

SRI RAMANA MAHARISHI



Venkataraman (later known as Sri Ramana Maharshi) was born on 1879 at Tiruchuzhi, a small village in Tamil Nadu. Venkataraman's mother Alagamma was a pious, devoted person and his father Sundaram Iyer was a pleader, who practiced mostly before the local magistrate. Venkataraman realized the Self in a miraculous way at an early age. He abandoned his home and family to Arunachalam (Thiruvannamalai Hill) at 17 years of age and completely absorbed in the Bliss of Being. There after he became famous in the Hill Town as a Bala Swami. Most of the time He continued to be in Deep Silence in front of his Devotees where the interrogator's doubts vanished and questioner's mind & intellect rested in absolute silence to realize that the intellect created its own problem and brought sorrow by solving the same problem. Not only human beings, but even cows, dogs, monkeys, squirrels, crows and peacocks enjoyed perfect freedom and full rights in the Ashramam. Cow Lakshmi, for example, lived there as a pet daughter and attained "Moksha" (Liberation) in her last hour by the divine touch of Sri Bhagavan. As time went by, people throughout the world came to know that Sri Bhagavan was the living embodiment of all that is taught in the Bible, Thirukkural, Gita and Upanishads, and were attracted to His Feet. Forgetting the national differences such as Indian and foreigner and the religious differences such as Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh, near and far people flocked to the Feet of Sri Bhagavan and adored Him, as their Guru. Many among them achieved true knowledge, some by merely seeing Sri Bhagavan, some by living in His Divine Presence, some by dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to His service, and some by following His teachings. Sri Ramana Maharishi taught two paths as the main spiritual practices for the salvation of humanity. They are (1) the path of Self-Enquiry, that is, knowing one's real nature by enquiring 'Who am I?', and (2) the path of Self-Surrender, that is, surrendering one's ego completely to God. The former is the path of knowledge ("Jnana Marga"), and the latter is the path of devotion ("Bhakti Marga"). On Friday the 14th April 1950 after seated in "Padmasana", His every breath went on steadily, and at 8.47 p.m. He shed His gross body. At that moment, devotees saw a brilliant light flash engulfed the small room where Sri Bhagavan was seated and others who were standing in the open exclaimed, "Jyoti, Jyoti in the sky" as the radiant light had suddenly appeared in the sky further moved northwards to Arunachalam and vanished behind the summit. The Shrine of Grace of Sri Arunachalaramanan, who by His life exemplified the truth 'I am not this body, I am the ever-existing Supreme Thing', is ever quenching the thirst of the world for Jnana with the nectar of Grace flowing in the form of Silence.

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Brief about Sri Ramana Maharishi

When & where born

Ramana Maharshi was born “Venkataraman Iyer” on 30 December 1879 in the village [Tiruchuzhi](#) near [Aruppukkottai](#), [Madurai](#) in Tamil Nadu, [South India](#). His birth came upon *Arudhra Darshanam* day, the day of the [Sight of Lord Siva](#). Venkataraman was the second of four children born into an orthodox [Hindu Brahmin](#) family. His father was Sundaram Iyer from the lineage of Rishi Parashara, and his mother was Azhagammal. He had two brothers Nagaswamy (1877–1900) and Nagasundaram (1886–1953), along with a younger sister Alamelu (1891/92-1953).

Brief history of the person -personal

When Venkataraman was twelve, his father died and the family was broken up. He and his elder brother were sent to live with their paternal uncle in Madurai. Here, Venkataraman first attended the Scott’s Middle School and then joined the American Mission High School for his ninth standard. At school, his one asset was an amazingly retentive memory, which enabled him to repeat a lesson after hearing it just once. Venkataraman found school games and outdoor life more congenial than studies and reading books. In his boyhood Venkataraman was prone to abnormal deep sleep. Speaking about it in later years he said: “The boys didn’t dare to touch me when I was awake, but if they had any grudge against me they would come when I was asleep, carry me wherever they liked, beat me, paint my face with charcoal and then put me back, and I would know nothing how it happened until they told me next morning. At the age of 15 Venkataraman learnt about Arunachalam through his relative and there after he found himself haunted by its thoughts. A little later, Periapuranam book fell into his hands.

From that time onwards, the spiritual current of awareness began to waken up in the young boy. This grew ever stronger with the passage of time and after a few months, sometime in the middle of July 1896, when he was just sixteen and a half years old, Venkataraman realized the Self in a miraculous way of attaining death experience. Venkataraman emerged from this amazing experience an utterly changed person. He lost interest in studies, sports, and friends and so on.

At the age of 17 years Venkataraman left a note to his family before leaving to Thiruvanamalai with Rupees three in hand. Thus renouncing everything, he went to the temple complex and got immersed in the Bliss of Being, sitting motionless, day after day, night after night. When some devotees discovered the Swami in the vault, oblivious of the dreadful condition he was in, with worm-infested wounds and oozing pus, they removed him to a nearby shrine within the temple complex. Later He moved to Gurumurtam, After sometime, the young Swami began to reside at the Pavalakunru shrine on the Arunachalam hill, where also

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he would sit as before, immersed in the Bliss of Being. Swami met his mother at this place after he left home. Early in 1899, the young ascetic, accompanied by his attendant Palaniswami took up His residence in the Virupaksha Cave. Swami stayed in this cave for about seventeen years where “Who am I” was explained to his devotee Sivaprakasam Pillai. Kavya Kanta Ganapathy Muni a renowned Sanskrit Scholar of that time accepted Swami as his Guru named Swami as Baghavan Sri Ramana Maharishi. Ganapathy Muni later collated lots of answer from Baghavan for various questions as Ramana Gita. The earliest Western seeker to come under Swami’s influence in 1911 was F.H. Humphreys. In 1916, as the number of resident devotees increased, Sri Ramana Maharishi shifted to the more spacious Skandasram, named so as it was built through Herculean efforts of his staunch devotee Kandaswami.

Towards the end of 1948, a small nodule appeared above the left elbow of Sri Ramana. Operations were performed but the malignant tumour appeared again. The end came on April 14, 1950 at 8.47 p.m.

Principles & Practices in Spiritual Life

Much could be written about the way Sri Ramana practiced “Samatva” – equality. In his presence all were alike: high or low, rich or poor, man or woman, child or adult, human or animal. Whatever eatables devotees offered Him would be equally distributed, then and there, to everyone in His presence.

Sri Ramana had compassion for all species of life including plants, animals and birds.

Perfect “Simplicity” was the principle lived by Sri Bhagavan in Sri Ramanasramam. Till the end He wore only a loin cloth, which is less than the dress needed by even the poorest among our countrymen. The same was the case with His food, for which He always sat along the devotees, and which was the same as that served to all - in fact it was rather less than what was served to others.

After Sri Ramana came down to live in the Ashram at the foot of the hill, he made it clear, though not explicitly, that giving Darshan and communicating with people through silence or brief messages of deliverance was his sole goal in life.

Among the qualities that endeared Sri Ramana to thousands, was his “Soulabhya” – easy accessibility.

Equally charming was his “Sahajata” – the utter normality of behaviour. His manners were so natural that the newcomer immediately felt at ease with him.

Sri Ramana stressed that the path to peace is through service. He would diligently correct manuscripts and proofs, cut vegetables, clean grain, shell nuts, stitch leaf-plates and assist in cooking, thus exemplifying the dignity of labour and charm of simplicity.

Sri Ramana always laid stress on Maunam – the silence

Spiritual Works

A large number of seekers in various stages of spiritual evolution came to him and found peace, clarity and strength of mind in his presence

Sri Ramana’s teachings were mirrored to perfection in his life. He declared that to abide in the Self was the highest attainment, and it was in this State Transcendent that one found him at all times. He had the characteristics of a “Jivan Mukta” – emancipated, while yet in the physical body.



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Paul Brunton, a British journalist, who lived near Sri Ramana for few weeks in 1930, writes "I like him greatly because he is so simple and modest, when an atmosphere of authentic greatness lies so palpably around him and also because he is so totally without any traces of pretension and he strongly resists every effort to canonize him during his lifetime.

When people went to him and put questions, he answered them in his own simple way, devoid of solemn discourses Sri Ramana did not found a new cult or religion. He did not insist on compliance with any established religious mode, ritual or line of conduct.

Health Crisis

Even during the period of great torture caused by the disease, Sri Bhagavan was happily answering His devotees, and His replies were not only instructive but also full of humour, revealing thereby the sublimity of a "Jnani". Thus He comforted the devotees whenever they were much worried about His health. He once remarked, "The body itself is a disease that has come upon us.

Philanthropic Works

Mr. Rajandra Prasad from Gandhiji's advice reached at Sri Ramanasramam on 14th August 1938. At the time of his taking leave of Sri Bhagavan, he approached Him and humbly enquired, "O Bhagavan, it was Gandhiji himself who sent me here. Is there any message that I may take to him?" Sri Bhagavan graciously answered "The same Power which works here is working there also! Where is the need for words when heart speaks to heart?"

The Ramana Ashram served as a place for spiritual enlightenment with Ananadhanam (Prasadham/free Meal) provided to devotees whoever visited there.

Now the trust runs Veda Pattasala, Gosala, and Vaidyasala in line with Sri Bhagavan's guidelines

Writings / Celebrated books

Most celebrated one is "Who am I" composed by Sri Bhagavan. In response to Sri Muruganar, the foremost devotee of Sri Bhagavan and a great Tamil poet, Sri Bhagavan not only composed in Tamil 'Upadesa Undhiyar' but also compiled 'Ulladhu Narpadhu', Sri Arunachala Stuti Panchakam' ('The Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala'), and 'Guru Vachaka Kovai'.

The Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation, New York, has posthumously published his post-1952 writings (the year when his last book The Spiritual Crisis of Man, in 16 volumes. Dr. Paul Brunton was awarded a doctorate in philosophy by the Roosevelt College, USA.

Location

Sri Ramana Ashram, Tiruvannamalai, Tamilnadu, India; Phone : +91-4175-237200

Sources

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