Ramana as a Family Affair
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DEVOTION

Ramana as a Family Affair

Bangalore votaries

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From what I had heard about Sarada Natarajan, I had expected to see an elderly lady with graying hair. But the Sarada I met does not look like an ascetic. She is charming in her blue sari, and her earrings dance when she speaks. Sarada, 35, and her parents are devotees of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. Her father, A. R. Natarajan, is a retired government servant; her mother, Sulochana, is a musician. The family runs the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning in Bangalore, India.

"Although I grew up immersed in the teachings of Ramana," Sarada told Hinduism Today, "at one time I became very depressed. I decided to do what youngsters think is fun--go to movies, buy clothes, read novels. But this indulgence did not give me peace or joy. Again I turned to the teachings of Ramana. Then, at age 15, there seemed to more sense to his words." As a popular exponent of Ramana's teachings, Sarada discovered, "the teaching which appeals most to the younger generation is 'Happiness is natural.' Everyone is searching for happiness. But if it is always available, as Ramana taught, we

don't have to depend on anybody or anything for experiencing joy. This concept has profoundly influenced them."

Since 1978 the Centre has brought out a monthly magazine, published 64 books on Ramana, recorded 90 music cassettes of Ramana's favorite songs and given over 350 live lecture/dance/song programs (including a tour of Mauritius). Sarada, who is trained in both carnatic singing and bharatanatyam, is responsible for the recordings and the choreography and production of fifteen dance ballets on his life and teachings.