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# Ramana Yoga Sutras

*By Sri Krishna Bikshu*

*Sri Ramana Maharshi gave 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 not only made a deep study of the scriptures, he also practised them. He lived in the Ashram with Bhagavan for many years and wrote Ramana Leela, the life of Bhagavan in Telugu.*

*After listening to the talks on “Ramana Yoga Sutras” by Sri Krishna Bikshu at the Ramana Satsang, Hyderabad, some of the members desired to have these Sutras published in Telugu. It was done in 1973. This led to a request for the full text in English, which was published in 1980.*

## INTRODUCTORY

1. The ‘sutra’ is a form of Aryan scientific literature. It is a statement of the essential point of a doctrine in the fewest possible number of words enunciated in a clear, unambiguous and comprehensive way, touching all the aspects of the point in question. In studying a sutra, therefore, not even a letter can be omitted.

In ancient times, a disciple would go to the Master and request him to teach him the Vedanta. The disciple was required to possess an initial basic ethical training and it was also required that he should have turned away from all the affairs of the world. As written in the Brahmanical texts, he should possess the four requirements of mind (*sadhana chatustaya*), and the treasure of the six ethical virtues (*samadi shatka sampatti*).

The Ramana doctrine requires no such initial equipment. It is intended for all men or women, of whatever race or clime. Anybody following the Ramana path, in the course of his sadhana, acquires all this automatically.

We have said, the sutra being so short, not a letter can be omitted in its interpretation. Why? The guru, after elucidating a philosophical point, would cast the entire teaching in the form of a sutra so that the disciple could remember it easily, and by the law of association, the entire doctrine.

2. ‘Yoga’ literally means union, that is, of the sadhaka and the thing he strives for. The exact English equivalent is ‘religion’. In common parlance, yoga signifies the doctrine of ‘Hatha Yoga’, or control of the breath by using force of several kinds, adopting various asanas, etc. But here the word is used in a general sense, as a method of sadhana only.

In ancient times, the various ways of enlightenment were termed '*vidyas*'. In the Vedas, only the term '*vidya*' is used. Since the time of the *Gita*, the term yoga came into vogue. Vidya emphasizes the aspect of knowing the Ultimate. The word yoga signifies the union of the soul with the Divine. In the Ramana doctrine, the real emphasis is on Knowledge and inherence in It, but the commonly known term 'yoga' has been employed throughout this text. So that Ramana Yoga means the doctrine of Ramana, or the way to attain the Ultimate.

3. Is it really for all? In a way, yes. It is especially so for those who are wallowing in the miseries of samsara; for those who wish to get away from that bondage. Also for those who have had enough of the world, even of the riches and the sweet fruits of samsara (the term used in Sanskrit for this point or view is '*alam buddhi*' or 'enough idea'). The Ramana doctrine is also for those who want to know the Truth.

## THE TEXT

### I

#### **"*atma nishtho bhava*" Inhere in the Self**

1. 'Atman' denotes the body, the prana, the mind, the buddhi, the individual and the ultimate. But here 'Atman' is only used to indicate the ultimate. Normally Self is the word used to indicate the ultimate and self (lower case) is used to indicate the individual entity. Already we are firm in the notion of our individuality and this requires no teaching from the Master. The master emphasizes that the aim should be inherence in the ultimate.

2. By implication, the master insists that the sadhaka turn away from all the affairs and ideas of the world. He must be literally dead to it, so that he may be reborn in the divine realm. The master teaches that we should strictly abandon all activities, contacts and social functions of the world, whether good or bad, whether for individual or for social benefit. The aspirant should be a '*nissanga*' (non-attached). He should not allow himself to be carried away by such propaganda suggesting that 'living in society means participation in it for the good of society', or for that matter, for any portion of society or even for individuals. He should be non-attached even to individual matters, including the attainment of mystic powers or better worlds, called 'heaven' in Christian and Mohammedan religions, '*svarga*'

in the Hindu and Buddhist religions and the several lokas of Indra, Agni, Varuna, etc. (Indra, Agni and Varuna are the devas or deities mentioned in the Vedas. They have their own worlds or lokas). In the Ramana doctrine, there is no God or gods, angels or archangels, powers or hosts to rely upon for attaining this state of Self-inherence.

3. '*Nishtha*' comprises two ideas: '*shtha*' indicates 'being in'; '*nish*' means 'firmly, never to come out'. The use of '*nish*' indicates that in the Ramana doctrine, once one attains the highest state, there should be no coming back down. In the Yoga Sastra the sadhaka comes down to earth again even from the states of highest samadhi. When the power of his concentration slackens, he reverts to his normal state of consciousness—jagrat. Ramana distinguishes this state as the state of practice and not the state of attainment of the goal, which he calls the sahaja state, the native state, the original state. According to him, it is only when one forgets his pristine state that the notions of himself, the world and the Lord of the World occur.

4. This aphorism defines the goal. It must be noted that in Ramana's opinion all other activities, even the divination of the world, are futile. Without that knowledge one can never understand his relation to the world and to the Lord, nor the lesser aim of perfecting the world, which will not and cannot be successfully done.

### II

#### **'*hridi visa*' Enter the heart**

1. The word 'heart' here is used in its verbal sense. It means 'that which carries away', 'that which engulfs', 'that which digests everything into itself'. The meaning is that the world, and consequently ideas of it, submerge into the heart. Logically, the ideas of the world must submerge into that from which they originally sprung. In effect, the base on which thoughts arise and into which they finally subside is the heart. Really it is indefinable, for a definition is a significant distinctive statement of the characteristics of a thing. All these are included in the realm of ideas which do not appear there, where the heart alone is.

Therefore, the heart mentioned here should exclude the following definitions of the heart given in various schools of philosophy:

a) It does not mean the blood-pumping organ in the body.

b) It does not mean the '*anahata chakra*' mentioned in Yoga. In the Yoga Sastra it is said that there is a conduit pipe for the flow of the vital prana inside the spinal column consisting of two canals that are contained in a sheath. Through one of them, the '*purva sushumna*', the kundalini power flows upwards when forced by the practice of Yoga to these centres. And when the power inheres in each chakra, various mystic powers are attained. The fourth chakra up the *sushumna* is called the '*anahata*' and is at about the level of the sternum. Evidently, this is not the heart mentioned or intended here.

c) Neither is it the Atman. Bhagavan explained the hridayam (heart) as consisting of two words—'*hrid*' plus '*ayam*'. This is the '*hrid*' that is the Atman. It is said above in the first aphorism that to reach the Atman one must enter the heart.

d) Nor is it the heart mentioned by Bhagavan as being on the right side of the chest between the two nipples. That is the point according to Bhagavan where first the '*Chit sakti*' (knowledge power) enters into the body of a being. That power goes to the head (sahasrara through the amrita nadi, and comes down through the sushumna, giving us the experiences of the various words).

e) It is not the heart which signifies the center of emotions.

All these definitions must be eschewed before the exact significance of the word '*hrid*' can be comprehended. '*Hrid*' really means a state of consciousness and force. It is from this sea of consciousness that during the wakeful state thoughts arise, and into this that they again subside.

3. Some say that thoughtlessness itself is the state of Atman realization. It isn't. We have no thought when we

enter sleep or when experiencing a fit. Surely those states are not the state of the Atman. Buddha calls this state only '*sunyata*', or void. But Atman is a positive conception.

Hindu philosophy explains that the divine has an indefinable power called maya. Maya should not be equated with illusion. These two are not the same. Maya has two powers. It acts as a sheath to the Atman. This power is called '*avarana sakti*'. There is another correlated power. This is the power of manifestation, of becoming many. That power is called the '*vikshepa sakti*'. Now, in sleep we are not in command of our own mind, that is, of the totality of thoughts. Our will does not function. We are then said to be in a state of *tamas*.

4. To attain Realization we must have awareness! We must be wakeful and get the experience. We must have the *sattva* guna.

The state of the void is called '*tamasi*' or maya by the Advaitins. Buddhists call it the *sunyata*. Modern Indian philosophers have made a total confusion between the two. They mistakenly proclaim that *sunyata* is Brahman. No. One may or may not get the *sunyata* state before Realization. *Tripura Rahasya* says that there are six different states before attaining the final realization.

5. In yoga also, in *nirvikalpa samadhi*, one gets a state of thoughtlessness, and practically the glory of Atma realization is experienced then. The only difference between that state and the state of Atma realization advocated by Bhagavan is that in the former one eventually slips back to normal consciousness. But when once Realization, or *atma nishtha* is attained, one never departs from it.

(To be continued)

D.: How can the rebellious mind be brought under control?

M.: Either seek its source so that it may disappear or surrender that it may be struck down.

D.: But the mind slips away from our control.

M.: Be it so. Do not think of it. When you recollect yourself bring it back and turn it inward. That is enough.

No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not one's birthright. The successful few owe their success to their perseverance.

— Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, Talk No. 398

## Sri Krishna Bikshu

**S**RI Krishna Bikshu, Voruganti Venkata Krishnaiah (1904-1981), was a lifelong bachelor who held a degree in law, a profession that he scarcely practiced, however, preferring a life dedicated to spiritual pursuits. A man of sharp intellect and prodigious learning, Sri Krishna Bikshu authored several works besides the preceding *Ramana Yoga Sutras*. His published works were *Sukti Sudha* (Supplement to Forty Verses), a summary of *Ramana Lahari* and *Tripura Rahasya*—all in Telugu, and *Sri Ramana Gita* (5th edition) in English are among those that merit special mention. He wrote *Sri Ramana Leela*, the Telegu biography of Sri Bhagavan, in the immediate presence of Bhagavan who went through every page of it. To our knowledge his magnum opus, *Anasuya Ramayana*, a complete and faithful translation in Telugu of Valmiki's *Ramayana* is yet unpublished.

Even as a teenager, Sri Krishna Bikshu made a deep study of Vedantic literature. In 1929, he came into contact with Sri Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni and was won over by the Muni's great intellectual power and spiritual radiance. That led him to Sri Kavyakantha's guru, Sri Ramana Bhagavan, whom he first visited on May 17th, 1929. From 1931 on, Sri Krishna Bikshu committed himself solely to Sri Bhagavan and the practice of his teachings.

In 1945, when Sri Krishna Bikshu's mother died at Nellore, on the same day that Echammal died at Tiruvannamalai, Sri Bhagavan observed, "Poor Krishnaiah, he lost both his mothers on the same day!"

Krishna Bhikshu reached his Master's Feet in 1981 on the very day and month of Sri Bhagavan's birth in 1879! Just before his death at 6.05 a.m., December 30th, 1981, Sri Krishna Bhikshu joined his brother Dr. O. Ramachandraiah in chanting Arunachala Siva from 3.40 to 5.20 a.m.



## Bhagavan Referring to the Self and the Lokas

*By Sri Krishna Bikshu*

**I**N spite of being in the universal state of realized identity, Bhagavan recognised the contingent reality of higher states equal to that of this mundane state. This was shown in the case of Venkata Sastri, one in the group of devotees who put to Bhagavan the questions recorded in *Sri Ramana Gita*.

This devotee had been ill for a long time and, expecting a near demise, he took sannyasa. Venkata Sastri sat fully conscious to the last as death was approaching, repeating the pranava (OM mantra) in an audible voice and from time to time reporting to those around him the staged withdrawal of the prana until, with his last utterance, the prana finally departed. This was reported to Bhagavan who said: "Is that so? In that case he will go, according to the Sastras, to Brahma Loka and abide there till the end of Brahma's cycle when he, together with Brahma, will merge in the formless infinity of Nirguna. Yes, Venkata Sastri must have gone to Brahma Loka. You can tell his people that I said so." What further proof is needed that Bhagavan did not regard the higher worlds as mere mirages?

To deny the truth of the lokas and their lords, which is proclaimed with a hundred voices by the Sruti, the Upanishads and all other scriptures, is to deny the obvious.

I have also heard Bhagavan say: "It is neither necessary nor possible for the body to have realization. I have at this moment twenty different bodies working in twenty different lokas, so if one of them suffers am I to grieve? I am not the body. One who considers himself the body may grieve, but how should I?"

On a different occasion we put the same question to Bhagavan, asking how he could exist in a number of lokas at the same time and he said that one could have as many bodies as he wished if he had the necessary power of yoga, adding: "Have you not read that at the time of Rasa Leela Sri Krishna assumed 16,000 bodies at the same time?"

Such statements by Bhagavan affirm the existence of a number of lokas or planes of existence of which he was aware but we are not. They also show that he could

assume individual form in them as in this world. Advaitic purists may be shocked at this, saying that the scriptures say: "He is One." But that refers only to the universal state. Everyone is the same in essence on the plane of Paramartha, but that refers to fundamental, universal Reality. On the planes of empirical reality we have to note the existence of multiplicity. That is why Jesus could say: "I and my Father are One". They were separate on the empirical or manifested plane, since he had a body and the Father had not, but they were One in essence.

Some theoretical Advaitins hold that after realization even the notion of multiplicity no longer exists. They say that once a rope which was mistaken for a snake is known to be a rope that there can no longer be the illusion of its being a snake. But another school holds that even after realization the appearance of manifestation remains although it is known to be illusory. They cite the appearance of mother-of-pearl. There is no silver in it, but even though one knows this the silvery appearance remains. I have heard Bhagavan confirm this view.

We must remember that the lokas are empirical realities no more real than this world of ours but also no less real. Bhagavan confirmed this when a group of disciples from Tiruchirapalli asked him whether Siva and the other Gods and their heavens really exist. "Do you exist?" he retorted. They replied that they did, and he said: "Then in the same way they do too."

It was always to be observed that Bhagavan was against intellectual discussions about personalities or about his individual nature since he was setting before his devotees the highest goal of pure formless Being.

How are we to understand activity on the part of one who abides in the state of Brahman? The Sruti says: "He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman." This implies that if it be the Saguna Brahman or personal God that he knows he will merge in the personal God, but if it be the Nirguna Brahman or the Absolute, then he will merge in That. Furthermore, Brahman is declared to be unmoving, unconditioned and inactive. How is this to be reconciled with the idea of His manifestation as an individual performing the work of such, whether in this one world or in many?

The writer's brother, Venkateswar, who wrote a life of Bhagavan in Hindi, once asked Bhagavan himself: "Swami, I see you doing work but I know that the scriptures say that the *Jnani* becomes one with Brahman and is non-

dual. How are these two things to be reconciled?"

Bhagavan gave him the long, deep, concentrated look so familiar to his devotees and then said slowly and clearly: "Suppose I could explain this to you in words, are you in a state to understand it?"

My brother pondered for a minute and then had to confess that he was not. The activity of one beyond the range of words and thoughts is obviously not to be understood by a mind confined to them. This is a mystery that can only be unraveled by experience. Some say that it is all leela, others that it is maya, but both these explanations are just words; and words, having been formed after creation, can never go back to their source which is before creation and on a plane above them.

On another occasion a visitor named Amrutananda wrote on a piece of paper the first half of a verse. This ran: "Who is this Ramana, famed for his graciousness, who lives in Arunachala Cave? Is he Vararuchi or Siva or Vishnu or Dakshinamurti? I want to know the eminence of this Guru." Now the question is not about the essential nature of the guru but about a Ramana living in a cave on Arunachala. Amrutananda left the paper with Bhagavan and went out. When he returned he found it completed by Bhagavan with the words: "Ramana is the Supreme Spirit (Paramatma) who, in the form of Knowledge, abides in the heart-cavern of every person, from Vishnu downwards. If you come to the heart with the mind melting in love and see with the eye of wisdom, this will be plain to you." He is not speaking here of Ramana as an individual but of the essential nature of Ramana.

*(This and the other articles by or about Krishna Bikshu were compiled from the Mountain Path.)*

## Bhagavad Gita Parayanam

will be conducted in Arunachala Ashrama

**on Sunday, 27 March 2011**

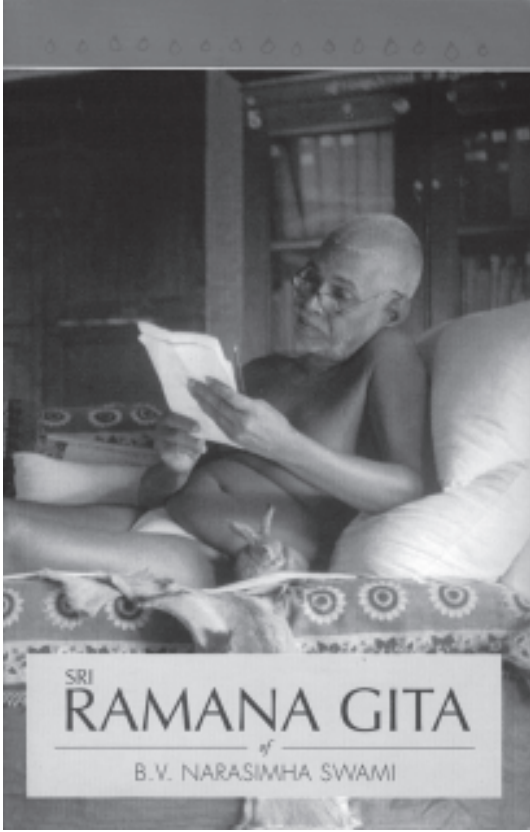
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*The program will be followed by Luncheon Prasadam.*

*For more information call the Ashrama at 718.560.3196*



## Sri Ramana Gita of B. V. Narasimha Swami

About 1930, B. V. Narasimha Swami attempted to recreate the *Sri Ramana Gita* in its original conversational form. His manuscript recently surfaced in Ashram archives and this book has been published from it.

With the help of the Maharshi and other devotees, and taking recourse to his own erudition, B.V.N. was able to recreate thirteen of the eighteen chapters of *Sri Ramana Gita* in conversational form. The book contains some nuances of teachings of the Master not covered in the Sanskrit *text*.

The fact that Sri Ramana Maharshi himself went through many of the typed pages, made corrections, added Sanskrit and Tamil text and verses to the manuscript, immeasurably enhances the value of this work.

**50 pages**

**Price \$4.00**

## The Genesis of “Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam” By Krishna Bikshu

*The following is an extract from an unpublished English manuscript written by Krishna Bikshu which was found in the Sri Ramanashram archives and which gives an interesting account of the genesis of the original Sanskrit version of “Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam”. Similar though less detailed accounts of the genesis of this work are given in Day by Day, 19-6-1946, and on page 75 of T. K. Sunderesa Iyer’s book, At the Feet of Bhagavan.*

Pranavananda, who was present then (in July and August 1917), requested Sri Ganapati Muni to compose a song on the Guru. So Ganapati Muni immediately wrote the “Guru Gita”. Then, some of the disciples called for a benedictory verse. Long before this Sri Bhagavan had composed one single verse in arya metre beginning with “*karuna purna sudhabdhe*”. That incident came to light on this occasion, so immediately Ganapati Muni requested Bhagavan to compose four more verses that, along with the first, would form the benedictory verses to the “Guru Gita”. Ganapati Muni also mentioned that in the rest of the verses the subject matter should be (1) a definition of the Self (atma-lakshana), (2) Self-enquiry (vichara), (3) yoga, and (4) karma and bhakti. Thus, the “Arunachala Pancharatnam” took shape. The concluding verse beginning “*srimald ramana maharsher*” was written by Gajanana (alias Daivarata) right there and then.

Subsequently, in 1922 at the request of a devotee named Aiyasami Pillai, Sri Bhagavan translated “Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam” into Tamil in venba metre, and the concluding verse by Daivarata was translated into a Tamil verse, beginning “*Arunagiri-Ramanan*”, by Sri Easwara Swami.

## An Invitation

You, your family and friends are cordially invited to join us in observing

The 61st Mahanirvana of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi on

**Saturday, 30th April at 11:00 a.m.**

ARUNACHALA ASHRAMA, BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTER

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*The program will include recitations, bhajans, talks and puja, followed by prasad (lunch).*

*For more information call: (718) 560-3196 or write: [ashrama@arunachala.org](mailto:ashrama@arunachala.org)*

## 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.

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**Ann Arbor, MI** — Nirupama & Ramesh (574-514-4766 / [neeru\\_2@hotmail.com](mailto:<neeru_2@hotmail.com>))

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