

The Ramana Maharshi Foundation UK

Newsletter

Summer 2020



The normal programme of events and activities of the RMF UK are as detailed on the next page. However, these events and activities are suspended for as long as the Coronavirus Pandemic lasts. Further developments will be posted on our Website.

Michael James is nevertheless holding his talks and discussions via [Zoom](#) on the second and last Saturday of each month as usual and as to which we will keep everyone informed by email and on our Website. Anyone wishing to participate in Michael's discussions online should contact enquiries@ramana-maharshi.org.uk. These discussions should be available as usual on the [Sri Ramana Teachings](#) channel on YouTube soon after each meeting.

Michael is currently answering questions in the Zoom Satsangs before beginning a series of talks about The Marital Garland of Letters (Aksara Mana Malai), discussing several verses each month, and continuing for as many months as necessary to complete all 108 verses. The format for these online Satsangs will be announced at the beginning of each one.

Satsangs, Meditation and Study

Although our Satsangs are currently held by Zoom as detailed above, the RMF UK normally meets on the second Saturday of each month for Satsangs which last from 2 pm to 5.30 pm at The Friends Meeting House, 120 Heath Street, Hampstead, London NW3 1DR.

Additional ('Devotional') Satsangs are also normally held on the last Saturday of each month at 2 pm in the Library upstairs in the Friends Meeting Hours

A Silent Meditation Group also normally meets at 6.45 pm and finishes at 9 pm.

A Study Group also normally meets on the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month to study some of the Core Texts. We are now going through Padamalai, the quintessence of Bhagavan's Teachings as presented and interpreted by Sri Muruganar.

These last 3 meetings are currently held by Zoom so anyone who is interested is asked to contact Alasdair Black.

Enquiries to Alasdair Black on enquiries@ramana-maharshi.org.uk

Mountain Path Subscriptions

are now payable directly to the Ashram via a portal at <http://worldstore.sriramanamaharshi.org>

For The Sri Ramana Community Pages on the Internet, Google into the [Ramana Maharshi Foundation UK](#) website or into [Sri Ramanasramam Home Page](#)

Free Downloads of Bhagavan's Teachings are available on: [http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/resource centre/publications/](http://www.sriramanamaharshi.org/resource%20centre/publications/)

Sri Ramanasramam, Ramana Maharshi Literature

and The Mountain Path:

Ashram website: Sri Ramana Maharshi, Home.

Ashram e-mail: ashram@sriramanamaharshi.org or the via the Website.

The Ashram's eNewsletter: Saranagati eNewsletter - Sri Ramana Maharshi

Key books can be downloaded from: www.ramana-maharshi.org. Other books can be ordered from the Manager of the Book Depot at Sri Ramanasram. There are well over 60 titles.

Back numbers of The Mountain Path can also be obtained via the Ashram website

The Mendicant

O Shiva, with bare skull as begging bowl,
Thou art the all pervading mendicant.
My mind roams the desert of discontent,
Dances on the breasts of female souls,
Leaps wildly on many a mad and crazy goal,
Branch to branch, where desire will soon torment.
Inconstant is this monkey mind thou sent
To fight against and with good sense control.
Taking this mind as an offering of alms,
Bind it tightly with thy cord of devotion,
Tie it well with your loving hands
As I sail across life's stormy ocean.
Lord Shiva save me from the terror of my mind,
Thou, the truest Guru I could ever find!

Alan Jacobs



Ramana's Self-Enquiry

Ramana said that Self-Enquiry was a deep looking for the source of our sense of "I", not an intellectual enquiry. "Leaving aside the Vedas and Agamas, enquire with focussed attention into your real nature, pure consciousness. Do not ruin yourself by repeatedly rising and subsiding as the thinking "I". Attain true life by abiding as the being "I". We must have a deep understanding of our true nature without the pride of speech or the pride of thought or even the pride of silence: beyond all these things.

Ramana's death experience was immediate and complete and overwhelming. Why should our enquiry not be immediate and complete and overwhelming too.? Jesus said he had come to cast fire on the earth. Ramana also came to cast fire on the earth, and that fire is Self-Enquiry. We ought to be so concentrated on it that we go beyond ourselves, and then Self-Enquiry becomes Grace, and by the power of Grace we will be completed.

Chris Hopkinson



Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni

Who amongst other things gave the name “Ramana Maharshi” to the young Venkataraman

Ganapati Muni was born in Andhra Pradesh on the 17th November 1878, a year before Bhagavan who was born on the 29th December 1879. He was named Ganapati in answer to prayers for a child made by his parents to the Lord Ganesa (Ganapati) in two separate Ganapati temples. ‘Muni’ means one who is steeped in contemplation. However, to his parents’ great disappointment the child could not speak until he was five years old, at which point they resorted to the age-old practice of having him branded with a red hot iron, the shock of which not only caused him to start speaking but also released his unique genius as a spiritual and literary polymath. He was educated at home where he mastered sanskrit literature by the age of nine, memorised all of the Vedas and Upanishads by the age of eleven and when he was fourteen composed sanskrit dramas which are still widely acclaimed.

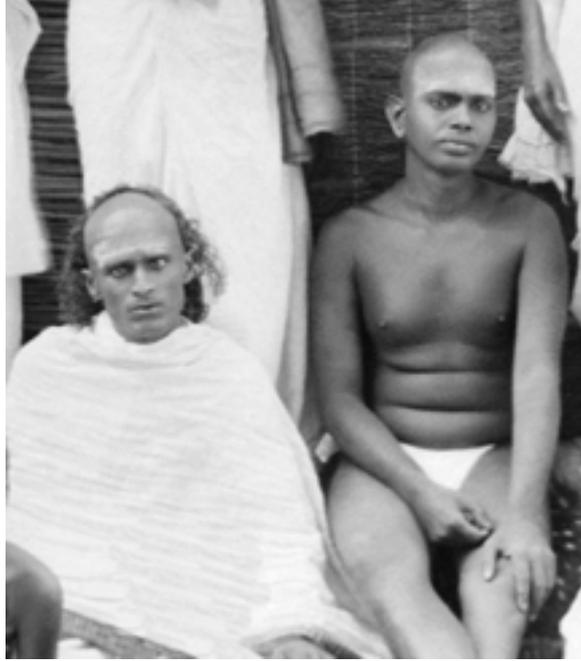
At a later stage, in 1900 when he was still a teenager, he was invited to appear before a panel of scholars and experts to be interviewed on just about everything that had ever been written in Sanskrit.¹ These interviews were regularly held at the turn of the twentieth century at Nawadweepa in Bengal, a city famous for its Sanskrit learning. The examination, which was oral, was on anything to do with Sanskrit literature as well as on puranic stories, astrology and philosophy.

Candidates were required to formulate their answers in perfectly grammatical Sanskrit verse which also had to rhyme and scan correctly, while the examiners themselves had to couch their replies or any supplementary questions in similarly impeccable Sanskrit verse. The result was often a fiercely intellectual debate which was greatly appreciated and savoured by all those taking part. To all of which the Muni answered instantaneously and correctly, to the awestruck wonder of his interlocutors! He was consequently awarded the honorary title of “Kavyakantha”, ‘one who has the voice of poetry’.²

This extraordinary accolade could not, however, have helped him in what was to become one of his main objects in life, to get rid of his ego in order to merge into God. He married at the age of 18 but this merely increased his religious fervour. After practising all kinds of severe austerities which failed to yield what he was seeking, he finally resorted to doing penance at the five holy places prescribed by Shiva as representing the elements of earth, water, air, ether and fire - the last one of which, fire, was none other than Arunachala where the devotee’s *tapas* is said to be rewarded. He finally reached Arunachala in 1904 where he was at first disappointed on seeing Bhagavan, who was then known as Brahmana Swami, sitting with his eyes closed absorbed in *samadhi*. He therefore took a teaching job in the nearby town Vellore.³ while continuing with his *tapas*, only to become even more dejected and dispirited at not making any further progress towards his goal.

He therefore decided to revisit Arunachala in one last attempt to find what he was seeking. At about One O’clock one hot afternoon while he was fasting and sitting in the hollow of a dead tree he heard the voice of the Divine Mother: “Until you have a guru you will not achieve you goal. Your guru is up on the hill. Surrender at his holy feet to receive his grace. Go now!” Whereupon Kavyakantha bounded up the hill to find Bhagavan sitting alone outside Virupaksha cave. He was transfixed this time and immediately fell down prostrate at his feet. He cried out, “I have read all that has to be read, including all of *Vedanta*. I have performed endless *tapas*, but I still do not understand what *tapas* is! I have therefore sought refuge at thy holy feet. Pray enlighten me as to the nature of *tapas*.” Helping him to his feet Bhagavan, looked into his eyes for some time before slowly and carefully replying: “*If you watch from where the thought ‘I’ arises, your mind will be absorbed into that. That is tapas. When repeating mantras, if you watch the source out of which the sound arises, your mind will be absorbed into that. That is tapas.*” At last he had found what he had been seeking, a practical way to find the truth! He was overcome by waves of ecstasy and when at last he recovered he enquired as to the name of the young ascetic. On being told that it was Venkataraman, he made this into *Ramana*, to which he added *Rishi* (sanskrit for ‘seer’, one who could see with the inner eye) and added *Maha* since it was clear to him that *Ramana* was a very great *Rishi*, indeed that he was none other than God himself, *Bhagavan* (sanskrit for God). Thus it was that Kavyakantha gave the young Venkataraman his full title of *Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi* by which he has ever since been known.

The next day he went to Bhagavan to ask him to accept him as his disciple, which Bhagavan agreed to, as well as suggesting that the Muni should move into a cave nearby so that he could continue to guide him. The Muni had over two hundred disciples of his own by this time, including some quite eminent ones, but he urged them all to become disciples of Bhagavan after this momentous event.



Shortly after this, out of gratitude to the Divine Mother who had brought him to his Guru, he started to compose his *magnum opus*, the ‘Thousand Verses in Praise of the Divine Mother (*Uma*)’. But his inspiration dried up after he had composed only seven hundred of these verses, whereupon Bhagavan volunteered to help him, asking him to sit down opposite him with a pencil and paper while he himself lapsed into silence. Upon which the remaining verses began to flow. After the Muni had completed the one thousand verses, which took them all of one night to do, Bhagavan got him to confirm that he had received them all. Following which Kavyakantha corrected the first seven hundred verses that he had himself composed but left the remainder well alone out of respect for their real author. Bhagavan at this time held the Muni in high esteem, addressing him, as did everyone else, as Kavyakantha. One day, however, he begged his Master to call him ‘Nayana’, one meaning of which in Telegu (the language of Andhra) is ‘disciple’ or ‘child’.

After he became Bhagavan’s disciple, Nayana stayed for a while in Mango Tree Cave to be close to Bhagavan who was then living in Virupaksha Cave. During this time he practised yoga and other forms of spiritual discipline. Indeed he practised many forms of spiritual discipline throughout his life. One of these practises involved the raising of his *kundalini*, which in his case resulted in the damage to his skull when the force of the serpent power reached his head. Something like steam was seen to be rising from his head when this happened and such was the pain this caused that he went to Bhagavan who who took it

away. There were other occasions when something like steam was seen to be rising from his head.

At this time Nayana and others plied Bhagavan with various questions, at a time when he seldom spoke. And although his answers were not immediately noted down, such was Nayana's memory that when people in turn asked him for Bhagavan's answers to and teachings on various subjects, he would say, eg, "The answer is in chapter 2 verse 8 of 'Sri Ramana Gita.'" Which was puzzling since no such book had at that time been written. However when Nayana did eventually write the book it was found that these questions and their answers were recorded as he had said! Bhagavan himself, moreover, confirmed that his answers as recorded were correct. 4

When in 1922 Bhagavan's mother died, it was Nayana who insisted that a temple should be built over her tomb, quoting Bhagavan's own words as recorded in *Sri Ramana Gita* to the effect that the body of a realised soul should be entombed appropriately. He also gave the Mother's Samadhi its name, *Matrubhuteshwara*, meaning 'the Lord who has become the mother'. Thus it was that as well as naming Bhagavan, Nayana was also responsible for naming the temple around which the Ashram was built.

One aspect of Ganapati Muni's life remains somewhat controversial - the question of whether he attained Self-realisation. In addition to all his undoubted gifts, he also had *sankalpas* - 'fixed desires to achieve certain objects' - which pointed to his having an unregenerate ego. He also had high ideals and was involved in various political movements including *Swaraj*, the campaign for independence from British rule. His aim was to restore Mother India to her former greatness. However, Nayana himself felt that these *sankalpas* were in fact *satya sankalpas* - desires that came to him from God, rather than ones which he had himself acquired and which formed his ego. He was, nevertheless, aware of this possible impediment to his Self-realisation. He once asked Bhagavan, "What about my ideals and aims?" To which Bhagavan replied, "It would be better for you if you were to throw the entire burden on the Lord. He will carry it and you will be free." After his death, Bhagavan was asked whether Nayana attained Self-realisation during his life. "How could he?" Bhagavan replied, "His *sankalpas* were too strong." 5

A curious incident is recorded in this connection. Once, when Nayana was in a Ganesa Temple in Tiruvottiyur, a suburb of Chennai (Madras as it was then), he was overcome by a feeling that he was making no spiritual progress whatsoever and earnestly prayed to Bhagavan, "Help me! Help me!" Whereupon Bhagavan appeared to him and, putting his hands on his head, released him from his sense of spiritual desolation. After which Nayana told his disciples what had happened. Bhagavan, who was at that time staying in Skandashram, himself confirmed this and described what had happened to him, "I was lying down when my body suddenly started floating. When I came down I heard the word 'Tiruvotiyur' and walked along a road and into a Ganesa Temple where I saw Nayana. Immediately

after which I found myself back in Skandashram.” When someone asked him why and how this had happened he replied, “It was Nayana’s *sankalpas* that caused me to visit him. I had no desire to do so. This experience was an example of how *siddhas* - legendary saints and sages - travel in the astral realm. However it was not my wish but Nayana’s desire that made it happen.”

The Muni’s literary output was phenomenal. He was regarded by many of his fellows as a spiritual and intellectual superman. Apart from the thousand verses of the *Umasashasram*, he wrote many other works, including a variety of commentaries on the scriptures. He was a literary as well as a spiritual giant and it is no wonder that K Natesan wrote so much about him. It is, in Natesan’s own words, ‘difficult to summarise the thoughts, perceptions and literary ability of this great man’. He was an exceptionally versatile genius whose poetic renderings can be compared with those of the great ones - Kalidasa and Shankara, as well as, in Sutra writings, with Patanjali and Shabara, or with Shankara in his commentaries. The writings of the Muni were, moreover, not merely the product of his literary efforts, they were borne out of his unique Yogic experiences and personal visions. They will remain a source of fascination and inspiration for a long time to come. He eventually settled down with a group of his followers in the village of Nimpur near Kharagpur to practice tapas for the last two years of his life before he died at the age of 58 on the 25th July 1936.

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1. From <https://www.davidgodman.org/poetic-combat> (posted on 6 May 2008)
 2. His full title was ‘Vasistha Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni’, the prefix Vasishta indicating that he was a brahmin of the Vasistha lineage. The word itself means ‘most excellent, best or richest’.
 3. It was while he was in Vellore that he was instrumental in bringing the 20-year old Frank Humphreys, Bhagavan’s first western devotee, to him. Humphreys was then a policeman.
 4. See p 51 of Ramana Periyar Puranam by Sri V Ganesan.
 5. Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge by Arthur Osborne, pp 101 - 106.



The Goshala (cowsheds) and the original Gentlemen's Accommodation in the Ashram

From 'Day by Day', the Diary kept by A Devaraja Mudaliar

8-11-45 Morning

When Mr Roy asked Bhagavan what was the best way of killing the ego, Bhagavan said, "To ask the mind to kill the mind is like making the thief the policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So you must turn inward and see where the mind rises from and then it will cease to exist." In reference to this answer, Mr Thambi Thorai of Jaffna (who has been living in Palakottu for over a year) asked me whether asking the mind to turn inward and seek its source is not also employing the mind. So I put this doubt to Bhagavan who said, "Of course we are employing the mind. It is well known and admitted that only with the help of the mind the mind has to be killed. But instead of setting about saying there is a mind and I want to kill it, you begin to seek the source of the mind, you find that the mind does not exist at all. The mind turned outwards results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards it becomes the Self. Such a mind is sometimes called *arupa manas* or *suddha manas*."

11-11-45 Evening

A Visitor : "I don't know what *kundalini* is."

Bhagavan : "*Kundalini* is one name given by the yogic people for what may be called the *atma sakti* inside the body. The *vichara* school calls the same power *jnana*. The *bhakta* call it love or *bhakti*. The yogic school says that this power is dormant in the *muladhara* at the base of the spinal cord and that it must be roused and taken up through the various chakras on to the *sahasrara* at the top, in the brain, to obtain *moksha*. The *jnani*s think this power is centred in the heart, and so on."

12-11-45 Morning

A visitor asked Bhagavan, "When the mind or *ahamkar* is killed, is that stage an inert stage?"

Bhagavan : "Why do you bother about the *jnani*'s state?" You should understand your own state."

Visitor : "The *mumukshu* (one who desires to be liberated) naturally wants to know about the multi state which is his goal".

Bhagavan kept quiet for a little while and then said, "You admit the mind has to be killed. Why don't you do that first and then see for yourself whether that stage is 'inert' or without consciousness?"

Visitor : "When *ahamkar* goes, will *aham vritti* still exist?"

Bhagavan : "That which is, always is. If the *ahamkar* dies, It, the Reality, exists as it has always existed. You may speak of it as having *aham vritti* or simply *aham*. It is all the same. That which exists as 'I am' or '*aham*'"

Swami is Everywhere

An American lady, unaccustomed to squatting on the floor, somehow managed to sit in the hall by stretching her legs out towards Bhagavan's sofa. One of the attendants suggested to her that she sit cross-legged. When Bhagavan saw this, he said, smiling. "When they find it difficult to even sit down on the floor, should you ask them to sit cross-legged as well?" "No, no! As they do not know that it is disrespectful to stretch their legs towards Bhagavan, I merely told them so, that is all," said the attendant. "Oh is that so! It is disrespectful is it? Then it is also disrespectful for me to stretch my legs towards them. What you say applies to me as well." Saying this in a lighter vein, Bhagavan sat up cross-legged. Even though the rheumatism in Bhagavan's legs made them painful and stiff, after a few minutes of keeping them folded, he continued to sit cross-legged, stretching his legs from time to time and saying that this might be seen as disrespectful. Even after the visitors took their leave he kept his legs folded and said, "I do not know if I can stretch them. They say it is not good manners." The attendant stood beside Bhagavan crestfallen and repentant. Whereupon Bhagavan, full of compassion, stretched out his legs as usual and told the following story:

Seeing that Sundaramurthi was setting off on a white elephant for Kailas, the Rajah of Cher whispered in the ear of his horse the *panchakshara mantra* ¹ and mounted it to go to Kailas. Avvaiyar, who was then doing *puja* to Lord Ganesa, saw them going to Kailas and so tried to hurry up her *puja* since she too wanted to go to Kailas. Seeing this, Ganesa said, "Old woman, don't hurry, please perform your *puja* as usual. I shall take you to Kailas before they get there. So the *puja* was performed in the usual way. Waving his hand, Ganesa said, "Old lady, close your eyes." When she opened her eyes, she found herself seated in Kailas in front of Parvati and Parameswara. When Sundaramurthi and Raja Cher arrived, they found her already seated there. Surprised, they asked her how she had got there and were overjoyed to hear how her bhakti had enabled her to do this. After all, she was very old. So she sat facing Parameswara with her legs stretched out (*as mine were*). Parvati, however, could not bear this. She was worried because to sit with legs stretched out towards a Swami was, she felt, a great insult. So she respectfully asked Parameswara if she could point this out to the lady. "Oh no, we should not say anything to her." But Parvati could not help whispering in the ear of her maid to tell the old lady, "Grandma, don't stretch your legs out towards *Iswara*." "Is that so?" Avvaiyar replied, "Tell me, on which side is *Iswara* not present? Shall I turn to this side?" And so saying she turned her legs in another direction, whereupon *Iswara* also turned to face her, and when she again turned in another direction he did the same. Thus Swami was turned to face any direction she sat in. Turning to Parvati, *Iswara* said, "Do you see now? You would not listen to me. See how she has made me turn this way and that? That is why I told you not to open your mouth." And so Parvati apologised to the old lady. It is the same when people here are asked not to stretch their legs towards the Swami. Where is he not present?

From 'Spiritual stories as told by Ramana Maharshi' Ashram Publication, 2004.

1. A Vedic Mantra made up of the letters 'Na', 'Ma', 'Si', 'Va', 'Ya', associated with *Om Namah Shivaya*



The Isa Upanishad

Behold the universe in the glory of God: and all that lives and moves on earth. Leaving the transient, find joy in the Eternal: set not your heart on another's possession.

Working thus, a man may wish for a life of a hundred years. Only actions done in God bind not the soul of man.

There are demon-haunted worlds, regions of utter darkness. Whoever in life denies the Spirit falls into that darkness of death.

The Spirit, without moving, is swifter than the mind; the senses cannot reach him: He is ever beyond them. Standing still he overtakes those who run. To the ocean of his being, the spirit of life leads the streams of action.

He moves, and he moves not. He is far, and he is near. He is within, and he is outside all.

Who sees all beings in his own Self, and his own Self in all beings, loses all fear.

When a sage sees this great Unity and his Self has become all beings, what delusion and what sorrow can ever be near him?

The Spirit filled all with his radiance. He is incorporeal and invulnerable, pure and untouched by evil. He is the supreme seer and thinker, immanent and transcendent. He placed all things in the path of Eternity.

Into deep darkness fall all those who follow action. Into deeper darkness fall those who follow knowledge.

One is the outcome of knowledge, and the other is the outcome of action. Thus have we heard from the ancient sages who explained this truth to us.

He who knows both knowledge and action, with action overcomes death and with knowledge reaches immortality.

Into deep darkness fall those who follow the immanent. Into deeper darkness fall those who follow the transcendent.

One is the outcome of the transcendent, and the other is the outcome of the immanent. Thus have we heard from the ancient sages who explained this truth to us.

He who knows both the transcendent and the immanent, with the immanent overcomes death and with the transcendent reaches immortality.

The face of truth remains hidden behind a circle of gold. Unveil it, O God of light that I who love the true may see!

O life-giving sun, offspring of the Lord of creation, solitary seer of heaven! Spread thy light and withdraw thy blinding splendour that I may see thy radiant form: That Spirit which is far away within thee is my own inmost Spirit.

May life go to immortal life, and the body go to ashes. OM. O my soul, remember past strivings, remember!

By the path of good lead us to final bliss, O fire divine, thou God who knowest all ways. Deliver us from wandering evil. Prayers and adoration we offer thee.

Valli the Deer
from
Bhagavan Ramana, the Friend of All¹

A devotee of Bhagavan, who was a manufacturer of match boxes, brought a little deer and offered her to Bhagavan. Bhagavan was initially reluctant to accept a deer in the Ashram. “*Why do we want a deer in the Ashram?*” Bhagavan asked, “*Who will look after her?*” But Bhagavan’s attendant Madhava Swami came forward and volunteered to look after the deer. She was allowed to stay in the Ashram. The deer was named “Valli”. She grew up as an Ashram pet. Bhagavan regularly fed her with rice, dhal and cashew nuts, a mixture which she greatly enjoyed. Some devotees also occasionally fed her with puffed rice and dhal, but Valli had no interest in puffed rice; she would eat only the dhal from the bowl, leaving out the puffed rice and without sprinkling a single grain outside the bowl.

Valli often came into the hall where she put her forehead on the soles of Bhagavan’s feet. Sometimes when she did this, Bhagavan would play with her by pushing his foot strongly against her head. Valli would respond by playfully butting Bhagavan’s foot. When Valli danced on her hind legs, Bhagavan would stand beside her, imitating her actions by dancing with his feet and waving his arms. Those who witnessed this dance must have been very lucky indeed.

After some time Valli the deer started going into the forest to graze with the goat herds. People who knew that she belonged the Ashram brought her back. The Ashram people let her go out to graze. She would come back on her own.

One day Valli went off to graze with some goats. Some *Panchanamas* (criminals) attacked her and broke her leg, hoping to kill her and eat her flesh. This attack took place near the *Easanya Math* about 2 miles (3.2 km) away from the Ashram. In the attack Valli’s leg was broken so badly that she could not return to the Ashram. She lay unattended for over a day.

When Valli failed to return to the Ashram that night, Bhagavan sent Annamalai Swami and Rangaswami to look for her. Someone informed them that she had been seen on one of the Muslim streets in the town, but when they got there no one could recollect having seen her.

However, next day a group of devotees who were walking near *Easanya Math* found her. They bandaged her and brought her back to the Ashram. A local veterinary doctor, who was also a devotee of Bhagavan, examined her and found that her leg was broken. He bandaged it properly and gave instructions as to how to look after her. She was put into a corner of the dining hall on a soft bed. Bhagavan came every day to see her. But she did not recover from her injury.

A month later, Bhagavan, sensing that she was about to die, went to her. It was 4 O’clock in the early morning. He sat next to her and took her onto his lap. He put one hand on her head and the other on her ‘heart centre’. Bhagavan occasionally did this with devotees who were dying. If the devotee was a ripe soul, then the mind would resolve into the heart and die there. When this

technique was successfully applied the fortunate devotee would attain liberation. This had been done with Alagammal, Bhagavan's mother, and with the Cow Lakshmi.

Bhagavan kept his hand on Valli's heart for an hour, during which time she urinated on him but he took no notice. He remained by her side, touching her head and heart centre, until she finally passed away.

Later that morning Bhagavan asked Annamalai Swami to construct a small *Samadhi* near the back gate of the Ashram. "*We should build a 'Samadhi' for Valli inside the Ashram,*" Bhagavan said, "*We don't need any masons. Two of us can build it together.*"

Annamalai Swami did the masonry work while Bhagavan assisted him by handing him the materials. When the main structure of the *Samadhi* had been completed Bhagavan asked Annamalai Swami to install a *Lingam* and do *pooja* to it. Which Annamalai Swami did with Bhagavan by his side.

All this took several hours and other ceremonies were performed while the *Samadhi* was being constructed. That day Bhagavan did not go to the Hall. The devotees and visitors who came for his darshan had to go to him where he was working.

Valli the deer must have been a very ripe and virtuous soul who took the body of a deer to obtain salvation at the holy hands of Bhagavan.

1. An Ashram publication, 2008.

Liberation

The dove escaping from the hunter's hand
Escapes too from the forest, it is said. When
The hunter hunting for the 'I' gains freedom
The forest shrinks into a home.

Miracle of Dakshinamurti

Who is the youthful Guru beneath the banyan tree?
Very old are the pupils who seek him.
The handsome teacher's speech is silence.
Cleared are all the pupils' doubts.

Under the wonderful banyan tree shines the youthful
Guru. Aged pupils come to him. Silence is this teacher's
Speech. Gone are the pupils' doubts in the pupils' minds.

Occasional verses by Bhagavan, from *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, published by the Ashram, 2004.

A Summer Evening

In a secluded vale
In the rural heart of England,
At that time in the year
When Spring becomes summer,

A solitary figure,
Wandering through a meadow of wild flowers
Came to the bank of a still stream,
To lie down in tall grass,
To bask in the noonday sun,
To listen to birdsong
And the whispering
Of early summer breezes.

Evening approached, shadows lengthened,
But there seemed no need of return.
So he lay there,
Lapped and wrapped
In that verdurous warmth,
Resting in the beauty around him
In perfect contentment.

Revellers appeared, but did not linger,
Smiling as they passed,
The sound of their voices dying away in the stillness,
Leaving him to the bliss of his enchantment.

He slept for a while,
Until he was woken by something
In the the trees -
A spectre appeared
Through the moonbeams and branches
To gaze at him.
A halo of light enveloped
An old man, barely clothed,
A man with luminous, compassionate eyes,
Leaning on a stick, smiling,
Exuding an all-encompassing love.

And so did his solitude became plenitude
In that moment of realisation,
In that vision of light and of love
And compassion ...

Alasdair Black

Book Review

Quiet Courage of the Inner Light

by Philip Pegler

Christian Alternative Books, 2020. 151 pages. UK £10.99. US \$16.95

This book, of 32 chapters in four sections, sets out the accumulated wisdom of a wise and deeply sensitive person. The breadth and depth of his spiritual knowledge immediately becomes clear. One of the themes which run through it is the emphasis on what true spirituality is, and that he has found this in all aspects of life as well as in all religions. *The path is anywhere and everywhere. It is life itself. It is the wind blowing through the window, the blackbird singing on the top of the tree. It is within our struggle for expression as we reach out for affection or understanding, on our knees in prayer, through our stumbling words, our sorrows and our joys. The life of God within us is always pressing for release, so it would seem there is no need to choose any one path more than another. This is the boundless embrace of being which alone has the power to change our outlook as it bestows a clear vision of the way ahead.*

He begins by saying that despite his conventionally Christian education and background, Christianity itself had no particular meaning for him when he was young. After leaving school he spent several years living in the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi, and although the Maharshi is still his primary or Sat Guru (indeed he begins and ends his narrative with two verses from the *Arunachala Ashtakam*, that most poetical of Bhagavan's compositions) he was happy to eventually return to his Christian roots, after travelling widely and taking on board so much from so many other spiritual approaches, only to find that those roots were full of just as much wisdom as he had found in all his other spiritual enquiries.

It is a beautifully written and poetical account of Philip's inner and outer experiences. Much of it does indeed read like a prose poem. And the paragraphs and chapters are short which makes for easy reading. Apart from the central theme of love, much of it is about the importance of courage and tenacity. He gives examples of various experiences which have shaped his attitude to life, experiences which amounted in their way to harrowing ordeals, but which turned out to be preludes to a great inner peace and joy. He emphasises the importance of facing and accepting all forms of adversity as if they were the best possible thing that could happen to us however improbable that may seem to be at the time, and that it is a matter of trusting and accepting that all these experiences are given to us for our own deepest good, as well as to get us to understand why they were necessary and what we need to learn through them.

It is impossible to summarise this book since there is so much in it under so many headings which is worth reading - including the negativity of fear and distrust and how to overcome these feelings; the value of kindness in little things, and in simply listening to others; the fundamental importance of healing and loving ourselves in order to be able to love others ... It is full of such sentences as: *When once you begin to find the true origin of yourself there at the source of thought - and sense the mystery of really being at the centre of your existence - you will find too that you are no longer so easily knocked off balance by outward events; or, Whenever you touch the conscious, inward ground of your own awareness you are simultaneously in communion with everyone else in the world.* I do most sincerely recommend this book.

Alasdair Black

Donations to the Ramana Maharshi Foundation UK

Although we have discontinued Membership Fees we would welcome any donations towards the running of the Foundation, a cheque for which should be made payable to “Ramana Maharshi Foundation UK” and sent to Mrs Zarine Pegler, 28 Perryfield Way, Richmond, Surrey, TW10 7SP, giving your full name, address and email address. Alternatively, if you would prefer to donate by bank transfer, details of the Foundation’s bank account is available on request via enquiries@ramana-maharshi.org.uk



Arunachala Animal Sanctuary and Rescue Shelter



These two YouTube items give you an idea of what the Sanctuary looks and feels like:

<https://youtu.be/V4on7cvbMhE>

<https://youtu.be/4P-K5rHHe3c>

Google: [Arunachala Animal Sanctuary](#) for the Sanctuary's Website and Newsletter as well as for more accounts and clips of rescues plus all kinds of other information. You can contribute directly via a portal in the Website or via Global Giving and there is a collection at all of our Satsangs. Do please continue to give generously, and thank you so much.



