



# The Maharshi

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## THE SRI RAMANA GITA OF B. V. NARASIMHA SWAMI PART IX

While B. V. Narasimha Swami was residing in Sri Ramanasramam, around the year 1930, he took up the project of recasting Ganapati Muni's Sri Ramana Gita in its original conversational form. For a full introduction to this recently discovered manuscript see the July/August 2009 MAHARSHI newsletter.

In the present issue, we continue with the next three chapters found in the manuscript — Chapter XIII, “Women and Self-Realisation”, Chapter XIV “Jivanmukti” and Chapter XV, “What are Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana?”.

### Chapter XIII Women and Self-Realisation

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 1917, Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri approached Maharshi to solve the following two doubts arising in the mind of Visalakshi, his wife, who had gone through *Tara Vidya* and *Panchadasakshari Mantra Japa* and other spiritual courses.

**Question 1:** If a woman has attained Self-realisation and finds further stay as a member of a domestic circle a hindrance, can she, consistent with the Sastras, leave home and all and become a *sannyasini* or *hamsini*?

**Maharshi:** For those who are fully ripe in Self-realisation there is no gender bar as to the assumption of *sannyasa ashrama* in the Sastras.

**Question 2:** When such a lady is a *Jivanmukta*, i.e., released from bondage while in the flesh, and in that condition throws off her mortal coil, how should her body be dealt with, by cremation or by burial?

**Maharshi:** There is no difference between the sexes with respect to the attainment of *Jnana*, Realisation, or *Mukti*, release from bondage. A female *Jivanmukta*'s body should not be cremated, for a *Jnani*'s body is a tabernacle of the Divine. Whatever objections are urged against the cremation of a male *Jnani*, apply with equal force to the cremation of a female *Jnani*'s body.

### Chapter XIV Jivanmukti

On the night of the same day (21-8-1917), Venkatesa Sastriar came to Skandasramam and requested Maharshi to explain fully the state of *Jivanmukti* (i.e., release from bondage while yet in the flesh).

*M.:* A *Jivanmukta* is a person who, while yet in the flesh, has realised the *Atman*, and continues firmly in that state of Realisation unaffected by the *vasanas* arising either from books or contact with the world.

Realisation is only one. There is no difference in it; and freedom from bondage is also one and the same, alike for one who casts off the body and for the one who retains the body. It is the latter, however, who is referred to by the term *Jivanmukta*. The Scriptures say that such released or blessed souls are found in *Satyaloka*. But in the matter of Realisation, i.e. inner experience, there is no difference between the inhabitants of the *Satyaloka* and the *Jivanmukta*; nor is the experience of the Self-realised one who has cast off his body and become one with *Brahman* different from that of the above two. All these three are equally free from bondage and equal in their realisation of the Self. Salvation (*Mukti*) is the same, though to one with fixed ideas of difference, the experience may appear to be different in the above three cases.

The Scriptures say that the *Jivanmukta's* *jiva* (ego) is absorbed into *Brahman* even on this earth. When the *Jivanmukta* continues his *tapas* and it becomes mature, after some time he thereby develops several *siddhis*. Some develop the power to overcome the density in their body which thereafter ceases to be a matter for touch. Their bodies cease to be of dense material and become aerial, or like a flame of light, and are known as *Pranavakara* (i.e., of the form of *Pranava*, *Om*). Yet others lose even that degree of substantiality and overcome even the *rupa* (form), *rasa* (taste), *gandha* (smell), etc. nature of the original human frame and become pure *Chinmaya*, thought-bodies. These *siddhis* may be attained very quickly in respect of their bodies by favour of the gods. There is no superiority or inferiority amongst the Self-realised to be inferred from the possession or non-possession of such *siddhis*. The Self-realised one is always free (*Mukta*).

Such freedom or *Mukti* is attained by the wise one who passes from his *Sushumna-nadi* in the upward path by the *Archinathi Margam*; by the light of wisdom emanating there, *Mukti* is attained. By the Grace of the Lord, the *upasaka* whose mind is matured by yoga, attains this excellent *Nadi-dwara Gati*. To him comes the power of traversing all worlds at pleasure, entering into any body at pleasure, and granting all boons to anyone at pleasure.

Some say that *Kailasam* (the Seat of Siva) is the place to which released souls go; others say it is *Vaikuntam* (the abode of Vishnu), yet others say it is *Surya-Mandalam*, the orb of the Sun. All these worlds to which these released souls go are as real and substantial as this world is. They are all created within the *Swarupa* by the wonderful power of *Sakti*.

### Chapter XV

#### What are Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana?

22-8-1912

**Kavyakantha:** Pray Sir, what are Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana?

**Maharshi:** These terms have several meanings – each to some extent derived from or connected with the other.

Take *Sravana* first: According to some, it is only the hearing of Scriptural texts (*Veda vakya*) with adequate explanation (*Vyakhyana*) from a Guru, which constitutes *Sravana*. But others disregard this and say even if what is taught is not the text from the Vedas or

a comment thereon, but is couched in the vernacular, it is still *Sravanam* if (1) the Guru that imparts instruction is himself Self-realised, and (2) if his words throw light, i.e., teach Self-realisation.

You may take it that (a) whether listening to the Guru's recital of scriptural texts or to the Guru's own words, or otherwise, by merit acquired in previous births, (b) or if the voice is heard within and an idea is formed in your mind that the underlying truth or root of the 'I-idea', or idea of personality, is not the body, then truly you have had *Sravanam*. Above all, note the fact that *Sravanam* is not the mere falling of sound on the ears. It involves paying attention to *Atma Vichara*, enquiry into the Self.

Then let us take *Manana*:

Some say *Manana* is *Sastrartha Vichara*, or enquiry into the import or effect of Sastras (scripture). Well, it is more correct to note what is essential and say that *Manana* is devoting the mind to *Atma Vichara*, i.e., enquiry into the Self.

Finally let us consider what is *Nididhyasana*:

Some say that a thorough knowledge of *Brahman* or *Atman* is *Nididhyasana*, provided only that that knowledge be free from doubt and not conflict with the Sastras.

This definition, however, will fit in even for a bare intellectual grasp of the subject mentioned, even though it may be unattended by Realisation. Mere study of the unity of *jiva* and *Iswara* from the Sastras does not ensure Realisation, even if it be free from doubt or delusions such as 'I am the body and these phenomena are real, etc.' The mere study of hundreds of Sastras will not remove doubt and delusion. No doubt these Sastras, studied with faith, do remove such doubt and delusion, but such removal is not permanent, as faith often weakens and the man begins to waver. It is only Realisation that can ensure a rooting out, i.e., the permanent removal of these obstacles of doubt and delusion.

When the mind or *jiva* goes through various outside experiences, even by exploring hundreds of Sastras, without realising and staying in the *Atman*, one does not obtain what is styled *Aparoksha Jnana*, i.e., Self-Illumination directly realised. If, however, one has obtained such Realisation, then one gets *Sakshatkara*, or immediate knowledge of the Self, and that is Moksha – that is the highest *Nishta*.

## Remembering Indira Bhatt

ON Sunday, 10-10-2010, about 6 PM, Indira Bhatt, a well-known and revered devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, took her last earthly breath in the arms of her son Virat in Woodbridge, New Jersey. Manganlal Bhatt, her husband, who had passed away 19 years earlier, first heard Sri Ramana's name at a Jayanti program in Bombay in 1947, but not until one day in 1952 when he devoured a handful of books about the sage did he become totally dedicated to Bhagavan. Indira, his wife, who was devoted by nature, immediately recognized The Maharshi's divinity and joined her husband in his total devotion to the Master.

Baa (all the devotees called her Baa, which means Mother) was an invaluable and consistent source of inspiration to devotees of Arunachala Ashrama. Her presence will be sorely missed, not just by her immediate family, but by all who knew her. Her three daughters, Chhaya, Maya, Geeta, her son Virat, and many grandchildren survive her. We wish to express our sincere condolences to them all.

*Dennis Hartel was asked to say a few words at her funeral ceremony on 10-13-2010. He said:*

"It has been one of the most fortunate experiences of my life to have known Baa, and I am sure that you all feel the same way. She stood out as a solid edifice of peace, of nobility, of kindness, love, compassion and clear vision. I was never adequately spiritually evolved to fathom the depth of her devotion, knowledge and surrender to Bhagavan. But I, like many others, would instantly feel the cool breeze of peace and devotion in her presence. Invariably, immediately upon seeing her, a cool, fresh breeze would wash over me. That refreshing breeze of peace emanated from the heart of her being.

"Baa had a natural motherly love for all. Her personal well-being was the least of her concerns. When she focused her mind outwardly, she only thought of others with genuine love and solicitude. And she always managed to bring out the best in us because her heart was so pure and she saw only what was good and noble in us, like a blemishless mirror that reflected back to us all the good and great that was within us. In all the years that I knew her I never once heard her say an unkind word to anyone or about anyone. She was



always awake to the true purpose in life and there she fixed her whole heart and soul. Her life was a testimony to complete surrender and devotion to Bhagavan.

"I can never forget when she first visited the Nova Scotia Ashrama 25 years ago. Every day, for most of the day, I would see her sitting crossed legged on the living room couch, silently engaged in her japa. Never were there any discussions or distractions for her. She was so simple and pure. That picture of her sitting on the couch in that state of devotion has been permanently fixed in my mind.

"Baa had an endearing love for all her children and grandchildren, and I observed she had particular affection for Henaz and Chancy. Why? Simply because these two granddaughters were raised in her presence and they were totally devoted to her. She reciprocated their love and devotion unreservedly. In Baa they found one fully anchored, abiding beneath the turbulent surface of worldly life. By daily touching base with her they were pulled into those waters of peace and purity wherein she dwelt.

"Baa's departure is a great loss to us all. But that loss is far outweighed by what we gained in her company. Her presence in our midst was surely Bhagavan's gift to us.

"The life and teachings of Bhagavan Ramana begin and end with the experience of death. By searching one pointedly within "Who is it that dies?" "What is death?" and "Who am I?" he discovered his true eternal Being, free from death and birth. Baa was not lost in the trivialities of this life. She knew that her real being was that which lived beyond this birth and death, so she focused her attention solely on that. I sincerely pray that all of us, her children, learn from her this lesson of life and fix our heart and soul, as she had done, on that deathless Self in the Heart of all beings."

## Pilgrimage to Arunachala

By Prof. S. Nagachandran

*The author of this article is a retired professor from Princeton University. He lives in Long Island and often visits the New York Arunachala Ashrama. We have been waiting for many years for him to write about his visit to Bhagavan as a 14-year-old boy in 1950.*

Sixty years have passed. Bhagavan Ramana attained Mahasamadhi on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1950. My visit to Tiruvannamalai and to the Sage of Arunachala in January 1950 is still fresh in my memory. I thought at this late stage of my life I should share my experience with devotees.

My father, Dr. N. Suryanarayanan, was a prominent eye surgeon of Madurai. Although he had never visited Sri Ramana Maharshi before, one day in January 1950 he announced to the family that we should all get ready to leave for Tiruvannamalai. In the morning he had read about Bhagavan's illness in *The Hindu* and immediately decided that we should go. "The Maharshi is not keeping good health. We must go and see him," he said. He also said that we were distant relatives of the Maharshi. I was 14 years old at the time and was excited with anticipation to see Bhagavan. My father was an ardent devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba, so I was a little surprised at his sudden interest in Sri Ramana.

In the evening we took the express train from Madurai to Virudachalam Junction. We reached Virudachalam about 3 A.M. where we had to change to another train for Tiruvannamalai. I could not sleep on the train as I was too excited, even thrilled, at the thought of seeing Bhagavan.

Before dawn the passenger train slowly started moving out of the station for Tiruvannamalai. It was a bit chilly and a gentle breeze was blowing. Soon the sun began to rise on the eastern horizon and the beautiful rice fields, trees and blue lakes were bathed in its light. As we approached our destination I saw at a distance the holy Arunachala Mountain reflecting the golden rays of the morning sun. That wonderful sight, coupled with the anticipation of Bhagavan's darshan, filled my heart with the cool breeze of His divine presence even before I set my eyes on him.



This early morning arrival at Arunachala made a lasting imprint on my mind and heart.

Disembarking from the train we immediately set out for the Ashram. Our transportation and accommodations were all prearranged by the Ashram, and we soon settled in our rooms where we bathed and got ourselves ready for Bhagavan's darshan. In the meantime, Bhagavan's brother, Sri Niranjananda Swami, came to our room and took my father to see Bhagavan and discuss his health problems. While my father was in the small room where Bhagavan rested [the Nirvana Room] he observed the Unani (Homeopathic) physician cleaning and bandaging Bhagavan's cancerous wound. He was amazed at the indifference Bhagavan showed to his body during this long procedure. Once the treatment was over Bhagavan slowly walked out of his room, came to the New Hall and reclined on the stone couch.

When Bhagavan sat down there was a large group of devotees sitting there singing. Then all became still as we fixed our gaze on Bhagavan's holy countenance.

The Maharani of Baroda was there with a large cine camera. The Sarvadhikari temporarily took away the camera from her because he said that in Bhagavan's state of health we should not take movies of him. I also had a box camera with me and was eager to take some photos, but didn't because of what the Sarvadhikari had said to the Maharani.

When we settled down in the hall before Bhagavan, my youngest brother, who was three-and-a-half years old at the time, was sitting on my father's lap. He suddenly got up, ran straight over to Bhagavan and asked him why he was sitting there naked. We all

knew that Bhagavan wore only a loincloth, but my brother could not understand why. Everyone gathered was amused at my brother's innocent observation and question. Bhagavan seemed especially delighted and beamed with a wonderful smile on his face. Then my brother sat down in front of him, at his feet, for nearly two hours quietly, hardly moving. The pure and spontaneous rapport between Bhagavan and my brother enchanted everyone. I distinctly remember seeing a radiant glow emanating around Bhagavan's head while I looked at him. I was so captivated by his presence that I felt for certain that my unspoken feelings of devotion and reverence which spontaneously poured out of my heart were understood and accepted by him. This was an unforgettable experience that time and space could never erase, as I feel Bhagavan Ramana has always been with me since that day.

After Bhagavan's darshan our family toured around the town and mountain to see many of the places where he resided before coming to settle at Sri Ramanasramam.

In the evening we once again sat before Bhagavan and had his darshan. And again I witnessed the aura emanating from Bhagavan and experienced that same indescribable presence. This scene will be etched in my memory as long as I live.

When I think of Bhagavan, verse six in Chapter Fifteen of the *Bhagavad Gita* comes to mind:

*na tad bhasayate sooryo na shashanko na pavakah  
yadgatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama*

"My supreme Divine abode is not illuminated by the material sun, moon, or fire. A soul who reaches that Divine abode does not return to this mundane world."

## Upcoming Programs at Arunachala Ashrama

86-06 Edgerton Blvd.

Jamaica Estates, New York 11432

Tel: 718.560.3196 / ashrama@arunachala.org

*Sunday 21 November*

### **Mahanyasa Purvaka Rudrabhishekam**

Celebrated during Kartika Deepam Day, the day in which the beacon is lit on the summit of the holy hill of Sri Arunachala

7:30 AM to 7:45 AM Ganapati Puja

7:45 AM to 9:00 AM Mahanyasa Parayanam

9:00 AM to 10:30 AM Arunaprashna Sahita Panchamruta Abhishekam

11:00 AM to 3:00 PM Rudrabhishekam with Ekadasha Rudra Parayana

*Saturday 18 December*

### **The Bhagavad Gita Parayanam**

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM Ganesha Puja, Krishna Abhishekam with Rudram & Purusha Suktam

10:00 AM - 12:30 PM Bhagavad Gita Parayanam

12:30 PM - 01:00 PM Aarati and Mantrapushpam

*Sunday 26 December*

### **131st Jayanti of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

*All the programs are followed with prasad (lunch)*

## Sri Ramana Meditation Room Miami, Florida

Seekers and devotees are welcome to attend daily meditation in Miami.

*For information please contact:*

marcelo\_addario@hotmail.com / 786.277.2982



## How the Maharshi Came to Me *by G. N. Daley*

ON August 13th, 1966 his Grace descended on me like a lightning flash. I cannot describe the nature of it; that can only be experienced. I can only describe the way in which it was bestowed and the nature of the awakening which it brought about.

It came upon me in one of those dreams which are not the result of mental activity but which one recognises when one wakes from them as direct experience or communication.

In the dream I was standing at the head of a bus queue. When the bus arrived it did not stop where I was standing but a few yards away, so that those who were at the end of the queue were the first to get in and I was the last. By the time I did get in all the seats were occupied and I had to stand in the middle of the gangway between the two rows of seats. Several people who had been standing near me in the queue, seeing this, began to protest that I ought to have a seat, all

speaking together. It was in the midst of this hubbub that Bhagavan's Grace struck hard and decisively, completely silent and formless. This body I called mine, in which 'my' consciousness was still functioning as 'my' ego suddenly changed and grew taller, broader and sturdier. I was also aware of a change in features and the gentle smile of Bhagavan was superimposed on the face. The physical changes were accompanied by an experience of pure universal consciousness and bliss. In the first few moments of this Beingness a few thoughts lightly crossed the mind. "How can I tell these people that I am here?" "How can I possibly explain this to them?" "What does it matter if I sit in a front seat or at the back or just stand in the middle? I am here Now." Bliss and Beingness were both inside and outside the body. Then these thoughts subsided leaving only the bliss of pure awareness.

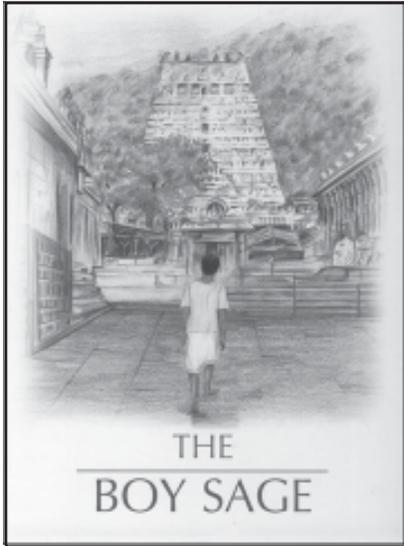
I am quite unable to describe the reality of this experience of Bhagavan's Grace. It did not matter where I was because 'I Am' includes both space and time. Whether Bhagavan's consciousness entered mine or whether he drew mine into his I do not know; only that Bhagavan was experienced within and that he is still within me now.

Implicit in his Grace were also instruction, initiation and obligation. The instruction was to continue Being, and the initiation was in the Beingness, the sharing or the joining of his consciousness with 'mine'. The obligation lies in assisting others who may need help or guidance.

So strong is the I-current now that a certainty has arisen that I was never born. And if this question is referred to the mind the answer which arises is, "How can you have been born? You are Now and you always were and always will be Now."

The following analogy may further explain the nature of his Grace. Consider us all to be satellites in orbit around the Centre, the Heart; then suppose one of these, by Bhagavan's guidance, slows down until a spiralling motion sets in. Then, by his Grace, it stops dead in its track and plummets right into the centre. After having there absorbed his Grace, it is free once more to return into orbit but in doing so no longer sees the Heart as being exclusively in the centre but in itself also and in all the others who are orbiting the centre. In fact, the Heart is everywhere.

—*The Mountain Path, 1967*



## The Boy Sage

This beautiful children's storybook, replete with full-color illustrations, tells the life of Sri Ramana Maharshi, highlighting his childhood experiences and the endearing relationship he had with children and animals.

Published by Sri Ramanasramam, with text by Geeta Bhatt, illustrations by S. K. Maithreyi and layout by Rohit Sabharwal.

*hardbound, 42 pages, \$10 plus postage*

## Ramana Satsangs

Satsangs with recitations, songs, readings and meditation are conducted in a few places in or near large cities. Some of them are weekly. If you would like to attend any of these, please contact the individuals below for more information.

**Atlanta Area** — Mangalam Kalyanam (678-546-0378 / smoothcutter@hotmail.com)

**Ann Arbor, MI** — Nirupama & Ramesh (574-514-4766 / <neeru\_2@hotmail.com)

**Boston, MA** — David & Anna (617-928-1487 / dklegon@comcast.net)

**Connecticut Area** — Prashanth & Shobana (860-691-1862 / vprashanth@msn.com)

**Dublin, Ohio** — Abilash & Madhavi (614-789-9058 / mungamuru@hotmail.com)

**Miami, Ft. Lauderdale Area** — David & Janet Rubinson (954-755-4758 / arunahill@gmail.com)

**New Jersey, Pennington** — Nandini (609-730-8447 / nandinikapadia@yahoo.com)

**San Francisco Area** — Karthik & Sunita (510-656-2752 / sunita\_parasuraman@yahoo.com)

**San Francisco Area** — Vijay and Sree Sajja (925-417-0909 / vsajja@evergent.com)

**Los Angeles, CA** — Natarajan and Indira Venkatesan (310-473-9441 / nvenky30@yahoo.com)

**Washington, D.C. Area** — Uma and Santosh (301-528 - 5526 / uma\_santosh@hotmail.com)

**Ottawa, Canada** — Anantha Padmanabhan (613-733-8250 / padmanabhan\_ananth@hotmail.com)

**Toronto, Canada** — Krishnan & Padma Sastri (905-849-6005 / psastri@hotmail.com)

**Toronto, Canada** — Thiru (905-686-6592 / thirusivasamy@hotmail.com)

**Vancouver, Canada** — Akash (778 321-4499 / eternalshiva@hotmail.com)

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