

# TURYA - THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI

## Transcript

(chanting female voice)

(ambient music)

(chanting male voice)

NARRATOR: The story of Ramana Maharshi is a story of self-discovery.

His transformation from an average young man in southern India to one of the most important spiritual teachers in modern history has attracted spiritual seekers from all over the world. They come to the holy mountain Arunachala and to Ramana Ashram in Tiruvannamalai, India, where he spent most of his life. They come to meditate, they come to worship, they come because they know his teachings hold the key to their own self-realization. His teachings are not religious, but convey the truth that underlies them all. You already have everything you need to attain self-realization, he says. You are already that. It is just a matter of revealing this simple truth to yourself.

Who was this man? What was it he taught? Why does he have so many followers even today, so many years after his death? Join us as we journey into the the fourth state of consciousness and reveal the life and teachings of this most extraordinary man. This is the story of Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi.

(music builds)

(chanting female voice)

(chanting male voice)

## **Turiya - The Life and Teachings of Ramana Maharshi**

(music with flute)

NARRATOR: By the 1930s, Ramana Maharshi was largely unknown to Western civilization. In his home country of India, he was known as a wise sage, and his devotees would even say that he was God in human form. He had no money, no possessions, just a gourd shell water jug, a bamboo walking staff, and a loincloth. This was how he chose to live since the age of 16. He sat in deep

meditation for much of the day and night, and sometimes he would answer questions when spiritual seekers came to him with questions about self-realization. He had no desire to be a spiritual teacher or guru. He just wanted to live in silence on his sacred mountain, Arunachala. But spiritual seekers were attracted to his peaceful nature and kept coming to him for guidance and just to be in his presence.

And over time, Ramana Ashram was built by his devotees so they could stay by his side day and night. It wasn't until a young Englishman wrote about his encounters with this mysterious Maharishi, as he called him, that he became known to the Western world. Paul Brunton had been traveling India and was writing a book about the many yogis he met during his travels. He was a spiritual seeker himself and was largely curious about the secrets that India's many yogis had to share.

A Search in Secret India was published in 1935 and details Brunton's first encounter with Ramana. When Paul arrived at Ramana Ashram in Tiruvannamalai, he found Bhagavan, as his followers called him, surrounded by his devotees in a great hall of the ashram. He reported a mysterious peace that Ramana emanated and said all of the questions he had come with seemed to disappear in his calm presence. Hours went by in silence before Paul finally asked Ramana some questions.

"I have questioned the sages of the West," Paul said. "Now I have turned my face towards the East. I seek more light. Can you assist me to experience enlightenment? Or is the search itself a mere delusion?" He asked.

After several minutes Ramana replied. "You say I. I want to know. Tell me, who is that 'I'?"

Ramana's response was not what Paul was expecting.

"Who are you?" Ramana said. "First know that 'I', And then you shall know the truth."

(music with female voice)

In this first exchange between Paul Brunton and Ramana, we see the very core of Ramana's teachings. Look into your own self and you will find the truth. But what does Ramana mean by the self? And how do we find it within us?

Most of us, we think we're a person. We think we are a human being. Bhagavan Ramana says, You are not a person. You are not actually a human being. You are something far greater, much deeper than this. You are something else, something divine, something wonderful that is called in this way of speaking your true self or the Self. This true self that we are, we all know in our hearts this truth. We all already know what we are.

So how did Ramana come to know his true self? It turns out, like most of us, that he was not born with this knowledge. He mysteriously acquired it when he was a young man. When he was just 16, he would have an experience that would change the course of his life forever. Up until that time, he was an average South Indian boy who went to school, was athletic, had two brothers and a sister. He was born in 1879, and his mother and father named him Venkataraman. His father, Sundaram Iyer, passed away when he was 12, at which time Venkataraman went to live with his uncle in Madurai, India. It was there one afternoon for no particular reason, He had what is described as his death experience.

(music playing)

As a young boy in Madurai, Venkataraman, as he was known then, experienced an immediate, instantaneous and direct fear of death.

Suddenly one day when he was alone in his uncle's house, in an upstairs room, a small room, a very beautiful room, he was just overtaken by a very intense fear of death.

He felt that he was dying or perhaps had even died.

He said it was so intense he knew he could not escape it. And so he didn't do what normally a young boy of 16 might do: He didn't rush to his relatives or friends or a doctor. He decided death has come. So he said, What do I do about it?

He even lay down straight on the ground with his limbs outstretched, without breathing, and lay there as if he was dead.

He was this young boy who was not studying Vedanta. He was not doing, hearing and listening from a complete competent teacher and reading Vedantic texts. He was not spending his time in subtle philosophical arguments, certainly not sitting for hours and hours in deep meditation. No, no, no. One day he just lay down and thought, What would it like to be dead?

He describes how his mind was pulled inwards towards his Self to discover what he actually was.

And he had a breakthrough. He clearly saw the death of the body is not my death. Even the stopping of the mind is not my stopping. I Am. Prior to the body, prior to the mind, He saw clearly the mind with the body, and the whole world could disappear in an instant and not the least would be lost.

The description is like this that he says, "I said to myself, this body is dead. It's going to be carried to the burial ground or the cremation ground, and it's going to be burnt to ashes, which is our custom. But, with the death of the body am I dead?" And he says, "I can feel the full force of my personality, the full current which is shining and which is enveloping everything, including the body and it is deathless." And he says, "At that moment I knew and I knew from then forever that that is my true nature."

He continued to be a schoolboy, continued going to school, but he says the Self began to draw all my attention to itself. It just drew my attention to itself, it was very difficult for him to engage in normal activities. He had to bring himself to do that. He lost all interest in everything except the Self. Other thoughts, activities, I might have been talking or walking or eating or doing anything else, but the Self remained as this substratum and the continuous awareness which underlies everything else that one does.

(calm music playing)

NARRATOR: Something else now guided him and with some strange power he did not understand, he was drawn to a holy mountain in southern India. He had never been there before, but he said it pulled him like a magnet.

(train sounds)

He borrowed enough money for a train ticket and left his family with no intention of returning to go to Mount Arunachala, in Tiruvannamalai.

Bhagavan's relationship with Arunachala was very mysterious because he never gave importance to anything outside. But when it comes to Arunachala, he was so attached to it. 54 years, he never moved away from this place. Where he says, "I have found a magnet mountain it somehow pulls the soul, the heart and makes them still. Makes the mind still."

SARADA: And Arunachala is known as the hill which pulls towards itself every seeker of self-knowledge. It says, "Come, come to me." It welcomes them.

NARRATOR: He would spend the rest of his life here next to this sacred mountain that spiritual seekers have been coming to for thousands of years.

(music with female voice)

The ancient Hindu temple at the base of Arunachala offered many places for the young boy to sit and meditate in silence. Some of the other boys there would tease and pester him when he tried to meditate. Venkataraman just wanted to be alone. He eventually found a quiet place in a dark basement of one of the temples, and would sit there in such deep meditation that he would lose the ability to care for himself. Insects and vermin found him and began eating his flesh. It is quite possible he could have been lost forever if he was not discovered by some of the temple swamis.

So now picture Ramana, his attention completely soaked in his being naturally, effortlessly, dissolved. He has absolutely no awareness of what's happening in the external world. So he found a place where no one could bother him, so to speak. He was there and some insects and bugs started eating his flesh. But it's like from our perspective, it's like he was unconscious. But he was not unconscious from his own perspective, which meant he was not feeling his body. There was no body awareness, which means there was no sensations. If they hadn't found him, if they hadn't nourished him with food and milk and so on, he would have perished the body.

NARRATOR: These temple swamis and priests began caring for him. They would give him milk and rice and other nourishment. They would also watch over him to give him the freedom to meditate around the temple and surrounding town. They could see how special the young Swami was, and it wasn't long before he had his first regular devotee. Palaniswami cared for him and allowed him to do what he wanted most in life: to sit in silence and meditate on Mount Arunachala. In time, many more devotees became attracted to him. And so began the lifelong companionship of devoted spiritual followers.

(music with female voice)

Venkataraman had a very special energy that everyone could feel. They felt just by being in his presence, they too could find peace and realization. He moved around the mountain from place to place, and eventually he would find Virupaksha Cave on Mount Arunachala, that he would live in, mostly in silence, for 17 years.

After he came to Tiruvannamalai he didn't speak because he said there was no -- there was no motivation to speak. It was not that I was observing any vow of silence, but I never felt the need to speak.

Undoubtedly he was -- his attention was focused inwards on himself alone. On his true self alone. But is that why he spent the time in silence?

When Bhagavan talks about silence, he's not talking about vocal silence. He's not even talking about mental silence. He's talking about the silence of pure being. So even in the midst of noise, that silence is ever the underlying reality. And Bhagavan often said the ultimate teaching is silence because the words can only point us in the right direction. But silence alone can reveal the truth

because silence is itself the truth. So silence is a synonym for pure being, which is what we actually are.

The silence that Ramana Maharshi talked about is not acoustic silence. It is a silence full of presence, full of awareness, full of the deepest recognition that is way beyond words. Words are conventional designations that we apply to label objects or states or anything like that.

Silence? True silence, mauna, that's powerful. Because in that moment, the mind cannot grasp it. That true, grace-filled silence, that's where profound teaching happens.

Then slowly, seekers of truth started coming to him. One of them was a person, Sivaprakasam Pillai, who got answers from him in writing and which is now compiled as the text, "Who am I?"

So at around about 1902, Sri Bhagavan was living in Virupaksha Cave up on Arunachala, and an early devotee of his, Sivaprakasam Pillai, came to visit him and ask him a series of questions. Now, because Bhagavan wasn't speaking at the time, even though Sivaprakasam Pillai asked the questions verbally, the answers were given in writing. And here in this text, "Who Am I?", when this conversation is recorded, we see beautiful high-level teachings that are very simple and very direct, that take us all the way to self-realization. The first question that Sivaprakasam Pillai asked was, "Who am I?"

And this gives us the name of the text. And Bhagavan said, the truth of what you actually are is pure consciousness. And he said that to know yourself as pure consciousness, you have to remove or eliminate everything that you can see, everything that is observable or perceivable. If you remove everything you can perceive from your consciousness, what remains is the essence of what you are. That is sat-chit-ananda: pure consciousness, beingness, bliss. And that is also self-realization. And in the text he gives a very simple, elegant, straightforward way on how this is done. And one of the principal methods that Bhagavan gives in the text, "Who Am I?" is this method of self-inquiry.

The "Who Am I?" text wouldn't be published for another 20 years. When Ramana reviewed it before it was published, he made very few changes or additions because very little had changed in his teachings during that time. The process of self-inquiry had come to him that day when he had his death experience. It was the means by which he came to know his own true nature. And nothing had changed since that fateful day at his uncle's house.

And in that moment, this inquiry spontaneously arose in him, this question: Who am I? And he describes how this question arose in him, but in a non-verbal way. It wasn't that he was verbally articulating this Who am I? But non-verbally, inwardly he felt, who is this person? Who is this I who's dying?

As soon as that fear of death arose in him, he was prompted to investigate. What is going to die is this body. With the death of this body, will I die? Though he put it in words, he's made it clear this wasn't even a thought process. It was just an immediate response to that fear of death. He turned his attention back towards himself to see whether I will die when the body dies. And because he turned his attention back to I with such intensity, he dissolved back into that infinite silence of pure being that is the reality of all of us.

In this death experience, Bhagavan was actually doing self-inquiry. He didn't call it self-inquiry. He'd never heard of self-inquiry. But this is what he was actually doing. And he had discovered the direct path to liberation. And it was this direct path, the most direct of paths, that he went on to teach for the rest of his life to those who came to him.

Self-investigation means looking at turning our attention away from all phenomena, away from everything that appears and disappears back to the one thing that is constant, that is the fundamental being awareness I Am. Though Bhagavan's path is a very, very simple path, it's extremely deep. It is the ultimate, it's the complete dissolution of our self as a separate individual. And when we dissolve, we dissolve back into what we actually are which is the infinite and eternal being, which is pure awareness.

Ramana's teachings center around the direct way to liberation. He was giving us a direct method, the simplest method, the easiest method for liberation. He didn't want us to go on any detours unnecessarily. He just gave us the simple way to liberation, the easiest way, the straightforward way. And what he said is the sure way. And all we have to do is discover what we are.

Bhagavan suggests two questions we ask. The first question always has the same answer. The first question is, to whom do these thoughts or do these phenomena arise? The answer is always, to me. And the second question is, Who am I?

So ask yourself, Who is the I who is aware of the thoughts? And don't give any answer because if I give an answer that would be another thought. So without giving any answer, I ask myself, Who am I? And I just remain. Another thought may arise and then I repeat the process. There comes a time when thoughts become less and less and less and just quieten out altogether when one experiences one's -- the core of one's nature.

But because of this strength of conditioning, of thinking that I am this name and form, the mind again gets back into thoughts, into thinking, into activity. So again, I take it back. I take it back and Ramana says try to do this all the time, twenty-four/seven. There is no time restraint, there's no constraint, there's no -- there are no rules and regulations other than the fact that you want to get back to your own Self.

This knowledge of what we are is non-verbal knowledge. It's not in the mind. And it's got nothing to do with the body. Bhagavan said this question of, "Who am I?" and this method of self-inquiry eventually burns itself up in the process. And what you're left with is just purity itself which is our true nature.

When seeker asked Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, How to meditate?" Bhagavan said, "Find out the meditator." He said, "Find out who wants to meditate." If you are asking me about Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's way, meditation is inquiry. It is the quest. Because every day we find in deep sleep the I thought merges in the source. The source where the I thought merges is the heart. And from there when you wake up, the first thing that comes out is this "I". It is the first to sprout. Then the mind blooms. If it is partially opened, you will dream. When it fully comes out you wake up. So the entire process of creation is happening inside. All the thoughts they depend on the "I" thought. And the thoughts make the mind. In essence, the "I" thought is the mind.

When he says "thought," he doesn't just mean mental chatter. According to Bhagavan, all this is thought. The whole world is nothing but thought. Any -- any mental impression, any mental phenomena of any kind whatsoever is a thought. So all phenomena are thoughts. So if we are -- when he says, What does it matter how many thoughts arise? You mean, what does it matter how many things appear? Whatever appears, nothing can appear without appearing to something. What it appears to is to me, to I. So whatever may appear, we need to investigate to whom it appears. Investigating to whom it appears, means turning our attention away from whatever has appeared back to ourself, back to the awareness to which it has all appeared. Because the real nature of I is pure infinitely silent being. It's the underlying reality of time, of space, of everything. Self-investigation is the means by which we listen to the silent teaching, the means by which we subside back into the silence which is our own reality. It's only in that silence of pure being that we can know our self as we actually are.

(calm music playing)

NARRATOR: Ramana by this time had become known as the wise sage on the mountain. And they called him many things. But since he wasn't speaking, no one actually knew his real name. At this point in his life, Ramana had no attachment to his name anyway. It wasn't until another scholar and well-known sage came to see him that he became known as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

In 1907, Bhagavan Ramana was visited by a great Sanskrit scholar by the name of Ganapati Muni. And Ganapati Muni knew all the Vedas, and he had performed many austerities and many spiritual practices. He was widely revered as a great man. But he didn't understand what the true spiritual practice was. He still felt within himself he hadn't really understood the true teaching despite having read all these different scriptures.

He knew the Vedas as if they were his own childhood rhymes. He knew the essence of the Vedas and he had practiced the most intense mantras in the Vedas. And he had done everything that

could be done. And he had his own following. He was called a Muni, but he was aware that the fullness had not been attained.

TOM DAS: So he approached Bhagavan Ramana and asked him about this. And when he received the spiritual teaching from Ramana, he was so elated, he was so overjoyed, he proclaimed that this is the true spiritual master. This is the true sage. And it was then that he gave who we now call Ramana his name. It was only at that point Ganapati Muni said, This is Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

What does Ramana mean? Ramana means that in which everything abides, that to which everything is drawn, that which everyone or everything loves or adores is Ramana. It is the Self. It is a name for the Self. And he said, I see that he is God. I see him as incarnation of an Indian Godhead, whom we call Subramania. So he called him Bhagavan. Bhagavan means God. Ramana is the Self. And he said, he is, everybody is calling him a Rishi. He's not an ordinary rishi. He is a maharishi. He is the greatest among the rishis, among the seers. A rishi means a seer of truth. He is greatest among the seers of truth so he is maharishi. And on that very day, he wrote to all his disciples, he said, I have found my master, I have called him Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Henceforth all of you call him that and may the whole world know him to be Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

NARRATOR: Ramana had been living on Arunachala for many years now. He moved into Virupaksha Cave, still living in silence. The whole time since he had left home, his family had been searching for him. Eventually, they had heard of a young swami named Venkataraman that was living in Tiruvannamalai. They decided to come and see if it was the same Venkataraman that had left home so many years ago.

Ramana had left his home, he'd left his family behind, and he was in Tiruvannamalai at the holy mountain Arunachala. And once his family had located him, they pleaded with him to come back home, and he was resolute that he would not be coming home. He'll be staying in Tiruvannamalai in Arunachala. And as you can imagine, this was very upsetting to his family initially. But over time, one by one they came and joined him in Tiruvannamalai at Arunachala and they themselves became his devotees.

His mother, Alagammal, eventually moved in with him in Skanda Ashram and stayed with him until her death six years after arriving at Tiruvannamalai. She helped care for Ramana and his devotees during this time, and when she died in his arms from an illness, Ramana had said she did not pass away, she was absorbed. Alagammal was interred at the foot of Arunachala and a stone tomb was constructed for her memorial. Later, a temple was built on this spot. And soon Ramana moved off the hill and decided to stay here permanently. He started speaking again and it was here over many years that Ramana Ashram was constructed by his devotees with donations that were flowing in.

(calm music)

Ramana's brother Niranjan Ananda Swami became the manager of the ashram since Ramana would not do these things. He did, however, help with other daily tasks. He was also very attentive to his visitors and devotees, and would always make sure they were well cared for. He made sure he was accessible for anyone for anyone to come see him. It was why he moved to the foot of the hill he said by divine will so he could be available to devotees and visitors day and night. He felt now that giving darshan was his task in life, and he must be accessible to all who came to Ramana Ashram seeking guidance.

(calm music)

When a ripe person comes in contact with the awakened teacher, disciple also wakes up to the same stature of the master. It can be handed over to him in one stroke. When devotees came to him, he just saw them as already awakened. Bhagavan told many it is only a pretension that you are doing. You want to continue the play. You are already that. What is there to attain? What is there to achieve? Those who were ready to receive the teaching, they just got it with such swiftness that you enter the hall, and you no more come out. The person no more comes out.

Because what happens when we do the self-inquiry is there comes a point you see there's the part is, of course, has to be done by the identity, right? It's done with the mind. When there's a process, it's done with the mind. So it happens with the mind, but it has to transcend the mind. There's a point at which the mind drops off. It has to drop off, thoughts drop off. But because we are not accustomed to that experience, there is a feeling that I have reached a blank. I have reached an emptiness. I don't know where I'm going. So who is the companion at that point of time? Who's the support at that point of time? It's what Ramana says is -- it's who Ramana says is, is the inner guru, the Self. At that point, the Self actually rises up and embraces the seeker. It reveals itself.

And somebody asked Ramana Maharshi, "Who is your guru?" He said, in fact he asked, "you say that guru is not needed." Maharshi said, "When did I say that? I also have a guru." Then he asked, "Who is your guru?" Maharshi said, "The inner one, the Self is my guru."

Bhagavan Ramana explained that when people first come to spiritual teachings, often they envisage a power outside of them. Let's call it God. You can call it the universe, you can call it the Great Spirit, but let's just call it God. You envisage some power greater than you outside of yourself, and maybe you pray to that power, or you worship that power, or you feel drawn to that power. Bhagavan said, After some time, that power will manifest as a guru, a teacher, often in human form, but not necessarily. And then we feel drawn to that teacher, that guru. And that teacher will then tell us to turn within and discover our true nature, the Self. So we have these three things. We have God, which is that greater power which we perceive to be outside of us, which we may initially worship. Then God then directs us towards the guru, the teacher. The teacher directs us towards our own Self. And these three are one. God, Guru, Self. They are one and the same thing.

NARRATOR: Ramana Ashram was now fully active and seekers came to him from all over the world. Not only Hindus came to him, but Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Jews, Parsis, and he never expected any to change their religion. Devotion to the guru and the flow of his grace leads to the deeper reality of every religion and self-inquiry to the ultimate truth behind all religions. He would guide them to their own self-realization no matter where they were from or what they believed. Sometimes it would be by his gaze or some direct pointing to the truth, but everyone felt his divine presence. Even animals were drawn to his peaceful nature. But arguably the greatest legacy he left us was this method of self-inquiry. Ramana said self-inquiry is the one infallible means, the only direct one to realize the unconditioned, absolute being that you really are. The attempt to destroy the ego or mind through sadhanas other than self-inquiry is like the thief turning policeman to catch the thief that is himself. Self-inquiry alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists and enable one to realize the pure, undifferentiated being of the Self or Absolute. Having realized the Self, nothing remains to be known because it is perfect bliss. It is the all.

(serious music)

One mantra which we are constantly chanting: I, I, I, I. So why not inquire that? Find out what it is, explore it. Then you find that the ego is not real. There is pure awareness. But the "I" is something which is very near, which is very intimate. All the problems happen to the "I". All suffering happens to the "I". Even the spiritual quest is because of "I". Because I have suffering, I want to be free of that suffering. And then ultimately you discover that the very "I" is the problem. Because in the deep sleep, the inner being is giving you an intimation, a clue, that when the "I" is not, there is no suffering. Because that is the only authentic state which gives you a taste of bodylessness, mindlessness, egolessness, where only existence is there and you come out every day, you come out wishing to go back. You do not want to be this person. You want to be in that impersonal state.

NARRATOR: Ramana would talk about the states of existence: Waking, dream, and deep sleep. There is also a fourth state. This is the Absolute, the Self, the consciousness that underlies them all. This state is known as Turiya. It is not even truly a state since it is always present. Ramana lived his life in Turiya. He was always aware of the other states, but was not affected by their coming and going.

Turiya. Turiya literally means the fourth. And it means the fourth state, as opposed to the previous three of waking, dreaming, and deep dreamless sleep. Turiya is the fourth state. It's the pure consciousness. It's your Self. It's what you truly are. Turiya is just another word for your true nature. Turiya is pure consciousness. When your attention goes inwards towards yourself, towards the I Am, towards what you actually are, you discover yourself as you actually are. That is Turiya, that is your Self. That is your true identity. It is distinct from the waking state, the dream state, and the deep sleep state. It is distinct from these three and this is why it is called the fourth, Turiya. When it is discovered as it is, it is then discovered that it is not the fourth because the other three are actually illusory. And is discovered to be the fourth, Turiya, is discovered to be the one, Advaita. Advaita means non-duality, the one truth, the one Self that you actually are.

Take a look at our lives. We are awake, that's our life. But we also fall asleep and we have dreams. And there is also deep sleep: no waking world, no dream world, just blank for a while at least. And then this cycle repeats itself again and again. And that's what we call life. You the consciousness with this body and mind, you inhabit this world. This is what we call life. But when we fall asleep and dream, our conscious experience continues in our dreams, but we leave this world behind. We don't experience even the bedroom where we are sleeping, the bed, even the body is not experienced in our dreams. And then we go on to the third stage: deep sleep. And in deep sleep something even more profound happens: we exist. After all, we claim I am the one who slept. We don't claim that somebody else slept. We don't even claim I didn't exist. I was snuffed out in deep sleep. That would be weird, because, when I -- that means I am recreated every time I fall asleep? That's so weird.

So clearly I exist in some form. In some sense, I do exist. Even when I don't experience the world. I don't experience this body. I don't experience any dreams, just deep sleep blankness. Therefore I, the experiencer, which means, by the way, consciousness, we can't have experience without consciousness. I experience this world with this body and mind. I experience the dream world without this body but with just the mind. And I experience the deep sleep without body and mind. Then what am I? It's like a riddle. You have three: the waker in this world; the dreamer with the dream world, not this world of this body; and the deep sleeper. What is that one thing running in and through all of these three? It can only be existence awareness. I am and I shine. That one which is in and through the three, it is called the fourth. It's not really the fourth. It's the one which appears as the three. In itself, it's neither subject nor object. It's just being and awareness. That being awareness is Turiya. It's not a fourth state of consciousness. Often that is how it is translated. It is consciousness itself which has three states: waking, dreaming, deep sleep. The states come and go. Turiya doesn't come and go.

We never cease to be aware of that because now we're aware of ourself as I am this person, I am this body. We can't be aware I am this body without being aware I am. So that awareness, I Am, that is the fundamental awareness. So that awareness I Am in its pure condition, that is Turiya. By holding onto self-attentiveness as he says, the mind will return to its birthplace. Its birthplace means its source, that pure being from which it arose. The silence of pure being from which it arose which is Turiya.

Ramana Maharshi was the living embodiment of Turiya. Turiya was not a concept or a word for Ramana. It was his whole vehicle of expression here in the world. Ramana is one of the greatest exemplifications of what Turiya is -- magical being that just radiates light, silence, presence, being.

Turiya is pure awareness. Pure awareness can never be an object of awareness. So what knows pure awareness is only pure awareness. The truth is, when we know our self as we actually are, we will know that turiya is eternal. We have never come out of turiya. We have never risen as ego.

(ethereal music)

It's inevitable that all of us will recognize and realize turiya for ourselves. Why so? Because that is our own true nature. It's inescapable. It's immutable. It's unchangeable.

What was Ramana or who was Ramana? Was he an embodiment of the Bhagavad Gita? Was he an embodiment of the Vedas? Many have sung songs on him saying he's the embodiment of the essence of the Vedas. He, as a boy of 16, without having any knowledge of any scripture whatsoever, including the Vedas, or including any of that of the Sanatan Dharma, he had the highest experience of self-awareness and self-abidance from which he never moved away. In that sense, he is not just an embodiment of the Vedas, he is the proof for all people, whether they are skeptical or they are believers, that this is true. Because it came to him without any prior knowledge of it. It came to him by direct intuition.

The teaching of Ramana is universally acceptable because it is about our Self. As Bhagavan used to say, The only thing about which you are certain, you are sure, is your own existence. The truth is available to everyone as their own existence. As their own "I". You may be even an agnostic or an atheist, still, you cannot deny your existence.

But when you find someone that actually points to the deepest truth in you, this is remarkable moment of grace. And Ramana was a beautiful manifestation of that, and is an inspiring figure for all genuine seekers, for all teachers, for everyone that seeks light, freedom, truth, reality. It was so simple. He was authentic. Ramana had access to a source of bliss, love and joy that most humans cannot even dream of.

(music with female voice)

LYRICS: Arunachala Shiva

NARRATOR: Most of Ramana's devotees could not envision the world without their master and spiritual guide's presence. Many of them relied on his guidance and grace to carry them through their lives. But when a cancerous tumor appeared in his arm one day, they realized his body would not be with them forever.

In November 1948, a small cancerous lump was found on the arm of Sri Ramana's, and the next year that lump was removed. But unfortunately the cancer returned and eventually this led to him passing away in 1950.

NARRATOR: Here is an account of his last night. While he was lying in this room at the ashram, a group of devotees began singing Arunachala Shiva. Upon hearing it, Sri Bhagavan eyes opened and shone. He gave a brief smile of indescribable tenderness from the outer edges of his eyes, tears of

bliss rolled down. One more deep breath and no more. There was no struggle, no spasm, no other sign of death. Only that the next breath did not come. At 8:47 p.m., he breathed his last breath.

Ramana may have left the body behind, but his spirit lives on. He had said "before the body died, I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here." For Ramana, there was no change, no time, no difference of past and future. No going away. Only the eternal now in which the whole of time is poised and universal, spaceless, here. He left behind many beautiful books of his teachings and poems that he had written. Many of his devotees also wrote books of his interactions with spiritual seekers and accounts of his daily life.

(calm music with flute)

And still many years after Ramana left us, his ashram is still bustling with activity. His spirit is alive here. And his divine energy can be felt by those who visit his ashram.

This ashram from time immemorial, I would say, is a temple of silence and for where, of self-inquiry and self-discovery, Arunachala has attracted seekers like you and people who want to come and discover the Self. This is a place of realization. As you see, so many people from all over the world are here. So people tell me that while I had all these complicated questions and they're all answered here in silence.

The power of Ramana Ashram, it is a great mystery. The only thing that we can say is what Bhagavan also said. "Where can I go? I am here," he said. Only the body had its destiny of 71 years. But the power which was initiating, the power which was transmitting the experience is still very powerfully operating from that center. So that you cannot too much analyze it intellectually. It is just like the mystery of Arunachala. The mystery of Arunachala is there like that Bhagavan presence is also there.

(birds chirping)

It is... Alive. That's all.

NARRATOR: Ramana did not bring a new religion into the world. His self-realization only confirmed what ancient scriptures have been reporting for thousands of years. By direct intuition, as a young man, he realized these ancient understandings of the Self are true for everyone in every land and religion. And we all can realize this truth through his teachings of self-inquiry. His teachings have spread far from India. They are practiced all over the world and can be practiced by anyone, anywhere, at any time. It doesn't matter where you are or who you are. It doesn't matter what you are doing or what you believe in. Just know yourself, Ramana would say. This knowledge has the power to change the world. And he would say, The greatest service you could give the world is your

own self-realization. And realizing the Self is simple because it is not about attaining something, but a recognition of what you always already are. His emphasis on people who came to him was go within and discover yourself, for turiya alone is real. Wherever the question, Who am I? is asked sincerely, and wherever even that question falls silent, Ramana is there. Not as a teacher remembered, but as the self that never left.

(music with female voice)

Om Arunachala Om...

Om Arunachala Om...

Om Arunachala Om...

Arunachala, Arunachala, Arunachala,

Arunachala, Arunachala, Arunachala,

Arunachala, Arunachala, Arunachala,

Arunachala, Arunachala, Arunachala,

Shiva, Shiva, Shiva,

Shiva, Shiva, Shiva,

Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.

Shiva, Shiva, Shiva.