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Ramana Yoga Sutras

By Sri Krishna Bikshu

Sri Ramana Maharshi wrote these Sutras at the request of some devotees to benefit their sadhana. Sri Krishna Bikshu (Voruganti Venkata Krishnaiah) was one of the early and ardent devotees of Bhagavan. He lived in the Ashram with Bhagavan for many years and wrote Ramana Leela, the life of Bhagavan in Telugu.

After talks on “Ramana Yoga Sutras” were given by Sri Krishna Bikshu at the Ramana Satsang, Hyderabad, these Sutras were published in Telugu in 1973 and then in English in 1980. We continue in this issue with sutra number six and seven along with their commentary.

VI “mjjata va” By dipping in

1. In the previous aphorisms, Bhagavan advocated the discipline of moving away from name and form which, if they exist, form an obstacle on the path. In this aphorism, the discipline taught is a unique one because it takes the very name and form used to denote the Divinity as steps to the realization of the ultimate Divine, the Atman. For, as it is said in “Ulladu Narpadu,” “By whatever name or form you worship, or in whatever way you worship, the worship will lead you to That which has no name or form.”

2. A name is but an idea; it reminds you of a quality (guna), or of an action (kriya), of a genesis (jati) or of a symbol having a particular significance. At least that is so in Sanskrit. If we say ‘Siva’, it means ‘good to the universe’. So in that word ‘Siva’ an attribute is described. If we say ‘Vishnu’, that means ‘One who is omnipresent’. Being

everywhere is an action. If we say ‘the Formless’, we indicate the genesis of a form. And if in Mantra Sastra we say ‘A’, we are using the symbol for the Creator. Therefore, the use of all the different languages means the use of different ideas. The basis of all languages is sound and the different manifestations of sound are in the letters. Sound is the basis of all creation. “In the beginning there was the Word,” says the Bible. The Word could not have existed without an idea. The Word should have been comprised of different deflections of sound; and it was the Word out of which the world arose.

3. The worship of the Divine through words or ideas generally means recitation of the names of the Lord with the help of hymns, songs, a stuti or mantra, the combination of words of mystical import.

In this aphorism Bhagavan advocates sticking to the name or a mantra. He says in “Upadesa Saram”: “Japa of mantras is better than hymnal praise; and the mental

repetition of the mantra or the Name is more effective than the oral utterance or whisper.” And then he explains, “If you continue sticking to the sound or the idea there will come a stage when there will be only a sound, undifferentiated even into various letters.” As you go deeper and deeper, even the sound dissolves, and that process he calls ‘dipping in’.

4. There is a link between this ‘dipping in’ and the previous path advocated, that of Self-enquiry. When you repeat a name or mantra, Bhagavan says that you should watch the source of the sound or the one that produces the sound, that being the Atman alone. You have to follow the sound to the Atman. This is a finer point of Atma vichara. That is what he taught to Ganapati Muni. Here we find the reconciliation between Mantra Sastra and Vedanta.

5. As with the name, the process of ‘dipping in’ can be carried on with the help of a form. The most popular form taken up is that of an idol, an icon, a symbol like a swastika, a yantra, like the six-pointed star, or a chakra in the form of a Sri Chakra. Hold on to any of these forms. Remember them every minute of your life. The form disappears. There will be a light—not of this earth. It will be the Divine Light and that Light will disappear into the sunya, or the void, the ‘hrid’ (Centre). In technical language, the name is defined as nada and the final form of the form is the kala. Both disappear into the bindu, the vast void, wherein take place these phenomena, or creation. In this method we see clearly that thoughts are only thoughts, forms are only thought forms. There is no effort to reach their source, the source is reached automatically. Negate all thoughts of name and form except those which you have adopted. With this as your aid, dip in or slip into your Self. Reject every other idea. At the source of creation, **you are** – you, being the Atman.

6. All sadhanas advocated in all the religions are included in the process of ‘dipping in’. Clinging to a name or form is bhakti. Worshipping a form or name is karma. Knowing a form or name and its significance is jnana. Keeping your attention fixed on a name or form to the exclusion of all others is raja yoga. All the religions of the world have their basis in this: clinging to the One and ‘dipping in’. All meet in this Ramana doctrine. This is the method he has advocated in the previous aphorism as the

real Vichara. In “Ulladu Narpadu”, he says: “Do not utter ‘I-I’ aloud; collect all your prana and dip into That. That is the real Atma-Vichara.

7. It may be interesting to note that the idea that sound, being the subtlest medium through which we can dip into the Atman, is also the opinion held by our great musician Thyagaraja. He says that without knowledge of music, the art of utilizing sound, and without knowledge of the sound in the muladhara (sound as a concept), one can never attain liberation. He followed the bhakti marga and his practice was also ‘dipping in’, into the music, and merging with the primal sound. He also used the technique of yoga, by the control of the movement of prana through the various channels and through the sahasrara.

VII

“sakshat bhakti” Directly experienced

1. In aphorism five, nirgunopasana or the worship of Brahman without attributes is advocated. In aphorism six, the way of saguna Brahman upasana is explained. In this aphorism, Bhagavan tells us that the fruition of all spiritual endeavour lies in the direct experience of the Atman.

2. There are two kinds of experiences, one is mediate, the other immediate. When we perceive by means of the eye and know a thing it is mediate experience. When suddenly a thought flashes intuitively in the mind, it is immediate experience. The experience of Brahman can only be immediate, and unlike conventional experiences which imply the triad of experiencer, experienced and experience, this experience of the Atman is a direct and immediate. Bhagavan used to add: “Think of a person going down into a well in search of some lost article. He sees it and takes it but is unable to communicate this to the people outside the well itself. Similarly, a man having the experience of the Atman (in samadhi) is unable to speak of it when he is in samadhi. Unlike the first case (mediate experience), in the second, even after he returns to normal consciousness, he cannot actually reveal his experience in words, for words only come after the appearance of phenomena, and in Brahman there is no phenomenon.

(To be concluded)

If Only It Were Chadwick

By Louis Buss

Louis Buss lives in London. He is presently engaged, both in England and abroad, in extensive research into the life of Major A. W. Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala).

PART II

PLEASE KEEP IT CAREFULLY

IT was smaller than I'd imagined during the long wait for the postman. How could something of such vast significance be condensed into such a tiny volume, so that it was no larger than an ordinary paperback? Anyone who didn't know better might have mistaken it for an early Agatha Christie or some 1930s housekeeping manual. There was also something almost painfully vulnerable about it. Looking at all the smudges on the cover, and the ring of that coffee-cup standing out like the circle of some ghostly eclipse, I could hardly believe that this fragile little object had come through all its adventures to end safely in my hands.

After I'd stared at the cover for a moment, I opened the book. There on the frontispiece, written in red ink by someone with an emphatic, slanting hand, I read the following words:

*Sent from Tiruvannamalai
South India
25/8/36*

To Mother, Dada & Russell

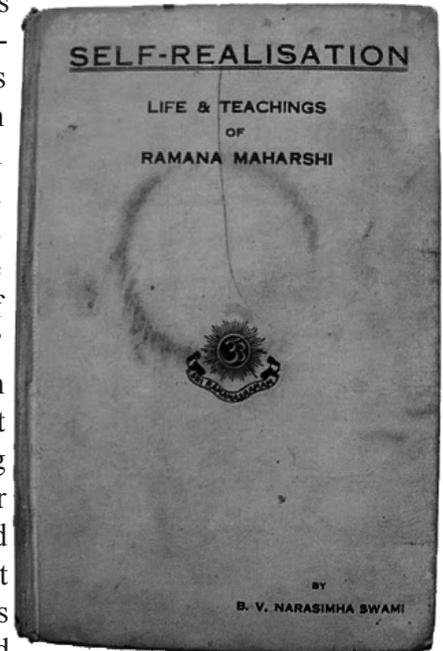
This will bring you something of the atmosphere of the place in which I am living and the vital presence of the Maharishee.

Do not be put off by the style – this means nothing; only pay attention to the facts.

*This book is very precious, please keep it carefully.
See page 262 & onwards*

It was unsigned, so the Mystery Devotee was still, for the moment at least, a mystery. But he (I had not entirely dismissed the possibility that it might be a 'she', but knew this to be highly unlikely) had revealed quite a lot about himself in those few words. First of all, and perhaps most importantly, he had not been just some tourist or curious

visitor, but a serious devotee. Tiruvannamalai – and perhaps even the Ashram itself – had been 'the place in which I am living'. His reference to the 'vital presence of the Maharishee' seemed to confirm his devotion, yet the quaint spelling struck a rather jarring note, and was not how most resident Ashramites would have referred



to Bhagavan. I seemed to remember Paul Brunton using that spelling, which always made Bhagavan sound like some sort of Red Indian brave – a great warrior of the 'Hindoo' tribe. Had our man perhaps recently arrived from the West after reading *A Search in Secret India*, and not yet learnt that most people spelt it 'Maharshi'?

The fact that he was sending the book home to his parents and 'Russell' (a brother, presumably) was also revealing. That he had parents at all meant that he had probably still been relatively young. A man in his 20s would perhaps have been too immature to embark on such a spiritual adventure and settle so far from home, so I presumed he would have been in his 30s or 40s. But the fact that he had sent the book back at all, and with such an inscription, implied that those parents of his still loomed quite large in his life. He still wanted them to understand the move he had made to India and the path he had chosen to follow there. It seemed to me that he had thrust the book at them with a sort of bossy desperation, certain in advance that Mother, Dada and Russell would never really understand. His parents would presumably have been middle-aged, or even elderly. What would they make of their son forsaking England to sit at the feet of some strange Hindoo in a loincloth? At the very least, he could have expected incomprehension, if not outright disapproval.

The way he asked them not to be put off by the style suggested a fear that they would use any excuse not to plough all the way through the thing. And that line about

keeping the book carefully sounded like a last despairing cry. ‘I know you’ll never read this,’ he seemed to be saying, ‘but at least try to understand how important it is to me. And don’t you dare go using it as a coffee-mat!’

We will never know who committed that little sacrilege. The book has had a long life, and any number of people might have absently-mindedly used it as a coaster over the past seventy-five years. For the sake of our Mystery Devotee, I only hoped the vandal hadn’t been Mother, Dada or Russell. Yet, although he still cared what his family thought, he didn’t seem to have been terribly close to them. Having exhorted them to read the book, he didn’t finish by sending them his love, or even his regards. He wanted them to understand the new life he had started many miles away from England, but he didn’t do them the conventional courtesy of saying how much he was missing family and home. He hadn’t, to my enormous frustration, even bothered to sign his name. All he cared about was thrusting the book under their noses. The whole gesture looked mainly like a declaration of love for Ramana Maharshi, with his own family in a distant second place.

With those first few words, whatever effect they might have had on their intended recipients, the Mystery Devotee had completely won me over. There can be few devotees of Bhagavan, particularly in the West, who wouldn’t feel some sympathy with his plight. He had fallen under an enchantment from which he knew his family, along with most of his countrymen, to be immune. All the same, hopeless as it was, he felt he had to make some attempt to explain what had happened, and knew he could only do this by explaining about Bhagavan.

Once I’d read the dedication, I went straight to page 262 as he so emphatically instructed, hoping to find some fresh clue. It turned out that he had merely been directing his family to the final two chapters – these are adaptations from Brunton’s *A Search in Secret India* which have been appended to the original biography. They detail some of Brunton’s experiences with Bhagavan, and also contain dialogues which give a general outline of His philosophy and method. Did the Mystery Devotee hope that his family would feel more at home reading the words of a fellow Westerner with a literary reputation? Did he think that, even if he couldn’t persuade them to read the entire biography, he could at least give them the gist of Bhagavan’s ideas, and thus prove that it wasn’t all completely crazy? Perhaps he hoped that, if he could just

get them to read those two chapters, they might be intrigued enough to read the rest. Or was he hoping that the dialogues would help them through some specific personal or spiritual problem of their own?

Going back to the start of the book, I began slowly leafing through, looking for more notes, and it didn’t take me long to find one.

There is only one colour illustration in the whole volume. It is the very first that appears, and it is protected by its own sheet of transparent tissue paper, which perhaps gives some idea of how much more expensive and difficult it was in those days to insert a colour reproduction into a book. This one is a pastel sketch of Bhagavan sitting outdoors on a leopard-skin with His water-pot and walking-stick. In the background, the sun is setting behind the outlines of mountains and the tower of a temple. All this is colourful, atmospheric and charming, if perhaps rather crudely done from a draftsman’s point of view. But the central figure itself is perfect. I have often wondered at how difficult it is to capture Bhagavan’s face in a picture or a carving – there is something about Him that eludes the artist, so that, no matter how accurate the representation may be, some vital essence is always lost. If this particular picture succeeds, that is perhaps because it is actually a photograph which has been coloured in and superimposed on the simple pastel background. It shows Bhagavan in middle age, sitting cross-legged with *vibhuti* smeared on his forehead, giving one of those stares of His which seems to leap out of the page like an irrefutable argument.

Above this picture, the Mystery Devotee had simply written:

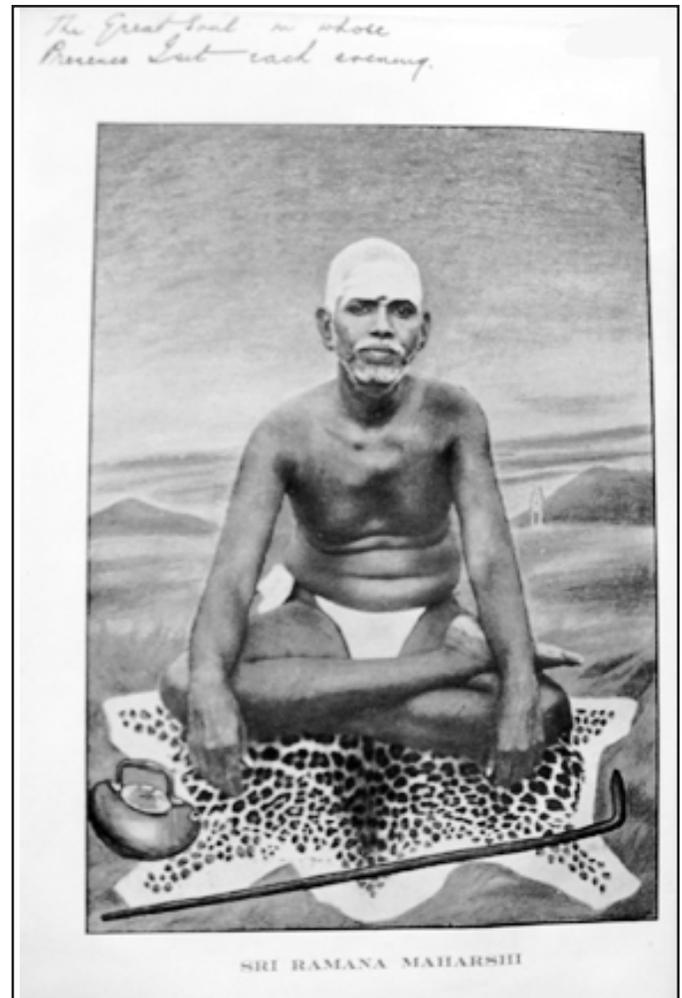
The Great Soul in whose presence I sit each evening.

Those words brought an unexpected lump to my throat. Perhaps it was partly because, after all that the opening dedication seemed to have revealed about his family’s attitude, I was moved to see him nailing his colours so firmly to the mast. No matter what they might think, he was going to come right out and say it – this half-naked Indian, with ash daubed on His forehead like some sort of tribal marking, was a Great Soul. But, more than the simplicity and courage of the declaration, it was perhaps that additional little detail which made me want to weep: ‘... in whose presence I sit each evening.’ I don’t know what I’d been expecting, but it hadn’t been such a personal, intimate little insight. The Old Hall had never seemed so

immediate and so hopelessly far away. For the writer of those words, Bhagavan's greatness had clearly been remarkable, but the fact of being able to sit in His presence had been pretty much taken for granted. He had not only seen Him, but seen Him each evening, as a matter of almost humdrum daily routine. For all I knew, he had actually been sitting with Bhagavan in the Old Hall when he wrote those words above the picture. Even if he'd been elsewhere in the Ashram, Bhagavan would have been reassuringly nearby, just as He always was. Perhaps, after he'd finished inscribing the book for his parents, the Mystery Devotee had carefully replaced the top on his pen and gone off to sit with the Great Soul for a few hours, never realising how we of future generations would envy him.

The idea brought on a sort of vertigo. It was as if that inscription had taken me right to the edge and made me stare straight down the cliff of those seventy-five years. Down there the dole queues of the Great Depression were lengthening whilst Hitler's Germany rearmed, Joyce and Orwell were scribbling away on their respective masterpieces and, at the foot of an Indian mountain, a man in a loin cloth sat motionless upon a sofa. That world had vanished, taking the Great Soul with it. By what merit had the sender of this book been born at exactly the right time? And for what sin had I been exiled to this vast distance?

(To be continued)



On the Glory of the Siddhas

Chapter 18 of Sri Ramana Gita

THE *Sri Ramana Gita* contains the essence of wisdom imparted by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi to Sri Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, his illustrious devotee who sought refuge at His feet in 1907. The Muni thereafter aptly named the sage - who was then known as Brahmanaswami - Sri Ramana Maharshi, the name by which he became renowned the world over.

The *Sri Ramana Gita* contains replies given by Sri Bhagavan to Sri Ganapati Muni and other devotees on a variety of important spiritual topics discussed during the years 1913 and 1917. The text contains three hundred verses and is arranged into 18 chapters, such as "The Importance of Self-Abidance", "The Paramount Duty" and "The Nature of Gnana".

In former times, the Paramatman, the Divine Self in the form of Lord Krishna, gave his gospel in the form of the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna in order to remove the darkness of ignorance. In the present age, Lord Ramana, the Sage of Arunachala, has clarified the path to liberation in order to meet the spiritual needs of present-day seekers of Truth from every continent the world over.

The concluding eighteenth chapter of *Sri Ramana Gita* is titled "On the Glory of the Siddhas". In this chapter Sri Kavyakantha pours out his heart in devotion to his Master, elucidating his power and Divinity. Most of Bhagavan's devotees are familiar with Ganapati Muni's exquisite exposition in 40 verses in praise of Sri Ramana, titled "Sri Ramana Chatvarimsat". The verses composed

for the 18th chapter of Sri Ramana Gita are in every manner a similar source of inspiration and insight.

This 18th chapter has been melodiously sung by Sri Lingeswara Rao and Sri J. Jayaraman of Sri Ramanasramam and recorded on a CD titled “Sanskrit Hymns from Sri Ramanasram”. A sample of this can be heard on Arunachala Ashrama’s web site at:

<http://www.arunachala.org/bookstall/audio/>

Sri Ramana Gita is one of those few books that all sincere aspirants should revisit often. At present, Sri Ramanasramam has three different publications titled *Sri Ramana Gita*. The first one contains the Sanskrit text with an English translation and transliteration, and also a Tamil translation. The second was recently published and is titled *Sri Ramana Gita of B. V. Narasimha Swami*. This second edition was serialized in our 2010 newsletter. The third is *Sri Ramana Gita (The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi)*. This is the English translation of Kapali Sastriar’s Sanskrit commentary of *Sri Ramana Gita*. Kapali Sastriar was an eminent disciple of Ganapati Muni and himself an illumined scholar and sadhaka.

The following English translation is taken from the first book described above which is the result of the lifelong devotion, practical experience and scholarly insight of Swami Viswanathan and Prof. K. Swaminathan.

We have included the English transliteration so that devotees will be easily able to add their voices to the divine words given by Sri Kavyakanta in praise of Sri Bhagavan Ramana, and share in that divine devotion in which all else is rendered superfluous.

Chapter 18 On the Glory of the Siddhas (verses 1-6)

वरपराशरगोत्रसमुद्भवं
वसुमतीसुरसहृद्यशस्करम् ।
विमलसुन्दरपण्डितनन्दनं
कमलपत्रविशालविलोचनम् ।१ ।

varaparāśara-gotra-samudbhavaṁ
vasumatī-surasaṅghaya-śaskaram |
vimala sundara paṇḍita nandanam |
kamala-patra viśāla vilocanam |1 |

1. Bhagavan Ramana, born in the great line of Parasara, the son of the immaculate Sundara Pandita, with lovely eyes wide as the lotus petal, bringing renown to the earthly gods.

अरुणशैलगाताश्रमवासिनं
परमहंसमनञ्जनमच्युतम् ।
करुणया दधतं व्यवहारितां
सततमात्मनि संस्थितमक्षरे ।२ ।

aruṇaśaila-gatāśrama vāsinam
paramahaṁsa manañjanam-acyutam |
karuṇayā dadhataṁ vyavahāritām
satatamātmani saṁsthitamakṣare |2 |

2. Dweller in the Ashrama on Arunachala, he is a steadfast and stainless Paramahansa, assuming activity out of compassion while ever established in the imperishable Atman.

अखिलसंशयवारणभाषणं
भ्रममदद्विरदाङ्कुशवीक्षणम् ।
अवरितं परसौख्यधृतोद्यमं
निजतनूविषयेष्वलसालसम् ।३ ।

akhila-saṁśaya vāraṇa bhāṣaṇam
bhramamadad-viradāṅkuśa vīkṣaṇam |
avaritam parasaukhya-dhṛtodyamaṁ
nija tanū viṣayeṣvala-sālasam |3 |

3. His words dispel all doubt. His glance, like an Ankusa, brings under control the mad elephant of the deluded mind. He is ever active for the happiness of others and utterly indifferent to his body’s needs.

परिणताम्रफलप्रभविग्रहं
चलतरेन्द्रियनिग्रहसग्रहम् ।
अमृतचिद्धनवल्लिपरिग्रहं
मितवचोरचितागमसहृग्रहम् ।४ ।

pariṇatāmra-phala prabhavigrahaṁ
calatareindriya nigraha-sagraham |
amṛta-ciddhanavalli parigrahaṁ
mita-vacora-citāgama saṅgraham |4 |

4. His body glows like a ripe mango. Absolutely master of the fickle senses, he is wedded to the immortal Valli¹, who

1. One of the two consorts of Kumara.

is pure awareness. In a few words, he conveys the substance of all the scriptures.

अमलदीप्ततरात्ममरीचिभिर्
निजकरैरिव पङ्कजबाधवम् ।
पद्जुशां जडभावमनेहसा
परिहरन्तमनन्तगुणाकरम् ।५ ।

amala dīpta tarātma marīcibhir
nija-karairiva paṅkaja bādhavam
padajuśāṃ jaḍa-bhāva-manehasā
pariharantam ananta-guṇākaram ।5।

5. With his pure effulgent rays he clears, like the sun in due season, the dullness of the devotees. He is an inexhaustible mine of auspicious qualities.

मृदुतमं वचने दृशि शीतलं
विकसितं वदने सरसीरुहे ।
मनसि शून्यमहश्शशिसन्निभे
हृदि लसन्तमनन्त इवारुणाम् ।६ ।

mṛdutamaṃ vacane dṛśi śītaḷam
vikasitaṃ vadane sarasīruhe
manasi śūnya-mahaś-śaśi-sannibhe
hṛdi lasantam ananta ivāruṇām ।6।

6. In speech, he is extremely soft, in look cool and compassionate; his face is like a full-blown lotus; his mind is a void like the moon in daylight; he shines in the Heart as the Sun in the sky.

(To be continued)

Ramana Satsangs

Regular satsangs with recitations, songs, readings and meditation are conducted 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)

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

Houston, TX — Kumar Saran (832-435-3761 / saran01@earthlink.net)

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