and the actions stop. However as soon as the ‘I-thought’ awakes we are back to activity. Caught up in the ocean of actions we have forgotten the purpose of this play called “Life”.

The conversation between Daivarata and Ramana Maharshi in the 3rd Chapter of ‘Ramana Gita’ gives us a pointer. Daivarata asks “Bhagavan, what is the paramount duty of a human being caught up in the cycle of birth and death? Please decide on one and expound it to me.”

Ramana says “For those desiring the highest, discovering one’s own true nature is the most important. It is the basis of all

actions and their fruit. Knowing one's true nature can be achieved by withdrawing all thoughts from sense-objects through effort, one should remain fixed in steady non-objective enquiry."

Ramana in Aksharamana Malai asks "What is the use of this life without the spirit of Enquiry?"

In his reply to Deivarata Ramana continues that Japa, repetition of the sacred syllables too will withdraw the mind from the sense-objects and reveal one's true nature, the Self.

Ramana also compassionately says action performed without desire and as an offering to the Lord purifies us and lead us to the Self. Surrendering to the Supreme with devotion will also make one melt like ice in water and become one with our true nature.

Ramana again and again re-iterates that 'For a true disciple the work is within'. The only work is to drop the false "I" –notion, the notion that one is a collection of body, mind with the senses, breath, intellect or even ignorance. When this "I"-notion is completely dropped, the true Self shines forth. This is the only duty one needs to undertake. This is the greatest of all austerities. Knowing yourself is the greatest service you can render the world.

In the 'Eka Sloki' of Ramana 'hRudaya kuhara madhye kevalam brahmamAtram...." he says

"In the centre of the Heart-cave, Brahman shines alone. It is the form of Self experienced directly as "I"-I". Enter the heart through self-enquiry or merging or by breath-control and become rooted as That."

Ramana seems to be telling here that any path you choose is fine, but hold on to the path joyously, tirelessly and continuously until you are abiding in the Self. When anyone firmly abides in the Self the work that needs to get done through them will get done without any obstacles.

During November 1907, Ganapathi Muni was enjoying the fruits of practicing the path shown by his young Guru whom he proclaimed as 'Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi'. Around that time he intended to make a composition of a thousand verses on 'Uma' within 20 days in gratitude to the Divine Mother for blessing him with the Sadguru. The work was started successfully in the presence of Ramana. Nayana's (Ganapathi Muni) right thumb blistered by writing continuously for ten days. Still he continued writing for some time. But on 19th day, only 700 shlokas were composed. The thumb was swollen and writing became impossible. A Doctor named Punyakoti of Tiruvannamalai, who was instructed in his dream by the divine, operated on the blister, bandaged the finger and gave some medicine to alleviate the pain.

Even though the finger was treated, it was still impossible to write. Nayana's disciples offered to write at his dictation. At 8 p.m on 15-12-1907, the last day scheduled to complete the composition, Maharshi sat on a high stool and went into Samadhi. The Muni sat at his feet, while the five disciples sat around with paper and pens in hand. Nayana started to dictate five verses simultaneously, at the rate of one line of the verse to each disciple. After dictating to the five disciples, he would come back to the first and dictate the second line and go on dictating to each one the second line of the verse they were writing. The verses flowed spontaneously during this glorious feat, unparalleled in the history of poetic composition.

Midnight arrived and the last five shlokas were written down. Three hundred shlokas were composed and written down in exactly four hours. The scribes took a deep breath in great relief and looked at Nayana. Nayana was in a trance-like state. Bhagavan was absorbed in Samadhi throughout. For five minutes there was absolute silence. All of a sudden Bhagavan opened his eyes and spoke "Nayana! Have you taken down all that I have said?"

Those words broke Nayana's trance and with moist eyes, devotion and joy shining in his face, he touched Bhagavan's feet with

both his hands and said, “Yes, Bhagavan! All that you said has been received and noted down!”

Thus are the words of Ramana, which spring forth from the silence of the Self devoid of “I”-notion. Meditation of these words itself is the greatest austerity and it destroys the “I”-notion and reveals the true Self.

*aham apetakam nijavibhAnakam
mahad idam tapO ramaNA vAgiyam*

The sparkling of truth devoid of ‘I’ is the greatest austerity. This is the teaching of Ramana.



Essence of the Vedas – Upadesha Saarah - Tattvabodhini

G Kameshwar

Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning has been blessed with the honour of publishing several gems on the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. One of the shining gems is the latest publication 'Essence of the Vedas- Upadesha Saarah – Tattvabodhini'

We offer prostrations to the abundantly gracious Shrine of Sri Ramaneswara at Sri Ramanasramam whereat were placed the first few copies of this new publication.

This book includes the Sanskrit treatise 'Upadeœa Sâra' of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, along with Tattvabodhini, a Sanskrit commentary by Atmavidyabhushanam Sri Jagadeeshwara Shastri, a great scholar of Vedanta and one of the foremost disciples of Sri Ramana.

English rendering of the treatise and commentary, along with explanations and notes, is by G. Kameshwar.

We are bringing in 'The Ramana Way' in few parts, the introduction to this work of devotion by Sri G.Kameshwar. This is the second part of the introduction.

The Message of Upadesha Saarah¹

A brief outline of the treatise is given below.

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

'Karma' is inert, and is incapable of bestowing any fruits. It is the Almighty Lord who bestows fruits for different activities done by one and all. Indeed, an activity has no power of its own. Actually, activities done with a desire for specific outcomes, lead to a fall in

¹ 'About Upadesha Saarah' and 'The Message of Upadesha Saarah' are adapted from the book 'Upadesha Saram' of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, With Bhashya and Translation, also by this author, published by RMCL, Bengaluru, in 2017.

spiritual life. Fruits of such activities are ephemeral. Such acts are an obstacle to spiritual progress. However, activities that are dedicated to God and done without selfish desire do aid in spiritual progress.

As such, spiritual activity is of three kinds – as distinguished by whether the ‘act’ is done by body, speech or mind. By body one offers ‘*pujanam*’, physical worship. By speech one does ‘*japa*’. And by mind, one does ‘*chintanam*’, reflection / meditation. This is a spiritual progression. Each of this is superior to the preceding one.

As regards Pujanam – physical worship.

Bhagavan points out that the act of serving the manifest universe, viewing the entire universe as the form of God of eight-fold form, is equivalent to the highest form of worship.

Now coming to Japa - recitation....

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

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

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

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

How is one to control the mind?

One way is that of (Hatha) Yoga - by restraining one’s breath. Like netting a bird, one can immobilize the mind by restraining one’s breath. Actually the ‘mind’ and ‘breath’ are two branches rising from

the same energy source – namely, the power of the Lord-Almighty. Rising from one source, the two, however, serve different functions. The ‘mind’ is associated with ‘awareness’ while the ‘breath’ is associated with ‘activity’. (But, as they are two aspects of the same source, the control of one automatically results in the control of the other).

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

So how is the mind to be destroyed?

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

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

There is also the path of Yoga of the mind.

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

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

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

When one deliberates on the nature of the mind, one finds that mind is nothing but a mass of thoughts. And the origin of all thoughts

is the notion of individuality, the “I”-thought. Therefore, the “I”-ness is indeed the mind. When one, with total attention, seeks the origin of the “I”-thought, one finds that one’s individual “I”-ness drops off. This is self-inquiry.

So, what happens when the “I”-notion vanishes?

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

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

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

Now, a question.

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

No! Because Effulgence-Consciousness is by itself of the nature of Existence. And one’s ‘Being’, the Self, is of the nature of Effulgence-Consciousness.

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

There is a perceived difference in terms of form and intelligence. That of the individual is limited, whereas that of God is infinite. This perception is a delusion. In reality, in terms of their core ‘Being’, they are but one in substance.

How is one to realize this oneness?

When one’s body identification ceases, one sees one’s true identity, as God Almighty, who is of the nature of one’s own Self. Actually, there is no ‘seeing’ in this God/Self Realization. There is just ‘Being’. For the ‘Self’ is not an entity that is apart from the Seer. Just

'Being the Self' is Self-Realization. There is not a trace of duality there.

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

(To conclude...)

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

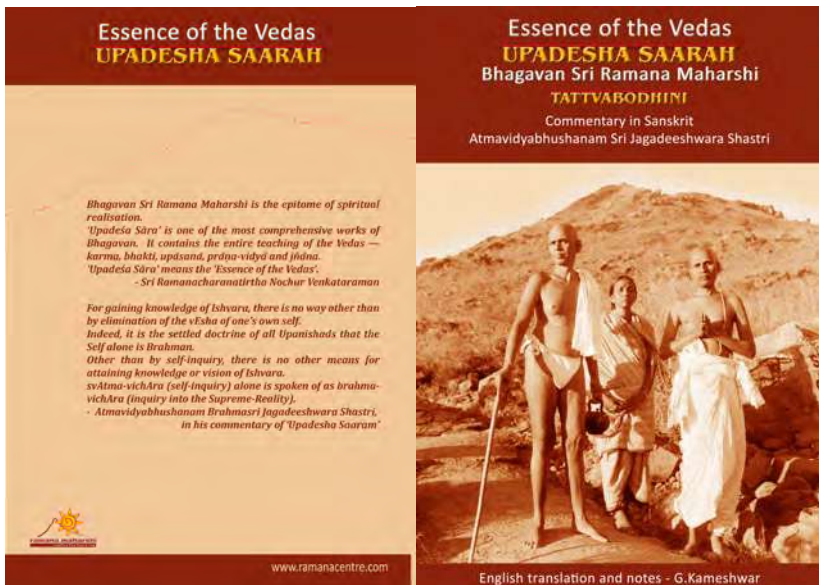
The individual being attains, here and now, Supreme-Bliss that transcends bondage and liberation; which is Divine, free of body identification.

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

This is Ramana's word.

Om!

(to be contd.).



The book can be purchased from Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning by reaching the number +918042061951 or emailing to publications@ramanacentre.com

The Present and the Presence

Alan Jacobs



The next stage is to study the whole field. One must read about self-enquiry as Bhagavan wrote it. His two essays – ‘Who Am I?’ and ‘Self-enquiry’ are essential to be familiar with what he said. They are short, they are all in the one volume of his collected works and all his main works can now be downloaded from the main

Sri Ramanasramam website. So, we read these over and over again till they have sunk in. Then next we can look at the index in ‘Talks’, look at the index of ‘Self-enquiry’ or ‘Atma Vichara’ and look at the suggestions he made to different devotees which would be suitable to them. Some of them may not appeal and all of a sudden one will strike you and you will say, “Ahhh. That is for me.” And there you have an approach to self-enquiry specially suggested for you by Sri Bhagavan himself.

Or we may even adopt a number of approaches perhaps 2-3. It could be just holding the breath, if you retain the breath, thought stops. And then when the breath is held, one can focus the attention, it is called diving or plunging into the heart through the doorway on the right side of the chest, holding in mind to find the source of the ‘I’ thought. This is the ‘EkaSloka’ and he says in there you don’t necessarily have to hold the breath. Some people find the very approach towards the Silence, silences the mind. So, there is a choice.

Then in his main essay ‘Who Am I’, there is the questioning method. So, when any thought or emotion arises, we ask to whom has this feeling come. The answer pops up – Oh! To me. Then we ask – ‘Who am I?’ with attention again seeking for the source of the ‘I’ thought. And this is very, very effective. If for some reason we are annoyed by something, get angry or don’t like it or it is not according to what we want, and that emotion arises, instead of venting forth if we

say 'To whom does this anger arise?' the mind stops dead. It is such a shock to it. It has turned around to ask to whom does this occur. And this can be used for any strong emotion which one does not want to live with. 'To whom does this anger or this irritation arise?' and the mind stops dead.

Then there are suggestions again that we should pay attention to the Self. Self-attention or paying attention to awareness. It's plain magic. If we say that I am going to be aware of my awareness, again the mind stops. I am going to try to be aware of my awareness. And all of a sudden, I become aware of a heightened awareness something stronger than my normal awareness. The normal awareness we have is common in everybody, I think they call it kinesthetics awareness. It is quite normal. The heightened awareness is closer to the real Self. So, if we say I wish to be aware of my awareness we stop. And then recollect. And magically we find that it is more intense, it is heightened.

Then he talks about holding on to our real 'I' thought. Our real 'I' thought, not the I am the body thought, the feeling of the essential "I am ness" the real 'I' thought with attention, whenever it arises. And then he said to one devotee who said that she found it very difficult the self-enquiry, he said repeat 'I', 'I', 'I', 'I'. Go on repeating it, because it will take you there eventually, because 'I' is the real name of God, the real 'I'. And to emphasize this whenever he said this it was written 'I-I' because it was more of a pulsation and should not be confused with the ordinary I which says, 'O! I am going to the talk at the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning this afternoon' or 'I am going for a walk' or 'I have enjoyed everything here'. That I is actually a false I, he wants us to focus on the real 'I' behind the charade, the mask of the body, which isn't us at all. It's a vehicle we have, which grace has given us in order to realize the Self in this life time.

Then he said we can recite our favourite mantra and trace the sound back to where the source of the mantra comes. This was the advice, the suggestion he gave to Ganapati Muni. Recite your favourite mantra and then trace the sound back the source from where this mantra came.

Then there is a suggestion of a breathing exercise. On the inhalation you say to yourself 'Who Am I?' and then you retain that for 4-5 counts. And while you are retaining the breath and not letting it out you say to yourself, 'I am the Self'. And on the exhalation, you say 'I am not the body'. And that is an effective routine of driving this whole truth home that I am not the body, I am the Self and it does come under the heading of his suggestions for self-enquiry. It's in 'Talks' in 2 or 3 places.

So, perseverance, continuous practice, setting aside sometime each day, perhaps first thing in the morning or late in the evening or whenever one has a spare moment, some kind of practice. Some people find they must travel on a train or a bus they can even then practice. And then he said great faith is needed. One must have faith; one shouldn't be discouraged. Each time we enquire he said it will gradually loosen the identification with the mind and body. He said no thought force ever goes in vain and it starts severing what he calls the Granthi knot and this is something very subtle which holds the I am body notion intact, so this has to be severed. So, this Atma Vichara combined with the surrender succeeds in every case.

So, the inner guru guides us, Bhagavan guides us and the practice is modified as is needed, adjustments are made, new suggestions come. And the vasanas gradually and gracefully come out. We are purified and now our consciousness is moving to what is called pure, absolute consciousness awareness and that is synonymous with the Self. The naadis are churned and the Granthi knot is gradually severed.

So Atma Vichara is classified as a way of jnana. But when it is combined with devotion or bhakti it is even more powerful. And Sri Bhagavan brought this practice out in the open for all and made it explicit. Self-enquiry should be linked to devotion, it must become emotional, not only from the head but from the heart. And then it is easier to reach the source of the 'I' thought. So, we surrender totally unconditionally, non-negotiably, with full devotion, love and gratitude to our great guru Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. We thank him from the bottom of our heart for all he has done for us, for taking over

the whole burden of our lives as he promises his devotees without fail if we offer it to him.

What great fortune! There could not be a greater fortune than to enter this teaching much greater than winning the lottery. There is nothing greater than this. You are released of the burden. He settles problems for you in a way you wouldn't expect, not the way you think they should be settled, all of a sudden. I have had cases myself and I have been amazed at how they are dealt with. And then, it is even more



gratitude because if we continue with this teaching, with this practice, we will move away from this world illusion of suffering and samsara, the cycle of rebirths. And there comes a point when one is weary perhaps and would like to go to a higher plane, a better plane of existence, *sat chit ananda*, which he said is beyond verbal description.

So, to conclude Ramana is in our spiritual hearts, he is present, he is the presence. So, he is the presence in the present. All is combined to all those who are earnest devotees, calling on his name. So, in one's practice one offers one's egotistic mind at his lotus feet, there in one's spiritual heart. And we go as deep as we can and surrender over and over again until he deems the moment is right for that surrender to be fully accepted.

So, the sadhana must be kept up because it may not be fully accepted until he judges that the time is ripe, the gradual and gracious changes are made to one's life and vasanas are merged with the extreme practices. And finally, when his grace decides it is safe and the mind is purified, we enter the sacred presence of the Self in the presence of the here and now forever. And that is self-realization.

Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya

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

My Favorite Verse

Sri V.S.Ramanan, President, Sri Ramanasramam

Dear Sarada,

These four lines of the first stanza of Bhagavan's 'Appala Paattu' (Song of Pappadam) often come to my mind.

Ippuvi tannil Engittiriyaamal
sadbOda suka sadguruvaanavar
seppaadu sonna tattuvamaagira
oppuyarvilla Ormozhiuin pADi

Blessed indeed is Mother Alagammal who was the immediate cause for Bhagavan coming out with this song. What a song of a song!

In the first line, Bhagavan asks us not to roam the world disconsolate. Has he not shown in a thousand ways, in speech and in silence, that the whole universe is within us, that are not, for instance, in India or England but that India and England are within us? Bhagavan wants us not to roam the world either physically or mentally. He often said that whenever we may go, we see the same sky and he said that our true nature is *chidakasa*, the infinite consciousness – space.

Saint Kabir sang: 'Go where you will, to Banaras or to Mathura, if you do not find your soul, the world is unreal to you.' Kabir laughed that the fish is thirsty in water. Bhagavan said that we stand neck – deep in the river of grace and yet feel thirsty.

How may we find our Self and the real world? In the next three lines of the song, Bhagavan says, "Head the word, unique, unspoken/Taught by the rue teacher who silently teaches /The Truth of Being – Awareness – Bliss."

A highly revered Swami of Rishikesh, who lived till a few years ago, said "A young man told me, 'Swamiji, I have seen many ashrams and gurus,' I told him, 'Son, you did not see any guru, if you did, you could not have left him.'"

Can we ever dream of leaving Bhagavan, our Sadguru? All we have to do is to live by every word of his. Let us heed his word. Like Arunachala. Achala Ramana will draw us and make us achala (still) like him. We will then cease to be vagabonds and be free from every bond.

Affectionately, Sundaram



Power of the Word

Sanjay Lohia

In Bhagavan's path, the effort is absolutely essential

- ◆ All mundane activities which are ordinarily called effort are performed with the aid of a portion of the mind and with frequent breaks. But the act of communion with oneself or remaining still inwardly is an intense effort, which is performed with the entire mind and without break.
 - ◆ If other thoughts rise, without trying to complete them it is necessary to investigate to whom they have occurred. When one practises and practises in this manner, to the mind the power to stand firmly established in its birthplace will increase.
 - ◆ It is necessary to walk unfailingly along the path that guru has shown.
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The Mystic Voice of the Veena

An Interview with Guru Kumari Meenakshi

Guru Kumari Meenakshi attained the lotus feet of Bhagavan on the 23rd October, 2020, the Friday which fell in the midst of Navaratri. She lived a life completely given to dance and music and it was she who initiated the Ramananjali Nritya or the dance form of classical Ramananjali Music.



In this interview with the Editor, Dr. Sarada, Kumari Meenakshi speaks about her aunt, Veena Visalakshi.

A famous vainika of her times, Veena Visalakshi was deeply devoted to Bhagavan Ramana and had played the veena several times in his presence. Imbued with great spirituality and an almost mystic silence and humility, she would sing to God for hours simultaneously playing on her veena. A versatile artiste and scholar she had translated and set to music several dance dramas for Rishi Valley school. She may be credited with being the mother of the dance movement at RMCL as she intuitively selected Ambika Natarajan (now Dr. Ambika Kameshwar) to be trained in dance under her own niece Kumari Meenakshi whom she inspired to develop the first Bharatanatyam repertoire from Ramananjali Music.

- Editor

Dr. S: Meenakshi Akka, you have been blessed to be the pioneer in choreographing the whole Bharatanatyam Margam of what we now call 'Ramananjali Nritya'. This is dance based on the music which is

‘Ramananjali Music’, the vast repertoire of Carnatic classical and devotional music containing works of Sri Ramana Maharshi and those on him by several saint poets.

Akka: Every credit coming to me really belongs to my Attai, Veena Visalakshi. She has played a great role in my life. What I am is what she made me. My music, my dance, even this little English I am able to speak is all what she has taught me - Sanskrit, music, dance, nattuvangam. I don’t know if am a complete person but whatever I am it is she who has moulded me to be.



Dr. S: A great woman indeed. Very intuitive. In a way we can say that she was the force behind the starting of this Ramana Dance Movement. It was she who insisted that Ambika should learn Bharatanatyam under your tutelage saying that she is born to dance. Veena Visalakshi was known to be a very blessed Veena exponent of her times. Because of this the epithet ‘veena’ was added to her name. We know her to be an ardent devotee of Bhagavan Ramana and one of the founder members of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning. I know she was your paternal aunt, your father’s sister. Do share your insights about her.

Akka: Yes, she was not just my aunt, she was more than a mother to me. She brought me up and groomed me to be a dedicated artiste ever aware of the supreme goal of Bharatanatyam. She was a child prodigy. She was not an ordinary person. She was from a religious family and a very spiritual person. I don’t know if we can use the word enlightenment, but I would like to do so. I believe she was an enlightened person living with ordinary people, worldly people. What makes me say this? It is the fact that she was Affection personified.

And it is perfectly appropriate to add the epithet ‘veena’ to her name. Whomsoever she came into contact with, she would

communicate with them, speak with them, not with words but she would pick up her Veena and play music. Lots of European guests would come to visit Dr. Balasundaram, her husband and the principal of Rishi Valley School for many years. With all of them she had only this kind of musical contact. I don't know how to put it but it was musical contact. She would sit with them awhile and she would say I will



play music. And music to her was a mystical union with the divine. The great writer Raja Rao would say to Dr. Balasundaram, Visalakshi is in direct communion with God. In fact every evening she would sit in the puja room for hours and simply sing verses in praise of the Supreme playing her veena. They were not verses she had learnt anywhere, they just came to her spontaneously.

She used to go to Ramanasramam frequently. She used to tell us later that she was going every year. Every year she was going there, but one of the years that she went, she took me along. I was a small girl with pavadai and blouse.



She was playing before Ramana Maharshi. Maharshi was lying down. He didn't speak, he didn't say anything. And she was sitting and playing and after that we got up and came back. There was no conversation.

She got married in 1946 June, Dr. Balasundaram married her and then both of them went to Ramana Maharshi to take his blessings. They went to Ramanasramam. Like this, her life was one of great spiritual depth and purely a spiritual life. Dr. Balasundaram

was a very great genius. He built Rishi Valley school, worked for J. Krishnamurthy, the great philosopher. She was all the time only at the background but she was the spirit of the whole thing.

Dr. S: She used to compose music isn't it?

Akka: Yes, she would. It came to her intuitively. Incidentally as I grew up with her, I came into the great dance teachers, nattuvanars and many eminent people in the field of Indian classical arts. Then we went to



Rishi Valley and I became the dance teacher there. We used to choreograph and compose lots of dance dramas. There is a huge open-air theater there in Rishi Valley where Krishnaji used to sit through the performance for 2 hours. And it used to be like a mela, the whole Bharatanatyam performance. We always worked on majorly on spiritual themes. We produced Amrapali, Mrucchukatika, Koravanji, Malavikagnimitram, Shakuntalam, Naukacharitam... And all the students participated in the dance dramas, they were all part of the whole team.

It was not myself or Attai or somebody producing the dance drama but the team was producing it. Everybody used to be a part of the whole thing. So, it was not that 'I only did it', there was not that kind of approach. But Attai used to compose the whole music for this. She used to write out the dance drama in English scene by scene because some, Amrapali for instance, was in Pali language. And we had a Sanskrit Scholar, Hanumantha Rao, in Rishi Valley. He used to translate it to Sanskrit and she would set the music and jath is and give it to me and I used to choreograph the dance. This is how we produced dance ballets for 25 years, we have done 11 ballets.

So Attai was my aunt Veena Visalakshi. I don't know, she was too close to me, so I didn't know her greatness. When you are too close to somebody you don't know their greatness. But she was affection only. A great spiritual force. Wherever, whomever she saw only affection used to pour out of her, nothing else, even if somebody had done wrong to her. Dr. Balasundaram was also like that. He had no bitter feelings towards anybody. He had only goodness. So, I have lived with two very great people.

Dr. S: Has Dr. Balasundaram seen Bhagavan only once, that is after his marriage to Visalakshi Mami?

Akka: No, no he has seen Bhagavan many times.

Dr. S: Even prior to his marriage had Dr. Balasundaram met Bhagavan?

Akka: No, not earlier, he only went with Attai.

Dr. S: After their marriage they visited Bhagavan several times, is it?

Akka: Yes, after that they have gone many times to Maharshi. Maharshi was a great influence on Dr. Balasundaram. He went to see Maharshi along with Attai, because every year she used to go and play for him. Thayumanavan, she used to play for him. Maharshi used to like Thayumanavan.

Dr. S: Even though you were a young girl, you have a good memory of seeing Bhagavan, isn't it?

Akka: I have very fresh memory that I sat with Attai. She took me.

Dr. S: What was your impression about him, as you physically remember him?

Akka: At that time I didn't know anything. She took me, I went and I was too young.

Dr. S: Did he turn and look at you or at Attai?

Akka: He was turning towards Attai. His face was like this. (She shows the direction). He was lying down. That I remember well.

Dr. S: I believe his glance has fallen once on you and he has made you the pioneer for the Ramana Dance movement.

Akka: It may well be so.

Dr. S: You are the one who has started the Ramana Dance Movement and now so many dance dramas have been produced on Bhagavan by the Ramana Maharshi Centre. You were the one who taught Ambika, taught me. Thank you so much Akka.

Akka: Yes, I was the one who started the Movement. It's a great honor for me.



Sri Ramana Ashtottaram

Viswanatha Swami

50. DAKSHINABHIMUKHAHA

One facing south

Even though it was not by design, Ramana usually used to sit facing the south. The sadhaka sits facing the north. The guru's grace flows from his southern seat. South means the right side. This indicates the spiritual heart which is located on the right side of the chest. Ramana envelops the entire universe rooted as he is in the spiritual heart. 'Daksina' also means intelligence. Hence it might be said that those who turn their mind inwards through intelligent self-enquiry are receiving the help of Ramana for discovering the truth.

Om DakShiNAbhimukhAyanamaha

51. SWARAT

Self-luminous

Abiding in the Self he shines as the fullness of it. In his Arunachala Astakam in the verse 'Inrahamenumninaivu' Ramana says that he who is seated in the heart, which is the ground, conquers everything.

Deivarata describes Ramana thus, "He is firmly established in the state of sahaja samadhi or steady Self-abidance. He is free from all thoughts, desirable or undesirable, happy or unhappy etc. Even though his eyes are wide open, they remain very steady and introverted, fixed in the Self alone. In other words, he does not see external objects with a desire to get any impression from them. He is always absorbed in the Heart, in the state of Silence. He is ever revelling in the spontaneous joy of the Heart."

Om swarAjEnamaha

52. MAHARSHIH

Self-aware seer who proclaims the Truth

Ganapati Muni who had dedicated his life to tapas, surrendered to Ramana and accepted him as his Guru. In view of his exalted yogic stature, the Muni called this young ascetic who till then

was known as Brahmana Swami, a Maharshi. Since then Ramana has become widely known in the world by this name.

Om maharShayEnamaha

53. BHAGAVAN

God

Bhaga stands for plenitude (aisvarya), courage (parakrama), renown (kirti), beauty (ezhil), Knowledge (jnana) and dispassion (vairagya). Those who are incarnations of God are called Bhagavan. Humphreys, the first western seeker to visit Ramana in 1911 says that Ramana's body was like a mere corpse from which God was radiating terrifically.

This name 'Bhagavan' which is pregnant with meaning was also given to him by Ganapati Muni. The Muni had divine visions of Ramana as the incarnation of Subrahmanya. Muruganar has seen him as Siva. Sadhu Om says he is the very hill Arunachala, which has taken human form. Sundaresayer envisions him as Rama. Suri Nagamma, beholding his beauty with Lakshmi and the other cows in the Ramanasramam cowshed describes him as Sri Krishna. Thus, a devotee, Amritanatha, wrote a poem in Malayalam asking Ramana who he was. Are you Hari, Siva, Vararuchi, Subrahmanya? Who are you? Ramana replied with a poem in Malayalam which says, 'Arunachala Ramana is the consciousness sporting in the hearts of all beings beginning from Hari.'

The inner circle of devotees always used to address Ramana as Bhagavan. The devotees are well aware that now as then and always Ramana can grant every boon that is sought and also bestow the highest good beyond all seeking. Kunju Swami would ask 'When I have the very emperor of the universe as my protector, to whom else do I need to turn for fulfilling any of my needs?'

He who is witness of the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the world is termed Bhagavan. Once Bhagavan Ramana asked Ganapati Muni, 'Nayana, if all the planets are moving around my waist, then who am I?'

Om bhagavatEnamaha

How Bhagavan Captured Us

By Smt. Sulochana Natarajan

The early months after our arrival at Delhi were in a way 'difficult' months. Looking back I cannot really say that they were difficult because we had a comfortable house to stay in as soon as we landed there. Sri Srinivasa Murthy, ARN's uncle, had gone on a short stint out of the country and allowed us the use of his quarters. Yet the perspective of the mind is always relative. At Bangalore we had been living in a huge bungalow with a marvelous garden having several plants and fruit trees. I have always loved gardens and this love was further reinforced by the perfect manner in which gardens were maintained at the Ramakrishna Math. From such a bungalow we had come into a two-bedroom first floor flat. Although I knew Hindi, my knowledge was bookish and I was not used to interacting with others using that language.

At Bangalore we had a separate living quarters for the servants and had a whole family of house helpers staying with us and literally available at our beck and call, not to mention the office staff as well who would be available at times. Here, though we did get house help for cleaning and washing, I had to do the cooking myself apart from taking care of two young children. Ambika was just about a year old and quite inquisitive and very active and I had to practically continuously keep an eye on her. She on her part would not be away from me for a moment maybe because in her own way she was confused about the change in the surroundings.

Baby Sarada too apparently found that period difficult as I came to know only in later years when we talked about it. She was not very happy with her new school and perhaps because of this she became quieter during this period. In Bangalore she was very talkative and very expressive as well. She was very articulate even from the age of two and an excellent story teller from before her third year. Her favourite stories were King Midas and the golden touch and the story of the goose that laid the golden egg. She would end these stories which she narrated in Tamil with the words, 'adanaala, pEraasai perunashtam' 'therefore, excessive greed leads to colossal loss'. This was the similar

moral that both the stories had. Our house help's children were her good friends too and she was certainly the young princess. At Delhi all this changed.

For ARN it was literally a role reversal at his office. He was no doubt hand picked by T.T.Krishnamachari himself, the then Finance Minister, to be his Personal Secretary. When TTK had visited Bangalore there had been an opportunity for ARN to interact with him and he had been so impressed that he immediately inducted ARN as his Personal Secretary. This seemed to be a great honour indeed. But the fact of the matter was that TTK already had a Personal Secretary and ARN was the additional PS. As things turned out, the original PS was deeply unhappy about the new addition. So he saw to it that he himself personally handled all the matters and assigned zero work to ARN. TTK himself was too busy to look into what exactly was happening in his ante-room.

It took ARN quite some time to understand the psychological standpoint of the earlier PS and to deal with the situation in a manner that would please him as well. Therefore, in the early months ARN would go to work, simply twiddle his thumbs all day long in the office and get back. He was obviously deeply disturbed by this situation. For one thing, from practically being the king in his office, having to play second fiddle to the boss's PS! Secondly, from working practically 10 hours a day, every minute of the day, to having no work at all to do. ARN never brought his office cares home. His moods did not spill over between office and home time. He was by nature greatly detached and highly positive in his approach. Besides, he was an intense spiritual aspirant. Therefore, he did not allow the situation to depress him. He knew that I too was facing some challenges in adjusting to the new life and did not want to burden me with his cares as well. Nonetheless, the overall mood in those early months at Delhi was a little gloomy. What did Bhagavan have planned by taking us to Delhi? We had to wait and see.

During this period Bhagavan's teachings and Guruji's words of truth to us were our greatest support. Guruji would say, "There are both ultimate and working ideals. Progress consists in bridging the gap between them. 'I am neither the body nor the mind nor the senses. I am Sat Chit Ananda'. These are powerful thoughts; and we should give ourselves such strong injections periodically. It is particularly important

to stress the Ananda aspect. Most non-dualists lay too much emphasis on the Sat and Chit aspects of Reality, and the result is dryness. Always emphasise the Ananda aspect, that you are Bliss itself. That is your very nature. How can you be different? Swami Turiyananda said that Sri Ramakrishna experienced Bliss in his heart even in the midst of severe physical pain. Catch this inner current. Assert your real nature.”

Guruji would reiterate to us that this bliss is literally ours for the asking, so why should we be anxious or grieve about anything at all? “Brahman in all its manifestations is only too willing to offer us the delight of yoga. ‘Knock and it shall be opened. Seek and ye shall find’. The pity is this, we do not love God enough and so cannot attune ourselves to His company. Why does this happen? It is because we have all along enthroned our senses and their false values. The mind rebels because it has not been exposed to truth. Why do we look upon as unworthy the attachment to the fleeting objects of the senses? Just ponder for a minute and you will know why. The answer is beautifully expressed in the Katha Upanishad, in Nachiketas reply to Yama: ‘The senses give us just enjoyment, not bliss. This enjoyment is very short-lived, lasting a few minutes at most.’ Even if you think it lasts a whole lifetime, our lifespan is but a tiny speck in the ocean of time.”

“On the other hand, our mind becomes purer and purer in the blissful company of our Ishta. Contemplation on the eternal, changeless Atman, which is our true nature, helps us discriminate between the real (permanent) and the unreal (transitory) and frees us from the shackles of self-imposed ignorance. Mark the words ‘self-imposed’. So, the remedy must come from within. It is up to us to break the cocoon of ignorance we have built around us, and enjoy our blissful and free nature. Sincere yearning for God, the Eternal Companion, makes our life delightful because we partake of the nectar of His company. We march towards the goal of human life, which is the realisation of the ultimate Truth.”

The inner life is indeed a balm at all times as Bhagavan has entered our lives. Once one begins to taste the true bliss of the Self, then of course nothing else would touch us or disturb us anymore. One thing we knew, even in our ‘external’ life, was that Bhagavan was taking care of us. So it was for us to wait for him to unravel his plan.

News & Events*Revathi Sankar*

In the month of August Tamil Online Satsang was started on the first Sunday of every month. Among other devotees Smt.Aruna Anand from Australia participated and so did little Viyan. In the September and October Satsangs the Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Society from Malaysia joined by chanting Aksharamanamalai and Arunachala Pancharatnam. Young Darshan was on the lead .



Young participants in the Ramana Satsangs include Prarthana who joins her father Sri Vaibhav in the chanting of Ramana Ashtottaram.

Independence Day was celebrated by hoisting the National Flag at the Ramana Maharshi Heritage Campus and Online with the sharing of videos of the song 'Dhanya Bharatha'.



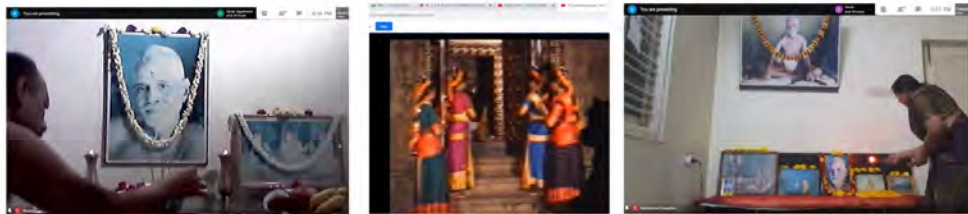
Ganesa Chaturthi was celebrated with singing of 'Ramana Ganesa' kritis.



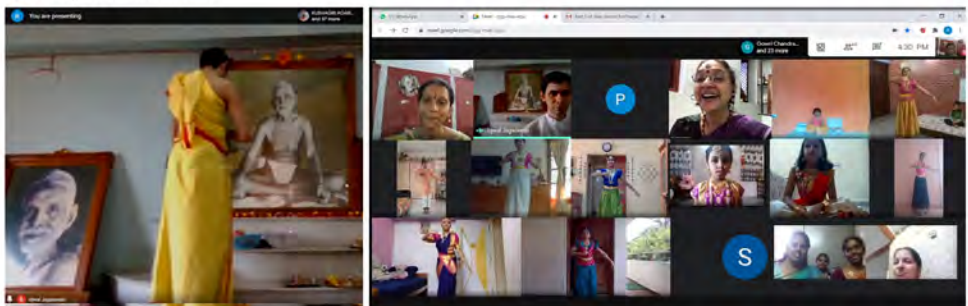
Navaratri – Ayudha Puja was offered to vehicles of the Centre and of staff members at the Ramana Maharshi Heritage Campus.



Navaratri – was also celebrated online with music, video of dance presentation and special puja chanting of Azhagamma Ashtottaram and Ramana Ashtottaram.



On Vijaya Dasami the dance and music students of the Centre came online and made sweet presentations.



Your Dates with Ramana**DAILY AND WEEKLY ONLINE EVENTS**

We at Ramana Centre, Bangalore are happy to announce one single sign-in Google Meet URL for all the Online Self Enquiry Sessions and Satsangs of the Centre.

This we believe will ease the sharing of URL to all like minded Ramana devotees to join our scheduled online events as listed below for each week

The URL is also available on our website www.ramanacentre.com
URL: <https://meet.google.com/kwx-bdoa-gtf>

SPECIAL MEETINGS

14th November, Saturday – Deepavali

29th November, Sunday – Karthigai Deepam Celebrations

- 1. Daily Morning Self Enquiry satsang:** Time: 5:30am Duration: 15min.
- 2. Daily Night Self Enquiry satsang:** Time: 9:30pm Duration: 30min
(9:30pm - 9:45pm Q&A, 9:45pm - 10:00pm Self Enquiry)
- 3. Thursday Evening Self Enquiry satsang:** Time: 7:00pm Duration: 1hr Conducted by: Sri Nandakumarj
- 4. Friday Evening Self Enquiry satsang:** Time: 7:00pm Duration: 1hr
Conducted by: Dileep Simha and Dr. Sarada Natarajan
- 5. Saturday Evening satsang:** Time: 6:30pm Duration: 2hr
Conducted by: Dr. Sarada Natarajan
- 6. Sunday Evening Satsang (in Kannada):** Time: 6:45pm Duration: 1hr 45mts. Conducted by: Dr. Sarada Natarajan
- 7. Every First Sunday of the Month - Morning Satsang (in Tamil):**
Time: 10:00 am Duration: 1hr 30 mts. Conducted by: Dr. Sarada Natarajan

If you have any queries or concerns regarding joining the Satsang, please contact: **Uma: 9538472026**

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 and On site 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 and On site Music and Dance classes

[Contact - Uma (9538472026)] at RMHC

On site Yoga classes [Contact - Uma (9538472026)]

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

On site Talk

By Sri Sridhar Guruji,

Saturday 4:00pm - 5:30pm at RMS.

[Contact Usha Sankar (9663284111)]

On site Talks, Parayana and Puja

By Sri Chandrashekar (9448839594)

Thursday 6:30 pm at RSCR

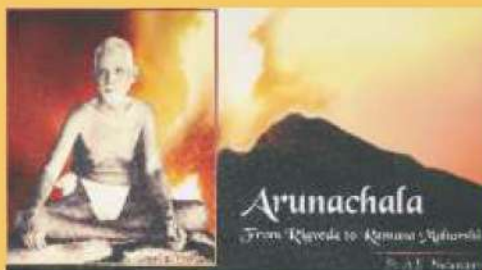
Guru Vachaka Kovai in English

Original : Muruganar

Translation: David Godman

Investigation into Truth

118. Individual gods [and goddesses] and their powers appear to be real on account of the imagination of the minds of those who marvel at and admire them. But in the Self, the reality that transcends the mind, *maya* – the imagination of the mind that bewilders the *jiva* – is false at all times.
119. The *jivanmukta* has attained the state of reality that shines, transcending individuality and non – individuality. If one insists that, in this experience, he still has a distinct individuality, such an assertion arises only through the limited knowledge of pandits who are bound to the false. The form of *jivanmuktas* is the space of consciousness which is the clean mirror that reflects whatever is placed before it. The individuality that seems to exist for these [*jivanmuktas*] is only the reflection of the individuality of those who love individuality.



ARUNACHALA FROM RIGVEDA TO RAMANA MAHARSHI

This book covers a vast panorama of over four thousand years from the Rigvedic seers to Ramana Maharshi. Arunachala, the seemingly insentient hill, and the golden hued Ramana are embodied fire of Knowledge. The purpose of this book is to rekindle in every human heart this smouldering fire now doused by ignorance.