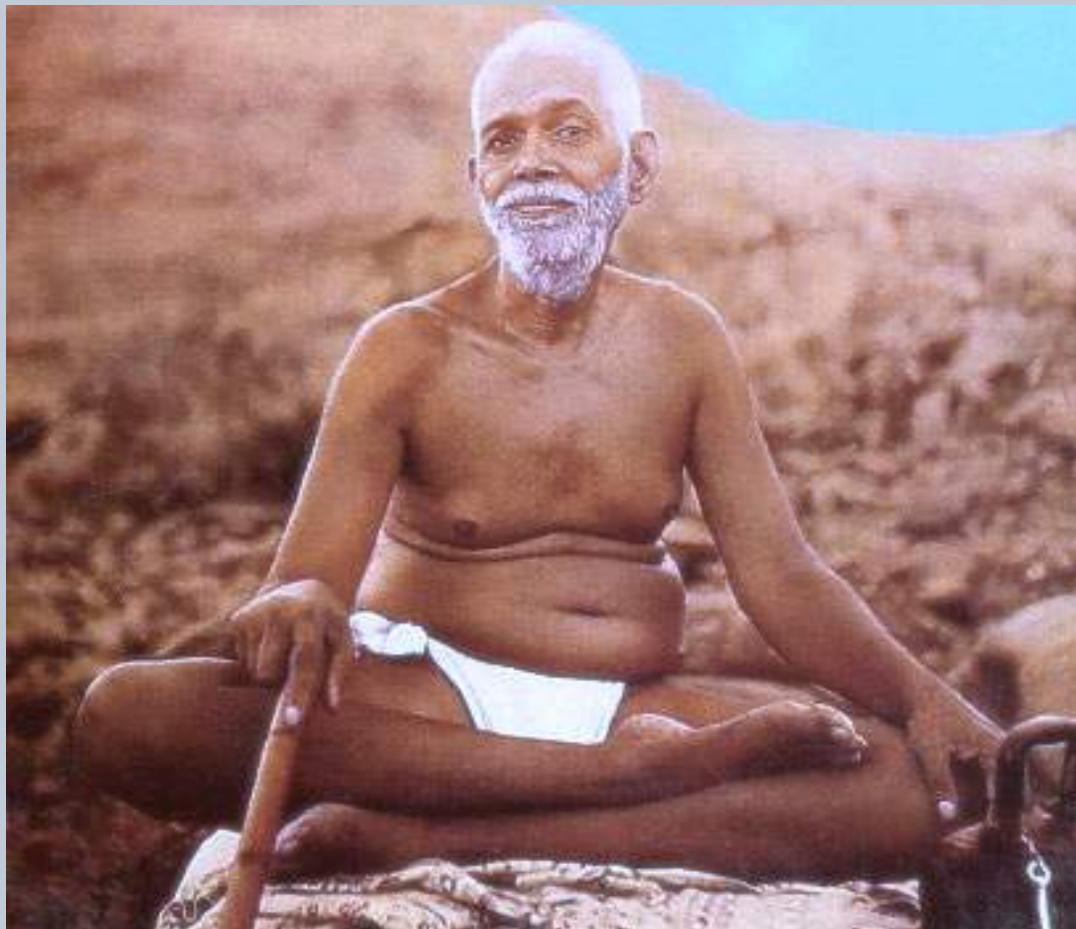


# NEWSLETTER

Ramana Maharshi Foundation U.K.  
Autumn-Winter 2022



Newsletter  
Autumn-Winter 2022

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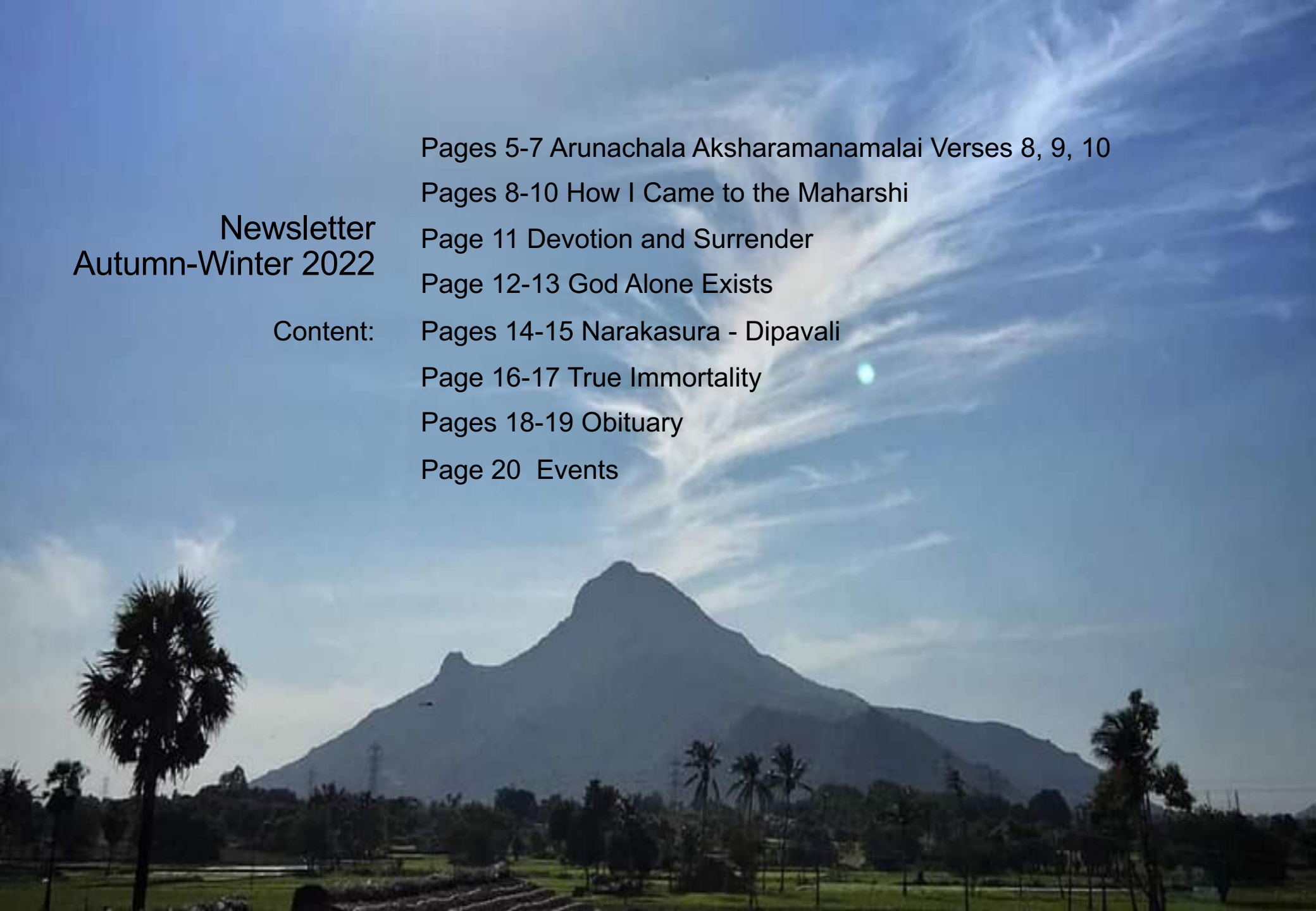
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To those who have not realised the Self, as well as to those who have, the word 'I' refers to the body, but with this difference, that for those who have not realised, the 'I' is confined to the body whereas for those who have realised the Self within the body the 'I' shines as the limitless Self."

*(Ulladu Narpadu- verse 17)*



## Welcome to this Autumn-Winter 2022 edition of the RMFUK newsletter.



In 1945 PV Sastri and his wife came to Ramasramam after the loss of their eldest son. Their specific intention was to ask Bhagavan for their son's life to be restored. Sastri's account of the Guru's grace bestowed upon them and the peace that slowly developed for them is presented in this edition.

Bhagavan has repeatedly said devotion and surrender is key to losing this fear of death.

One of Bhagavan's cardinal teachings is that it is because we erroneously take the body as real that we experience such anguish when someone passes away. In GV Subaramayya's reminiscences he records that the ashramites all felt much when a devotee who was with Bhagavan continuously passed away all of a sudden. Bhagavan remarked "That which is not real (the body) you take as real and anguish is the only result."

The excerpts from Kanakkammal's *Cherished Memories* and Suri Nagamma's *Letters* speak to this particular teaching. A realised person has no attachment to the body, whilst for those who have not realised the attachment to the body is Hell.

This is beautifully described by Muruganar in his verses on True Immortality in *Garland of Guru's Sayings*.

We end this Newsletter with a tribute to Sri V Subramanian, popularly known as Mani Anna to all those who visited the ashram.

## Arunachala Aksharamanamai

### Verse 8

ūrcuṛ ruḷamviṭā tuṇaiḱkaṇ ṭaṭaṅkiṭa  
vuṇṇala kaikkāṭ ṭaruṇācalā

#### Paraphrase:

*[Arunachala!] Compelled by its inherited dispositions my mind wanders ceaselessly amongst the things of the world. May you in grace reveal to it the exquisite beauty of your all-embracing Self, so that, contemplating you ceaselessly, it subsides irreversibly in you.*

#### Commentary:

[The word] *ūr* [meaning *town*] is used first to mean the *world* and after that *the things of the world*. [The words] *your beauty* refer to the beauty of the Self, Arunachala, the pure consciousness which endures and shines in its attribute-free, self-luminous and changeless nature, and is fundamentally different from all the worldly phenomena which appear as the sport of *maya* to delude the mind. Having seen how the mind, which has not yet inwardly perceived the unique and glorious beauty of the Real in its unchanging, eternally single nature, runs off and wanders amongst the worldly phenomena which appear other than it, due to its conditioned habits over endless time, Bhagavan petitions Arunachala in prayer to bestow his grace and reveal to the mind this same Self-nature of his, in order that its wandering may come to an end. Just as here he says, 'reveal your beauty (*aḷakai*)', he says further on [in v.75] 'in grace reveal your splendour (*pavicu*), and [in v.32] 'may you reveal your form of light (*jyoti uru*)'. The sense is this: if the mind, which is deluded on experiencing the attractive nature of outward appearances and wanders endlessly amongst the phenomena of the world, gains within itself the uninterrupted experience of the beauty of Arunachala's Self-nature, which is far greater than all the beauty the world has to offer, it will at once forget all those things entirely, subside permanently into that Self-nature and experience unalloyed peace.



## Arunachala Aksharamanamai

Verse 9

ṇaiyaḷit tippō teṇaikkala vāviṭi  
lituvō vāṇmai yaruṇācalā

### Paraphrase:

*[Arunachala!] If, now that I have attained maturity, you do not entirely destroy the virginity (that is my ego) and embrace me (so that I unite as one with you), would that be a manly act on the part of you, the most excellent of men?*

### Commentary:

The heroine, overwhelmed by a love and passion which is entirely beyond her control, here addresses her lover frankly and openly, going against worldly convention and abandoning the modesty which is dearer than life itself to girls like herself. It should be understood that, since fidelity [to the one she loves] is far more important than any such consideration of modesty, it is entirely proper in a way that the heroine should speak in this manner. Why should this be so? Because the great ones have declared, 'Modesty is greater than life itself, but unblemished fidelity is superior even to that.' Leaving this topic for now, those who in the world consent to their own destruction are the rarest of the rare. There are those who not only confront such a dear loss - the loss of their own self - with great eagerness, but even seek it out, summoning with a bold wave the Death which has been biding its time, waiting for an opportunity to consume their dear soul. However, even amongst such men, Bhagavan must indeed be the bravest of the brave, for [not only did he consent to his own death but] more eagerly even than they, he provoked Lord Arunachala, the killer of death itself to attack him, calling to Him and summoning Him to battle. And is it not the fruit of such daring, that he now dwells with Lord Arunachala in the unsurpassed bliss of the Self, the all-embracing non-dual state, the highest good, with Arunachala as himself, and himself as Arunachala, shining as a guiding light [illuminating] in that holy place [the way to salvation] for mankind like the [Karttika] beacon on Arunachala[’s summit]!



# Arunachala Aksharamanamai

## Verse 10

ēṇinta vuṛakka meṇaippiṛa riḷukka  
vituvuṇak kaḷakō varuṇācalā

### Paraphrase:

*[Arunachala!] O why is this pretence of sleep on your part? I belong to you alone. So when wicked strangers, who have no connection whatsoever with me - desire, anger and the rest - drag me away on the path of evil, is this conduct (in which you do nothing, your face averted as if you had not seen it) consonant with your grace, (you who as Pacupati are the Lord of my soul)?*

### Commentary:

Nakkīrar [sings], 'When you, whose duty is to watch over me, do not protect me, to whom else might that burden fall, Arumukaṇ?' In the phrase 'this sleep', it has been taken that feigned sleep, not natural sleep, is meant. In reality the three-eyed Lord whose eyes never closed - the Arunachala Siva, the pure being-consciousness of the Self - is in his very nature unsleeping, other than in a feigned pretence of it. To indicate that the young men, who in the heat of lust drag her, a virgin, away by force and defile her chaste nature, have in reality no other relationship with her whatsoever, she says 'when others drag me off.' She says 'Is this worthy of you?' because, when she is under attack from evil, lecherous men, it is the duty of a strong husband to fully protect the honour and chastity of a faithful wife - who is helpless and has no recourse other than to him - and thus keep her from dishonour and defilement. If he fails to do so, this is not fitting conduct for him, she says. The mind sets out on the path of chastity, that is to say, *bhakti - devotion*, but deeply evil and sinful tendencies drag it away in the wicked paths of the sensory world, just as the lustful Kauravas [dragged away] the chaste Panchali (Draupadi). In order to illustrate this, she refers metaphorically to the abstract qualities, lust, anger and the rest, as sinners, regarding them as human beings and calling them 'other people', in the same way that Valluvar says, 'poverty is a matchless sinner', [Tiru-k-kuṛal v.1042].



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## How I Came to the Maharshi

P. V. Sastri

*Which is the greater miracle, to change the date on a tombstone or to change a man's heart?*

In May 1945 my eldest son, who was 23 years old, married, devout and a very promising young man, passed away. The event was so terrible and caused such grief that it was thought I would not survive it. I neglected practically all my worldly duties for some time. Later I was somehow attracted to Ramanashram and went there with the whole of my family. Ordinarily people, under such circumstances, would go to obtain peace and get rid of their sorrow. But that was not the idea of myself and my wife. Having read about Sri Krishna's bringing Sandipani's son back to life, we were so mad as to think of getting our son restored to life by the grace of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. We were prepared to sacrifice our all for that.

We left for Tiruvannamalai and, reaching the Ashram at 11 a.m. entered the hall where Bhagavan used to sit. Our one idea was to beseech him to bring our son back to life; but despite our intense desire we found that we could not open our mouths to speak. We simply sat silent till Bhagavan rose for dinner and every one went out. Then we too went back to where we lodged. We went again in the afternoon, when devotees assembled in the hall, with the same purpose but with the same result. In that way eight days passed. Each morning and afternoon we wanted to implore Bhagavan to bring our son back to life but we could not utter a word in his presence. On the eighth evening we talked it over together on coming out of the hall and decided that it was no use staying any longer since our purpose had not been fulfilled. So we decided to leave next morning.



At that moment a gentleman of the name of Subbarao met us. He was formerly a pleader, I think at Nellore, and had come to Tiruvannamalai and settled down as one of the resident devotees. We had made friends, perhaps because I also am a pleader. He asked me what we were talking about, so I told him our whole story. I admitted that we felt peace in Bhagavan's presence, but the moment we left the hall our grief burst out again like a volcanic eruption; and yet we were unable to speak out and put our desire before Bhagavan.

Mr. Subbarao promised to take us to Sri Bhagavan next day and introduce us to him. We agreed and next day, on being introduced, told Bhagavan about our grief and in a general way asked for his help. Sri Bhagavan nodded his head and said "Seri, Seri" (All right, All right). But we still found ourselves unable to talk any more, still less to tell him what it was that we really wanted. Again we felt constrained to sit there speechless.

That evening we decided to leave, since even the intervention of Mr. Subbarao had not helped us. But Ramana would not let us go. The thought occurred to me that I should buy some books published by the Ashram, so I went to the bookstall. The gentleman in charge was in meditation, but he opened his eyes immediately and asked us to come in. On being questioned by him I repeated our whole story. He said that the Maharshi was capable of bringing the boy back to life, but since the boy was a highly religious and really devout young man he would have gone to better regions and would not like to come back to us. I assured him that he loved us so much and we loved him so much that he would really come back if it were possible. The gentleman then put me another question.

“Suppose Bhagavan brings him back to you and then both of you die, what will the position be then?” This question dispelled the thick cloud of illusion that had enveloped us and at last we saw that our attempt to get our son back was sheer madness. I felt at the time and still feel now that it was not the bookseller that was talking to me like that but really Bhagavan speaking through him.

We abandoned the hope of getting our son back to life and also our plan of leaving immediately. We stayed for about twelve more days, until our monetary resources were exhausted. The rest of our stay at the Ashram was only for the purpose of obtaining peace. Sri Ramana's "all right" had been meant to help us in the only way in which a realized Guru will help. His grace was bestowed on us and he began to work silently in our hearts to remove the thick clouds of sorrow and end the volcanic outbursts of grief. He began to instil peace and develop real knowledge in us. Silently and slowly the grace is still working in that direction. What we wanted to have we were actually prevented from asking for. We were also not allowed to go away in a mood of despair. We were blessed with his grace and uplifted in the right way.

Because this is an experience of an extraordinary type I feel that it is appropriate to make it known to all the devotees of Bhagavan.

*(Published in the Mountain Path July 1964)*

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## Devotion and Surrender

Maharshi: In the effort to overcome birth and death, man looks up to the Supreme Being to save him. Thus are born faith and devotion to the Lord. How to worship Him? The creature is powerless and the Creator is All-powerful. How to approach Him? To entrust oneself to His care is the only thing left for him; total surrender is the only way. Therefore he surrenders himself to God. Surrender consists in giving up oneself and one's possessions to the Lord of Mercy. Then what is left over for the man? Nothing — neither himself nor his possessions. The body liable to be born and to die having been made over to the Lord, the man need no longer worry about it. Then birth and death cannot strike terror. The cause of fear was the body; it is no longer his; why should he fear now?

*(Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi)*



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## God Alone Exists

Those who have realized the Self remain uninvolved, even when they are engaged in everyday activities. They are always in a state of utter stillness. Bhagavan himself has described this in the thirtieth verse of the *Supplement to Reality in Forty Verses*.

“The mind that is devoid of attachments, though it may appear to be engaged in activity, is in reality inactive — just as the mind of a person listening to a story might wander off to a faraway place.”

Once, in the Jubilee Hall, we were all listening to the radio. At the end of the program the names of all the artists were announced. Bhagavan said, “See! The radio sings and gives speeches. It even announces the names of the performers. But there is nobody inside the radio. Our existence is also like that. The body might appear to walk and talk and perform a number of functions, but in fact there is no individual inside the body. Everything is God. He alone exists.” Bhagavan continued, “The concepts of time and space are also imaginary. When we listen to a concert on the radio are we bothered about the exact time and location at which the concert took place? What difference can it make to our enjoyment of the music? Whether the concert took place in Hyderabad or in Madras, we can listen to the music and derive the same degree of enjoyment sitting right here in this hall.

The wise one does not attach any importance to concepts of space and time. One has to go through certain situations in a given lifetime and for this a body is required. That is the only reason for acquiring a body. One goes through various experiences, without getting involved in anything. To an ordinary person, worldly experiences seem real. An ordinary man might think that a liberated person has all the experiences that others have. But the liberated person has no attachment to the body and therefore physical experiences hold no significance for him.

The *jivanmukta* has the same attitude towards his body that a railway porter has for the luggage he carries. Just as the porter carries the luggage up to the destination and lays it down at that spot, the *jivanmukta* carries the body through the pre-ordained experiences of a lifetime and at the end of the course he lays down the burden with relief. The porter thinks of the load on his head only as a burden; he does not identify with it on a personal level. That is why he feels no regret when he puts it down. It is the same in the case of a *jivanmukta*. As he never thinks of the body as having any personal significance, he feels no sorrow when the time comes for him to leave the body.”

During the last days of Bhagavan’s earthly life, when his devotees besought him to retain the human form for a long time, Bhagavan used to say, “A *jnani* (a realised soul) knows that the sole purpose of acquiring a body is to enable the spirit to attain knowledge through experiences. Do we feel sad because we have to throw away the used leaf-plate after a meal? In the same way, a *jnani* discards the human body without any regret or sorrow.”

*Cherished Memories, by Kanakammal*

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## NARAKASURA - *DIPAVALI*

Ramachandra Iyer came here from Madras recently. One day he was seated in the hall going through an old notebook and correcting some dates and numbers in it. Seeing that, Bhagavan asked what it was. He replied, "This is an old notebook written by Bhagavan. I am looking into the numbers and dates in it, and entering them in the printed book." "Give it to me", Bhagavan said, and taking it and turning over the pages, said to me, "There are some *Dipavali padyams* (verses) in it. Have you heard them?"

When I said I had not, he read them out and gave the meaning there of as follows: "He is Narakasura (a demon) who feels attached in the thought that he is the body. That attachment to the body itself is *Naraka* (hell). The life of a person who has that attachment, even if he be a Maharajah, is hellish. Destroying the attachment to the body, and the self shining by itself as Self is *Dipavali*. That is the idea contained in those verses." I asked, "Are all these verses in *Nool Thirattu*?" [book in Tamil containing all the verses, songs and prose writings of Bhagavan] Bhagavan said, "These were all composed extempore on the spur of the moment from time to time. Why include all these in that book?"

After the first publication of the book, these verses were read out in Bhagavan's presence, and he asked, "Do you know why I wrote those verses?" When I said that I did not know, he said, "Is that so? One *Dipavali* day, Muruganar wanted me to write something about *Dipavali*. 'Why don't you write? Why should I?' I asked. He said that he would also write if I did. I agreed, and wrote these verses. I did not write anything without reason. There is a story behind every verse that I wrote". So saying he showed me the verses (in Tamil). I give them below with the meaning:

*Vrittam:*

He is the king of hell who says that he is the body which is hell itself. He is Narayana who ascertains who Naraka is, and destroys him with His vision of wisdom, *Jnana Drishti*. That is the auspicious day of *Narakachathurdasi*.

*Vennpa:*

The false belief that this hell-like house called body is me, is Naraka himself. To destroy that false belief and let the self shine as Self, is *Dipavali*.

*(Letters from Sri Ramanasramam by Suri Nagamma 20 August 1946)*

# TRUE IMMORTALITY

Unfailing immortality  
Accrues only to those who have  
Destroyed the ego whose demon-dance  
Obstructs the vision of the precious  
Truth that we are ever-perfect  
Being-Awareness-Bliss

Imagining that this new-comer,  
The body, is oneself, one thinks  
That one is born and that one dies.  
The moment this delusion goes  
One's own true immortality  
Is gained.

Death is nothing but the fond  
Delusion that this new-comer,  
The body, is oneself. When the ego,  
The clinging to delusion, ends,  
The ensuing bliss of true Awareness,  
Being one without a second, this,  
This only is immortality.



Believing that the body is  
Oneself, one dreads the body's death.  
Enquiring "What dies?", "Who am I?"  
One dies into the Self. How else  
But through the ego's death can one  
Gain immortality?

True clearness, freedom from the mind's  
Ripples and shadows, this alone  
Is ever-fresh immortality.  
By this awareness pure, by this  
Alone and by no other means,  
Can Death, a mere delusion, end.



*(The Garland of Guru's Sayings by Sri Muruganar v.225 - 229)*

# OBITUARY

Sri V. Subramanian (1939-2022)

Alasdair Black writes:

Almost the first thing I did when I arrived for my annual stay in the Ashram was to visit Mani in his office. I was always warmly welcomed and questioned as to how things were in the UK Foundation, and this was followed by a string of questions about various members who were his personal friends.

I used to enjoy visiting him in his office to have a chat, when he was free to do so, although I knew we would be interrupted by other people who either needed to consult him about Ashram matters or who, like myself, dropped in just to say hello. He occasionally invited me to take a seat in the chair next to him so that he could break off to speak to whoever came in. I enjoyed those chats, which, with his smile, were invariably light-hearted and amusing.

I remember once, shortly after I became a regular visitor to the Ashram, being taken by him around the gardens in the Ashram, which were his pride and joy. As were the cows in *gosala* (cattle enclosure). He enjoyed explaining everything. He also loved discussing the political situation and goings-on in India, the UK and elsewhere. I learned a great deal from him one way and another.

Mani once came to London with his wife, Ramani, to stay with Chris and Zarine Pegler en route to visit friends in other parts of the world. During which time he and Ramani, my wife Diana and myself set off to spend the morning in Kew Gardens, which turned out to be a very happy visit. It was a sunny morning and we boarded a miniature train at one point to be taken on a tour of all the main features of those extensive gardens. Mani was amused when we stopped for the driver to feed some peacocks. "Man happy. Birds happy!" he remarked. He was intrigued, when we were inside the tropical glasshouse, to find some trees and plants which were native to Tamil Nadu.

He was also intrigued by the names of some Western guests in the Ashram. One of whom was Barry Domegan, a member of the UK Foundation. When they met and Barry introduced himself, Mani asked him to repeat his name, to which Barry replied, "Domegan, as in Tommy Gun!" The next morning when Barry and I were queuing for breakfast Mani came up to us with a big smile and said, "Good morning Mr Top Gun!" Another name which intrigued him was that of Margriet Van Den Dool. He once asked her if that was her real name, to which she replied with a smile, if somewhat indignantly, "Yes it is!" I in turn mentioned an Indian name which intrigued me. Shivaramakrishna. 'Oh', said Mani, "That's because his parents felt that the best thing they could do was to give him fully comprehensive insurance cover!"

One afternoon when I was having tea with Dorab Framji in his home in Osborne Lane, Mani dropped in for a chat. He mentioned that he was asking around to find out if anyone knew anything about Bhagavan's father, Sundaram Iyer, about whom very little was known other than that he was a respected lawyer who once punished the infant Venkataraman for some childish prank by making him go without supper. I asked Mani during a subsequent stay in the Ashram if he had succeeded in finding out anything more about this but he said he hadn't.

In the late afternoons, just before Evening Parayanas, Mani often used to take Ramani for a walk around the Ashram. I was always touched by that. They were very close and he must have felt utterly bereft when he lost her, which I can't help feeling might have had something to do with his own comparatively early demise.

*You were a wonderful person altogether, dear Mani. We miss you greatly. You did so much for the Ashram and for us all. May you enjoy forever the bliss of your absorption into Arunachala with your beloved Bhagavan.*

## EVENTS

**Satsangs on Bhagavan's Compositions** - second and last Saturday of every month with Michael James via Zoom

**In-Person Meetings** in London - 1st or 3rd Saturday of every month at The Study Society, Colet House, London W14 9DA.

(Future meetings are scheduled for 15 October, 5 November, 3 December)

**Meditation Group** - Every Thursday at 7pm via Zoom

**Study Group** - Every Tuesday at 7pm via Zoom

A **Newsletter** is distributed in Spring-Summer and Autumn-Winter

To join or subscribe to any of the above, email: [ramanamaharshifoundationuk@ramana-maharshi.co.uk](mailto:ramanamaharshifoundationuk@ramana-maharshi.co.uk)



If you consider yourself the body, the world appears to be external. [But when] you [understand that you] are the Self, the world [even in its transitoriness] appears as Brahman.

*Talks No. 272*