

DIRECT PATH

RAMANA KENDRA
DELHI

February - April 2023

Vol. XXV, No.1

"Let what comes come, let what goes go. Find out what remains."

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi



68. Om dayarnavaya namah

Ocean of compassion.

***69. Om sri sonacala hrdbhuta skandasrama
niketanaya namah***

Dweller in Skandasramam, the heart of the Hill of Gold.

70. Om saddarsano padestre namah

Teacher of Satdarshan, revealer of Reality.





Original ink sketch of Arunachala by Sri Ramana Maharshi from Kunju Swami's notebook

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VOLUME XXV, ISSUE 1

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Call for Articles

As the journal depends on articles from volunteer writers, we appeal to you to send in articles for our consideration. We wish to keep the range of subjects both wide and diverse covering aspects such as: Bhagavan's life, teachings, and experiences related to the practice of his methods; life, teachings, and experiences related to the practice of methods taught by other spiritual masters; teachings and stories from religions other than Hinduism; interpretations of sacred texts and verses; spiritual travel and insights; poetry; feedback and suggestions.

As a guideline, articles can be short (around 750 words), medium (around 1500 words) or in longer format (around 2300 words). Please send in your contributions through e-mail to editor.dp@rkdelhi.org

We look forward to hearing from you!

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Ramana Maharshi: 1879 to Infinity

Advait Shrivastav



India was an enslaved country when Maharshi was born. It was free and functioning under its own constitution when he died. However political slavery is not the harshest kind. The mind behind bars forces the longest, strongest, and most agonizing subjugation. By the time Maharshi left the mortal plane, the number of people suffering from an invisible slavery reduced significantly. The interesting fact is that the freedom he extended did not stop after Maharshi's physical death. Those who could not witness His form continued to benefit by His presence in various subtle ways.

The removal of Maharshi's mortal frame made many eyes wet. A spiritual giant in the form of Neem Karoli Baba shed tears. The devotees shed tears. However, the sky shone and smiled

in the form of the bright meteor that was visible just after His passing. The man who illuminated Earth for over seventy years imparted a glow to the sky while going back to His Home. He could now be seen by no biological eyesight. The man whose teachings turned many within could now only be seen within.

The Aitareya Upanishad enlightens us that everything emerged from the supreme soul. Its first verse says that only the supreme soul existed before the appearance of the world. This soul neither takes birth nor dies. Birth and death are applicable only to the body. For most people this truth is merely a pious idea stated in religious texts and on the lips of respected or self-proclaimed pundits. Some reject this outright as fiction. Others may hope it is

true but set it aside as indeterminable or irrelevant and continue to live their lives blindly assuming an identity with the body. One in a million or fewer set out to enquire into this truth and prove it on their pulses. Ramana Maharshi realized this supreme soul and became one with it. His spiritual life crystallized in an encounter with death and a realization that the Self is deathless. Eleanor Pauline Noye wrote this after Maharshi's passing: "Sri Bhagavan treated his body as something apart from him."¹ Maharshi donned a body in 1879 and transcended it within two decades. No reaction could be elicited by the ants and vermin that bit Him in an underground vault. The body could no longer bind the young sage who was absorbed in the soul. The death of His ego had resulted in His dying to the body.

We say that Maharshi left us in 1950. Did He really leave? In His own words, "They say that I am dying, but I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here."² Maharshi is here, near, and dear. Where can that which is beyond birth and death go? Noye writes further in the same passage: "As the body grew weaker his face became more radiant, his eyes shone like two stars. He was ever abiding in the Self." He is still residing here

and watching over us. Robert Adams reported, Maharshi's last words were, "Has anyone fed the peacock yet?" We are ignorant and screeching peacocks and our Master ensures that we are fed with wisdom. His presence is still the same for the devotee who sees through the inward lens.

Noye concludes her message by saying, "A few days before he passed away, he remarked, 'They say I am dying, but I shall be more alive than before.' Now he is all pervading." Maharshi indeed is more alive than before. Seventy-three years have passed since the physical death of Maharshi yet His presence keeps intensifying and multiplying in the lives of His devotees. I have often gone to Sri Ramanasramam's online bookstore and found that the books that I wanted to buy were out of stock. His destined devotees are drawn to Him through many paths. His physical death wasn't a full stop. He lives with His devotees in their homes. His smiling portraits speak to many hearts. The sentence that ends with a question mark has no room for the existence of a full stop. Maharshi's spiritual journey began with enquiry and He stayed on earth to shift our attention towards this *vichara*.

Self-realized saints choose to stay

1 *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, reminiscence number 11.

2 *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge* by Arthur Osborne, page number 222.

in their bodies even after achieving the highest consciousness so that they can help humanity with their physical presence. They may bear intense pain. The pain may not appear to affect them since they are stationed beyond joy and sorrow. Ramakrishna Paramahansa suffered from throat cancer and had immense difficulty in swallowing food. Such jnanis may simply see their work as an expression of the love of the Self to the Self. However, staying

on planet Earth even after attaining enlightenment may seem to observers to be similar to doing clerical work even after being elected as the prime minister. One must therefore *question* whether the Master's physical death is really a thing to mourn, for it ends the burden of the body without removing his presence from the devotee's life, and in fact making him 'more alive than before'. ■

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I am pleased to inform our readers that we are starting a Hindi section with a translation of one key article per issue. I seek your blessings for this endeavour, and hope, with your contributions, this section will grow bigger and richer.

The auspicious occasions of Deepam and Bhagavan's Jayanti were celebrated solemnly.

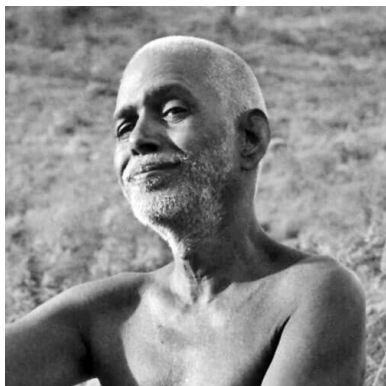
Mrs Jayanthi Aiyar and other singers and musicians rendered songs composed by Mahalakshmi Suryanandan.

Sri Raghav Kumar and Mr Michael James started a new series of discourses on *Self-Enquiry* and *Anma Viddai* respectively. The recordings of these talks are available at Ramana Kendra, Delhi's YouTube channel. Important events (from Bhagavan's time) falling in the current issue (February-April 2023) are as follows:

- Chinnaswamigal Aradhana: 5th February
- Swami Rajeswarananda Aradhana: 7th February
- Maha Sivaratri: 18th February
- Sundaram Iyer Day: 12th March
- Telugu New Year: 22nd March
- Sri Rama Navami: 30th March
- Tamil New Year: 14th April
- Bhagavan's 73rd Aradhana (Gregorian): 14th April
- Bhagavan's 73rd Aradhana (Vedic): 18th April

Bhagavan's 143rd Jayanti

BM



Ramana Maharshi told a lady who was visiting from England, ‘The realised mind is the Holy Spirit and the other mind is the home of the devil. For the realised being this is the Kingdom of Heaven... That kingdom is *here* and *now*.’³

The Jayanti celebrations made the Delhi Kendra a jubilant heaven here and now. For a while, the unrealised mind was given a taste of the undiluted Holy Spirit, revitalizing the remembrance of our true state, and giving impetus to our sadhana. A feast was laid out for every level of being for those who could attend in person, and to some extent even for those attending virtually, as is increasingly the mode in this age of rapid transformation. For a while, the vital inner leap

seemed imminent.

A Kolam in the pattern of a sunburst and strings of flowers welcomed visitors approaching the Kendra gate. Flowers in joyous abundance adorned the shrine. Swirls of incense smoke wafted through the hall full of people. The portrait of Sri Ramana, ever radiant and freshly garlanded reflected the dancing *diya* flames. It was truly a heaven for all the senses. Into this setting walked Swami Prabhudananda, who had first addressed people in this hall in 1976. All these years of teaching Advaita Vedanta and Bhagavan's direct path to realisation seemed to have saturated Swamiji's being with divine nectar, which spilled forth in a steady stream, carried by his now frail voice. The transience of the body was

3 Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, 3rd May 1938

sharply contrasted by the steadiness of the truth he expressed. His discourse had a particularly poignant impact coming as it did after a long phase of unfortunate world events during which many beloved friends on the path vanished from our midst.

He described Sri Ramana as *atm-agyam* as well as *jayam*. He explained that this meant that Maharshi is worthy of *upasana*, viz. worship, *japa* and prayer, which are mental activities which will achieve spiritual results. The other way is to understand his teachings and follow the path of *jnana*, which leads to *moksha*. Swamiji told us that he has followed both methods for years, and just the previous evening he had composed a *gayatri* mantra to Sri Ramana, which he chanted for us to hear. He said we should accept or ignore, but not analyse or criticise, what we heard. Do not say that we have an *atma*; we ARE *atma*, awareness, he said. Mistaking the self for the body, we become *murkha*. We should remember that we are not *karta*, doers. Thinking that we are actors is pure *kalpitam*, imagination. However, an error cannot correct itself, but requires effort. A *sthitaprajna* lives in effortless goodness and awareness. The rest of us must make great effort to achieve this effortless state.

There was a lively question-answer session followed by beautiful bhajans by the euphonious quartet led by Delhi Kendra's very own Jayanthi Aiyar. She announced that she would conduct Aksharamanamalai classes every third Sunday, so that others could understand as well as join in the singing of this blessed composition which was born from 'the experience of supreme divine love for Arunachala Siva that surged forth in an extremely intense and powerful manner from the depths of Sri Ramana Maharshi's heart.'⁴

In Delhi, Jayanti morning is always bitterly cold. The brightly lit and decorated Kendra has always felt specially welcoming on this day. Memories are what we creatures of habit are trapped in and I felt the absence of the swirling energies of the vigorously chanted Rudram that always seemed to me to be trying to lift the Kendra into outer space. The energies were much mellower this time, yet as beautiful and fulfilling as always. The heart was filled with gratitude for this renewed opportunity for collective celebration, prayer, and worship.

One was also grateful to see many new as well as familiar faces in the attendees. All later partook of delicious prasadam; of a range of hot food and coffee. People outside the gate were

4 Publisher's note, quoting from Sri Murugunar's detailed commentary on *Arunachala Aksharamanamalai*.

fed hot Pongal, sambar, and rice kheer. I had carried little boxes in my bag and happily carried some to share at home. Much more than the food, what I also carried back with me was a heart bursting with love and gratitude for the reminder that one's true birth is when one awakens into knowledge of that which is never born and which can never die. That eternal, unchanging, indivisible self.

The heart spontaneously offers salutations in gratitude for the immense

compassion that created a person that lived, aged, endured a huge illness and death of the body, only to show us that we too can be in the body, yet get connected to our true inner self. May we each practise remaining steady in that awareness no matter what appears to change, grow, or decay around us. May the grace of Sri Bhagavan ever guide us from within and may we blossom into a jayanti of the Heart. ■

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Relationship of thought, respiration and life

TALKS WITH RAMANA MAHARSHI, 4th February 1835

Thought (intellectual) and respiration, circulation, etc. (vegetative) activities are both different aspects of the same: the individual life. Both depend upon (or metaphorically reside in) life. Personality and other ideas spring from it like the vital activity.

If respiration or other vital activity is forcibly repressed, thought also is repressed. If thought is forcibly slowed down and pinned to a point, the vital activity of respiration is slowed down, made even, and confined to the lowest level compatible with life.

In both cases the distracting variety of thought is temporarily at an end.

The interaction is noticeable in other ways also. Take the will to live.

That is thought-power.

That sustains and keeps up life when other vitality is almost exhausted and delays death.

In the absence of such will-power death is accelerated.

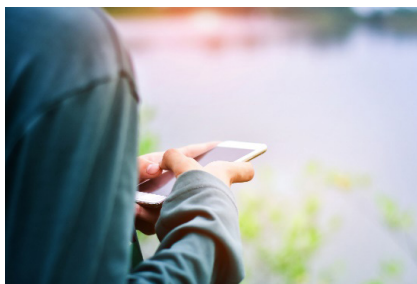
So thought is said to carry life with it in the flesh
and from one body to another.



PHOTOGRAPH by ANIL MANSUKHANI

Bhagavan's Inquiry: Distinguishing the True from the False in the Age of Information (Part I)

Michael Highburger



Very often efforts at refining our understanding of Bhagavan's teachings bring only moderate results. This may be because we want to cut corners. We want to get to what Bhagavan was talking about without necessarily taking the steps he advised us to take in order to get there. We place great hopes that the longed-for might be found in the thinking mind and then extend that hope to the vast expanse of information available to us in the digital era. If Bhagavan tells us that the thinking mind cannot lead us there, then at least, we imagine the internet would provide a database large enough to aid us in uncovering the missing pieces. If ordinary thought is insufficient to take us to the Self, then perhaps online digital searches powered by algorithms that seem to

know us in advance, would hold some hope. If we took literally the injunction, *know the truth and the truth will set you free*, then we imagine there is some formulation out there somewhere that had escaped our notice which, once in our possession, would at last set us free. We remain ever hopeful that the next Google search or YouTube video will yield just the thing we are missing. A line from the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* reads:

Can you hear the universe resounding with His presence? He is sound and echo, intangible vibration, and the infinitesimal substance of every particle of dust and foam. His presence is immanent in verdant trees and the soft green grass. He is in the rustling withered leaves and the silent dead. He has each and everyone's

face. Everything human is in him, for he is in every person.⁵

He is in every person, and yet, we do not know what to call Him. If we call Him Rudra, Paramatman, the indwelling Divinity, the Spiritual Heart, or the Transcendental Self-God; if we call Him Consciousness, Pure Awareness, Original Nature, the Witness, the Formless, or Vast Emptiness; if we call Him the Unconditioned, the Changeless, the Deathless, the Knower of Births, Possessor of Divine Wisdom, Immortal in Mortals, the Brahmic Fire of Self-knowledge, or Mother of the Universe, still, we ask, who is He/She? An ancient poem begins:

*The name that can be named is not the eternal name. The unnameable is the eternally real. The named is the mother of myriad things.*⁶

What does this mean? It means that if we look for the ultimate in the realm of words and thoughts, even at the monumental scales of the internet driven by terahertz of processing power and quintillions of bits of information⁷ and algorithms that track our online behaviour, still whatever names we come up with will only be of

the myriad things and not the one True Name. Labels and conceptualisation, thoughts and words, names and forms are valid in the conventional realm but cannot help us in the pursuit of the Self. Grasping at ideas, satisfying though it is, is just a form of attachment, and attachment can never be transformative, Bhagavan tells us, can never lead us out from the delusion that separates us from the Self. If we seek essences without doing the purification work beforehand, our names will not be true names. The poem goes on:

*When caught in desire, you see only manifestations; when free from desire, you see the mystery. Yet mystery and manifestations arise from the same source.*⁸

Desire to come up with a name is already a disqualifier. If it has always been easy to fall into *maya*, now the stakes seem ever higher. The current generation of spiritual seekers must contend with the digital reality of our world, with search engines and social media algorithms that cater to our every need and keep us gravitating to our devices. Amid their astonishing efficiency we begin to suspect that

5 See *The Mountain Path*, July 1982, p. 204.

6 *Tao-te-Ching*.

7 IBM says that 2.5 quintillion bytes, i.e. 20 quintillion bits of data (called an exabyte) are processed each day. See <https://seedscientific.com/how-much-data-is-created-every-day/>

8 *Tao-te-Ching*.

we are being manipulated. Algorithms built to select for increased search use have the side-effect of eliciting addictive behaviours in the user, taking advantage of built-in vulnerabilities in the human psyche. Lots of room for *vichara* here.

Machine culture asserts itself and the simple aim of increasing website activity can have drastic consequences. Consider, for example, recent studies at MIT that show that false narratives have a six times greater chance at proliferation, i.e., ‘going viral’, than truthful ones. This means that the otherwise ethically neutral algorithms at work in social media platforms promote untruths because such themes increase click rate and user activity. It was not the original intention to engender misinformation. It’s just that in the interest of generating the success of the start-up, its creator writes algorithms that inadvertently result in misinformation. From the algorithm’s ‘point of view’, any story or video is just data, just 0’s and 1’s.

Sorting through vast troves of new information which have been tailor-selected to conform to our basic view of the world, the seeker has great difficulty in deciding what is true and what is not. The process is quite

simple: social media’s algorithms are designed to glean information from each of our online activities where, with each click of the mouse and each swipe of the smart phone, we teach the search engine’s data base something new about our personal tastes, preferences, and habits. It learns who we are by tracking our movements using GPS and keeps a perfect record of our activities. It remembers things we have long forgotten. Tracking our behaviour over many years, algorithms selectively guess what links, videos, news stories, and websites will be of interest to us. Algorithms seem to validate our hunches about the way the world is made whereas, in fact, what we are experiencing is a sophisticated ultra-high-speed feed-back loop. If we find such loops attractive, it is because they seem to confirm us. But in them, we are being remade in a kind of reverse-engineering.⁹ Algorithms make guesses at what we will be interested in and tests them on us by prompting us with files, links, personalised news, and videos. As we respond, they adjust their estimate of who we are. We imagine that it is we who are doing the searching but in fact, it is we who are being *searched*, and being *remade*

9 From the documentary-drama, *The Social Dilemma* (2020).

by the online content we engage in. Engaging with each new online digital item influences us in ways that we are unable to predict. We unvaryingly re-create ourselves and reinforce the assumptions we have about who we are through this algorithm driven personalisation loop, growing our sense of separation from millions of other individuals, each in his or her own personalised information bubble.



If we find ourselves under the sway of a digitally contrived hyper-narcissism wherein algorithmically driven self-validation becomes a way of life, we wonder how we strayed so far from Bhagavan's path. If face-time interactions with family, friends, and fellow devotees gives way to digital isolation, we see that they don't get the same news we get nor do they have the database and algorithms that Google, YouTube, and WhatsApp have regarding our personal interests. If we notice that the core need for belonging to a community is fulfilled in the next link, article, or video clip,

then we wonder if this can really be healthy. If algorithm-driven positive reinforcement feels like looking into a mirror that alters our appearance according to unconscious wishes about how we think *we should look*, we worry about the danger such mechanisms pose to our children and grandchildren who may be more vulnerable to such influences.

If we had set ourselves the task of diminishing egoic identification and overcoming the allure of *samsara* to pass beyond the veil of *maya* once for all, alas, we find ego at the centre and wonder to what extent we have become addicted to the instant culture of the internet.

Samsara in the age of algorithmically contrived worldviews incubated in our respective information silos becomes increasingly confusing for the contemporary seeker. Invariably, we find ourselves sympathetic to those with whom we share filter bubbles, and correspondingly, polarised from those with whom we do not. This is built into the system of preferences. But is machine intelligence creating our preferences? Not exactly. It is only mining them, though too, magnifying them. The filter bubbles we inhabit are born of unconscious impulses expressed through our click behaviour. AI merely assesses preferences based

on our online activities and mirrors them back to us. But the degree of egoistic reinforcement provoked by AI's unfathomable processing power and immense caches of stored information is indeed unprecedented.

Information silos fold back on themselves in ways that cut off their inhabitants to competing views. Machine intelligence's selective guessing causes one to get a reverberation of the dominant views within one's own silo, squelching dissonant views in what can only be seen as a kind of self-promoting echo chamber. Here we imagine ourselves having a unique angle on the world and being set apart from those not privy to the information in our silo.

If we bring *vichara* to bear on the mechanisms at work in this process, we avoid being easily fooled by the pleasurable sense of belonging to one silo or the other, neither creating an identity *from* it nor fortifying our sense of self *through* it. We remember that opinions and views are the province of the ego and are, as much as possible, to be minimised.

When someone tells us that their recent online research has led them to conclude that the Earth is flat and that all who imagine it as round are victims of a government conspiracy, we watch

the intensity of our push-back. Even if the roundness of the Earth is not really a subject for intelligent debate in the 21st century, we remember that the Earth does not care what we think about its shape. Clinging to opinions, either way, can cause harm as egoic vibrations ripple out and surcharge the collective. We try and disabuse our interlocutor of such notions, all the while unwittingly clinging to the outcomes of our efforts. If we notice that we are overly attached to getting them to see things our way, which is just another form of grasping, we inquire into it and, as much as possible, avoid indulging it. Faithful in our inquiry, we hold things lightly and try to remain aware of our responses while taking care not to minimise the perils of misinformation. Having said that, how do such views become so prevalent?

Neurologists tell us we are hard-wired to isolate danger and threat from benign environmental conditions as a means to better ensure survival. We intuitively cling to messages that are negatively focused because we are evolutionarily biased toward eliminating threats. This means that to survive generation after generation over hundreds of thousands of years, natural selection favoured our ancestors who were skilled at

reducing threats. While evolution has also given us the ability to overrule *false* threats, this overriding function seems increasingly to be getting short-circuited in the internet age. Why?

Social species such as human beings depend on members in the group to determine the safety and well-being of the tribe at any given time. When an individual senses danger, he or she will check in with other members. If a threshold number of members senses danger, then the tribe will take steps to protect itself. Here is where the trouble begins in respect of social media algorithms.

Throughout evolutionary history, tribe size typically numbered 30-40 members, whereas the digital tribe numbers in the billions. When an internet user goes online to check if the government is seeking to dupe them about the shape of the earth, algorithms link them with members of the global tribe that share similar concerns. This cohort could number ten thousand or more, which sounds like a lot, but as a sample taken from billions of users, it is actually less than one-thousandth of one per cent. From the point of view of evolutionary biology, just ten geographically dispersed flat-earthers face to face online are enough to form a virtual community and reinforce an

otherwise outlandish stance, a theme which hadn't really been a burning issue for them before meeting up online.

This is how the displacement of dharmic culture begins. Traditional culture is time-tested, and its truths are consensual, i.e., arrived at through shared views passed down through generations. Digital micro communities, by contrast, neither have geographical borders nor anchors in time. The glue that binds them is algorithmically driven narratives formed from a pool of unconscious wishes, doubts, and concerns gleaned from trillions of previous clicks and searches.

The True Name

If the world appears to be upside down as filter bubbles mimic and displace traditional culture, it is because we have taken filter bubbles as reality. Of course, it is only natural since throughout evolutionary history, shared views have constituted truth as we know it. If our confusion is great, still, it is not so great that it cannot be fathomed. Bhagavan left us tools for greeting these challenges.

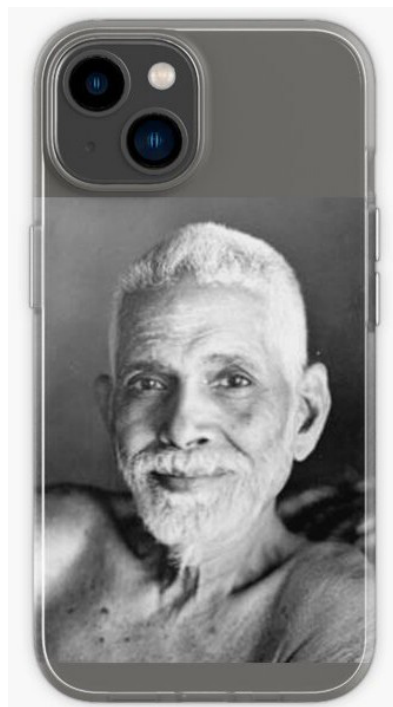
Inquiry's ability to train discriminative powers gives us the means to unmask algorithmically constituted storylines and avoid their

allure. Sticking closely to Bhagavan's recommendations for *vichara* practice, we make sense of what might otherwise be disorienting. Borrowing insights from neuropsychology, evolutionary biology, social anthropology, narcissistic defence theory and combining that with a basic understanding of how social media algorithms work, the polarisation and division we are seeing around the globe appears lawful, even if highly undesirable.

Our work is to watch our attachment to views, remembering that as we insulate ourselves within our filter bubble, tolerance for contrasting views diminishes and with it, our capacity for meaningful face-time interactions. If Covid lock downs resulted in increased internet use and a corresponding intensification of filter bubble identification, we recognise that this is not a permanent condition and can be adjusted. If we find ourselves encapsulated in opinions, we put forth the effort to give more time to non-digital interactions and reduce our internet activities, remembering the unintended negative effects of algorithms.

As for seeking the True Name, i.e. the Self and the work Bhagavan gave us, all this is of a piece. Everything

life dishes out presents us with the opportunity to discriminate between the false and the true. The quality of our investigation born of faith and non-judgemental observation helps us hold lightly algorithmically driven stories and focus on purifying the heart which, after all, is the principal work of the devotee of Bhagavan.



If purifying the heart begins with the study of the Self, we start by seeing *what the Self is not*. We understand that the Self is not anything that can be pointed to in the vast reaches of cyberspace. We see that compulsive

thinking, or, for that matter, any transactional activity designed for short-term benefit which includes gratuitous internet browsing, keeps the wheels of *samsara* turning.

Seeking to *name* the Self and make it into something *graspable*, we make it into something *else*. But how can we grasp and possess what we already are, Bhagavan asks?

There is no greater mystery than this: Being Reality ourselves, we seek to gain Reality ... Our real nature is liberation. But we imagine we are bound. We thus make strenuous efforts to become free while all the while we ARE free. We will be surprised that

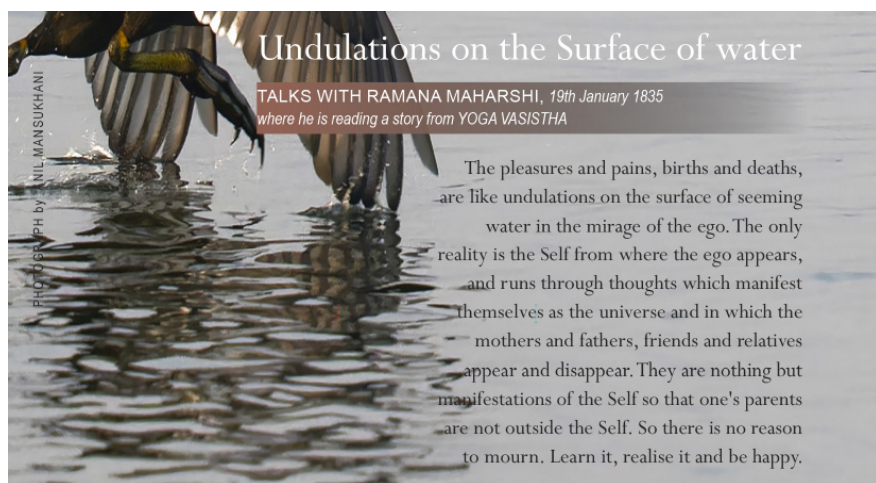
we were frantically trying to attain something which we have always been and are. ¹⁰

With inquiry and Bhagavan's guidance, we can penetrate the veils of illusion and make sense of a new world dawning on us suddenly and unexpectedly. If we feel overwhelmed by a world that appears very different, we remember our refuge is not in this world. In the face of ever-changing conditions, we greet our bewilderment with ever more sincere inquiry, trusting that Bhagavan will not fail to come to our assistance in our time of need. ■

(to be continued)

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10 Talks §146; *Day by Day*, 5-1-46.



PHOTOGRAPH BY NIL MANSUKHANI

Undulations on the Surface of water

TALKS WITH RAMANA MAHARSHI, 19th January 1835
where he is reading a story from YOGA VASISTHA

The pleasures and pains, births and deaths, are like undulations on the surface of seeming water in the mirage of the ego. The only reality is the Self from where the ego appears, and runs through thoughts which manifest themselves as the universe and in which the mothers and fathers, friends and relatives appear and disappear. They are nothing but manifestations of the Self so that one's parents are not outside the Self. So there is no reason to mourn. Learn it, realise it and be happy.

Talk 257.

D.: A certain young man from Dindigul spoke to Sri Bhagavan, saying that he had learnt by his stay for a few days; that all that he need do was to enquire, "Who am I?" He wanted to know if any discipline was to be observed and started with the question: "Where should I do the enquiry?" meaning if he should do it in Guru sannidhi (the presence of the Master).

M.: The enquiry should be from where the 'I' is.

D.: People labour for gaining the summum bonum of life. I think that they are not on the right track. Sri Bhagavan has made considerable tapas and achieved the goal. Sri Bhagavan is also desirous that all should reach the goal and willing to help them to that end. His vicarious tapas must enable others to reach the goal rather easily. They need not undergo all the hardships which Sri Bhagavan has already undergone. Their way has been made easy for them by Sri Bhagavan. Am I not right?

Maharshi smiled and said: If that were so everyone would easily reach the goal, but each one must work for himself.

"When the mind turns away from the objects, it beholds its source, consciousness. This is Self-abidance."

Ramana Maharshi (Upadesa Saram-16)

*With Best Compliments
from :*



Rajneesh Joshi
36/75, Punjabi Bagh (West)
New Delhi - 110 026

1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
 SELF + IMAGININGS = THE WORLD



Wizards
 in a
 Magic Place

Do you wish you were at Hogwarts, doing magic and with a flick of your wand you could conjure up a dragon? Or even something more useful like all your homework completed? Or that you could turn invisible and quietly quit a room when tests or people get difficult?

Granny do you know how I'm going to open this door?



A little girl of six once decided not to wait for an owl invitation and instead launch into a career of magic immediately. She tucked a towel round her shoulders, picked up a twig from the garden and stood in front of her bedroom door.

By turning the knob?

No! By saying a magic spell!

Open Sesame?

No Granny! I learnt this from Harry Potter books!

ALOHAMORA
 ALOHAMORA
 ALOHAMORA

"Alohamora," shouted the little girl.

The door remained deaf... and shut. She uttered the magic spell again and again and when the door stayed shut, she delivered a hefty kick. The door opened!

"Granny, at last I got the magic right," she said triumphantly.

Her grandmother laughed and hugged her.

I think your legs are a lot more magic than your spell, darling.



The longing for magic solutions and powers is not just a thing for kids. Or a recent phenomenon. Or confined to fools who get cheated by frauds who claim they can do magic and win gold or a girl.

Even wise people are fascinated by stories of siddhas, who develop through years of prayer and spiritual effort, powers called siddhis.

1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
 EGO + THOUGHTS = UNIVERSE of MAYA

1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1
SELF + AWARENESS = ONENESS

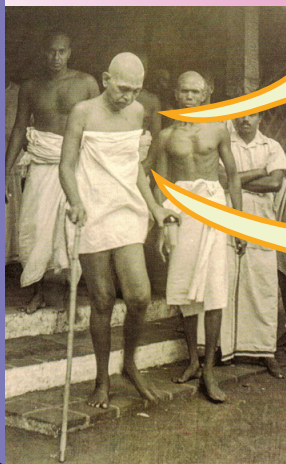
Once there was talk in Bhagavan Sri Ramana's presence about attaining such powers

This yogi after great tapas and sadhana attained many siddhis!

Hatha yoga teaches how to walk on water!

Some sages use an astral body to be in two places at the same time!

Our divine guru took a completely different point of view. He pointed out we are all Atman, pure spirit and really formless.



Yet we now have bodies with eyes, ears, nose, hands and keep doing things with them. Is this not a siddhi or a remarkable attainment?

We are siddhas.
 We get food if we want food;
 water if we want water; milk if we want milk.
 Are not all these siddhis?
 While we experience ever so many siddhis,
 why clamour for more siddhis?

Bhagavan lived always in the knowledge that he was not the body that all could see, but really formless spirit who could never die. He was keenly aware of the strangeness of the immortal and all powerful spirit living in disguise as a body, forgetting its own divine nature and struggling in the seemingly real world it is creating every moment through the mind.

We love and respect Bhagavan and we can choose to take his wise vision as our own. This world is real if we are Muggles who think we are our bodies. The world is unreal or visionary when we remember we are all one indivisible spirit. If we believe the word of our Guru, the door will open on a magic world where we are all really wizards or siddhas creating what we see.

We need to marvel at the wonder of our 'ordinary' universe and the miracle of our 'normal' lives. We can't make a dragon (as yet), but we have made spacecraft. We can't turn invisible (as of now) but most of us can walk in and out of rooms. And we can after all sit down and... do our own homework!



1 + 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 = 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1
SELF + AWARENESS = CONSCIOUSNESS

Ashtavakra Gita and Bhagavan's Teachings

Neera Kashyap



The story of Ashtavakra appears in the Vana Parva of the *Mahabharata*. Ashtavakra was born of Kahor and Sujata. Kahor was an erudite scholar of the Vedas, and would often read aloud the sacred mandalas to his wife. While still in his mother's womb, Ashtavakra, one day, suddenly cried out: "Father, even while in my mother's womb, through your grace, I have already learnt the Vedas. But I regret that you often make mistakes in your recitation." For this, he was cursed by his father to be born with eight bodily deformities. So, after birth, he was named Ashtavakra (eight deformities). Under the yoke of poverty, Kahor went to King Janaka's court to beg for royal patronage. There he was defeated in a verbal dual with King Janaka's court philosopher,

Vandi (son of King Varuna), also profoundly versed in the Vedas. Kahor was thereafter kept as priest in the service of King Varuna, and disappeared from his family's life.

When twelve, Ashtavakra reached Janaka's kingdom to observe a *mahayajna*, as also to search for his father. As the king's attendants began clearing the route for the king's passage to the *yajnasala*, Ashtavakra pointed out that, as a Brahmin with a precise knowledge of the *sastras*, he had priority in the right of passage even over the king. Impressed, King Janaka requested Ashtavakra to proceed ahead of him. In court, by posing various questions, the king tested Ashtavakra's knowledge of the *sastras*. Ashtavakra then went onto defeat his father's old opponent, Vandi through his wisdom

of the ancients and Knowledge of the Self, thereby winning as award, freedom for his father. After bathing in the river Samanga and, receiving his father's blessings, the deformed boy emerged from the water, completely cured of his deformities.

The Ashtavakra Gita follows the Guru-Shisya style of the Upanishads in the form of a dialogue between Ashtavakra the Guru, and the King-seer Janaka, his disciple. Though the teaching is simple and direct, it is uncompromising in its delivery and is aimed at mature *sadhakas*, who have sought to purify their minds through *sadhana* and are competent to realize the absolute identity of the Self through the negation of any second principle, spiritual or material. In his introduction to the Ashtavakra Samhita (from which the verse translations and explanations have been taken for this article), Swami Nityaswarupananda writes in his introduction, "The recognition of values and the ethical and intellectual disciplines are valid only provisionally, that is to say, in the lower planes of reality, where the influence of *Avidya* is in force. But when the *Avidya* is destroyed together with its satellites, there is no experience of a second entity even in the phenomenal

plane. In other words, the phenomenal world disappears with the cessation of its cause."¹¹ Because Janaka as a ripe soul realizes the Self, his own realization is described in some of the chapters wherein the reader sees that the unreality of the objective world is a preparation for seeing the unreality of the inner psychological world, both being ultimately illusory.

It is only in a few early verses that virtues are highlighted. In response to Janaka's very first question on how knowledge and liberation can be attained and renunciation achieved, Ashtavakra replies:

1.2 If you aspire after liberation, my child, shun the objects of the senses as poison and seek forgiveness, sincerity, kindness, contentment and truth as nectar.

The emphasis of the Ashtavakra Gita is to get beyond all dualities: honour and dishonor; acceptance and renunciation; association and dissociation; attachment and aversion; contemplation and exertion. Even the desire for liberation and the dissolution of the world must go. So must go the thought of adhering to the Self, and not to the non Self, for not a speck of thought remains in the Self. In Chapter 18 which has a hundred verses under

11 *Ashtavakra Samhita*, Swami Nityaswarupananda, Translation and comments, Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, 1940, p.xii

the title Peace, we have these verses:

18.16 He who has seen the Supreme Brahman, meditates, ‘I am Brahman.’ What would he who has transcended all thought think, when he sees no second?

Being completely unidentified with the mind and the senses:

18.95 The man of Knowledge is devoid of thought even when engaged in thought, devoid of the sense-organs even though possessed of them, devoid of intelligence even though endowed with it, and devoid of the sense of ego even though possessed of it.

This article focuses on Chapter 5 which, in four verses, gives the four ways to Self-realization. The first verse deals with *asanga* or the unattached. The infinite Self, being the substratum of the illusory world superimposed upon it, has no contact or attachment with anything. The second verse looks upon the universe as the same reality as the Self – there is only one Atman. The third considers the phenomenal universe as illusory. In the fourth verse, the Self remains unaffected by the phenomena of the universe, internal and external. There would be an overlap in these methods as they are not distinct but convergent. These methods also form the theoretical basis for Sri Bhagavan’s teachings

which, though dwelling on the theoretical, move quickly to practical modes and practices, so that whatever the approach used, the practice overrides.

The verses:

5.1 Ashtavakra said: You have no contact with anything whatsoever. Therefore, pure as you are, what do you want to renounce? Destroy the complex and even thus enter into Dissolution.

Swami Nityaswarupananda’s explanation helps us see that renunciation can only follow attachment – attachment to the ‘complex’ aggregate of body, mind, intellect, the senses and consciousness. By identifying the



Self with these, we make them exist. By renouncing this identification, we enter dissolution – the Absolute state in which no phenomenon exists.

There are several verses in the Ashtavakra Gita that support this theory with important implications for practice. In Chapter 15.15, Ashtavakra advises Janaka to give up all distinctions such as ‘I am He’ and ‘I am not this’, thus preventing the division between Transcendental Reality and the universe. Chapter 15.16 points to ignorance being the cause of the existence of the universe. So long as ignorance exists, we have to conceive the world in two ways: in its transmigratory aspect in which the *jiva* moves from birth to death to re-birth, and in its transcendental aspect in which the God-principle lies beyond the cycle of birth and death, eternal and unchanging. But when the universe no longer exists as different from the Self, this distinction rooted in ignorance, vanishes. In truth, ‘you alone are.’

From Chapter 16.9 we learn that it is not the world but attachment to it that is the root cause of all misery. One attached to the world wants to renounce it to avoid sorrow, but one free from attachment is free from sorrow and can live without misery even in the world. Chapter 16.4 takes

non-attachment to its extreme wherein such is the indifference to the body that even the closing and opening of eyelids is seen as a limitation.

On this way of *asanga* or non-attachment, Sri Bhagavan highlighted the sense of doership as the bondage, not the actions themselves. Surrender was the way to get rid of desire, total surrender leading to a stillness without a vestige of individuality. As pointed out by Arthur Osborne, Bhagavan’s path of *atma vichara* combined with *karma yoga* or harmonious action in the life of the world, is a new path created by him to meet the needs of our time. He himself had to be established in the Truth before he could establish this path for us.

Since, as in the Ashtavakra Gita, renunciation must follow attachment, Bhagavan has said that to think about one’s renunciation defeats the purpose of renouncing. “Surrender once for all and be done with the desire. So long as the sense of doership is retained there is the desire; that is also personality. If this goes the Self is found to shine forth pure. The sense of doership is the bondage and not the actions themselves. ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ Here stillness is total surrender without a vestige of individuality. Stillness will prevail and there will

be no agitation of mind. Agitation of mind is the cause of desire, the sense of doership and personality.”¹²

Bhagavan’s emphasis on persevering with the practice, hence effort, which would eventually turn effortless, points to both the practical and the higher state of being. The emphasis in the ensuing statement is on the words, ‘Remember who you are’: “The feeling ‘I work’ is the hindrance. Ask yourself ‘who works?’ Remember who you are. Then the work will not bind you; it will go on automatically. Make no effort either to work or to renounce; your effort is the bondage. What is destined to happen will happen....you cannot renounce or retain as you choose.”¹³ The firm advice was on Self abidance, a state that would never interfere with the effective discharge of duty any more than an actor’s awareness of his real status would interfere with his acting his part on stage.

In his book ‘Pathway to God in Hindi Literature’, the author R.D. Ranade comments on the twelfth century Hindi poet-saint Gulal’s poem *tatta hindolva*’s exclamations of the Self: “The Self is a child in the cradle of Reality. The cradle is miraculous,

having no poles to support it, no ropes to attach it to the poles. The bells attached to it ring continuously and lull the Self to Samadhi. The spiritual teacher gives it a swing and the cradle leaves the world altogether and flies into the empyrean and the Self, the supreme object of love, becomes dissociated with the world and entirely transcendent.”¹⁴

The second verse of chapter 5 gives us the second way to Self-realization, looking upon the universe as the same reality as the Self:

5.2 The universe rises from you like bubbles rising from the sea. Thus know the Atman to be one and enter thus into (the state of) Dissolution.

The image of bubbles rising from the sea indicates that bubbles are no different from the sea or that the phenomenal world is not other than the Self. This knowledge that all are One is the knowledge that the Atman alone exists.

How do we achieve this state of oneness? Chapter 11.2 points to the peace and desirelessness that comes from the certainty that Ishwara is the creator of all and ‘there is none else here’. This certainty is reiterated in

12 Talk 354, *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, 2000

13 *Maharshi’s Gospel*, 2002, pp. 4-5

14 See Mountain Path, October-December 2022, Songs of swings, cradle and Reality, p. 104

Chapter 11.7: when one knows ‘It is verily I from Brahma down to the clump of grass’, that one ‘becomes free from the conflict of thought, pure and peaceful, and turns away from what is attained and not attained.’

How does one realize the Self in all and all in the Self? Chapter 15.6 points to the simple but profound truth: be free from egoism and free from the sense of ‘mine’. The image of the manifestation of the universe rising like bubbles from the sea in Chapter 5.2 is replaced in Chapter 11.7 with waves of the ocean. Heralding our innate Intelligence as ‘O you Intelligence’, Ashtavakra urges us: ‘Be you free from fever’, the fever of worldliness and all the complexities that arise from our ignorance of the true nature of the universe. This point is reiterated in Chapter 15.12 where it is pointed out that as Pure Intelligence, this universe is no different from us, so who will accept and reject? And how and where? In his comments, Swami Nityaswarupananda points out that so long as we know the universe as phenomenal, there would necessarily be distinctions of good and evil, and of acceptance and rejection. Once we know the universe as Pure Intelligence, only ‘I’ exists; I cannot reject or accept myself, neither is there the mind, the instrument of acceptance

or rejection; nor the space or reality outside of me from where I can accept or reject.

In Chapter 15.14 we have the quintessential example of gold ornaments being nothing but gold. ‘Do bracelets, armlets and anklets appear different from gold?’ Hence in the very next verse (15.15) we are enjoined to give up all distinctions between the Self and the universe in the verse: “Completely give up such distinctions as ‘I am He’ and ‘I am not this’”. As pointed out in Chapter 18.38, without this Self-knowledge of oneness, the ignorant will continue to think and behave as if the world is real, and so try to get rid of it. But the world is real simply because we think it such. When we look upon it as non-different from the Self, it ceases to bind us.

Sri Bhagavan’s own words to us on this second route to Self-realization bear close resemblance to Ashtavakra’s words to Janaka: “Those who have discovered great truths have done so in the still depths of the Self. But really there are no ‘others’ to be helped. For the Realised Being sees only the Self, just as the goldsmith sees only the gold while valuing it in various jewels made of gold. When you identify yourself with the body, name and form are there. But when you transcend the body-consciousness, the

‘others’ also disappear. The Realised one does not see the world as different from Himself.”¹⁵

Sri Bhagavan responded with compassion to the needs of modern minds for processes and logic. A visitor raised the question that while Sri San-karacharya referred to the Supreme Self as real and the world as illusion, others saw the world as real. Which is true? Sri Bhagavan’s response:

“Both statements are true. They refer to different stages of development and are spoken from different points of view. The aspirant (abhyasi) starts with the definition, that which is real exists always; then he eliminates the world as unreal because it is changing. It cannot be real; ‘not this, not this!’ The seeker ultimately reaches the Self and there finds unity as the prevailing note. Then, that which was originally rejected as being unreal is found to be a part of the unity. Being absorbed in the Reality, the world also is Real. There is only being in Self-Realisation, and nothing but being.”¹⁶

Often using the example of the screen as Self and images on the screen as the illusory world, Sri Bhagavan has also used this to exemplify the Self

in its manifest and unmanifest forms, much like the Ashtavakra Gita’s images of the ocean and the sea, bubbles and waves. Sri Bhagavan: “Take the instance of moving pictures on the screen in the cinema-show....The jnani knows that the screen, the pictures and the sight thereof are but the Self. With the pictures the Self is in its manifest form; without the pictures It remains in the unmanifest form. To the jnani it is quite immaterial if the Self is in the one form or the other. He is always the Self.”¹⁷

We can draw enormous encouragement from his words on the power of the permanent and the lack of stamina of the impermanent: “Samsara is only in your mind. The world does not speak out, saying ‘I am the world’. Otherwise, it must be ever there - not excluding your sleep. Since it is not in sleep it is impermanent. Being impermanent it has no stamina. Having no stamina it is easily subdued by the Self.”¹⁸

At the higher level, he has said: “As is the tree so its seed....As a matter of truth there is neither seed nor tree. There is only Being.”¹⁹

Writes 11th century Virasaiva saint

¹⁵ *Maharshi’s Gospel*, p.24

¹⁶ Talk 33

¹⁷ *Maharshi’s Gospel*, p.47

¹⁸ Talk 251

¹⁹ Talk 439

Devara Dasimayya in one of his *vacanas*:

For what
shall I handle a dagger
O lord?
What can I pull it out of,
or stab it in,
when You are all the world,
O Ramanatha?²⁰

The third verse of Chapter 5 gives us the third way to Self-realisation by considering the phenomenal universe as illusory:

5.3 The universe, being manifested like the snake in the rope, does not exist in you who are pure, even though it is present to the senses; because it is unreal. Thus verily do you enter into (the state of) Dissolution.

This classical example of the snake in the rope indicates that the universe which has been superimposed on the Self is really non-existent. The illusion of the world can never affect the pure, purity being key, purity being the Self.

There are several verses in the Ashtavakra Gita that point to the jiva's realization of the hollowness of the world and its consequent rejection. Chapter 9.2 speaks of desires getting extinguished by observing the ways of men – the sufferings of others and

one's own. The next verse reiterates these in the form of 'the three fold misery': of one's own body and mind; those caused by animate and inanimate objects and those caused by cosmic forces like floods and earthquakes. In Chapter 15.17, one who knows for certain that this universe is an illusion and a nothing, becomes desireless and Pure Intelligence and finds peace, as if nothing exists. The result of this observation or knowledge is quietness, peace and desirelessness.

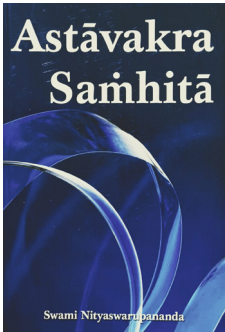
Ashtavakra raises the important question of duty and its endless hold on our lives. In Chapter 9.1, he asks: "Duties done and not done as well as the pairs of opposites – when do they cease and for whom? Knowing thus, be intent on renunciation and desireless through complete indifference to the world."

With regard to duty, Sri Bhagavan's emphasis was on work without attachment, work thus proceeding better than when one works with the sense of doership. Understanding that our perception of the world is so strong that it is not easily shaken off, he has said: "You are not instructed to shut your eyes from the world. You are only to 'see yourself' first and then see the whole world as the Self". If you consider yourself as the body the world

20 Ramanujan, A.K., *Speaking of Siva*, Penguin Classics, 1973, p. 82

appears to be external. If you are the Self the world appears as Brahman.”²¹

It is small wonder then that the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ is a tool which helps redirect attention from thought and perception to the thinker and perceiver of them. The real answer is aimed at coming not from the mind but from the absence of mind. For if we assume that the mind exists and seek to control it, “it amounts to mind controlling the mind, just like a thief turning out to be a policeman to catch the thief, i.e. himself. Mind persists in that way alone, but eludes itself.”²²



For what is the nature of the world, Sri Bhagavan asks? He answers: “It is perpetual change, a continuous interminable flux. A dependent, unselfconscious, ever-changing world cannot be real.”²³ And as has been pointed out in the Ashtavakra Gita, Sri Bhagavan

has often referred to suffering in the world as the spur to release ourselves from its thrall.

Basavanna, twelfth century political activist and social reformer who spread awareness through his Siva-focused Bhakti poetry writes:

They plunge
wherever they see water.
They circumambulate
every tree they see
How can they know you
O Lord
who adore
waters that run dry
trees that wither?²⁴

The fourth verse of Chapter 5 gives us the fourth way to Self-realisation – remaining unaffected by the phenomena of the universe, internal and external:

5.4 You are perfect and equanimous in misery and happiness, hope and despair, and life and death. Therefore even thus do you attain (the state of) Dissolution.

The refrain throughout these verses is on Dissolution. While the first three verses deal with the dissolution of the

21 Talk 272

22 Talk 43

23 *Maharshi's Gospel*, p. 52

24 *Speaking of Siva*, p. 67

external world, the fourth verse is the dissolution of the internal world – the world of thought and feelings. The moment we know ourselves as Atman, which alone is perfect, we go beyond all pairs of opposites and are unaffected by them.

There are verses in the Ashtavakra Gita that reiterate this dissolution. Chapter 13.4 indicates that a signifier for attachment is an insistence on action or inaction. So long as we have not realized the Self, we are bound to follow prescribed rules, prescribing certain disciplines, forbidding certain actions. When the Self is realized, there is neither association nor dissociation. Chapter 17.7 describes the state of the man of knowledge: he feels no desire for the dissolution of the universe nor an aversion to its existence, but lives happily on whatever subsistence comes his way. So long as he looks upon the world as the root of all his miseries, and tries to shun or destroy it, he lives in ignorance. Once he perceives the universe as the Self itself, his vision changes and everything appears as the Self alone.

In theory this looks impossible. Yet Bhagavan's method of Self-enquiry turns theory powerfully into practice. Sri Bhagavan has assured us that in

the quest for the Self, as one goes deeper and deeper, the real Self waits to receive us, and then whatever is to be done is done by something else and we, as individuals, have no hand in it:

Sri Bhagavan: "The thought 'Who am I?' will destroy all other thoughts, and like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed.....When other thoughts arise, one should not pursue them, but should inquire: 'To whom do they arise?' It does not matter how many thoughts arise. As each thought arises, one should inquire with diligence, 'To whom has this thought arisen?' The answer that would emerge would be 'to me'. Thereupon if one inquires 'Who am I?' the mind will go back to its source; and the thought that arose will become quiescent."²⁵

In one fell sweep, we can apply this to all the four recommended Yogas of Jnana, Bhakti, Raja and Karma. "What is action, or devotion, or union, or knowledge? It is to inquire, 'Whose is this action, or indifference, or separateness, or ignorance?' Inquiring thus, the ego vanishes. To abide as the Self, whereas these eight have never been, this is True existence."²⁶

Twelfth century poet Akka Mahadevi of the Lingayat Shaiva sect

25 *Who am I?*, Sri Ramanasramam, 2019, p.8

26 Reality in Forty Verses Supplement, verse 14

expresses a willing dissolution of the world in a compelling <i>vacana</i> :	ground.
Make me go from house to house	If it falls, before I pick it up, make a dog take it,
with arms stretched for alms.	O lord
If I beg, make them give nothing.	white as jasmine. ²⁷ ■
If they give, make it fall to the	[e-mail:neerak7@gmail.com]

Talk 574.

D.: What are *asanas* (postures or seats)? Are they necessary?

M.: Many *asanas* with their effects are mentioned in the *Yoga sastras*. The seats are the tiger-skin, grass, etc.; the postures are the 'lotus posture', the 'easy posture' and so on.

Why all these - only to know oneself? "I am the body; the body requires a seat; it is the earth," thinking thus, he seeks seats. But in sleep did he think of the support or the bed: the bed on the cot and the cot on the earth? Did he not exist in sleep too? How was he then?

The truth is - Being the Self, the ego rising up, confusing himself with the body, mistaking the world to be real, differentiating the objects, covered by the ignorance of the 'I'-conceit, he thinks wildly and also looks for seats. He does not understand that he himself is the Centre of all and thus forms the basis for all.

If questioned he talks of the effects of seats and footwear in terms of gravitation, magnetism and so on. Without them he imagines that the power of his austerities will dwindle away.

Where from do they all derive their power? He looks to the effects, seeks their causes and imagines them to be the power of seats and of footwear. A stone thrown up falls back to the ground. Why? Owing to the gravitation, says he. Well - are all these different from his thoughts? Think and say if the stone, the earth and gravity are different from his thoughts. They are all in his mind only. He is the Power and the wielder of it. He is the Centre of all and their support. He is also the Seat.

The seat is meant to make him sit firm. Where and how can he remain firm except in his own real state? This is the Seat.

What Can I Do?

Rupa Anand

Photo courtesy: Anil Mansukhani

Which diya to light
that isn't your light?

Which stuti to sing
that hasn't been sung?

Which pushp to offer
that isn't already yours?

What parayan to follow
that you haven't spoken?

What pradakshina to do
that you aren't aware of?

What shabda to utter
that you haven't heard?

Which teerth to visit
where you're not present?

What rupa to worship
that you are not?

Whatever I do
You already know
in that silence
of eternal existence.

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Baggage Check-In

V. T. Tripurari



Everyone else in the meeting room looked totally at ease. I was the only one tense. My sweat glands prickled just by guessing when to enter the room and choosing how far from the head of the table I should sit. Anticipating stress-triggered animal odours, I had sprayed on a thick chemical precautionary cover. Every aspect of my appearance: not too professional, not too casual, had been rehearsed in front of the mirror. I wore my studied intelligent enthusiastic look, only to notice that none seemed to be bothered much by the new person in their midst.

Only three working days into this new job, this was the first time I was attending the important weekly ‘office roundup’ sessions designed to update everyone on the stage of on-going

projects and to chart each person’s role in the path ahead. Our task was mammoth. Heal The Earth. HTE is the name of this non-profit set up by a group of school buddies who’d kept in touch as they had moved on to successful careers. They were concerned about the state of the world that their children were inheriting. This office of ten workers and two helpers was financed purely by their love and sharing. My job interviews were conducted by two of these donors, and I had been impressed by their optimism, wide awareness, and knowledge. Finance, business, law, arts, history, social networks in India as well as across the globe, seemed to be part of their daily background. I had not yet seen them in this office, but when I arrived everyone here knew who I

was and welcomed me into the work without any kind of formal introductions. I was shown a computer by a window that was for my use.

Since they weren't looking at me, I felt emboldened to try to figure them out. The whole office was gathered together for this weekly review session. The loudest and largest personality, Mrs Batra, with a regal aura of authority and a ready smile, introduced each topic. Some had iPads or phones into which they typed notes, while others read out their newest developments. I had a slim yellow paper munimji's khaata covered in typical red fabric to scribble in. I create my own code of symbols so my notes remain private. Mrs Batra with her swirls of very black hair appeared like the queen of clubs, so the clubs sign marked my notes of the important points she made: climate change is not a business opportunity. Answers/solutions are not to be sought through either money or technology, as these are most often the cause of the problems.

The other large person in the room was Mr. Mathur who did not speak a word, but often grunted as he shifted his head to look thoughtfully at another spot of wall or table. I drew a brick, but wrote nothing next to it. A pair of glasses represented the

lady with eyes that looked as though enlarged by high power lenses. The lady with glasses was represented by a dolphin because the nose on which her glasses kept slipping looked like a river dolphin. Next to the fish I wrote what I had to research: year-wise and state-wise change/ definition of forest/ area figures affected by change of definition.

The guy with spikey hair became a childlike sun, a circle with radiating short straight lines. Others of the team were a hockey stick, he knocked a punch; a falling leaf, for speaking gently and almost inaudibly; a musical note for the high-pitched voice; a bull's horns for the one who interrupted... I sure was making this meeting also be fun. I marked all the things I had to follow up with my specialization in data-mining with an O. That is what I felt like, open and empty, allowing all to flow through me unhindered. I've been greatly influenced by reading Ramana Maharshi. So I keep turning my awareness to what I am, other than this outer form that others see. Via these symbols I recognize that those around me are projections of my mind. Through my doodles I feel a role in creating them.

This morning, no, actually all through the weekend, as I rehearsed

my clothes, my walk, quite sure I should reach the meeting early, but reaching early I had to plan what I'd say as others entered, whether I'd sit or wait till others sat, whether to lean on the wall or stand by the table. I kept trying to stop my mental churning by remembering Ramana's words, that foolish are those on the train who carry their luggage on their heads, instead of just keeping it down. And relaxing. Here I was, finally at the meeting, and I'd let go.

As I doodled in my book, listening to all the reports the others were presenting, I said softly, "The poorest are the world's weather warriors." As the topic shifted to creating awareness I remarked, "Advertising constantly teaches that consuming more brings happiness, so people assume that consuming less will cause unhappiness. We need to communicate that true joy is in using less and less."

I hadn't thought about these things. The words just came as I listened to the others and drew my hieroglyphic

notes. The relaxed attitude of the others had made me lose the silly trepidation that had rotted my weekend. I knew I was very lucky to have got a job in such a place. The pay wasn't high, opportunities for a rising career trajectory seemed rather unclear, but I just knew that I belonged. I was going to give my best. Work hard and uncover as much fact as I could from all the usual obfuscations created by manipulating numbers. We have no time to lose. The future of the planet is at stake.

"Since Trips seems to have an understanding and a way with words..." It was the queen of clubs winding up the meeting. "Please take some time off numbers. Take a look at our social media project. I've just mailed the draft report to you. Read it and come and discuss it with me at 4:30. Ok?"

Hey! Trips! That must mean me. Ramana, you're right. The train is carrying my luggage. ■

[e-mail:tripurarivt@gmail.com]

Talk 543.

Many visitors came on one occasion and they all saluted Sri Bhagavan with the single prayer, "Make me a *bhakta*. Give me *moksha*." After they left Sri Bhagavan said, thinking aloud: All of them want *bhakti* and *moksha*. If I say to them, 'Give yourself to me' they will not. How then can they get what they want?

॥ श्री गणेशाय नमः ॥

Shubh Aarambh

INVOCATION TO BLESS THE REINTRODUCTION OF A HINDI SECTION IN DIRECT PATH

One day in 1912, a potter came to Virupaksha Cave with a small image of Sri Ganesa that he had made and presented it to Sri Bhagavan. Easwara Swami suggested that both he and Sri Bhagavan should write a verse to celebrate the occasion.

This is what Sri Bhagavan wrote:

He who begot you as a child
you made into a beggar;

as a child yourself
you then lived everywhere
just to support your own huge belly;

I too am a child.

Oh Child God in that niche!
Encountering one
born after you,
is your heart made of stone?



अष्टावक्र गीता और भगवान के उपदेश

नीरा कश्यप

इसी अंक में प्रकाशित नीरा कश्यप के लेख 'The Ashtavakra Gita and Bhagavan's Teachings' के चुनिन्दा अंशों का अनुवाद प्रस्तुत है।

— संपादक

अष्टावक्र की कथा महाभारत के वन पर्व में आती है। उनकी माता सुजाता और पिता कहोर थे। कहोर वेदों के विद्वान थे और बहुधा अपनी पत्नी को पवित्र मंडल ऊँचे स्वर में पढ़कर सुनाते थे। अपनी माता के गर्भ में रहते हुए अष्टावक्र ने एक दिन अचानक कहा — “पिताजी, माँ के गर्भ में रहते हुए ही, आपकी कृपा से, मैं वेदों को सीख चुका हूँ। लेकिन मुझे खेद है कि आप बहुधा अपने पाठ में त्रुटियाँ करते हैं।” इसके लिए उन्हें उनके पिता ने आठ शारीरिक विकृतियों के साथ जन्म लेने का श्राप दिया था। इसलिए जन्म के बाद उनका नाम अष्टावक्र (आठ विकृतियाँ) रखा गया। विपन्नता की यंत्रणा में कहोर राजा जनक की राज सभा में राजसी संरक्षण के लिए विनती करने गये। वहाँ वह वंडी (राजा वरुण के पुत्र), जो राजा जनक की राज सभा में एक दार्शनिक थे और वेदों में पारंगत थे, से शास्त्रार्थ में हार गए। तत्पश्चात् कहोर को राजा वरुण

की सेवा में पुजारी के रूप में रखा गया और वह अपने परिवार से ओझल हो गए।

बारह वर्ष के होने पर अष्टावक्र एक महायज्ञ करने के साथ-साथ अपने पिता की खोज करने के लिए जनक के राज्य में पहुंचे। जैसे ही राजा के परिचारकों ने राजा के यज्ञशाला तक जाने के लिए मार्ग को सुगम करना आरम्भ किया, अष्टावक्र ने कहा कि एक शास्त्रज्ञ ब्राह्मण होने के नाते वह राजा से पहले मार्ग में प्राथमिकता का अधिकार रखते हैं। प्रभावित होकर राजा जनक ने अष्टावक्र से आगे बढ़ने का अनुरोध किया। राजसभा में जनक ने विभिन्न प्रश्नों को प्रस्तुत करके अष्टावक्र के शास्त्रीय ज्ञान का परीक्षण किया। अष्टावक्र ने फिर अपने पिता के पुराने प्रतिद्वंद्वी वंडी को पारम्परिक ज्ञान और आत्मज्ञान के बलपर हराकर अपने पिता की स्वतंत्रता पुरस्कार के रूप में प्राप्त की। समंगा नदी में स्नान करने और अपने पिता का आशीर्वाद प्राप्त करने के पश्चात् वह

विकृत लड़का पानी से बाहर निकलकर अपनी विकृतियों से पूर्णतः उबर गया।

‘अष्टावक्र गीता’ उपनिषदों की गुरु-शिष्य शैली का अनुसरण गुरु अष्टावक्र और उनके शिष्य राजा जनक के बीच संवाद के रूप में करती है। शिक्षण सरल और सीधा है लेकिन यह प्रतिपादन में अटल है और इसका उद्देश्य परिपक्व साधकों के लिए है, जिन्होंने साधना के माध्यम से अपने मन को शुद्ध करने की चेष्टा की है और किसी भी दूसरे सिद्धांत, आध्यात्मिक अथवा भौतिक, के अस्वीकरण के माध्यम से आत्मा के पूर्ण रूप का बोध करने में सक्षम हैं। चूँकि जनक परिपक्व होते हुए आत्मा का बोध करते हैं, उनके बोध का वर्णन कुछ अध्यायों में किया गया है जिसमें पाठक देखता है कि दृश्यमान संसार की असत्यता आंतरिक मनोवैज्ञानिक संसार की असत्यता को देखने का उपक्रमण है, और अंततः दोनों मायावी हैं।

यह लेख पाँचवें अध्याय पर केंद्रित है जो चार श्लोकों में आत्मबोध के लिए चार मार्ग देता है। पहला श्लोक असंग से संबंधित है। अपने ऊपर अध्यारोपित मायावी संसार का आधार होने के नाते अनन्त आत्मा का किसी भी वस्तु के साथ कोई संपर्क अथवा लगाव नहीं है। दूसरा श्लोक ब्रह्मांड को आत्मा के सत्य के समान देखता है — केवल एक ही आत्मा है। तीसरा दृश्यमान ब्रह्मांड को

मायावी मानता है। चौथे श्लोक में है कि आत्मा आंतरिक और बाह्य ब्रह्मांडों की घटनाओं से अप्रभावित रहती है। इन पद्धतियों में अतिव्यापन होगा क्योंकि वे संसृत हैं, पृथक् नहीं। ये पद्धतियाँ श्री भगवान के उपदेशों का सैद्धांतिक आधार भी बनाती हैं, जो सिद्धान्त पर मनन करते हैं परंतु शीघ्रता से व्यावहारिक ढंगों और क्रियाओं की ओर बढ़ते हैं, जिससे कि जिस भी पथका उपयोग किया जाए, उसे साधना अधिभावित करे।

अध्याय १६.६ से हम सीखते हैं कि संसार नहीं अपितु उसके प्रति आसक्ति ही समस्त दुखों का मूल कारण है। संसार से आसक्त हुआ व्यक्ति दुःख से बचने के लिए उसका त्याग करना चाहता है, लेकिन आसक्ति से मुक्त व्यक्ति दुःख से मुक्त होता है और संसार में भी दुःख रहित रह सकता है। अध्याय १६.४ अनासक्ति को उसके चरम पर ले जाता है जिसमें शरीर के प्रति ऐसी विरक्ति होती है कि पलकों के झपकने को भी बाधा के रूप में देखा जाता है।

असंग के इस मार्ग पर श्री भगवान ने कर्तापन को बन्धन बताया है, कर्मों को नहीं। आत्मसमर्पण लालसाओं से छुटकारा पाने का पथ है, पूर्ण आत्मसमर्पण व्यक्तित्व के अवशेष के बिना स्थिरता की ओर ले जाता है। जैसा कि आर्थर ओसबोर्न ने बताया है, कर्म योग, अर्थात् सांसारिक जीवन में सामंजस्यपूर्ण कर्म, के साथ

संयुक्त भगवान का आत्म-विचार का मार्ग हमारे समय की आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने के लिए उनके द्वारा बनाया गया एक नया मार्ग है। वह पहले स्वयं सत्य में स्थापित हुए और तत्पश्चात् उन्होंने हमारे लिए यह मार्ग स्थापित किया।

चूँकि, 'अष्टावक्र गीता' के अनुसार, त्याग को आसक्ति के उपरांत आना चाहिए, भगवान ने कहा है कि त्याग के बारे में सोचने से त्याग का उद्देश्य विफल हो जाता है। भगवान का दृढ़ता से अभ्यास करने पर बल देना, और प्रयास पर भी, जो अन्ततः सरल हो जाता है, अस्तित्व की व्यावहारिक और उच्चतर स्थिति की ओर संकेत करता है। दृढ़ उपदेश आत्मस्थ होने पर था — एक ऐसी स्थिति जो कर्तव्य के प्रभावी निर्वाहण में उतना ही हस्तक्षेप करेगी जितनी एक अभिनेता की अपनी वास्तविक स्थिति के बारे में जागरूकता मंच पर उसके अभिनय में हस्तक्षेप करती है।

पाँचवे अध्याय का दूसरा श्लोक ब्रह्मांड और आत्मा की वास्तविकताओं को समान रूप से देखकर हमें आत्मबोध का दूसरा मार्ग देता है:

५.२ ब्रह्मांड आपसे उसी प्रकार उठता है जैसे बुलबुले समुद्र से उठते हैं। अतः आत्मा को एक जानें और विलयन की स्थिति में प्रवेश करें।

समुद्र से उठने वाले बुलबुलों का बिम्ब इंगित करता है कि बुलबुले समुद्र से अलग नहीं हैं अथवा यह कि दृश्यमान संसार आत्मा से पृथक नहीं है। सबके एक होने का ज्ञान इस बात का ज्ञान है कि केवल आत्मा का अस्तित्व है।

बहुधा चित्रपट को आत्मा और चित्रपट पर चित्रों को मायावी संसार मानकर श्री भगवान ने इस उदाहरण का उपयोग आत्मा के व्यक्त और अव्यक्त रूपों का दृष्टांत देने के लिए भी किया है, 'अष्टावक्र गीता' के महासागर और समुद्र व बुलबुलों और लहरों के बिम्बों के समान।

अष्टावक्र गीता में कई श्लोक हैं जो जीव के संसार के खोखलेपन का बोध और परिणाम स्वरूप उसकी अस्वीकृति की ओर संकेत करते हैं। अध्याय ६.२ मनुष्यों के ढंगों को देखने से लालसाओं के समाप्त होने की बात करता है — दूसरों और स्वयं की पीड़ा। अगला श्लोक इनपर बल देकर 'त्रिविध ताप' को प्रस्तुत करता है: निज शरीर और मन के; चेतन और जड़ अस्तित्वों के कारण होने वाले, और बाढ़ और भूकंप के रूप में ब्रह्मांडीय शक्तियों के कारण होने वाले। अध्याय १५-१७ में बताया जाता है कि जो निश्चित रूप से जानता है कि यह ब्रह्मांड एक अस्तित्वहीन माया है, वह इच्छाहीन और शुद्ध बुद्धि बन जाता है और शांति पाता

है, जैसे कि कुछ भी उपस्थित नहीं है। इस अवलोकन अथवा ज्ञान का परिणाम नीरवता, शांति, और इच्छाहीनता है।

यह कोई आश्चर्य की बात नहीं है कि 'मैं कौन हूँ?' का अनुसंधान एक ऐसा साधन है जो ध्यान को विचार और अनुभूति से उनके विचारक और अनुभवकर्ता की ओर अनुप्रेषित करने में सहायता करता है। वास्तविक उत्तर मन से नहीं अपितु मन की अनुपस्थिति से आता है।

श्री भगवान पूछते हैं कि संसार की प्रकृति क्या है। वह उत्तर देते हैं: "वह एक निरंतर परिवर्तन है, एक निरंतर अनन्त प्रवाह। एक अधीन, अचेत, सदा परिवर्तनशील संसार सत्य नहीं हो सकता है।" और जैसा कि 'अष्टावक्र गीता' में बताया गया है, श्री भगवान ने बहुधा हमारी सांसारिक पीड़ा को स्वयं को संसार के नियंत्रण से मुक्त करने की प्रेरणा के रूप में संदर्भित किया है।

'अष्टावक्र गीता' में ऐसे श्लोक हैं जो आंतरिक विलयन पर बारम्बार बल देते हैं। अध्याय १३.४ इंगित करता है कि आसक्ति का प्रतीक कर्म अथवा अकर्म पर बल देता है। जब तक हमें आत्मा की अनुभूति नहीं होती है, तब तक हम कुछ अनुशासनों को निर्धारित करने वाले और कुछ कार्यों को निषेध करने वाले निर्धारित नियमों का पालन करने के लिए

बाध्य हैं। जब आत्मा की अनुभूति होती है, तब न तो लगाव होता है और न ही अलगाव। अध्याय १७.७ एक ज्ञानी की स्थिति का वर्णन करता है – वह ब्रह्मांड के विलयन की कोई इच्छा नहीं करता है और न ही उसके अस्तित्व के प्रति घृणा, अपितु जो भी साधन उसके पास आता है, उससे वह प्रसन्न रहता है। जब तक वह संसार को अपने समस्त दुखों की जड़ के रूप में देखता है और उसे त्यागने अथवा नष्ट करने का प्रयास करता है, वह अज्ञानता में रहता है। जब वह ब्रह्मांड को आत्मा के रूप में देखता है, उसकी दृष्टि परिवर्तित हो जाती है और उसे सब कुछ केवल आत्मा के रूप में दिखाई देता है।

सिद्धांत रूप में यह असंभव लगता है। तद्यपि भगवान की आत्म-अन्वेषण की पद्धति सिद्धांत को शक्तिशाली रूप से व्यवहार में परिवर्तित करती है। श्री भगवान ने हमें आश्वासन दिया है कि आत्मा की खोज में जैसे-जैसे हम और गहरे जाते हैं, आत्मा हमारा स्वागत करने की प्रतीक्षा करती है, और फिर जो भी कर्म किया जाना है वह किसी और अस्तित्व द्वारा किया जाता है और व्यक्तिगत रूप से हमारा उसमें कोई हाथ नहीं होता है। ■

[e-mail:neerak7@gmail.com]

The Cosmic Rhythm

S. Nambi

The cosmic rhythm – an orderly eternal happening and experience
The basic rhythm for the birth and death of the Universe
Successive steps in creation and destruction
The animate and inanimate are tuned to this rhythm of eternal dance

The terrifying lightning, deafening thunder and soothing rain
The spiraling flow of rivers, rivulets and the gushing streams
The howling wind, uprooting hurricane and the soul-stirring gales
The eruptions of volcanoes are tuned to this rhythm of eternal dance

The twinkling stars, the blazing sun and cooling moon
The waving tender leaves and blooming flowers
The vehicles and the immovable mountains
The changing seasons are tuned to this rhythm of eternal dance

The cry of painful births and deaths
The hearty laughs and the anguished tears
The curling waves and the roars of animals
The songs of birds are tuned to this rhythm of eternal dance

Yesterday is past, an illustrated history
Tomorrow is in the womb
of mother nature, a dream
Today is a reality and exists
in front of you
Oh Man, dance with joy
to this eternal cosmic rhythm!

—First published in
Tattvaloka, August 1982

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Photo Illustration: Bharati Mirchandani

A Visit to Sri Ramanasramam



Ramana Kendra made arrangements for a group of devotees from Delhi to visit and stay at Sri Ramanasramam. This trip was arranged for the first time. Nine devotees blissfully stayed there from 25 December 2022 to 01 January 2023.

Messages from Devotees

With Bhagavan's grace our group completed a peaceful and enriching trip which was facilitated by Anuraagji (Secretary, Ramana Kendra, Delhi) and the president of Sri Ramanasramam. Words are not enough to express gratitude for this spiritual sojourn that led us into our own selves, away from the tensions of the world.

The ashram was beautifully green, clean, and deeply endowed with positive energy. Dr. Srinivasa Murthy very

kindly helped us with settling down in the guest house. Simple and delicious meals were served in the ashram with great devotion and love.

The main shrine, the old hall, the Matrubhuteshwara temple, Bhagavan's Mahanirvana room, the library, the book depot: all were full of life. We soaked in every moment with gratitude. The old trees in the ashram were a joy to behold. They were the epitome of wisdom and it appeared as if they were speaking of the times when Bhagavan sat there and helped everyone with his grace.

The experience of *girivalam*, visiting the Arunachaleshwara temple, and the trek to the caves on the divine hill have changed most of us forever. We have begun to understand what delving in means and marvel at the

enormous tapas that Maharshi and his devotees have done. Tears welled in my eyes many times during this visit. My eleven-year-old daughter experienced the same. We hope every truth seeker gets an opportunity to visit the ashram and Arunachala.

--- *Garima Aggarwal*

We were lucky to be able to come to Ramanasramam during the last week of 2022 to have Bhagavan's darshan. Despite the heavy rush the ashram accommodated all of us comfortably. We spent the whole week attending the *pooja* in the morning and evening and also the daily *Parayanam* in front of the shrine. We went around the Arunachala hill, and visited Skandasramam, Virupaksha cave, and the Arunachaleshwara temple. The library was well-stocked with books on Bhagavan. We found solace in reading some of these rare books.

On the whole, the trip was satisfying and purposeful. I thank Dr. Srinivasa Murthy and his staff for their untiring efforts in maintaining the various ashram activities every day.

--- *C. Subramanian*

I am grateful to Anuraagji for the blissful experience I had in Ramanasramam. This experience is beyond words as it connected me to my inner self. The serene and tranquil atmosphere of the ashram went so deep into me that I can't express it in words. I would love to come here time and again.

--- *Pallavi Sinha*

To me it was like my Home. I had an urge to settle there and serve the ashram.

--- *Lalit Kumar*

Talk 541.

A certain visitor asked Sri Bhagavan:

There is so much misery in the world because wicked men abound in the world. How can one find happiness here?

M.: All are gurus to us. The wicked say by their evil deeds, "Do not come near me". The good are always good. So then, all persons are like gurus to us.



06th November



Honouring Mahalakshmi Suryanandan near the first anniversary of her passing, an evening of bhajans written and composed by her was organized at the Kendra. Her ardent devotion sustained by Bhagavan's grace were expertly reflected by the singers and musicians led by Jayanthi Aiyar, making the hall reverberate with sublime vibrations.

--- BM

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwhf-e7EnU4>

13th November

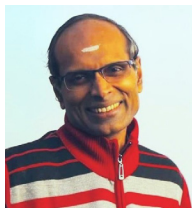
The last two verses of *Upadesa Saram* were taken up by Michael James. He said that when we see ourselves as we actually are, without any adjuncts, we see God and experience the supreme happiness which transcends bondage and

liberation. Being as we are is the real tapas which involves no bodily austerities.

--- AS

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scXasHg6SBo>

27th November



Raghavji spoke on the first two questions and answers in the text of *Self-Enquiry*. He said that the very acquisition of a limited embodiment is a source of misery. Therefore, one should enquire about one's real nature which is bodiless. Doership always comes packaged with misery. It must be diluted through self-enquiry.

--- AS

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fpOtuTPxSZs>

06th December



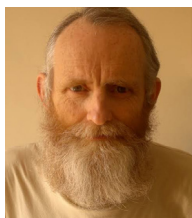
The Deepam festival was celebrated with fervour at the Kendra. The celebrations started with the worship of Ganesh. Sankalpam and Deepam aavahanam followed soon after. The recitation of Veda Parayanam emitted positive energy. The Deepam puja concluded with the place-

ment of the lighted Deepam at the top of the Kendra.

--- AS

Online link to this event: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TIYNOM85to>

15th January



Michael James began a series of discourses on the melodious *Anma Viddai*. He spoke on the first verse and said that everything perceived by awareness could be illusory but awareness itself can't be an illusion. Even when one is aware of oneself as a body, the clarity of one's fundamental self-awareness doesn't perish.

--- AS

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-2ocOtSYs0>

22nd January

Raghavji continued the series of lectures on Self-Enquiry. He said egoity is implied in every thought and action and it gives a basis to all other thoughts. If this 'I' thought is resolved through Self-knowledge, then all its other manifestations in the form of various thoughts and identifications will come to an end.

--- AS

Online link to this talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5hE1HholFO>

Talk 542.

'A' asked: I often desire to live in solitude where I can find all I want with ease, so that I may devote all my time to meditation only. Is such a desire good or bad?

M.: Such thoughts will bestow a *janma* (reincarnation) for their fulfilment. What does it matter where and how you are placed? The essential point is that the mind must always remain in its source. There is nothing external which is not also internal. The mind is all. If the mind is active even solitude becomes like a market place. There is no use closing your eyes. Close the mental eye and all will be right. The world is not external to you. The good persons will not care to make plans previous to their actions. Why so? For God who has sent us into the world has His own plan and that will certainly work itself out.

Letters to the Editor



We have started this new segment, Letters to the Editor with the aim of relating more closely with our readers. We would truly welcome feedback and suggestions. These should be sent directly to the Editor: editor.dp@rkdelhi.org with the subject line: 'Letters to the Editor'

Dear Advait,

The latest issue looks really good. Once again you have done a great job putting it all together. Congratulations!

Michael Highburger

Dear Advait,

Your editorial was lucid and gave an eloquent description of the life and times of Bhagavan whose day of 'birth' closely corresponded with Edison's incandescent discovery! I was also touched by Neera Kashyap's reminiscences of Sri Mani Anna. Overall, the issue has excellent layout and graphic design and I must commend you and your team for the efforts. The other articles too are well-curated by you and others involved and are a testimony to your devotion to Bhagavan and his path.

Raghav Kumar Dwivedula

Dear Advait,

I read the November 2022 - January 2023 issue of *Direct Path* with interest and loved the way this issue reached out both to the head and the heart. It had warm, human, and personalized stories interspersed with narratives that focussed on the philosophy and teachings of Bhagavan. The teachings and insights emerge gently from human stories. Overall, it was a light yet intense and joyful yet thought-provoking issue. The design, colours, and visuals were lovely.

Sonalini Mirchandani



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I, Mr. Justice K. Ramamoorthy (Retd.), hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

SD/-



1st March 2023

(Signature of the publisher)

*The results of Karma (Action) pass away,
and yet leave seeds that cast the agent
into an ocean of Karma.
Karma yields no salvation*

Ramana Maharshi {Upadesa Saram (2)}

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