



The Mountain Path

Vol. III
No. 1

J A Y A N T H I N U M B E R

January
1966

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

"After abducting me if
now Thou dost not embrace
me, where is Thy chivalry,
Oh Arunachala ?

—*The Marital Garland of
Letters*, verse 9.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those
who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!"

—*The Marital Garland of Letters*, Verse 1.

JAYANTHI NUMBER

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

Contributions for publication should be addressed to 'The Editor, *The Mountain Path*, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State'. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

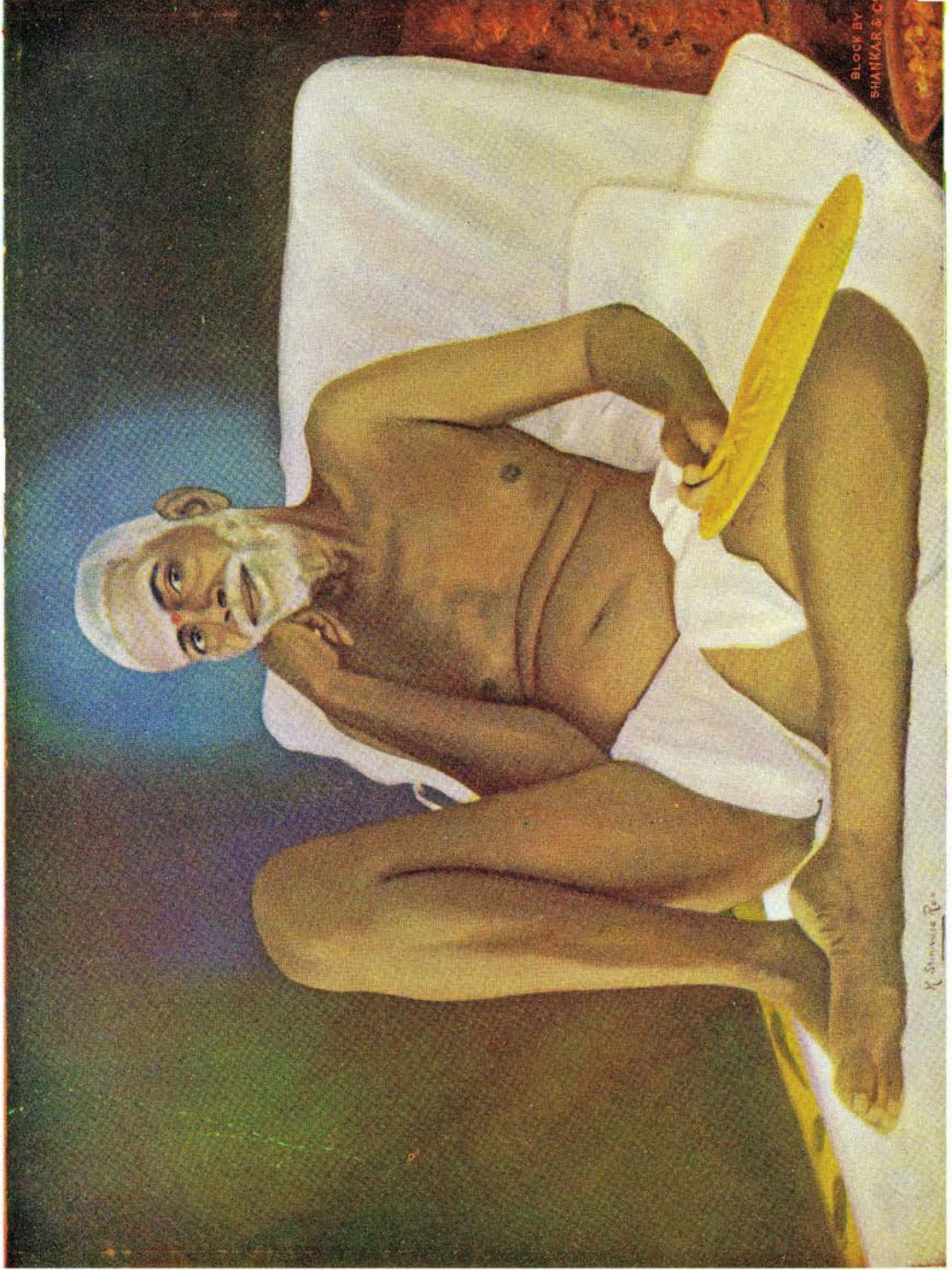
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अन्तर्यश्च बहिर्विधूततिमिरं ज्योतिर्मयं शाश्वतं
स्थानं प्राप्य विराजते विनमतामज्ञानमुन्मूलयन् ।
पश्यन्विश्वमपीदमुल्लसति यो विश्वस्य पारे पर-
त्तस्मै श्रीरमणाय लोकगुरवे शोकस्य हन्त्रे नमः ॥

Salutations to Sri Ramana, the universal Master, the Dispeller of misery from the world, the One Who chases away the darkness of His devotees and displays Himself as the Eternal Consciousness inhering in the heart, blazing both within and without, bereft of the least trace of ignorance—the One who shines as the transcendental Truth underlying the world and beyond !

—KAVYAKANTA GANAPATI MUNI.





THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: ARTHUR OSBORNE

JAYANTI NUMBER

VOL. III

JANUARY, 1966

No. 1

RAMANA SAT-GURU

[EDITORIAL]

He is now as he was. To many he said : "You are not the body." We see now that he was not the body. In his body's lifetime as now guidance came to all who turned to him, whether they could approach him physically or not ; now as in his body's lifetime it radiates with peculiar force from his Ashram at the foot of Arunachala.

"People say I am leaving," he said just before the body's death. "Where could I go ? I am here." Not "I shall be here" but "I am here". He is here in the eternal here and now ; he is here in each one's heart ; he is here also in his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai.

He inaugurated a new path independent of formal rites and initiation to suit the conditions of our age when true guidance is hard to find in any of the orthodox channels and when traditional forms of living do not fit into the pattern of life. It would have been a poor gift if it had been for his lifetime only. He is the Guru now as he was. Those many who never saw him in the body find his guidance no

less powerful than we who did. Therefore it is not necessary for any successor to give initiation in his name. The initiation was silent and formless, as it still is ; the guidance was straight to the heart, by-passing words and thought. Understanding is needed, and courage and devotion ; the path is there and the Guide to lead and support you to the Goal.

How can he perform the act of guiding aspirants if he has become one with Universal Being, theorists ask. He has not. He already was one with Universal Being. Every one is ; it is only a question of realizing it, and he had realized the Oneness before death already. He himself confirmed that there is no difference between Realization before death and after.

The Self is what you are, whether Muslim or Christian no less than Hindu. Therefore he turns people inwards to the self, to the quest of the Self, making no distinction between religions.

Books and scriptures teach that the quest must be undertaken and the ego dissolved. Once this has been understood, why study them interminably? Therefore he did not speak often or unprompted on theory. Did Christ or Buddha? About practice he spoke gladly.

Powers are useless, often an impediment. Any desire, even for powers that are considered higher, indicates that there is still some one who desires. It is that some one who is to be traced out and dissolved.

Only for our sake the Guru appears outwardly; he is the Self in the heart. But because the impure mind misinterprets messages, the instructions are received outwardly to be followed inwardly.

What is Ramana? When he joined in singing 'Ramana Sad-Guru' he pointed to his body and said: "Do you think this is Ramana?"

"In the recesses of the lotus-shaped heart of all, from Vishnu downwards, there shines the Absolute Consciousness which is the same as Arunachala or Ramana. When the mind melts with love of Him and reaches the inmost recess of the Heart where He dwells as the Beloved, the subtle eye of pure intellect opens and He reveals Himself as Pure Consciousness."¹

But how, it may be asked, is one to know that one has been taken up by Ramana Maharshi and become his disciple now that he is no longer here in the body to confirm it? The same problem existed in his lifetime also. He very seldom confirmed in words having given initiation.² It was to be understood. And then also there were some who failed to understand. As I explained in my last editorial, the time for rigid formalism, whether of initiation or of the path into which one is initiated, is past. The new trend required to meet the conditions of our times, did not, as I pointed out there, begin with the Maharshi. He brought it to completion but it started as far back as the 19th Century. Sai Baba, who lived at the

turn of the century,³ also gave no formal initiation. Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, who died in 1895,⁴ so simplified Kriya Yoga as to make it accessible to householders also and even to non-Hindus. In the Maharshi's lifetime, as now, his initiation came without ritual, whether through a potent, intense look or in a dream or some other way. Now as then people just know that the Maharshi is their Guru, that he has taken them up and that Grace flows to them from him.

And what then? People who turn to the path require some method, some discipline, some technique. It has been sufficiently explained in *The Mountain Path* that not all the Maharshi's disciples, even in his lifetime, followed the path of Self-enquiry. In particular, readers who wish for confirmation of this are referred to 'The Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' by A. Devaraja Mudaliar in our issue of October 1964 and 'A Chakra at Sri Ramanasramam' by Krishna Bhikshu in that of April 1965. His Grace supports his devotees on whatever path they follow, whether there be in it more of devotion or knowledge or action, whether fortified by ritual or not, whether within the framework of any religion or not. And if any change becomes advisable, if any forms or techniques or methods are outgrown and cease to be helpful, some indication will come. Guidance will not fail.

Having said this, however, the opposite side of the medal also should be shown. That is that the method which Bhagavan always recommended in the first place, which he spoke of as the most simple and direct and put first in all his teaching was Self-enquiry. It fol-

¹From *The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., England and Sri Ramanasramam, India.

²One such case is described on p. 73 of our issue of April 1964.

³For whom see an article in our issue of July 1964. See also *The Incredible Sai Baba* by Arthur Osborne, published by Orient Longmans, Calcutta and Rider & Co., London.

⁴For whom see our book review section of October 1965.

lows, therefore, that such of his devotees as can practise it should.

Some people have got a false idea that Self-enquiry is a coldly intellectual method. There is no such thing. Intellectual understanding may be helpful up to a point on one's quest, but it cannot be the quest. 'I am not this body ; I am not the thoughts' may be a useful preliminary to the enquiry but it cannot be the enquiry. The enquiry is not a mental investigation such as a psychologist might indulge in. It is not a probing into the faculties, urges, memories or tendencies of one's conscious or subconscious mind but a quest of the pure I-amness that lies behind all these.

It consists of turning the mind inwards to the sense of being, the feeling of 'I-am'. Therefore it is not verbal. 'Who am I?' is not a mantra. Its repetition might perhaps help to steady the mind in the early stages but can be of little use really. One hint that Bhagavan gave was that consciousness should not be centred in the head but in the spiritual heart at the right side of the chest, because it is not a question of thinking but of feeling and being. That does not mean thinking about the spiritual heart or meditating on it. When you want to see you don't think about your eyes, you just use them ; so also with the heart. It is not necessary to locate it exactly any more than it is to locate your eyes in a mirror before you can see with them. What is wanted is to have the experience, not to argue about it. This about the heart is only a hint, but a very useful one.

A man is made up of acting, thinking and being. Being underlies the other two because you can't act or think unless you first are ; but it is usually so covered over by them that it is not perceived. It can be compared to a cinema screen and they to the pictures projected on it. It is the screen that supports the pictures and yet it is so covered over by them that it is not perceived. Only very rarely, for a flash, one is aware of just being and feels it as pure, spontaneous, causeless happiness.

It is also pure, thought-free consciousness. The purpose of enquiry is to make one aware of being at will and for longer and longer periods.

This means that although the term 'meditation' is conventionally used for Self-enquiry, it is not meditation as the dictionary defines it. Meditation requires an object, something to meditate on, whereas in enquiry there is only the subject. You are not looking for anything new, anything outside yourself, but simply concentrating on being, on your self, on the pure 'I am' of you. It is not thinking but suspending thoughts while retaining consciousness.

Normally when you stop thinking you go to sleep ; and when one first begins enquiry the mind often does try to do so. An attack of overwhelming sleepiness comes over you ; but as soon as you stop the enquiry and turn to some other occupation of the mind it passes, thereby showing that it was not real tiredness but just an instinctive resistance to thought-free consciousness. One simply has to fight it.

Thoughts themselves are a far more persistent obstruction. They rush into the mind in an unending stream. You drive them out and others slip in from behind. You think you are free from these and before you notice you are indulging others. The only way is persistence. Constant alertness. Not to get carried away by thoughts. To see them aloofly like clouds passing over a clear sky and ask : 'What is this thought ? Who did it come to ? To me, but who am I ?' And so you bring your mind back to enquiry. The mind is likened to a monkey rushing from tree to tree, ever restless, never content to be still. It has to be checked from its restlessness and held firmly to enquiry.

But it is not only the wandering nature of the mind and the unending succession of thoughts that is the obstruction ; it is also the ego-drive behind many of the thoughts. This gives them power and makes them far harder

to dispel. You may convince yourself doctrinally that there is no ego and have occasional brief glimpses of the being-consciousness which is unruffled happiness when the ego is in fact absent; but you are drawn to this girl or want to impress this friend or dominate this group; you resent this criticism or feel slighted by this person; you feel insecure in your job, cling to your possessions, hanker after money or power: and all of these are affirmations of the ego which you believe not to exist. So long as they exist, it does. If there is no ego who can feel anger or desire, resentment or frustration?

This means that enquiry is not merely a cold investigation but a battle. Every path is, in every religion. The ego, or apparent ego, has to be destroyed. That is the one essential common to all of them. The only difference is how to do it. There are paths which set you attacking the various vices individually — lust, arrogance and so on — and cultivating the opposing virtues; but Self-enquiry is more direct. Such methods are like lopping the branches off a tree: so long as the roots and trunk remain fresh ones will grow. Self-enquiry aims at uprooting the tree itself. If the ego is deprived of one outlet — say if it is forced to celibacy — others will develop — say gluttony or vanity. But if the ego itself is dissolved the vices in which it found expression will collapse like deflated balloons. But it is constant warfare until the ego really is dissolved.

This is what Self-enquiry is aiming at. It does not teach one any more theory or doctrine. It is quite possible to know all the doctrine that is necessary before you start — “Simply that being is and you are That”. What it does, after a certain amount of practice, is to bring increasingly frequent and lengthy experience of pure timeless being which is also pure awareness and unruffled happiness. This is not mental, and yet the mind is aware of it. It is not physical, and

yet it is felt physically as a vibration or a waveless calm. Once awakened it begins to appear spontaneously even when you are not ‘meditating’ or to subsist as an under-current to whatever you are doing, to the routine of life, while you are talking, even while thinking.

This is important with regard to method. It explains why Bhagavan preferred his devotees to follow the quest in the life of the world. Sitting daily in ‘meditation’ is useful, in most cases, indispensable; but it is not enough. So far as possible fixed times should be set aside for it, since the mind accustoms itself to them, just as it does with physical functions like eating and sleeping, and responds more readily. For people who are bound by professional and domestic obligations, just after waking in the morning and before going to sleep at night are excellent times. But apart from that Bhagavan would tell people to practise enquiry always, to ask themselves ‘Who is doing this?’ to engage in activity without the ‘I-am-the-doer’ illusion. Keeping up this attitude of mind throughout the day’s activities is equivalent to remaining alert, to welcoming the sense of being whenever it comes. Constant alertness and remembering is necessary when not ‘meditating’ no less than concentration when remembering. At first there will be frequent forgetting: that also has to be combated. The ‘current of awareness’ has to be cultivated and fostered. It is very seldom that there is achievement without effort.

This is the path that Bhagavan laid down. It is independent both of forms and doctrines. It requires no ritual. It can be followed invisibly by the housewife or shopkeeper no less than the monk or yogi. The Grace of Bhagavan is available to all who turn to him, but it is those who strive on this path that utilise it the most fully and the most wisely. It is an unfailing support and an inexhaustible treasure for them.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By DR. LT. COL. P. V. KARAMCHANDANI

Normally, as soon as I place my head on the pillow, I fall asleep. One night, in February 1949, at Vellore, for no conscious reason, I could not sleep and kept tossing in bed. That was something very unusual.

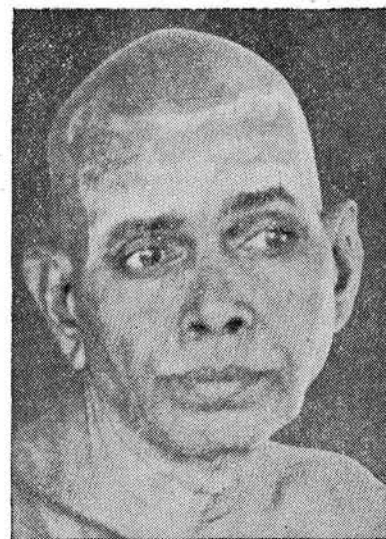
At 1 a.m. a telephone call came from Tiruvannamalai, a place 55 miles away, asking me to reach there by 8 a.m. as Bhagavan Ramana was very ill. Having received the call, I fell sound asleep.

I was the District Medical Officer of North Arcot then and Tiruvannamalai was within my jurisdiction. I reached Tiruvannamalai without any emotion. My only thought was that I was on a professional mission of attending on a patient. The sainthood of Bhagavan Ramana had no significance for me.

I examined Bhagavan Ramana. He had cancer of the main nerve, high up in the arm. I gave my prescription and returned to Vellore the same day.

I had conducted my examination of Bhagavan Ramana in a strictly professional manner. I carried no spiritual feelings for him. Nor did he speak a word with me. But he had directed a momentary gaze of grace at me which kept stirring me deeply. Involuntarily I felt a new vista of spiritual consciousness open out before me.

That wondrous gaze of Bhagavan seemed to envelop me with an aura of bliss. The spiritual pull from him felt so irresistible that after a few days I myself arranged a visit to Tiruvannamalai just for the sake of having his 'darshan.' I took my wife with me.



We visited Bhagavan with a sense of curiosity and an indefinable sense of expectation. We made our obeisance and sat by his feet. We did not speak a word ; nor did he speak. No speech seemed necessary. So surcharged with spirituality was he, that his spirituality wafted out to us, completely enveloping us. Serenity seeped into us. Our minds attained a state of blissful, ecstatic meditation.

The tumour that Bhagavan was bearing must have given him the most excruciating, nerve-wracking pain. Such writhing pain would make the toughest man wince and moan. But Bhagavan's face was serene, smiling and radiant.

All of a sudden a disciple accidentally touched only the fringe of the thin bandage that was covering Bhagavan's tumour. Bhagavan gave an involuntary start. The disciple felt bewildered and mumbled, " Bhagavan, did I hurt you ? It was only the fringe of the bandage that my hand touched." The Bhagavan smiled his benign smile and softly said, " You do not know the enormous weight as of a mountain that this fringe bears ! "

That chance exclamation of Bhagavan indicated the severity of his pain. But his godly face did not bear the slightest sign of his agony. It reflected only joy and peace. He seemed

to have switched off his mind from the body to the divine.

The next occasion when I was summoned to Bhagavan's presence was when he had developed anuria. I now went to his Ashram not with the all-important feeling of a District Medical Officer going to visit his patient. I went in the spirit of a humble devotee going to serve a saint of colossal spiritual magnitude. My ministrations as a doctor were to be coupled with the devotion of a disciple.

When I reached the Ashram, I was told that for the past 24 hours Bhagavan had not taken any food, not even a drop of water; that the disciples' implorations in this behalf had failed; and that, in consequence, the entire community was feeling most anxious. I was entreated to persuade Bhagavan to eat something.

On examining Bhagavan I found that it was imperative that he should take some fluid. But what if he refused my request too? Ordering him in my capacity as a doctor seemed to be out of question. I felt like asking him as a boon to accept my prayer. I prayed inwardly and held a glass of buttermilk before him. He gazed at me for a second, took the buttermilk in shaking hands, and drank it. My joy knew no bounds. There were relief and jubilation all around. I was thanked profusely. But I felt infinitely grateful for Bhagavan's overwhelming grace. He had heard my silent prayer and granted my boon.

Wonderful was the spiritual exhilaration I experienced in Bhagavan's holy presence.

The next time I was called to him was at midnight. When I entered his room, four disciples were there. Bhagavan was saying something to them in Tamil. They told me that he was asking them to leave the room, but that they wanted to stay as, according to them, he was in a delirium. I persuaded them to go. Three of them went away. The fourth one stayed on. Bhagavan turned to him and whispered, "You are not going away because

you feel that you love me more than the others!" The disciple now knew that Bhagavan was not delirious. He bowed and went.

I was left alone with Bhagavan. As usual, he did not speak with me. I was also silent. But the vibrations that emanated from him were celestial. His body must have been in terrific, mortal pain. But his heavenly spirituality was unaffected by it. A rapturous thrill electrified my entire being.

I administered to his body; but I was hardly conscious that I was a District Medical Officer. I was conscious only of an intense desire to worship this illumined soul. I had learnt that Bhagavan did not allow devotees to touch his feet. But I felt a deep urge within me not only to touch his blessed feet but to press them lovingly. I took courage in both my hands and pressed them. The wonder of wonders! Bhagavan let me do so! His grace was abounding. I considered myself in the seventh heaven. I glorify those few minutes of my life.

The next time I was summoned to him was about three hours after midnight. Pain must have been torturing his body. Still, he was sound asleep. Holy silence filled the room. It was the ambrosial hour of the dawn. I did not wish to disturb him. I sat quietly by his feet. Suddenly he opened his eyes. His gracious gaze fell on me. He softly muttered, "D.M.O.!" The peculiar tone in which he mentioned me indicated that I had been in his sacred thoughts and that he was expecting me. I felt myself blessed. I silently worshipped him. My whole being seemed to vibrate with ecstasy.

At that time I had been feeling restless about promotion to the rank of Major-General (Surgeon General), which was legitimately due to me as the senior-most I.M.S. Officer in the Province of Madras. Howsoever I tried to banish the idea of that coveted promotion from my mind, it loomed large before my mind's eye and marred my equanimity.

Then I said to myself, "Why am I fretting unnecessarily? The next time I visit Bhagavan, I shall request him to grant me this promotion!"

When I visited the Ashram again, I went before Bhagavan with my mind resolutely set on requesting him for that boon. But a marvel happened. As soon as I saw Bhagavan, my mind melted, the resolution evaporated, and I felt filled with strange contentment. A request did formulate itself within me, but it was an entirely different request. I inwardly prayed, "Bhagavan, free me from my craving for this promotion. I don't want anything mundane. Instead, grant me my soul's evolution." My prayer seemed to be instantly granted. Effulgent joy flooded the very depths of my being. I reverently bowed before Bhagavan and he gazed at me benevolently.

My last visit to Bhagavan was on the day he attained Nirvana. I have described it in my *Saintly Galaxy**: how, on visiting him, I

found that his body would not last beyond that day; how I silently prayed that he might retain his body till I brought my wife from Vellore as she had always been anxious to witness a great saint's last moments of life; how she brought orange juice for him; how he would not accept any drink at all; how, once again inwardly, I implored him to drink the orange juice to save my wife from deep disappointment; how he accepted my unspoken prayer and asked for orange juice, to the transcendental delight of my wife and myself; and how, shortly afterwards, in utter tranquillity, he passed on.

That was a scene of great sombre beauty.

During my two months' contact with Bhagavan, I did not speak a single word with him. But, what wonderful grace he poured into me through his benign, benevolent gaze!

A peerless spiritual experience indeed!

* Pp. 74-77. Published by Advani Press, Anand Nagar. Forjett Street, Bombay-26.

THE TEAR-DROPS IN MY EYES*

By G. H. MEES

There's little left, Bhagavan,
To offer Thee — too poor I am.
There's nothing left at all to give,
For all achievements vanish at Thy Feet,
And all things dwindle into nothingness.
There's one thing only that with faltering heart
I dare to offer Thee :
It is the tear-drops in my eyes
Which ever manifest themselves
In silent contemplation of Thy Grace.
They spring from Thee :
They are the Elixir of Bliss ;
Let them return to Thee,
Their Source, the Ocean of pure Love,
Outpouring of my heart.

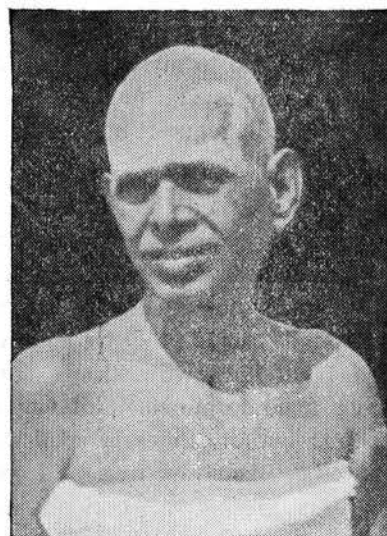
* From the Ashram Golden Jubilee Souvenir Volume.

A PERFECTIONIST

By PROF. G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

At this time I was blessed with the rare good fortune of working with Sri Bhagavan in the kitchen. The hours of duty were between 2-30 and 4 a.m. every night. Sri Bhagavan would come punctually at 2-30 and first spend some time cutting up vegetables with workers and devotees. Then he would enter the kitchen and prepare the sambar or chutney for next day's lunch and occasionally for other dishes also. The Sub-Registrar R. Narayana Iyer, the Book-stall Manager Kalyana Sundaram Iyer and myself used to assist Sri Bhagavan. At first I was an ignoramus in the work. As I saw Sri Bhagavan perspiring profusely near the oven I tried to fan him ; but he objected. He would not allow any distinction being shown to him. I stopped but when he was engrossed in the work I gently repeated the fanning. Turning to me, he laughed and said : "You want to do it on the sly but you don't even know how to do it effectively. Let me teach you." So saying, he held my hand and taught me the proper way of waving the fan. Oh ! how I thrilled at his touch and thanked my ignorance !

From the kitchen we would adjourn to another room for grinding the mixture. There too I did not know at first how to hold the pestle and to grind. Sri Bhagavan placed his hand upon mine and turned the pestle in the proper way. Again what a thrill ! How blessed was my ignorance ! After the work was finished Sri Bhagavan would take a bit out from the dish, taste a little of it and give us the remainder to taste, and sometimes when our hands were unwashed he would himself throw it into our mouths with his own hand. That would be the climax of our happiness.



Then he would hasten back to the hall and lie reclining on the couch and appear to be dozing as the Brahmins arrived for the chanting of the Vedas. Squatting so close to Sri Bhagavan, chatting and joking with him, partaking of the fruit of his gracious labours — what a privilege and fortune ! That was indeed the most blessed period in the lives of us three. Its very recollection must thrill us throughout our lives.

But this work with Sri Bhagavan had its rigours as well as its pleasures. Though he was all mercy and grace, he was at the same time a strict disciplinarian. He would not tolerate the least sloppiness. Everything had to be done to perfection. Nothing was to be wasted or spoiled. He would demand full attention and implicit obedience to his directions. One night a devotee who was an advocate insisted on sharing in the work. He was asked to shift a vessel containing sambar, and while he was doing so a few drops were spilled. At once Sri Bhagavan flared up and said : "You are only fit for arguing in court. Such work is not for you." The poor man never again volunteered.

Each one of us was allotted a duty and had to take his cue from a mere glance by Sri Bhagavan. My duty, for instance, was to supply salt and water, and whenever Sri Bha-

gavan looked at me I had to bring one or the other, understanding which was needed. Usually we used to wake at 2 o'clock, finish our ablutions and be ready before time to report for duty. One night, however, I was five minutes late and the work was already going on. Tasting the preparation, Sri Bhagavan said that there was a little too much salt and, turning to me, he added : "Since you were absent I thought of you at the moment of adding salt and that is the reason for the excess." That was his way of reprimanding me for my unpunctuality.

On another occasion the sour ingredient was slightly excessive. Sri Bhagavan tasted it

and said jokingly : "Acidity is an effective remedy for giddiness and since most of those who come here are more or less giddy this preparation will do us a lot of good." But such slight errors were very rare. As all devotees and visitors would readily testify, the preparations were ordinarily of excellent taste.

While the work was going on, Sri Bhagavan had a way of teaching the highest wisdom through homely, casual remarks. For instance, once when the sambar was being boiled he observed : "It must be thoroughly boiled and all the effervescence must completely subside. Only then will it mature and acquire the right taste."

RAMANA SAT-GURU

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

To feel, to know, to be the Christ within —
Can there then be love for Christ on earth,
Walking like men, seen as a man is seen ?
Seek not to argue ; love has greater worth.
Love makes man kin.

With the Beloved. Such have I known,
Him of the lustrous eyes, Him whose sole look
Pierced to the heart, wherein the seed was sown
Of wisdom deeper than in holy book,
Of truth alone

Not to be learned but lived, Truth in its hour
To sprout within the heart's dark, wintry earth
And grow a vibrant thing, then, come to power,
To slay the seeming self that gave it birth,
Or to devour.

Heart of my heart, seen outwardly as one
In human form, to draw my human love,
Lord Ramana, Guru, the risen Sun,
Self manifest, the guide of all who rove,
Lost and alone,

In tangled thoughts and vain imaginings,
Back to pure Being, which your radiant smile,
Full of compassion for my wanderings,
Tells me I always was, though lost this while
In a world of things.

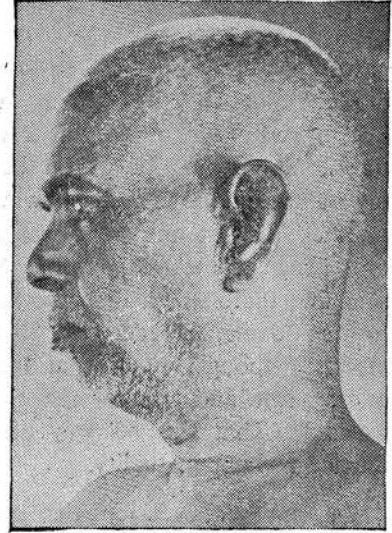
SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

By N. N. RAJAN

Being a householder, I felt that it was not right for me to follow a spiritual path alone, so I began taking my wife and children also to Bhagavan's Ashram. Within a few months I found, to my astonishment, quite a conspicuous change in my wife and noticed that she had outstripped me in her understanding of Bhagavan. She had become a greater devotee and was imbibing more peace from him. My children also enjoyed his presence and he used to laugh and joke with them. Indeed he had a special fondness for children and often used to joke with them and touch or caress them. He scrupulously avoided touching adults or being touched by them. The children themselves derived a certain peace and joy from his presence and would sometimes sit motionless before him, as though under a spell, free from childish wriggling.

I am not exaggerating when I say this. Once my daughter, who was only just over two, sat quietly by herself in a corner of the hall for about two hours, sitting cross-legged like adults and not even speaking. My wife and I did not notice this since we were absorbed in meditation, but the Maharshi did.

When I went there early next morning I was surprised and delighted to hear the Maharshi telling one of the devotees about it. "Rajan's little daughter Kutti was sitting cross-legged away from her parents for about two hours and she never stirred the whole time." He laughed in a pleased and surprised way and, as was his way when anything happened that particularly delighted him, he repeated the story over and over again as fresh devotees came in. Actually we say that things surprised him, but that is not strictly correct because in his dynamic presence even more remarkable things could happen.



It was delightful to hear him talking about it and to realize how closely he had watched her while we knew nothing about it. Of course, it was due to his Grace, as a child would not naturally act like that. She used to call him 'grandpa' and sometimes in answering her he would touch her head or pat her on the back. The touch of so exalted a Sage, especially on the head, must have been hasta-diksha and could not be without effect. He was omnipotent but was so unostentatious that he would never reveal his powers openly but behaved quite simply like an ordinary man.

He used to joke with my two sons also and would sometimes touch them. My second son was once offering some fruit and the Maharshi laughed and took hold of his hand. My elder son, who was then six years old, used to recite Sanskrit verses as prayers both in the Ashram and at home. If he said them too fast Bhagavan would tell him to go slowly; and when he recited them at home he would sometimes have a vision of Bhagavan and say to me: "Father, Bhagavan is telling me to go slowly." It was a wonderful experience to see my child gifted with such visions when I myself had no such experiences. The children are grown up now but all three still enjoy lasting benefits from the touch and blessings of Bhagavan.

RAMANA JAYANTHI

By K. LAKSHMANA SHARMA ('WHO')*

"The one Letter (Om) shines Inside the Heart eternally of Itself—how is It to be written?"

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA.

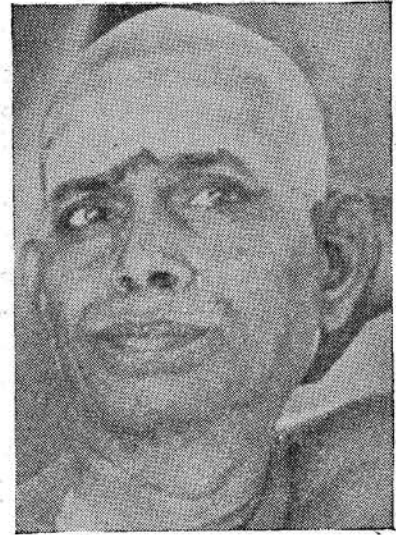
Ramana has no Jayanthi of His own, because He is the Unborn, Timeless Real Self in us. So what we call His Jayanthi is only our jayanthi—our Birth in Him, our Real Self. This birth is guaranteed to us, His sincere devotees, because He has looked on us with grace.

Ramana is the Formless, Timeless and Spaceless Arunachala who dances as the "I" in the Heart. He has graciously taken a form, that we may be relieved of the bondage of form. He is not a geographical entity but the Moveless Brahman of the Upanishads. Grace is His Essence, and out of grace He has become our Guru. Grace is not simply in Tiruvannamalai, but resides in our hearts. The Heart is the True Arunachala.

The might of His Grace is infinite, It is invincible: By His look we were caught in the net of His Grace, and It will accomplish Its work. There is no escape from It.

His Grace is like the unerring light of the sun. As it devours darkness, so Grace devours Ignorance and Unreality. We need do nothing at all, except to give our free consent that this work of Grace shall be accomplished.

To give our consent we must realise the truth about the work of Grace that it demands, in return for the gift of Ramana Himself, our own too much cherished, but wholly valueless false self, the ego, which makes us think and say, "I am so and so". We must ourselves



ardently desire to win Him by paying this seeming price and surrender this ego to Him.

This highly profitable bargain is to be won by Faith and Loyalty. We need to have faith in the teachings of Ramana. We have such Faith, since we know that Ramana is the same as Bhagavatpada Sri Shankaracharya and Sri Dakshinamurti, and that His words are the primary Upanishad, from which the ancient Upanishads themselves derive their authority. We do not go backward in time for our authority,—we find the needful authority in Ramana alone.

Though He tells us about the Quest of the Self by the Question "Who am I?", He also tells us that even now—without our making the Quest—"We are That" and that "That Itself is we". In other words we are Free by nature and always—that we are *Nitya-Muktas*. Bondage is unreal.

Hence our Jayanthi is not in the future, but now. All difference (including Bondage, Karma, etc.) is unreal.

He laughs at us for asking *how* we can become One with Him, saying it is like a man in Tiruvannamalai, asking the way to that very place.

* For whose obituary notice see our issue of July 1965.

Let Him laugh at us. For that laugh is full of grace, and will make us realise that we are He, and do not need to become He.

There is no room for discouragement, for remorse for our sins, or for fear of failure. For Grace alone exists, and it is He. If we do wrong, let us not weep for it, but forget it at once, and joyfully take Refuge in His Grace.

Must we do something, like the Squirrel at the Setu-Bandhan? Well, let us think of some of these truths of Ramana's Grace, and surrender our little selves to it, once or twice a day, when we fall asleep and when we awake. At other times, if Remembrance comes of its own accord, let us rejoice in it. If we fail often to stick to our programme, let us not waste thought in sinful regret, but go on with faith in His Grace.

WHY WE COME TO THEE, SAGE RAMANA*

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

Can we, Sage, ever give a name
To the Self that in our depths we want?
Can we, Fate's puppets, own to shame
Because we are so ignorant?

Not knowing of life's goal supreme,
We thrill in Vanity's displays,
With tongue deny the heart-lit Gleam!
When have fools worshipped Wisdom's ways?

In such an age of darkness Thou
Art come to meet us with Thy Light
Inscrutable — which is Thy plough
Wherewith Thou wilt disturb our Night

Of make-believes and vanities
And sow the seeds of truer Sight!
We say 'tis mad, yet bend our knees
To Thee, and, awed by Thy lone height,

We sing: "Truth wins to victory
Through aspiration's hopeless climb:
Life's din dissolves in harmony
Through disciplines which seldom rhyme

With Reason's feeble yes and no
Or weakling safety's whisperings;
Only strong faith can take in tow
The storm-tossed mind's imaginings."

* From the Ashram Golden Jubilee Souvenir Volume.

TIRUCHUZH - THE BIRTH PLACE OF SRI RAMANA

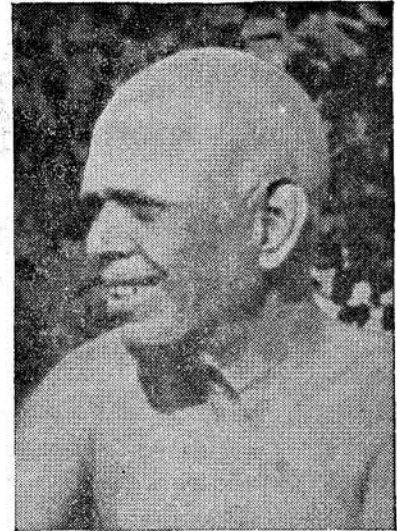
By N. N. RAJAN

Tiruchuzhi is an important place of pilgrimage (*kshetra*) from ancient days. The temple is noted for its antiquity and held in deep veneration. This place has become hallowed further, by being the birth place of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

It was here in 1879 that the celestial child Venkataraman was born as the son of Sri Sundaram Iyer and his devout wife Srimathi Alagammal. Sri Sundaram Iyer was an orthodox Brahmin of rare qualities and was working as a pleader, that is a country lawyer. His wife was equally pious and extremely generous. Sri Venkataraman was the second son in a family of three sons and one daughter.

Tiruchuzhi is a small town and administrative centre (taluk) in Ramanathapuram district in South India. It is about 38 miles from the large city of Madurai, and can be reached either by bus or car from there. It has recently been connected up with the railway line running from Manamadurai to Virudhunagar.

Legend has it that the town was named Tiruchuzhi because Lord Siva protected it from being submerged by making circular holes (*chuzhi*) in the land to serve as outlets for the waters to be drained out, when the whole world was inundated during the *Pralaya* (universal floods). The temple is well built in the style laid down by Hindu tradition and many centuries old. There are two separate chambers for the God and the Goddess and each is provided with an imposing tower. The inscriptions on the stones by the then Tamil rulers are still seen on the walls adjoining the



sanctum-sanctorum of both God and Goddess. This hoary temple was renovated and consecrated last in 1957 by the munificence of Sri Subramaniam Chettiar. The annual 'Adi-pooram' festival is celebrated there regularly during the month of 'Adi' (July-Aug.).

The presiding deity is Sri Bhuminatha and His consort is Sri Sahayavalli. Scriptures are replete with the description of the greatness of this place, as may be evident even from the various names given to the place as well as the Deities.

Tiruchuzhial, Punnaivanam, Avarthapuram, Trisulapuram, Kaleeswaram, Bhuvaneswaram etc.

The Lord is called— Bhuminathar, Bhumesar, Tirumeninathar, Bhuvanesar, Chuzhikesar etc.

The Goddess is called — Sahayavalli, Tunaimalai Amman, Muthumalai-Umayal etc.

It was visited by ancient Tamil saints famous for their devotion — Sri Appar, Sri Sundarar, Sri Manickavachagar and Sri Vageesar. They spontaneously poured forth beautiful classic Tamil songs, in this Temple in praise of the Lord and His Consort.

It is declared that there are nine sacred waters surrounding this Temple : Sulatheer-

tam, Papaharini, Kanvatheertam, Kalavatheertam, Koditheertam, Bhumitheertam, Amrithavavi, Brahmatheertam, and Trilochana-theertam.

Sri Bhuminatha is in the form of a Lingam symbolising Siva and it is said that He is worshipped here even by the celestials who are specially attracted by the place. The Lord confers considerable prosperity on those who visit this place, purging their sins and removing their miseries, besides granting them health, wealth and offspring. The return for any religious ceremonies, gifts, worship and sacrifices (*yajna*) done at this particular place increases a thousandfold. Such acts shower merit (*punya*) in abundance on individuals who perform them here. This place is compared to Kasi (Banaras) for its sanctity. All those who end their life here are said to attain Liberation, set free from the cycle of births and deaths. Brihathpala, one of the Pandya kings of the Lunar Dynasty, was absolved from his sin of killing a Brahmin simply by entering this town while seeking refuge.

The sacred river Koundinya which is named after Sage Koundinya, runs by the eastern side of the Temple, flowing north to south (*Dakshinavahini*). It is said that the holy river Ganges was specially brought here in the form of the Koundinya by Lord Siva as a boon in recognition of the austere penance performed by the Sage. The merit derived from a dip in this river is immeasurable.

Also there is a holy tank in front of the Temple. This is called Trisulatheertam as it was created by Lord Siva by a mere stroke of His weapon, the *Trisulam*. This is held

highly sacred as a bath in it washes away sins without leaving a trace.

Indeed it is said that the Goddess Ganges bathes in this tank every year on the full-moon day of the month of Masi (Feb.-March) and worships the Lord there. Even now it can be seen that during the waxing fortnight of the moon, just prior to this full-moon, the water in the tank rises gradually reaching the maximum on the full-moon day, after which it decreases gradually during the waning fortnight, to reach its previous level on the succeeding new-moon day.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana also often mentioned the greatness of this tank and spoke of this phenomenon. If any of the devotees happened to go to Tiruchuzhi at this time of year he would ask them specially to witness the changing level of the tank.

The house in Karthigai Street at Tiruchuzhi in which the child Venkataraman was born has been acquired by Sri Ramanasramam and is called "Sundara Mandiram". Daily pujas are regularly performed here for Bhagavan.

It should be strengthened without interfering with the original structure, to guard it against the ravages of time, as it attracts a great flow of visitors.

It may also be mentioned that the house at Madurai, where the boy Venkataraman was brought up during his school-days and where he had the supreme experience of Self-realization has been secured by Sri Ramanasramam. It is situated in Chokkappa Naicken Street and is called "Sri Ramana Mandiram". Here also daily pujas are performed for Bhagavan.

CORRECTION

Miss E. G. Blanchard informs us that she did not write 'The Sadhu's Prayer' published on p. 188 of our July issue but only sent it on to us. She does not know who is the author.

— Editor.

THE PERIYA PURANAM

By DR. DEVASENAPATHI

Although Realization came to Sri Ramana Maharshi through a single act of Self-enquiry (as related by Prof. Nagaraja Rao in another article in this issue) it was preceded by a phase when premonitions of Divine Grace haunted him. Two influences awakened these premonitions in him. The first was a mention of Arunachala, the Holy Hill; the second was the Periya Puranam or 'Great Purana', a record of the famous Tamil Saivite Saints. As he read this he was filled with awe and wonder and a spirit of emulation.

Dr. Devasenapathi, Reader in Philosophy at Madras University, here gives us an account of this great compilation.

The Periya Puranam, known also as the Tiruttondar Puranam, gives an account of the lives of the devotees of Siva and of the devotees of His devotees. Indeed, to be a devotee of a devotee is considered an even greater privilege than to be His own devotee. Written by Sekkilar, the Periya Puranam is based on a number of verses in praise of devotees by Saint Sundarar and a slightly more detailed account of them by Nambiandar Nambi. It was compiled about 800 years ago and since that time has come to occupy a place of honour in Tamil literature and in the hearts of Saivites. One feels in reading it the sublimity of its theme, that is of a life of utter selflessness and devotion either to God or to His devotees. In fact, this succession of the Saints, differing in age, sex, learning, profession, social status, etc., is characterised by the one common feature of steadfast love for the Lord or His devotees.

This love finds expression in various ways—in simple but unflinching adherence to one's religious duties, in deeds of outstanding courage, or in normally impossible feats.

In contrast to such spectacular heroism, we have accounts of quiet but nonetheless profound love. For instance, Pusalar Nayanar¹ wanted to build a temple but lacked the material means. Undaunted, he set to work to build it in his own mind. Collecting the materials, starting the work on an auspicious day,

proceeding methodically until the entire structure was completed, and all in his mind, he fixed a day for mentally opening it and installing the image of the Deity; then he found to his surprise that the Lord came rather to the opening of this mental temple of his than to one actually built by a king and to be opened on the same day.

Or there is the story of Vayilar of Mylapore whose worship, also inward, had even less form. "Installing the Deity in the temple of the mind by unceasing awareness of Him, lighting the lamp of Knowledge regarding relationship to Him, bathing the Deity in immortal bliss, offering love for the righteous to Him as food, he worshipped the Lord. By this worship which blossomed within him he devoted himself daily to the Lord with unflinching love."

It is usual to refer to the Tamil saints as sixty-three, but their number is not restricted to this figure. A phrase in Sundarar's verse refers to 'those beyond', and this is usually taken to mean others outside Tamilnad or from an earlier or later period than that covered by the Periya Puranam.

Sekkilar is aware of the difficulty of trying to describe the wellnigh inexpressible greatness of the saints. Paradoxically, this is the greatness of the 'lowly'. The Tamil word, adiyar, means those at the feet of the Lord.

¹ A translation of this story follows.—Editor.

They efface themselves so completely at his feet that the Lord makes the world recognize them as 'chiefs' or Nayanmars. Their greatness lies in realizing that their life centres in God, not in themselves.

Sekkilar says : "I shall sing the praises of countless devotees whose greatness is immeasurable. While even to indicate the limit of their praise is difficult ; impelled by boundless desire, I shall state their greatness." The Tamil word 'alairla', literally meaning measureless or limitless, is variously rendered here as 'countless', 'immeasurable' and 'boundless' to suit the context. It is perhaps deliberately repeated by the author to indicate the infinitude of the theme. What inspires devotion is the Infinite ; the love or devotion that is inspired is also infinite. In fact they seek to match the infinitude of the Lord by the infinitude of their love or devotion. Finitude of individual being is overcome by infinitude of love.

Here is a passage describing the qualities common to them all, notwithstanding the rich

variety of their personality. "Like the white sacred ash which adorned their bodies, they were pure within also. By their effulgence they illumined all places and they were great beyond the praise of words. Even were the elements to deviate from their nature, these would never forget the feet of the Lord. They pursued the path of steadfast love. They were great as a mountain in the loftiness of their blameless character. Their wealth was beyond the vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity, a piece of gold and a potsherd being alike to them. They worshipped because of the love that surged in them. So firm was their love that they cared not even for Liberation. Their ornament was a rosary, their costume rags. What weighed with them was the Lord's will ; nothing else mattered. Actuated by love that was an eternal spring in them, they lacked nothing. Is their heroism such as I can express ? All that I can do is to laud their exalted state. Their ancient glory continues without failing. How can I set it forth with due understanding ? "

COMPLETE YOUR WORK !

By A. RAO

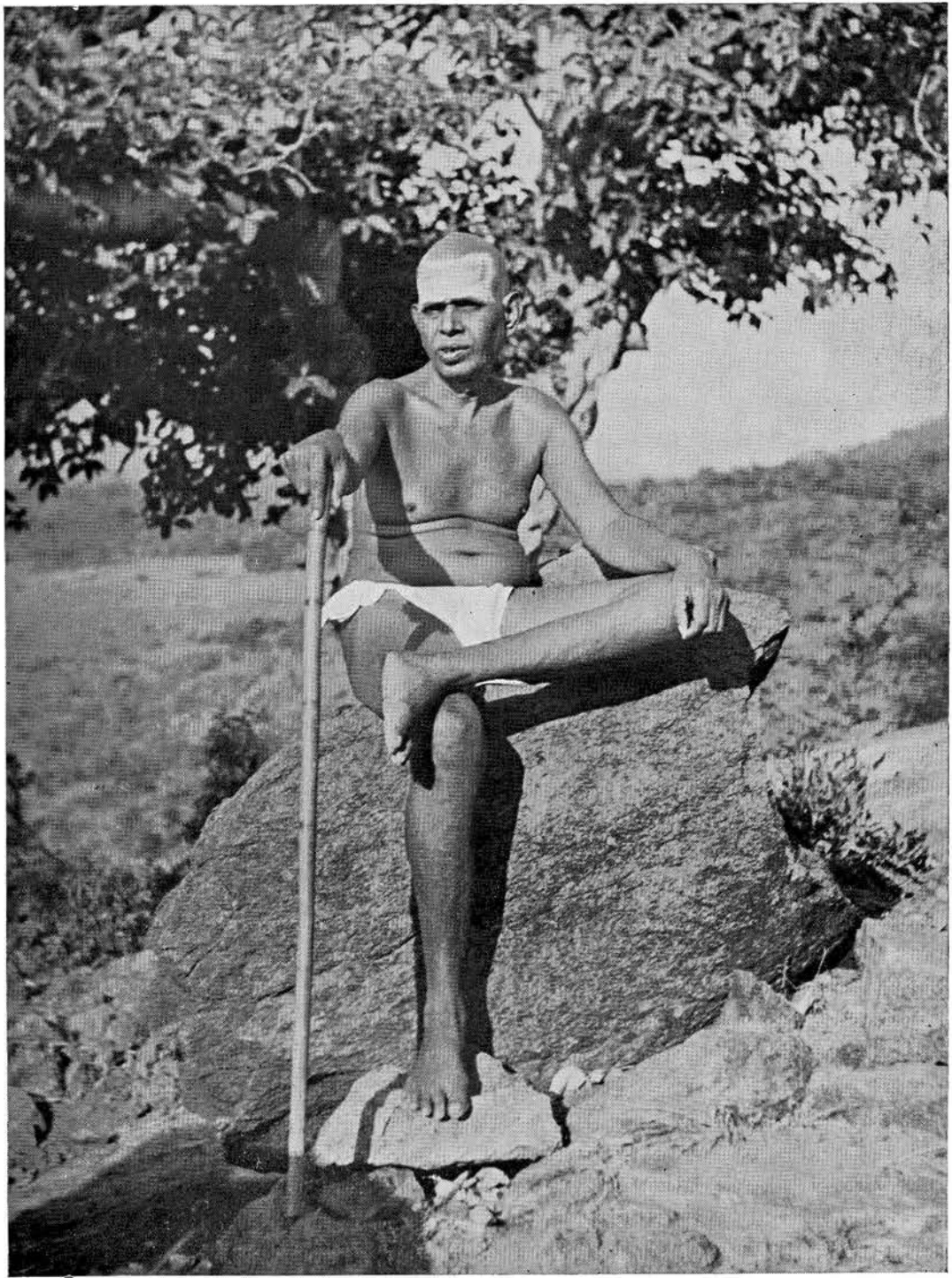
Bhagavan, was it not you
Who gave these rhymes to me —
My mind the lens they filtered through,
Beautiful to see ?

And shall they now stay hid
To lighten no man's way,
A lamp beneath an iron lid,
A prayer with none to pray ?

Complete your work, Bhagavan !
Let them shine forth clear,
A light held high for every man,
To guide men to you here.

That Shankara (Lord Siva) who appeared as
Dakshinamurthi (seated under the Banyan tree)
to grant peace to the Great Ascetics (Sanaka,
Sanandana, Sanat Kumara and Sanat Sujata),
who revealed his real state of Silence . . . abides
in me.

—BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.



POOSALAR

In Tinnanur, an ancient town in Tondai district, there dwelt a Brahmin, Poosalar by name. His mind for ever fixed on Siva's feet, he grew in love and learning day by day and spent his all in service to His devotees.

Wishing to build a temple to the Lord, he tried to raise funds. But try as he might, he failed. In grief he pondered, "What shall I do?" He resolved at last to raise within his heart a temple to his Lord. From far and near he fetched in fancy, little by little, stone and metal and other building material. Skilled masons and sculptors too he engaged and instructed in thought. And at an auspicious hour, he dug the ground and laid the foundation stone. Devoted, busy, sleepless even by night, he watched the temple grow, part by part and layer by layer, gateway, tower and central shrine, all planned according to the rules of Agama, and wrought in detail with minutest care. On top of the domed turret over the holy of holies he installed a stone a cubit long. And so with hard, steady effort of the mind, he completed the structure, plastered chinks with lime; dug wells and tanks, put up the outer walls; and fixed in his mind the auspicious day and hour for consecrating the shrine and installing the Presence.

The Pallava King had built in the city of Kanchi a mighty granite temple and appointed a day for the grand ceremony of its consecration. But, on the night preceding, the Lord appeared to the King in his dream and said,

"Poosalar, my friend, has laboured lovingly for many months and raised a temple for me in his mind, and I must be there tomorrow at its consecration. So you postpone your temple ceremony to some later day."

The King awoke, eager to visit Tinnanur and greet this favoured servant of the Lord. He reached the place and enquired of the people, "Whereabouts is this temple built by Poosalar?" But they all said, "We know of no such temple." Then he sent for the leading Brahmins of the town and asked them, "Who is this pure and perfect man, this Poosalar?" They answered, "A Brahmin of that name does dwell in this town. We shall go and bring him, Sire." But the King would have none of it. Instead he went himself to the man's house and, falling at his feet, asked, "Where is your famed temple? Today, I know, the Lord comes there to dwell. And at His bidding I too have come, to meet you and greet you on this day."

Staggered by this speech, the Brahmin said, "If the Lord pleases, the world shall know," and told the King the story of the building of the temple thought by thought. The King heard it all, fell again at the good man's feet, and marched back to Kanchi, accompanied by his army with drums and trumpets.

Poosalar through many seasons performed the daily pujas in his ideal temple at the due times in the prescribed manner and in the end attained the Feet of the Lord.

I had the opportunity of seeing Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi on a few occasions. He seemed to me to be the most authentic saint in our tradition. He kindled the spark of spirit in many people and helped many to attain the spiritual mysticism.

— DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN,
President of India.

LORD RAMANA COME

Translation of a Tamil poem written years ago by a devotee
who had the Grace of Ramana.¹

Dawn is rising on the Hill,
Sweet Ramana, come !
Lord Arunachala, come !

In the bush the koel sings,
Dear Master Ramana, come !
Lord of Knowledge, come !

The conch blows, the stars are dim,
Sweet Ramana, come !
Lord God of Gods, come !

The cocks crow, the birds chirp.
It is already time, come !
The night has fled, come !

The trumpets blow, the drums beat,
Gold-bright Ramana, come !
Knowledge Awake, come !

The crows caw, it is morn,
Snake-decked Lord, come !²
Blue-throated Lord, come !²

Ignorance is fled, the lotuses³ open,
Wise Lord Ramana, come !
Crown of the Vedas, come !

Unstained by qualities, Lord of Liberation,
Gracious Ramana, come !
Lord Peace, come !

Sage and Lord,
One with Being-Knowledge-Bliss,
Lord dancing in joy,² come !

Love on the summit of Knowledge,
Past pleasure, past pain, come !
Blissful Silence, come !

¹ From *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 108-9, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

² An epithet of Siva.

³ This implies also 'the hearts'.

EARLY DAYS WITH BHAGAVAN

By G. RAMASWAMI PILLAI

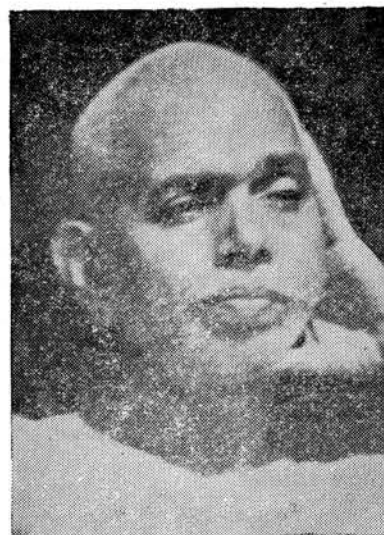
From boyhood I was spiritually inclined. Although coming of a meat-eating family, I turned vegetarian while still a boy. I was mainly a worshipper of Siva but learned about Christ and Buddha too and revered them. Twice I visited the great Muslim shrine at Nagore and I understood that Allah was only another name for God. My one ambition in life was to see God face to face. This was granted to me while still a schoolboy, in March 1917, when I first went to Skandashram and set eyes on Bhagavan. Reclining on the couch, he looked indescribably majestic. Since then he has been God in human form for me, my God, Guru and All.

I did not ask for anything. I was filled to overflowing by just seeing him. He turned on me that look of heart-melting Grace that he so often bestowed on newcomers. After a few days I had to return home. There I learnt the *Marital Garland of Letters* and spent my time reciting it either mentally or aloud and even writing it out.

After finishing school I went to college. Then I returned to my village and although I had no desire for married life my parents got me married. I had no children, however, and was soon able to give up married life and go and live with Bhagavan at his Ashram.

* * *

Bhagavan had lived in various caves and temples, but Skandashram was the first to be known as an Ashram. He stayed there for seven years with his mother, his younger brother Niranjanananda Swami, who was to be the future Sarvadhikari, and a few sadhus. It



was here that ashram cooking was first started. This was due to the presence of his Mother. It was her presence that made it into an ashram. After her death Bhagavan abandoned it and went to live beside her shrine at the foot of the Hill, where the present Ashram has grown up. This shows her to have had greater importance than commonly supposed.

During his years at Skandashram Bhagavan still spoke little and seldom. It did not matter; his gaze was dynamic, penetrating, gracious, soul-stirring, ego-killing. In later years he spoke far more but his silences were still tremendous.

It was on my second visit to Skandashram that I first made pradakshina. A visitor from Madurai whom I knew wanted to go round the hill with Bhagavan and I joined them. At that time the lower slopes were still forested and we took the forest path for a good part of the way before coming out on the road. Next day I had a sudden urge to go round by myself. I started out as before but soon lost my way on the forest track. As I started I had noticed that one of the Ashram dogs was following me. Now it ran in front and began to lead. At once it flashed on me that this was Bhagavan's work. With tears of gratitude and joy I followed my guide. He

took me by the same path as the previous day until we came to the road and then disappeared; and I saw him at the Ashram when I got back. At the time I told nobody about this. It was my first experience of my spiritual relationship with Bhagavan and I was more than ever convinced that he would guide me through the unknown paths of life. Such an incident may appear trivial to the reader, but when it actually happens it strengthens one's faith in Bhagavan who alone can help one by his infinite Grace in opening one's inner vision.

* * *

For a whole year at Skandashram Bhagavan took only one meagre meal a day. I was on a visit there the day he broke this fast. I had decided to stay the night even though there was no food for an evening meal even for the rest of us. I didn't feel hungry. At about 7-30 one of the devotees, Ramanatha Brahmachari, came back with some pieces of broken coconut and some rice that he had been given at a ceremony he had attended in town. Bhagavan suggested that we should boil it up on the charcoal stove we had there and share it out, as was the usual custom. He told us to see whether there was any sugar or sugar candy left from gifts by earlier visitors to flavour it with. We looked but there was nothing at all. It was dark and raining outside and we could not well go into town for anything. I was near to tears that Bhagavan should ask for something — so rare an event — and we should not be able to provide it. At that very moment the door opened and two students came in with a bag of sugar candy and a bunch of bananas that they had brought to present to Bhagavan. The meal was cooked and eaten, the two visitors also being invited. Bhagavan remarked that we had asked for sugar candy and got bananas also, which could be cut up and served like a pickle with the food. After eating he said that it was just a year, 365 days exactly, since he had limited himself to one meal a day and that from now

on he would eat in the evening also. That was how things happened with Bhagavan. He did not work miracles; things just happened right. Miracles are generally thought of as deliberate acts willed by a person, but happenings like this are the result of spiritual forces already and always at work. The Jnani is God Himself in human form. He never wills anything but things happen in his presence and the ignorant attribute them to him. His state is pure awareness. It is a matter of experience. One may get a glimpse of it in his presence.

* * *

It was in 1922, when the present Ashram at the foot of the hill first started, that I became a permanent resident. At first there was only a thatched hut over the Mother's shrine and a second small hut that served as a kitchen. There were only a few of us then. There were no Ashram servants in those days; we did all the work ourselves, and Bhagavan along with us. Puja was performed twice a day, as it still is. We spent our time doing Ashram work, chanting sacred songs, walking round the hill, meditating and reading spiritual books. Earlier Bhagavan had been more silent and aloof; later, when crowds began to come, he was necessarily more distant, but at this time he took part in everything, guiding and helping in every activity of the growing Ashram. He was our Lord and Guru and was always with us. Devotees used to bring us provisions when they were needed and we never felt any want. We used to share things out as they came. Sometimes there was even more than we could dispose of on the spot. We even used to make tea and coffee when the ingredients were available.

Though this was an idyllic state in itself, the essence of it was our striving for Realization. Having attained a human birth, that is the only goal worth aiming at, for it is unalloyed, eternal Bliss and Peace.

* * *

We can dwell on the name or form of Ramana or neither. Repeating the name 'Ramana' inwardly is itself a good sadhana for those who do not use Self-enquiry. Or by concentrating on him intensely and constantly we may find in him the fire of Knowledge which will burn up our ego and convert us into him so that we realize our identity with him who is the Self of the Self. The state of bliss thus attained through merging into the Guru is called Guru Turiya. It is a matter

for experience and cannot be explained in words.

The ego is only an accretion, a shadow, a ghost, an unstable outcome of the combination of chit and jada, consciousness and matter. It is the source of all mischief in our state of ignorance. Nothing is lost by its destruction. It obscures and conceals the true self of us which is identical with pure Consciousness. This false ego is to be dissolved by steady enquiry into it or by the Grace of our most gracious Sat-Guru Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

THE MAGICIAN RAMANA

(Three Stanzas from Muruganar's '*Suttaruttal*' translated by
PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN)

Awareness wherein brightly shine
These many forms of persons, places, time,
All separate-seeming though in substance One :
Into that same Awareness he transmuted
This 'I' of mine. Now, nothing to be known,
My past undone, my being his,
I stand, unruffled Bliss,
Untouched by any shock.
Lord Siva-Venkatesa he who,
King of kings, came conquering
And made me his alone.

What is this 'I' that rises from within ?
Only a thought that, like a bubble, floats
Up to the troubled surface of Awareness.
In sleep the sea is still, no bubble rises :
Then too you are.
You're not the 'I' that rises and then sets,
You are the sole Awareness in the All,
The eternal, uncreated Light of Being.

No form or feature has he of his own,
Yet form and feature to all beings gives ;
Knowledge and ignorance, both to him unknown,
Each human mind from him alone derives.
He brought me into being but to think
Of him as 'you', of me and mine as 'yours' ;
And he has left me wordless, deedless, prone,
Helpless on death's brink.
Only the vast beatitude endures.

COMPANIONSHIP WITH BHAGAVAN

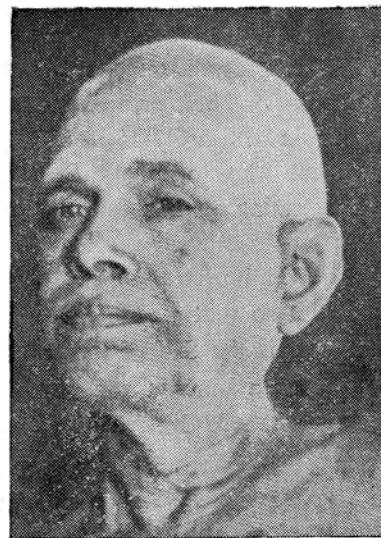
By VISVANATHAN

Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni,¹ the well-known early disciple of Bhagavan Ramana, familiarly known as Nayana, once lived for four months in a small tiled room facing the Ganapati Temple of Palakothu² in the year 1929. I had the rare privilege of sharing his room and serving him, immersed in the spiritual aura of that great tapasvin and yogi. He was a very simple man with few physical wants, so it was a pleasure to serve him. It involved no physical or mental strain at all. Having a natural inner poise, he was always relaxed, despite his brilliance and quick wit. Every one felt the warmth of his friendliness and the air of purity and peace about him.

It was no wonder therefore that Bhagavan Ramana, despite his equal vision, had some special regard and love for him. This expressed itself in many ways. During these early years Bhagavan used to go alone, without an attendant, for his short afternoon stroll past Palakothu and often dropped in to sit for a few minutes with Nayana. It was neither what Bhagavan did nor what he said that mattered, it was his glorious presence that shone above all. Yet the familiarity with which he moved with his intimate devotees was heart-warming.

Bhagavan was opposed to any sort of waste or extravagance. "How do you light the fire in your charcoal stove?" he asked me one day. I told him that I used a bit of old rag rolled up and dipped in kerosene. Smilingly he scolded me for wasting kerosene when the fire could easily be lit with some of the dry twigs and leaves lying around or with bits of waste paper.

On another occasion he saw some small bits of paper, about one inch by six, lying on



the floor of Nayana's room and asked him if they were of any use to him. Nayana replied that they were waste pieces that he had cut off in cutting some sheets of paper to the required size. Bhagavan said: "I can stitch these pieces together and make a little note-book the size of a thumb and use it for writing something or other in." Nayana beamed with pleasure at this economy; but I, to save Bhagavan the trouble, offered to do it myself and to make use of the paper. Perceiving my motive, Bhagavan said: "All right, but you are to show me the stitched note-book and the use you make of it." On my undertaking to do so Bhagavan dropped the matter, as he had confidence in my sincerity.

As soon as Bhagavan had left I made a tiny note-book out of the bits of paper and wrote down in it the 108 slokas of the Indra Sahasra Nama Stotra and its seven concluding verses composed by Ganapati Muni in 1929.³

¹ For an article on whom see our issue of April 1965.—*Editor*.

² The wooded ground immediately west of the Ashram where a number of sadhus later established a colony. It was Ganapati Muni who was the first to settle there.

³ The thousand names of Indra culled from the Rig Veda. Nayana composed his litany of these, adding no other words. 'Indra' refers here, of course, to the Supreme Being, not to the Indra of the Puranas who rises to a godly state by merit and again falls from it.

Bhagavan appreciated the deep spiritual significance of these names as they were read out to him during the composition of the work and even before. So next morning when I showed Bhagavan the tiny note-book with the Indra Sahasra Nama written in it in small script he scrutinized, as was his way,⁴ not only the contents but the stitching and general appearance as well and then exclaimed with pleasure : "You have kept your promise and made the best use of the bits of paper." I somehow lost that precious note-book handled and perused by Bhagavan. I need not say how glad I shall be if this lost treasure is found and restored for the benefit of all.

The present Ashram buildings had not yet been erected and Bhagavan was living in a thatched hut adjoining his Mother's samadhi (shrine). Nayana used to sit in the presence of Bhagavan for about two hours daily, before and after sunset. This is a part of the day known as *pradosha* in Sanskrit and traditionally held sacred to the worship of Siva. But for Bhagavan and Nayana there was no special time of worship since they were perpetually flaming with *tapas* transcending time and space.

One evening Nayana asked Bhagavan about the forests which at that time still existed on and around Arunachala, saying that he had been in forests in other parts of India but not here. Bhagavan, full of benevolence, at once offered to take him to the forests on a fine day and said with a radiant, almost boyish smile, "Nayana, there is no inch of ground all over Arunachala that has not been trodden by these feet during the time when I was living on the hill, especially during the Virupaksha period. I have been up the hills and down the dales and roamed about the interior regions where no forest guard would dare to go."

One cloudy day, a few days later, I went to Bhagavan after lunch as usual. He was sitting alone. As soon as he saw me he asked what Nayana was doing and whether it would

suit him to go for a walk in the forest. I replied that Nayana was writing something but would jump with joy and gladly drop it if he heard of Bhagavan's proposal. "Go and tell him, then, and be ready," Bhagavan said. "I will slip out of the Ashram unobserved (to avoid a crowd) and meet you near your room."

Bhagavan joined us a few minutes later and the three of us wended our way towards the forest, led of course by Bhagavan, the born leader through uncharted regions, physical as well as spiritual. We entered the second forest path, cutting through the cattle-fair ground west of Palakothu and the beautiful little temple of Draupadi with an arresting atmosphere about it. Thence Bhagavan took us to the third forest path, skirting the slopes of Arunachala at varying heights. It was dense forest with creepers entwining the trees and bushes. There were a few streams, some of them flowing and some dried up. As we proceeded along the winding, rugged path, enjoying the beauty of the scenery and the ever-changing aspects of changeless Arunachala, the clouds cleared away and let the sunlight in for a few minutes. Knowing that Nayana could not stand the heat of the sun on his head, Bhagavan took us to a spreading tree standing at the edge of a forest pond and said : "See, Nayana, this is the tree known as *Ingudi* famous for its cooling shade and medicinal properties described in *Sakuntala* and other famous Sanskrit works. It is called *Nilali* in Tamil on account of its very cool shade which wards off the effects of the hot sun in no time." And five minutes under the shade of the tree proved it to be so.

As soon as the clouds gathered over again, giving shade, Bhagavan took us deeper into the forest. Later he found a very pleasant place for us to rest, on the bed of a dried up stream, shaded by a huge rock to the west.

⁴ Bhagavan was extremely observant. Even on receiving a letter he would examine the envelope with address, postmark and stamps before opening it.

We did not speak much. One does not feel like disturbing the eloquent silence of Bhagavan in harmony with nature by indiscreet talk or even thought. He teaches in silence.

Time passed unnoticed in the gripping presence of the Lord of Silence until Nayana suggested that it was getting rather late for Bhagavan's return to the Ashram. Bhagavan said that we would wait for the afternoon breeze which would soon start up and make walking pleasant. A few minutes later the breeze did indeed start. At the same time we heard the sound of some one moving through the bushes to the south and looking that way I saw Muruganar's⁵ head above the bushes and announced his presence with surprise. Bhagavan, who was a marvellous actor, placed his finger along the side of his nose, as was his habit when surprised, and expressed his surprise that Muruganar could have penetrated so deep into the forest and discovered us. Muruganar had by this time caught sight of us and heard our voices, and a few minutes later he joined us and prostrated full length before Bhagavan, his face flushed with emotion. Bhagavan asked him however he had managed to find us out in this unfrequented spot where even a forest guard would find it hard to do so.

Muruganar explained in a voice choked with emotion that he was present when Nayana expressed his wish to see the forests and Bhagavan proposed a walk there and he decided not to miss the opportunity of accompanying Bhagavan deep into the heart of Arunachala. So since that day he had been daily coming to the Ashram as early as possible in the afternoon from the Temple of Arunachala where he was staying. That afternoon he had not found Bhagavan seated on his couch as usual when he came. The people at the Ashram had no knowledge of his whereabouts. Wasting no more time, he went straight to Nayana's room in Palakothu but found it locked. He enquired of the watchman who told him that earlier in the afternoon Nayana and I had been seen walking with Bhagavan in the direction of the cattle-fair ground. Some intuition made him choose the path he did, which brought him straight to Bhagavan.

We all three returned with Bhagavan to the Ashram unaware of anything but Bhagavan's Grace, the only Reality shining through all forms and movements and playing hide-and-seek with us all.

⁵ For an introduction to whom see our issue of October 1964.—*Editor*.

The Maharshi was asked by some one whether the belief in the necessity of a Guru is correct. He gave the following reply: "So long as one thinks of himself as little (*laghu*) he must take hold of the great (*Guru*); he must not, however, look upon the Guru as a person; the Sage is none other than the real Self of the disciple. When that Self is realized then there is neither Guru nor disciple." The question arose because the Sage himself had had no Guru—at least no outer Guru. On another occasion the Sage said: "A teacher would be needed if one had to learn something new, but this is a case of unlearning."

—DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR,
Vice-Chancellor of Annamalai University.
—Golden Jubilee Souvenir of 1946.

THE MAHARSHI AND HEALING

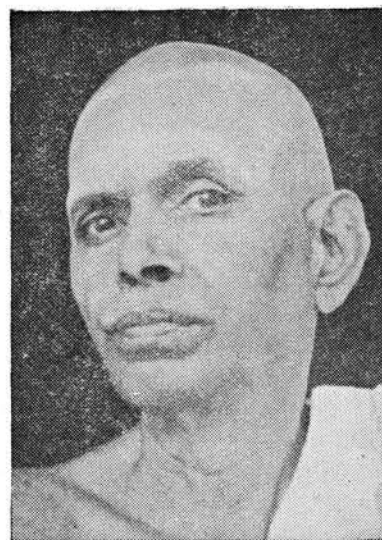
By DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

Some aspirants have asked what was the Maharshi's attitude to spiritual healing and why he did not actively encourage it. In this article Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami delves into this difficult question.

Some people hold that spiritual healing should be practised as a part of sadhana. Spiritual healing is a process by which power from a higher level is invoked to descend and help at the lower, human level. The higher is not reluctant to respond to the lower but many difficulties stand in the way of the lower coming in touch with the higher. Prayer should be from the highest state of consciousness possible to us. Christ said: "When thou prayest enter into thine inner chamber and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret and this Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

But if a man can purify himself utterly of self-will he becomes One with the Father, that is a Jivan-Mukta. Then his very presence is the greatest good and greatest balm to all human suffering. Miraculous cures may result from the outflow of healing grace from him. If a sick man makes himself a recipient of this grace by his faith he gets cured, but the cure is natural and spontaneous and not the result of any purpose or intention on the part of the Master.

But what of healing by one who has not attained this supreme level? Can he influence God as an advocate influences a judge? If God is Spirit or Consciousness no one can influence It or make It do anything for any one. What is it that heals and how is one to influence it? Bhagavan did not encourage pondering over such problems. They are of no



help for spiritual progress. One should concern oneself with the Self alone. Whether the body is sick or well there is the same 'I'. One should experience the 'I' which is in every one and is the same in every one.

This does not mean that Bhagavan was indifferent to the sufferings of those around him. He was supremely compassionate. Once a lady devotee brought the news of the death of her only daughter and on hearing it Bhagavan wept along with her. The Buddha advocated contemplation of suffering and its causes as the way to escape from it. Suffering is the prime problem of existence, but the earth-bound mind cannot comprehend the spiritual. To draw conclusions about God from what we see on earth is entirely wrong. The earth-bound mind may think of the external world as a theatre for divine vengeance and wonder what can be done to pacify the anger of God; but God neither punishes nor rewards and cannot be influenced.

It is the very nature of the mind to create mysteries and be baffled by them. Bhagavan warns us against seeking a remedy in the outside world. There is no peace to be gained in it. Our concern is with the Spirit which is within.

The body, being made up of matter, cannot suffer. Neither can suffering touch the Self,

which is Spirit. What is there between the two which suffers? This question takes us in search of something within us which is eternally young, beyond time and ever free but which is at present obscured. One should set aside some time daily in which to be separate from oneself and the outside world and abide in God. "If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you." The panacea for all the ills of the world is to stop being an individual and be one with God. Bhagavan said that the primary disease, the root of all other diseases, is ignorance of the Self. When asked to cure his own body at the end he said, "The body itself is a disease." The root symptoms of disease are body-consciousness and world-consciousness. One should try to heal this main disease rather than the lesser diseases from which the body suffers. The cause of suffering is ignorance of the real nature of the world and the inevitable evil of coming in contact with it. One is advised to shun the world by diving into oneself. The relation between body-consciousness and world-consciousness produces suffering. We use the body to keep up contact with the world, unaware of the painful consequences of such contact.

One should not be encouraged to seek the small solaces of this world as if they were the things of God. All experiences — birth and death, health and sickness, good and evil — are equally manifestations of one mind and are on the same level of reality or unreality as the mind. The world, the sorrows thereof, the compassion which seeks to relieve such sorrows are all dream experiences of a sleeping mind. When there is awakening everything vanishes, including the person who felt compassion in the dream.

One should use the manifestations of God to guide one to their Source. To study them in themselves is only to increase one's perplexities and to get involved in them.

Once a devotee who had strong faith in the Maharshi brought the corpse of her only child right into the hall where he was sitting. He asked what it was. She said: "My dead son, and I pray and beseech you to grant him life." The Maharshi sat silent for awhile, as was his custom, and then gently said: "Please remove the body to a nearby cottage and let us see what happens in the morning." Nothing happened and the boy lay dead. But something happened to the minds of the relatives and they removed the corpse and cremated it, realizing that they should not expect the dead to rise. The Maharshi later remarked that even an incarnate God cannot raise all the dead. He has no individual will so he cannot decide to perform such and such a miracle. If miracles happen in his ambience he witnesses them; that is all.

God radiates his grace throughout the universe irrespective of whether beneficiaries are there to receive it or not, like the sun its light. God's grace cannot be stopped. Bhagavan said that the very existence of a Jivan Mukta is the greatest blessing to the world.

Spiritual practice aims at helping human awareness to realize its identity with universal awareness. Identification with the body, whether healthy or diseased, is a result of misuse of the mind. Subject to this misuse a man seeks a comfortable body and a comfortable life. If we are concerned with maintaining and using this body to keep in touch with the world we are thereby perpetuating suffering. The compassion of the Enlightened One goes beyond pity for the ills the body is heir to and has rather pity for that false identification with the body which makes these ills inevitable. A jaundiced eye sees everything yellow; the split mind sees God's hand where it is not. The amount of pain and poverty in the world has made men doubt if there is a God at all. The omnipresence of God cannot co-exist with the miseries and ills that surround us. God's will is not being done in this world. Man's

will has kept God out. So one should not search for God in the world but inwardly. Where the ego is present no good or God can be present. Where the ego is absent no evil or want can be present. The body that is emptied of ego becomes the shrine of God and manifests His omnipresence and omnipotence. Such was the Divine state in which Bhagavan lived and moved among us. He proved this possibility, that a man can be one with God. Out-turned mind is bound to see the world and its sorrows; the in-turned mind is still. This stillness is the Spirit.

The purpose of this article is not to argue for or against spiritual healing but only to show

both possibilities, both viewpoints. Jesus healed the sick and said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." This showed that two things were necessary and had to conjoin: the grace flowing through the Master and faith on the part of the recipient. In the Maharshi's life healing played little part.¹ The world is as it is because men have desired such a world, not because God created it this way. The Maharshi's teaching is totally directed towards leading us out of such a world to the Source of the 'I' by intensely raising the question 'Who am I?'

¹ though certain cases of healing will be recorded in our next issue.—Editor.

HOW HE CAME TO SEE ME

By GURDIAL MALLIK

Yes, it was He who came to me, out of his abounding Grace. I had not then even heard his name, let alone anything about his abidance in the Being and Wisdom of the Eternal. It happened this way. Nearly thirty-five years ago I volunteered to work for a short time under the officiating editor of *The Theosophist* of Adyar, Madras. On one occasion he gave me a few books to review for it and among them a small booklet entitled 'Who am I?' As I read this I became more and more absorbed in what it had to say about Self-enquiry as a means to Realization. After I had put it aside a feeling of deep peace and bliss enfolded me like the arms of a mother, and I remained in this state for quite some time. When I finally came out of this exalted state I seemed to see with my inward eye a radiant face with starry gaze. And I bowed spontaneously before it in heartfelt reverence.

After this experience I resolved to use the enquiry every day. I continued to do so for many months. This enhanced by eagerness to touch the feet of the mighty Guru. But alas, I never found an occasion while he was among us in bodily form. When at last an opportunity to visit his Ashram did come in April 1950 the visible had already entered the Invisible.

Some years later, by God's Grace, I went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of this Great One. Once again the radiant face which had shone on me some three decades before gladdened my inward eye and I felt blessed to the very depths of my being. Also, by the Guru's benediction, a glimpse of the Self that is at the heart of Life was vouchsafed to me.

My salutations of love and reverence to the Self of the Guru and the Guru of the Self.

THE RESTORER OF ADVAITA

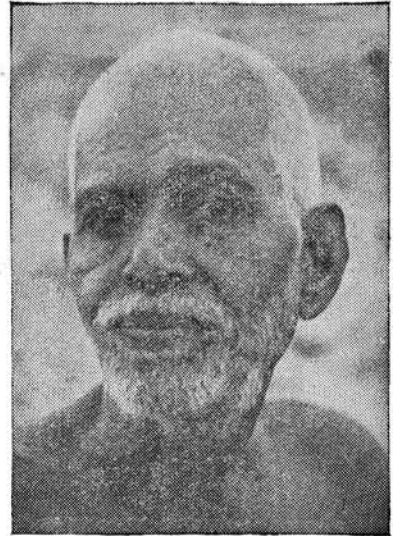
By PROF. NAGARAJA RAO

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi renewed the Advaitic tradition of Sri Shankara. After a long ascendancy of the Bhakti cult he resuscitated the primacy of the Path of Knowledge and the efficacy of vairagya or equalmindedness. He attached no importance to the way-side experiences of vision or ecstasy, only the ultimate realization of Self.

At a very early age Sri Ramana received the divine call and responded to it unreservedly. He left home for the holy hill of Arunachala at Tiruvannamalai, abiding thenceforth outwardly in Tiruvannamalai, inwardly in the Self.

Existentialist writers describe in terrible words the predicament of man when he encounters death and experiences the impermanence of life and the world. Certainly it is terrible if the fore-doomed ego-self is all one can conceive of. Ramana experienced at the early age of sixteen what death really means, and it was rebirth into deathless life. It was about six weeks before he left home for good. There was nothing wrong with his health, but one day a strong presentiment of death suddenly overtook him. As it was the great turning point of his life, his own description of it is given here.

"The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: 'Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? This body dies.' And I at once dramatised the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out stiff as though *rigor mortis* had set in and imitated



a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word 'I' nor any other word could be uttered. 'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But, with the death of this body, am I dead? Is the body 'I'? It is silent and inert, but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the 'I' within me, apart from it. So I am the Spirit transcending the body. The body dies, but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless Spirit'. All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truth which I perceived directly, almost without the thought-process. The 'I' was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centred on that 'I'. From that moment onwards, the 'I' or Self focused attention on itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on. Other thoughts might come and go like the various notes of music, but the 'I' continued like the fundamental *śruti* note that underlies and blends with all the

other notes. Whether the body was engaged in talking, reading or anything else, I was still centred on 'I'. Previous to that crisis, I had no clear perception of my Self and was not consciously attracted to it."¹

This single act of enquiry brought him to constant, unwavering realization of the Self. He taught from the fulness of his Advaitic experience; he was not a theorist. He remained henceforth established in the core of Reality, perceiving the Self in the world at large and in every being. He realized the unity of existence in the Spirit. The Spirit or Brahman is the sole reality. It is the cause of world-appearance and of the apparent plurality of selves. The empirical egos are many but the transcendental Spirit is one. Ignorance of the unity of the Self is called 'Maya'. It is the power of Maya that is responsible for our feeling of separate, self-subsistent being. The pluralist outlook not only hides from us the real nature of the Self but makes us imagine ourselves distinct individuals. As a result of this we do not love our neighbour as ourself but imagine that our good is different from his good. From this arises conflict and anti-social behaviour. Once we believe that we are all separate individuals with distinct ends we naturally feel that the interests of others are not compatible with our own. Indeed we often feel their ruin to be in our interest.

Bhagavan Ramana enjoined persistent enquiry into the nature of the Self. Spiritual ignorance is the root cause of all bondage and knowledge brings release. Therefore he prescribed primarily Jnana marga, the Path of Knowledge, with the technique of Self-enquiry. However, by this he did not mean cold, intellectual knowledge. He was full of compassion for all. Through his silent influence even more than by exposition, he taught his followers that Self-knowledge is the culmination of all spiritual discipline. It leads also to true benevolence, since without realization of the fundamental unity of Being one cannot achieve fellowship with other men. Altruistic activity not

based on realization of the Self is all too often mere gratification of the ego and a form of social vanity. Even our virtues, when unenlightened, can mask our egoism.

Sri Ramana did not teach the cultivation of the various virtues, but he embodied them. He taught that if the Self is realized the virtues will flourish spontaneously but if the ego remains it will find an outlet if not in one vice then in another. His words were wisdom and his proximity was a consecration. To talk with him or even to live in his presence was a great force that held at bay the unregenerate thoughts in us. His Grace enabled us to fight the temptations that assailed us. He was the consolation of many who were disturbed by the torments of the age. He had an insight into men's troubles and perceived their spiritual and mental state as soon as he saw them.

The Maharshi spent about twenty-four years in caves on Arunachala, speaking little and rather resisting than welcoming fame. After that he lived for about twenty-eight years as a world-famous figure in the Ashram that grew up around him at the foot of the hill. Throughout this long period there was absolutely no change in him or his teaching. This was because he was not expressing ideas but voicing realized truth. His Realization permeated all he did and said. He had no flaw of flesh, no error of mind. He was a perfect Jivanmukta. His love went out to the animals in the Ashram as well as the people. His living voice and vibrant silence inundated us with Grace which awakened us from our unreflective state into the need for realizing our true Reality. Unostentatiously he performed all the functions ascribed to a Guru in the Upanishads. There was nothing of the narrow cult in his teaching. Not only did he not ask us to believe blindly, he also did not expect us to surrender to any outside person as guru. He only asked us to surrender ego to Self, ignorance to Knowledge.

¹ *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, by Arthur Osborne, pp. 18-19, Rider & Co.

However, simple though it may appear, Self-enquiry is really very difficult. Only his Grace makes it possible for us. Man's love of ego prevents him from seeking what lies behind it. To trace the mind back to its source is no easy task. It is hard to break all accustomed props and cherished illusions and see the naked truth. We have to pierce the veil of many colours to perceive the white radiance of eternity. The Maharshi often used to say : "Man is not the body or senses or states of consciousness or intellect but that which uses all of them. He is Spirit, one, indivisible and infinite." To realize this we have first of all to put our mind in order and cleanse it of error-producing impurities. If the window-panes are dirty how can we see inside ?

The Maharshi had a rare technique when he expressed his teaching in words : he clothed wisdom in humour. But it always was pure, uncompromising wisdom. He always reminded us that the goal is realization of pure non-dual consciousness.

He revived in his teaching and exemplified in his life the truth of Advaita. Three traditional phrases summarise this for us : *naham deham*, 'I am not the body' ; *koham*, 'Who am I ?' and *soham*, 'I am He'. The nature of Reality and of spiritual experience is summarised in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (1. 6) : "The Reality realized through spiritual experience is the soul of Truth, the delight of life, the bliss of the mind and the fulness of Peace and Eternity."

TO SRI BHAGAVAN, THE ONE ETERNAL REALITY*

By C. S. BAGI

The World is *still*. And Light and Sound and Thought
Transfixt in Space and Time, like insects caught
In amber rock, are bygone things inwrought
In Cosmic Consciousness, where all is Nought.

Alas, how vain are eyes that think they see !
And ears they hear, and Mind that it is free !
True Freedom is to stay all thought and be
Like waveless waters of the deepest sea.

No more can I be still than go astray,
For fixed is all I do from day to day.
My steps upon the round of Time must stay ;
Without Thy Grace I cannot even pray.

But what is fixed to me to Thee is void ;
Through hardest rock Thy softest will can ride ;
All fire, all water, earth and air must hide,
Like me, this mock existence, Thee beside.

* From "Golden Jubilee Souvenir".

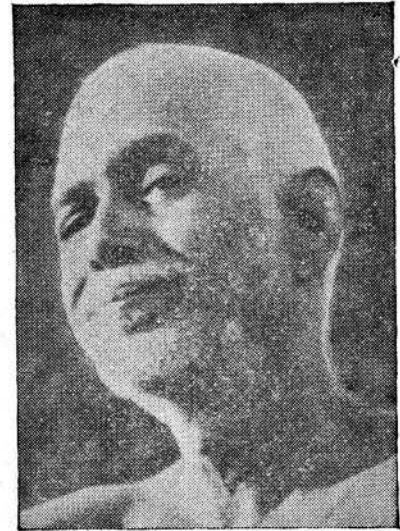
BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA, SUSTAINER OF SPIRITUAL REALITY

[From an article written for the Golden Jubilee Souvenir of 1946 by DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN, President of India, who was then Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University.]

It is somewhat surprising that many students of religion assume that the religious seers, the true representatives of religious genius, belong wholly to the past and we to-day have to live on the memory of the past. If religion is a living truth, if it has any vitality, it must be capable of producing men who from time to time bear witness to the truth and confirm and correct from their own experience the religious tradition. When the springs of experience dry up, our love for religion is a mere affectation, our faith a belief and our behaviour a habit with no reality behind it. In the Indian religious tradition, religion has meant not an imaginative or intellectual apprehension of Reality but its embodiment in regenerated living. Religion should energise our consciousness, transform our character and make us new men. The truly religious are those who have solid hold of the unseen Reality in which we ordinary men merely believe. They are not freaks proclaiming the reality of spirit, which is esoteric and intense. They tell us that they have a direct knowledge of the Real of which we have indirect or inferential knowledge. For them God is an Abiding Fact, a Living Presence, and in the consciousness of this fact their whole existence is transformed. These artists of the inner life are of different types. Some are full of poetry and music; others are vigorous men of action; still others are solitary souls. Despite these

differences they walk the same road, speak the same language of the soul and belong to the same family.

The Indian tradition has been kept alive by seers who were born in every age and incarnated the great ideal. We have such God-engrossed souls even to-day. It is our good fortune that we have with us to-day a living embodiment of God-centred life, a perfect image of the life divine in the mirror of human existence. Sri Ramana adopts the metaphysical position of Advaita Vedanta. He speaks to us of the Divine which is the pure subject from which all objectivity is excluded. The 'I' is different from the 'me'. The Self is not the body which perishes, nor the senses which suffer the same fate as the body, nor life, mind or intellect. It is the pure Spectator, the *Sakshin*, which is the same in all. We get to realize it not by metaphysical theorising but by spiritual discipline. Reality impinges on the unreality of life and to discover reality, absolute concentration and consecration are essential. We have to still our desires, steady our impulses, tread the ethical path. We cannot see so long as our vision is engrossed in outer forms, but those who turn their gaze inwards behold it. No one can see properly so long as he remains divided and disintegrat-



ed in his consciousness. We must become inwardly whole and free. We cannot acquire this wholeness or integrity if we do not root out our selfish impulses. We cannot know truly or act rightly so long as we are too afraid, too indolent or too self-centred. To see the Real and not merely the things of the world, the eye must be inverted.¹ God is within us. Not comfort but control is happiness. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself," says Jesus. Dedication to God means denial of the ego. We must empty the self in the abyss of God. This process is helped by the practice of unselfish service (*nishkama karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), mind control (*yoga*) and enquiry (*vichara*). Enquiry into self, religious worship, ethical service are means to this realization. The end of all worship — puja, japa, dhyana — is communion with God. With increasing intensity in our devotion, the distance between the human and the Divine diminishes. Indian thought believes in four stages of God-realization — *salokya*, where God and the worshipper dwell in the same world, *samipya*, where the devotee is near the Divine, *sarupya*, where the devotee assimilates more and more the forms and attributes of the Divine, and *sayujya*, where the devotee is united to the Divine.

When one discovers the Divine within oneself, one must discover it also in the outer world of men and things. While the heights within are revealed to those who strenuously exclude all that lies without, the process of seeing all in the fulness of the Divine is more arduous. God is both eternal silence and perpetual activity, the unmoved witness and the ground of all that is, the metaphysical Absolute and the personal Lord. The Divine reveals itself anew in all life and existence. Nothing on earth is excluded from the Divine Consciousness. The Divine is the life which gives birth to us all and is farther than our farthest thought. Sri Ramana not only dwells in a world of pure subjectivity but also has a sense of the Infinite that is in all. As he has elimi-

nated his selfish ego, he becomes the Voice of the whole, the Conscience of all that is. As he has no selfish desires and no sense of agency, he enters into the world-movement and carries out the functions expected of him by that Universal Spirit. Honour and dishonour, praise and blame, do not move him. Actions are not subject to the necessity of nature but are centred in the freedom of the Divine.

It is a false assumption to hold that the spiritually strong have no patience with human weakness. They are not insensitive to human sorrow. The Rishis are revealers of Reality, which is all-bliss. They do not keep their discoveries to themselves. They have a social significance. By getting into their company, we ordinary people realize the actuality of the world of spirit and catch something of their fire. The great of spirit are ministering angels who assist, protect and help those who are in need. Association with the holy people produces detachment from fruits of action. Such detachment leads to desirelessness; from desirelessness arises stability of mind; Liberation in life is then achieved. The Upanishads ask the aspirant for spiritual life to approach, fuel in hand, a teacher versed in scripture, steady in his realization of the Supreme.² The teacher shows the path. His very presence radiates peace and joy. He refashions the souls of those who look to him for help. With keen psychological insight he understands the needs of those who approach him and satisfies them. Like all saints, he has the foundation in God; his surface is intertwined with everything that exists. He loves all beings as he loves himself and cannot rest until every one mirrors the Divine in his life.

The saints are the sustainers of society. Philo remarks: "Households, cities, countries and nations have enjoyed great happiness

¹ *Katha Up.*, 11. 1. 1.

² *Mundaka Up.*, 1. 2. 12.

when a single individual has taken heed of the good and beautiful. Such men not only liberate themselves ; they fill those they meet with a free mind." The true sages possess the inner joy and peace which are independent of outer circumstances. Their happiness is not dependent on outer things. They have passed beyond the forms of social life. Their renunciation is spontaneous and does not involve any idea of sacrifice. They work for the fulfilment of the Divine in the world, for the good of all beings, for the fulfilment of the Pur-

pose. They are one in consciousness and action with the Divine.

To suggest that the spiritual souls are expected to abstain from action in the world is incorrect. The opportunities which the world offers are to be used for self-development. Life is a game where we should play our parts. We are all cast for different roles, and our business is to play them in the right spirit. We may lose the game but we should not mind it. It is the play that matters and not the score we make.

THE THRICE MARVELLOUS MASTER SRI RAMANA *

By HARINDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Eternity has worn a human face,
Contracted to a little human span ;
Lo, the Immortal has become a man,
A self-imprisoned thing in time and space.

Upon a narrow couch you see Him sit,
Vision of tenderness and grace and calm :
Upon the finite compass of his palm
He holds the secrets of the Infinite.

Behind our loneliness He is the speech
Shedding rare Wisdom ; and, beyond our guess,
Behind our speech, He is the loneliness
Sensed but in glimpses, far beyond our reach.

Thrice marvellous pure Master on the height,
Towards Whom we dumbly yearn, each one apart,
Striving to hold Thy image in the heart,
O cleave our darkness with your searching light !

The light which knows our subterfuges knows
The glooms encircling us, the mournful ways
On which we walk. O silent Master ! raise
Our footfalls unto summits of repose.

We are all tired, since we are un-attuned
To the unfaltering Stillness which You are :
Our feet are bleeding and the goal is far ;
Have mercy, Lord ! and heal us wound by wound.

* From "Golden Jubilee Souvenir".

GUIDANCE OF SAGES

By SRI C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN,
Union Deputy Minister for Information
and Broadcasting.

A well known sloka describes the Supreme Siva, in the form of a youthful teacher teaching under a banyan tree disciples, old in age, through silence and lo! their doubts are dispelled. Sri Shankara, while praying to Sri Dakshinamoorthy says that the Lord who pervades everything like ether or space appears *inter alia* in three forms — as Iswara, as Guru (this includes one's own father, who gives the earliest teaching) and as one's own Atma.

Excepting in very rare cases, a Guru is necessary for the fulfilment of one's life and realization of one's self. From time immemorial, we in India have had sages and seers, who handed down the eternal teachings to posterity. The Vedas and the Upanishads, the Itihasas (Ramayana and Mahabharata) are full of such highly evolved persons. Maharishi Valmiki is in a class by himself and became the vehicle of a great epic. Sri Veda Vyasa of the Mahabharata is an immortal and is considered the Parama Guru. He was surpassed in many cases by his son, Suka Brahman. The great Suka at a very early age attained Brahma Jnana. That did not, however, prevent him from singing the praise of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavata. Incidentally, it is possible that some of my readers may not have grasped the inner meaning of this great Purana. Much of the play or *kreedā* of Sri Krishna in Brindavan takes place before he was eleven years old. At the age of eleven, as a kshatriya, he would have had to go through the Upanayanam ceremony. It was not without meaning that the Lord is described in one of the Namas as "Anadi (the Eter-



nal) Brahmachari". Every time one meditates on each of the Namas or descriptions of the Supreme in the various Namavalies, a new meaning unfolds itself.

There is a beautiful story concerning the Great Vyasa and his son, Suka. The father one day misses the son in the Ashram and is overtaken by filial longing. He runs towards the woods calling out his name "Suka! Suka!". He comes across celestial damsels bathing in a river, who cover themselves as soon as they see the old man. Outraged at this, the sage asks them why they are covering themselves on seeing an old man like him, while they did not do so when his youthful son, Suka, was passing by naked — an "Ava-doota". They replied that his young son Suka had become a part of the infinite and had gone beyond good and evil, pleasure and pain. They actually asked the great Maharishi to utter the name 'Suka'. When he did so and called out 'Suka! Suka!', he found that all things — animate and inanimate, stone, tree, shrub, birds and insects — cried back 'Suka! Suka!'. Even the great Vyasa had to be reminded of the oneness of the Supreme in this manner. Such a realised sage as Suka has sung beautiful verses in praise of the Supreme as Sri Krishna Avatara in the Bhagavata.

The great Shankara is *sui generis*. Having realised the Truth, he still praised the Supreme either as Easwara, Devi or Mahavishnu or in other forms in soul stirring prayers. He restored the ancient faith and gave it a new strength. He united many discordant creeds and mathas. In my view, there is hardly any other human being in historical times who can be classed with him either for intellectual brilliance or universal grasp. We find in his writings various approaches, yogas and upasanas to the Brahman either with form or without. Sage Sadasiva Brahmendra of comparatively recent times having attained Brahma Jnana still sang about the Lord Krishna. "I know of no other reality or truth than the boy Krishna, blue of mien, clad in silk, with beautiful eyes like blooming lotuses and attractive lips, holding the flute in his hand."

Maharishi Ramana appears to me to be comparable to the Suka Brahman. In a radiant life most of which was lived in Tiruvannamalai, he taught, saying little and kindling enquiry. His was never a new creed or a system of philosophy nor did he seek to found a new institution. He appeared on earth at a time when the spiritual life in India was not very bright. A generation admiring western authors and spending more time on Burke and Berkely, Mill and Macaulay than on the classics in India was lost, in the early years of this century, in admiration of the material achievements and scientific discoveries of the western world. There was a pervasive growth of agnosticism. In an article in a well known journal written recently on the life of a great freedom fighter, we find that this patriot became very gloomy and pessimistic in the evening of his life. He did not have much faith in men and things, much less did he have any other abiding faith to fall back upon. His agnosticism was characterised by deep depression. This was true of many others like him of his and succeeding generations.

"That thou art" proclaims the Chhandogya Upanishad. Enquire ceaselessly "who am I?"

and when you know the answer, you attain immortality. What is so near to every one is also very far away and remote for many millions of human beings. The Lord in the Gita proclaims that "one out of a thousand seeks to attain perfection and one out of that thousand knows Me in reality". It is, however, also true, as pointed out in our sacred books, that in this yuga, "Moksha" or liberation is easy provided a real yearning is kindled in a person.

Many of us have had the good fortune of seeing the sage Ramana when he was alive. A few have received lasting benefits from such a darshan. Every one who went to Tiruvannamalai — with the best of effort quite a few were just unable to go there — became regenerated. Even the utterance of his name purifies and elevates. The "shraddha" of a person is inherent in him and inborn out of the past "samskaras". While a few yogis have realised quickly, others have not succeeded. Perhaps their mind has not been purified and regenerated by tapas and their senses have not really been subjugated.

Sri Ramana was like a ripe fruit falling off a tree. Even before completing his spell of life on earth, he was merged in the Brahman. The bliss of "Samadhi" in which he was merged inspired everyone who came into contact with him. It did not however make him a recluse or prevent him showing kindness to pet animals in the Ashram particularly in the early days, nor smiling beatifically while listening to the Veda Parayana which took place in the hall. When he cried out to Sri Arunachala "Father of all" tears trickled down his face. Samadhi did not prevent him from following the ordained rules of life like early morning bath and the application of sacred ash on his forehead. Not that he needed these, perhaps it was to guide the thousands who had to go through a long process of evolution. Some of us who were very sad when we saw him in his last days could see that he was above

pain or pleasure. His physical frame was weakening and even when beads of perspiration were present on his forehead, during his last days, one could only remember the calm eyes and the charming smile. His message has a particular potency and validity today in the modern world for meditative and thinking people. When Sri Jawaharlal Nehru pleaded "Only by constant self-questioning, individual and national, can we keep on the right path. An easy unthinking confidence is almost as bad as a weak submission to helpless dejection. Real failure comes only when we forget our ideals and objectives and principles and begin

to wander away from the road which leads to their realisation", he was revealing the modern mind. Sri Ramana pointed out a short-cut to "Brahma Jnana" for the young and the old of all climes and races. He demonstrated very clearly the truth in the Gita, knowing which there is nothing else to be known, i.e. the knowledge of kshetra and kshetragna, the human body in the aggregate and the "knower" of that. To an enquiry "who am I?" the answer was given a new look by Sri Ramana. The sum total of his teaching is very small, but is cherished throughout the world.

RECOLLECTIONS OF BHAGAVAN

By ALAN CHADWICK *

He had a great sense of humour and when talking a smile was seldom far from his face. He had a great fund of stories, personal and from the scriptures, and was a magnificent actor. He would always dramatise the protagonists of any story he was telling. It was a sight, for instance, to see him depicting fear—he who had never known fear. When the story was very pathetic his voice would be choked with tears so that he was unable to proceed.

When people came to him with their family stories he would laugh with the happy and sometimes shed tears with the bereaved. In this way he seemed to reciprocate the emotions of others.

He never raised his voice and if he did occasionally seem angry there was no ripple on the surface of his peace. Talk to him a moment later and he would answer calmly and quite undisturbed. With the rest of us some effect of anger will remain for a while even after the cause has gone. Internally we take time to regain our peace.

He would never touch money. This was not because he hated it. He knew that it was necessary for the purposes of daily life, but he just was not interested in it. Money and presents came to the Ashram management. That was all right. They needed funds to maintain the institution, but he was indifferent to it.

People said he would not talk but this was a foolish legend spun out of his saying that his real teaching was in silence. Sometimes he would talk freely. Often also he would sit silent.

In every way he liked simplicity. He preferred to sit on the floor but was induced to use a couch. He would never, if he could help it, allow preference to be shown to him. For instance, in the dining hall he was adamant on this point. Even if some tonic was brought for him he would refuse it unless it was supplied to all. "If it is good for me then it must be good for them too," he would say.

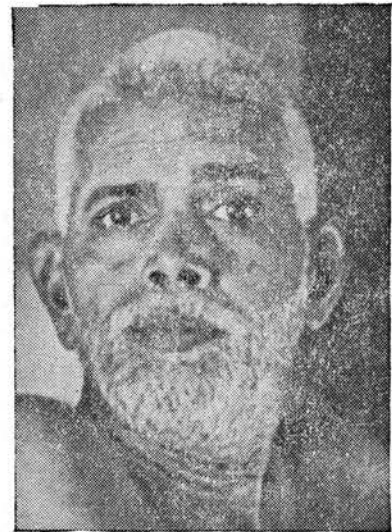
* For a note on whom see our 'Ashram Bulletin' of January 1964.

THE VEDANTIC TRADITION IN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

[From an article published in the 1946 Golden Jubilee Souvenir by the late SRI SWAMI SIDDHESWARANANDA who was for many years head of the French branch of the Ramakrishna Mission at Gretz, near Paris.]

Sri Ramana Maharshi represents the pure tradition in Advaita Vedanta. In this article I propose to examine certain aspects of the life and teachings of Maharshi that have appealed to me as verifications of Vedantic truths.

In Vedanta there is a theistic as well as a non-theistic tradition and these refer to two aspects of reality. The first treats of Saguna or Qualified Brahman and the second of Nirguna or Unqualified Brahman. The Bhagavad Gita says that the path of the Unconditioned is not for the aspirant who is still bound by the 'I-am-the-body' idea (XII. 5). Maharshi transcended the body-idea on the very day he made the investigation into the nature of the Self. His spiritual career is of particular interest to the student of Vedanta, for an example like his is rare to find. He is one who acceded to the Nirguna ideal without passing through the preliminary stages of discipline where much importance is given to devotion and worship. In history the most brilliant example of the same line of research and realization is that of Lord Buddha, though he had to spend long years in meditation before he had the Awakening. We are now above the prejudice handed down through ages where Buddhism and Vedanta in their spiritual appeal were placed one against the other in unrelenting opposition. We now consider Lord Buddha as one of the continuators of the Vedantic tradi-



tion of the Upanishads where the non-theistic ideal was lived and practised.

There are two Vedantic positions in conformity with two grades of seekers aspiring to know the One Ultimate Reality : the less capable consider Brahman as Saguna, the other, higher type consider It as Nirguna. The one is theological and the other philosophical. The two standpoints are not mutually exclusive, for the goal of the two methods is identical, namely to bring the aspirant to the realization of Brahman.

When Maharshi made the investigation 'Who am I?' he had not envisaged this technique or any other. He had not then any theological education. He once told me that at that time he was not even familiar with such terms as 'Brahman' and 'Atman'. He had not the support of any of the accepted theses on the subject. The enquiry was his own and the way he discovered was equally his own. He discovered much later that he had come to the same conclusion that scriptures and the experience of others in the same line had arrived at from time immemorial.

Later on in life, when he came into contact with such classical texts as Drigdrisya-Viveka he instinctively found there was a family likeness to the psychological or rather trans-psy-

chological way that he himself had followed. As Maharshi plunged into the depths of his soul during his analysis of 'Who am I?' he got beyond the plane of doubts; for he had transcended the limitations set by the intellectualizing character of the mind that never permits that disjunction with the name-form complex which is the field of empirical experience. His method has much in common with that of Lord Buddha. When Malunkya asked Buddha questions that did not touch the vital issue involved — that of suffering — the latter replied that one pierced by an arrow would be interested only in plucking it out and not in discussing of what substance it was made, whether it had a poisoned tip, etc.

One does not find in Maharshi the type of bhakti associated with devotional forms; but it can be said that if the way of bhakti brings one to an expression of bounty and love towards all, he is that. His very nature is imbued with love (prem). I should not omit to mention here a scene that I myself have witnessed. At my request he recited certain lines from the composition of the Saint Manikavachakar where the poet speaks of the condition of the soul melted in love: hardly had the Maharshi pronounced a few lines when there was a brilliance in his face. He who rarely expresses in any outward form his inner emotion could not restrain a few silent tears. A slanting ray of the morning sun from the hillside made the scene still more vivid. A peace that passeth all understanding pervaded the whole atmosphere. For more than an hour there was perfect silence.

On one occasion Maharshi told me that what he realized on the first day when he made the Enquiry has ever remained with him. It has neither increased nor decreased. When I asked him why he came all the way to Tiruvannamalai and why he underwent so many hardships which we would characterise as sadhana or quest he only waved his hand, implying "I don't know why all that happen-

ed". Our inquiring minds want explanations and are easily satisfied with some such fiction as destiny or prarabdha, which do not exist for the Jnani. For it is said that the three karmas of the person who realizes Brahman are all dissolved at one stroke. From the point of view of the Ramana Maharshi it must be so.

What impressed me most in reading the characteristics of the Jivanmukta, Realized while still alive, in Viveka-Chudamani were the lines: "He has his mind merged in Brahman; nevertheless he is quite alert but free from the characteristics of the waking state." (v. 429). While staying a few days with the Maharshi these lines often came to my mind. To all outward appearance he very often looked as if he were unconscious; but his mind was ever in such a state of concentration that even during the moments when he appeared to be inert he knew all that was going on in the hall. Once in repeating verses from the Ribhu Gita, old Tenamma made a certain error in pronunciation and, opening his eyes, he gently corrected her. In Drikdrisya-Viveka, in v. 30, there is a fine account of the concentration of a man of Realization "With the disappearance of attachment to the body and with the Realization of the Supreme Self, one experiences samadhi to whatever object the mind is directed."

We often hear it said that many of the devotees of the Maharshi saw him in a state of ecstasy. I do not contradict their interpretation of Maharshi as they saw him. I would like here only to give a certain Vedantic background to his attainment of the sahaja state, which, I think, should not be interpreted in terms of ecstasy. Ecstasy is a religious experience. Ecstasy is attained in the spiritual union with the Godhead. Union is possible only when a difference is conceded between the units that afterwards enter into relation. But the sahaja state is the natural state of the Self when all the superimpositions have been

thrown away, that is, in the language of the Gita, when one becomes "satisfied in the Self alone, by the Self" (11. 55).

Let us see what Shankara has to say with regard to this topic. In the case of a Jnani the text "he is merged in Brahman", as in the mantra in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, should be interpreted, according to Shankara, in a figurative sense. In commenting on the passage, he concludes by saying: "Therefore the Atman by itself has no difference due to bondage or Liberation, Knowledge or ignorance, for it is admitted to be always the same and homogeneous by nature."

From the above statements we should understand that the state of sahaja cannot be equated with the union attained in any particular mystic condition. Whatever may be the mystic value of these transcendental states described in the ecstasies, a Jnani—not denying, of course, the possibilities of these states—remains completely detached from them. For

he knows that every mode of experience, material or mystic, is the same manifestation of Atman and in every aspect of manifestation it is the same Brahman in action. His mind does not yearn for any special kind of experience. He has nothing to achieve, nor has he anything to be achieved through others (see Gita, III. 17). He is the person in whom there will be no tendency at all to proselytise. He has no mission to achieve. According to Shankara in the 'Nirvanashtaka', he alone can say: "I have no death or fear, no distinction of rank or class. I have no father, no mother, no friend, no master nor disciple.¹ I am Absolute Knowledge and Bliss. I am the all-pervading Self."

In the presence of the Maharshi this is indeed the impression that a seeker of the Vedantic tradition gets.

¹ The Maharshi did indeed sometimes say that he had no disciples. Yet he gave instructions and guidance as a Guru does to disciples. It is for those who can to understand.—*Editor*.

SILENT INFLUENCE

By ACHARYASWAMI

It is twenty-eight years since I first visited Sri Ramanasramam. The moment I entered the meditation hall and found myself face to face with Bhagavan I felt a thrill at heart the impression of which is still fresh in my memory. I could at once feel that here was a Saint and Sage of childlike simplicity, perfect renunciation and tremendous spiritual power.

Subsequently I paid a number of visits to that sacred place and every time I returned greatly benefited.

His teaching of Self-Knowledge was in the direct tradition of the great Shankara, but he showed regard and appreciation for all paths and even for all religions and their founders and scriptures. As a result followers of various religions were drawn to him from many parts of the world.

Bhagavan was a teacher of few words. Sometimes he might explain in words but it was his piercing gaze and tremendous silence that made the greatest impact.

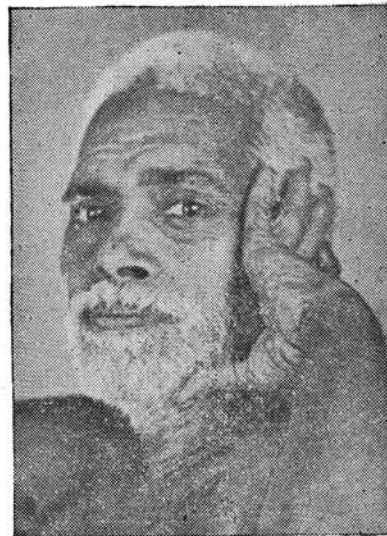
BHAGAVAN'S WRITING

By T. K. S.

To be still and know that 'I am that I am' is the essence of Bhagavan's teaching. He wrote little and what he did was nearly all at somebody's request. The 'Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala', the first and foremost of the 'Five Hymns of Sri Arunachala'¹ appeared in response to the request of his sadhu devotees in the days when they used to go round begging for food before there was an Ashram. They used to walk round singing spiritual songs and the householders would give them food liberally, knowing that it was to be shared with Sri Bhagavan. Knowing this, a few unscrupulous beggars used to pose as Ramana bhaktas and also go round singing. On account of this his bhaktas asked Bhagavan to make a special song for them to sing.

At first he did not respond to their request, but some time later, while they were walking round the Hill, the 108 exquisite, profound verses sprang forth from him spontaneously as a marriage garland for Sri Arunachala. They are the outpouring of a pining soul to its divine Lover. They still remain the solace and delight of his devotees.

Next came the 'Navamani Malai' (Nine Gems). These were born on different occasions but were later strung together like jewels on a string. The first of them explains the dance of the motionless Arunachala, while the second equates the term Arunachala with Sat-chitananda (Being-Consciousness-Bliss). Here is a strange thing : while at other holy centres the Shakti dances while Siva looks on, here the display of the Mother's activities ceases and merges in Siva while he dances as Arunachala.



The 'Dasaka' and 'Ashtaka' (Ten and Eight Verses), which come next, are a group by themselves. The former begins with the word 'karunaiyal' (by Thy Grace). This word kept ringing in Bhagavan's ears, he said. Several times he shook it away, asking what he had to do with it, but still it came back until at last he uttered it. The stream thus started flowed on until the ten superb verses of the hymn had been written. Bhagavan then thought that the flow had worked itself out, but it still continued, although in a different form and with different contents until it had built up the 'Ashtaka' as well. While the 'Dasaka' was more an appeal for Divine Grace, the 'Ashtaka' is a superb and full explanation of the significance of Arunachala, the Absolute Being-Consciousness-Bliss which, as the 'I-I' of our being, transforms itself into all that is. It also shows the way back to the Source, to that state of being which is supreme Peace.

The 'Arunachala Pancharatna' or 'Five Verses to Arunachala', the last of the series, was first composed by Sri Bhagavan in Sanskrit and then translated by him into Tamil. He first casually composed the first stanza. Long afterwards some one showed it to Kavyakanta

¹ Published in our issue of October 1964.

Ganapati Sastri² who urged him to write four more, so that the first would be benedictory, the second on the Divine, and the next three on the three paths of Jnana, Yoga and Bhakti. Thus the five gem-like verses comprise a complete treatise in themselves.

The 'Ulladu Narpadu' (Forty Verses on Reality)¹ and their 'Supplement', a second forty, were written on various occasions, this time under the urging of the poet Muruganar³ and later strung together in a sequence. These were the less devotional, more philosophical work of Bhagavan. The 'Upadesa Saram', (Instruction in Thirty Verses)⁴ was also written on the request of Muruganar.

As long ago as 1927 such of Bhagavan's works as were already written were put together as 'Collected Works' in the original Tamil. The pundits, sitting in the presence of Bhagavan, were talking about the need for a preface to it, all agreeing that one was needed but none undertaking to write it, each one excusing himself and saying that he was not qualified for the task. This went on for some time, each one proposing some one else for the task and that one declining, while Bhagavan sat and watched without saying anything.

Later in the evening I was passing by the hall when Bhagavan looked at me and said, "Why don't you write the preface?"

I was taken aback at the suggestion. "I would venture to if I had Bhagavan's blessing for the task," I said.

Bhagavan said: "Write it and it will come out all right."

So I began writing at dead of night and to my great surprise within three quarters of an hour had got it written out as though driven by some higher power. I changed not a word or comma of it and at two o'clock in the morning took it into the hall and placed it at the feet of Bhagavan. He was pleased with the arrangement of the contents and the simplicity of style. He passed it as satisfactory and asked me to take it away.

But when I had taken up the sheets of paper and gone only a few steps he called me back to show him it again. I had ended up by saying: "It is to be hoped that this work in the form of Bhagavan's Grace will give all who aspire to eternal Truth Liberation through gaining the Supreme Bliss by the removal of all misery." Bhagavan said: "Why have you written 'It is to be hoped'? Why not say: 'It is certain'?" So saying, he took the paper and with his own hands changed 'nambukiren' into 'tinnam'. Thus did he set the seal of his approval on the book, giving it to his devotees as a charter of Liberation in the form of his teaching (upadesa) which leaves no trace of doubt in the mind.

² For an article on whom see our issue of April 1965.

³ For an introduction to whom see our issue of October 1964.

⁴ Published in our issue of January 1965.

I had the pleasure of paying my respects to Ramana Maharshi in 1946 when I was a Minister of the Madras Government. It was a great inspiration to me and I can never forget my visit to him. No wonder that the world remembers him even after his demise. May his memory live for ever in the hearts of many of his devotees.

— V. V. GIRI,
Governor of Mysore State.

AN IMPRESSION OF MAHARSHI SRI RAMANA

By SWAMI MUKTANANDA

In our issue of April 1965 (pp. 108-110) we had an article about the strange miracle-working saint Swami Nityananda. Swami Muktananda was his disciple and is now his successor. In this article he tells us of the impression made on him by a brief visit that he paid to Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi was a great saint who always occupied a high place of reverence in the minds of people. His Divine Personality endeared him to all beings. The word 'Ramana' means 'One who plays' (ramate iti ramana). You may call him 'Atman' or 'Guru': both are synonyms indicating the same divine power of which this universe is a game.

Maharshi Ramana was a divine soul, completely detached, beyond all differences, highly self-restrained and playfully living in the Ocean of transcendental consciousness (the state of Turiyatita). I had the good fortune to be in his company just for three days. Even during that short stay I found that any one entering his presence even for a moment would experience a state of mental peace free from all thoughts. This shows that he was a fully realized soul in a transcendental state, beyond all thoughts. Some believed him to be a Siddha or great Saint and some believed him to be an incarnation of God. From the Vedantic point of view all are one in essence. God Himself appears in the world as Siddha. So Siddha is God and he is the entire universe. Therefore everything is the manifestation of Bhagavan Ramana, the Spirit at play. Any one going even once to Maharshi Ramana felt as if the Maharshi belonged to him. This was because he really belonged to every one and every one to him.

Wearing only a loincloth, he used to sit relaxed on a sofa; but still he looked more



attractive than even the most richly attired princes because, as my revered Gurudev Nityananda used to say, Maharshi Ramana was beyond body-consciousness, beyond all attributes and beyond the dualities. This indicates that he was on a plane far above bodily pain and pleasure, a plane inaccessible to ordinary mortals. Realization of the Self was all important in his teaching. To every one who asked he unhesitatingly gave the advice to meditate on the Self, worship the Self and know the Self. This is because, according to

Vedanta, there is nothing worth knowing, hearing or seeing except one's true Self. One who was and is Ramana is this eternal Truth beyond all time, having neither beginning nor end. Therefore the path in quest of Truth shown by him will remain accessible to all for a long time to come, because he proclaimed absolute Truth which remains unobstructed at all times, in all places and under all conditions. His message appears to some the oldest among the old, to others the newest of the new. Actually it is ancient and modern at the same time because the concepts of old and new are imposed on the Self by others, while it is really ageless and eternal. Some people call the present times a new age, but according to the Maharshi all things, old or new, are

projections of the same eternal Truth. Those who loved the Maharshi got from him the true supreme bliss attained by means of Jnana (Knowledge), Yoga (spiritual discipline) and Bhakti (devotion). This means that from him one got the essence of all spiritual practices. That is why I call him one who plays (*ramate iti ramana*). He is the ever-adorable Great Soul. My adorations to him.

The quarterly magazine published from Sri Ramanasramam by Arthur Osborne has become helpful to aspirants in their spiritual quest and also adds to their knowledge of the Maharshi. It has a beneficial effect on them. I wish all success to Mr. Osborne in his work, which will bring good and happiness to many.

M. S. KAMATH

By 'SEIN'

This seems a fitting occasion to remember one of the older devotees who has long since passed away. M. S. Kamath was editor of the *Madras Sunday Times* which in his day stood on a very high level and was widely respected. He used it particularly for disseminating spiritual teaching, and in the first place for making the Maharshi and his teaching more widely known. He was a man who loved service. People who saw him participating in the traditional feeding of the poor that took place at the Ashram (and still does) on the Jayanti (birth anniversary) of Bhagavan remarked on the devotion and sincerity he showed in serving them. While in Madras he was always ready to help with Ashram work, and especially with the still infant publication department.

The Ashram would write to him for any of its needs and he would immediately attend to it by sending one of his sub-editors to do so, giving it priority over his own professional work. People even used to joke about it at the Ashram, saying that if you wrote to him for a new broomstick (costing an anna or so) he would delegate a sub-editor for the job and lend his car and go to any expense to see that it reached the Ashram the same day. He served Bhagavan and his disciples wholeheartedly and unreservedly. Bhagavan appreciated his spirit of devotion. When informed of his death he actually shed tears and said in a voice choking with emotion : " So Kamath is gone ! Where now shall we find any who will serve us with such sincerity and dedication ? "

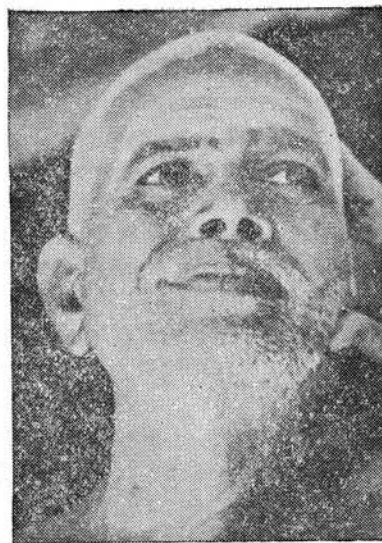
BUDDHA AND RAMANA

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

It is reported that Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was once asked why the Lord Buddha refused to answer questions about the after life, and that he replied : "Perhaps he was more concerned with the real work of guiding men to Self-Realization than with satisfying useless curiosity." It has not been sufficiently remarked how close the teaching of this Vedic Sage born in modern times is to that of the Blessed One. And there could be no better proof that it was the pure essence of Hindu spirituality that the Buddha reaffirmed, leaving aside only the accidentals.

Sri Bhagavan also refused to satisfy men's curiosity and constantly insisted that it was not theoretical understanding that was needed but only enlightenment. When asked : "What shall I be when I die ?", he answered : "Why do you want to know what you will be when you die before you know what you are now ? First find out what you are now." By which he meant : "Seek the deathless, formless Truth of Nirvana, which alone is behind the appearance of this life or any other life." When asked about the nature of God he replied : "Why do you want to know what God is before you know what you are ? First find out what you are." Nay more, he has even been heard to say : "There is no Ishwara." By which he meant : "There is no God apart from the Self which alone is, just as there is no you apart from the Self."

True, he often spoke of God, but that was a concession to ignorance, for so long as the conception of the individual self as a real and



separate being continues, the conception of God as Creator, Master and Lover of that individual self must also continue ; but for those who were willing to understand he always came back to the final truth that there is only the Self. Therefore he said : "There is no God apart from the Self, for if there were he would be a Self-less God, which would be absurd." He also insisted that you have no being apart from the self. The conclusion is obvious, however frightening.

There is, indeed, an apparent contradiction, for Sri Bhagavan proclaimed that there is only Atma whereas Lord Buddha declared that there is no atma ; but such a contradiction between two Masters who both point the way to the Absolute Truth can never be more than verbal. In this case, Sri Bhagavan used the word Atma to mean the Universal Self which is Nirvana, whereas Lord Buddha used it to mean the individual soul. And Sri Bhagavan taught also that there is no individual being, not only in the sense that it will not endure but that is not now ; "Never mind what you will be when you die ; find out what you are now."

The Buddha was very little concerned with theory. His purpose was not to erect either a theology or a social order but simply to show

men the way from suffering to peace. And yet theorists have descended upon his teaching and argued it out into patterns which help neither themselves nor others to escape from the wheel of suffering. It is possible that they will fasten on the teaching of Sri Bhagavan also, but it will not be his real teaching that they expound, for his real teaching was to avoid the inessential and follow the way to Self-realization. "But people do not like even to hear of this Truth, whereas they are eager to know what lies beyond, about heaven and hell and reincarnation. Because people love mystery and not the Truth religions cater to them so as to eventually bring them round to the Self. Whatever be the means adopted, you must at last return to the Self, so why not abide in the Self here and now?" Even more explicitly he said: "Just as it is futile to examine the rubbish that has to be swept up only to be thrown away, it is futile for him who seeks to know the Self if, instead of casting away the *tattvas* that envelop the Self, he sets himself to enumerate them or to examine their qualities." He who says that this Master taught this and that taught the other has not understood their purpose. They are not here to argue but to show men the way from suffering to Blessedness. Even though they may expound the one Truth in different modes and point different paths, the Truth and Goal is the same. But in these two cases there was striking similarity in the language spoken and the Path indicated.

The story of Sri Bhagavan is of the most simple. Born in a poor Brahmin family of South India, he went to a mission school and learnt a little English; and at the age of 17 he passed from darkness to Enlightenment as simply as any adolescent passes from boyhood to manhood. Lying upon his bed, he suddenly pondered: Who am I? I am not this changing body, nor am I these passing thoughts. What then am I? If this body dies shall I still be? And he tried to experience death, to imagine his body dead and carried

to the burning ghat. He lay stiff and held his breath to intensify the experience. There was a momentary intense fear of death, and then death was dead. He was no more the ego, he had awakened into Enlightenment of the Deathless Self. Theory he learnt later, and said: "Yes, that is it", just as a woman to whom a child had been born might read afterwards about childbirth.

He left his family secretly and went to the sacred hill of Arunachala and there he remained for 54 years until, on April 14, 1950, he left the body he had worn. Arrived at Arunachala, he remained immersed in the effulgence of pure Bliss, not conscious of his body, not needing it, not speaking or moving and scarcely eating, so that to onlookers it appeared to be the most intense *tapas*.

It was neither mind nor body that dragged him back to an acceptance of worldly conditions; but pure compassion. Devotees gathered round him, sought to bask in his Grace, craved his guidance. Once again, as in the time of the Tathagata, he saw that men were bewildered and needed guidance, and out of compassion he lived out his long life among us subject to all the conditions of human pain and sickness.

The path he prescribed was strikingly similar to that of the Buddha for he also taught that it is attachment that binds men to their suffering and that by detachment and dispassion they can discard birth and death and suffering and realise their true state of unshadowed Bliss. The weapon that he gave for achieving this was the *vichara*, the question: Who am I? Has some one angered you? Who is angered or offended? Who am I? Does some success flatter you and tempt you to further ambition? Who is pleased or flattered? Who am I? By remembering that I am not the doer, it is possible to live and act in the world in perfect equanimity, without passion or anxiety and without suffering. The image he gave was the bank cashier who

handles lakhs of rupees quite efficiently but without any agitation because he knows that it is not his money. So also it is not you, not the real Self, that is affected by changes of state and fortune.

And yet the *vichara* goes much farther than this for such dispassion would, in itself, be a cold and negative state. As the ego goes out, the Spirit must come in to take its place. And the *vichara* is a positive and terrifically potent weapon to awaken the awareness of Self, the Spirit in man. Bhagavan's instruction was to sit in meditation, concentrating the consciousness in the heart — not the physical heart on the left but the spiritual heart on the right side of the chest, the centre of I-ness in man, the spot to which every man spontaneously and unwittingly points when he says: "You mean me?" or "I did it." And, thus concentrating, ask yourself: "Who am I?" If thoughts arise during the meditation do not follow them but observe them and ask of each thought: "What is it? Whence did it come? And why? And to whom?" And so each thought will lead back to the basic I-thought. And who am I?

There is no mental or verbal answer. There cannot be since the purpose of the meditation is to awaken awareness of the Self that is beyond thought and words. The answer is a vibration of Self-awareness that, after some practice, awakens in the heart. And by effort and practice this is to be made ever more constant and profound. Then it will sing itself awake every time the *vichara* is used in the way first mentioned, and the reply will be blissful awareness of the Self that is untouched by anger or greed or desire, and the dispassion will be radiant not cold. This awareness of the Self must be made constant, and then all that is needed is not to interfere, and the Self will devour the ego.

Like the way and teaching of the Buddha, that of Bhagavan is simple and direct, because it is central. And yet what has happened is

that a new Path has been opened for mankind, a Path adapted to the peculiar conditions of our modern age. There are many today who find it difficult or impossible to withdraw from the world or even to observe the full and detailed obligations of their religion. And Bhagavan has absolved those who turn to him from the need to do so. Not only Hindus but Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Parsis, Jews, all came to him and he never advised any to change from one religion to another. He prescribed the *vichara* for all alike. Nor did he advise any to withdraw from the life of the world. Since the one object is to overcome the I-am-the-doer illusion, how does it help to exchange the thought: "I am a householder" for the thought "I am a monk"? It is necessary to discard both and remember only "I am". Through his tremendous Grace and Power, Bhagavan has opened to mankind again in this age the direct path of Self-enquiry. "The attempt to destroy the ego through ways other than Self-enquiry is like the thief turning policeman to catch the thief that is himself. Self-enquiry 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 the Absolute. Having realized the Self, nothing remains to be known because it is perfect Bliss, it is the All."

APPENDIX

This article was written over fifteen years ago as a chapter in a book called '*Ramana Arunachala*' published by Sri Ramanasramam. After writing it I found that there were Buddhists as unenlightened and intolerant as the followers of any theistic religion who objected to a comparison between the Maharshi and the Buddha. Indeed, one alluded scathingly in a book he wrote to people who could compare a 'mere jivan mukta' with the Buddha. I wish to elucidate this question, not in any spirit of emulation but as a matter of understanding: because understanding is so much of the essence of Buddhism that lack of it seems more shocking than in a personalized and devotional religion. And any one who can use the adjective 'mere' to qualify the

term 'Jivan Mukta' betrays thereby a total lack of understanding.

There is a universe composed of physical and subtle worlds full of animate and inanimate beings of countless variety. Apart from men and physical animals, these comprise gods, spirits and demons. Among the men are Buddhas, Prophets, Avatars, Saints and Sages who bring guidance and teach wisdom. In the form they assume all of these, as the Buddha said, are compound beings and therefore subject to dissolution. Mukti means the waking into realization that all these worlds with all their gods, men and demons, Prophets, Avatars and Buddhas, are a manifestation having no more reality within Nirvana, Dharma Kaya, Essence of Mind, Self or whatever term one may use than a dream

in the mind of the dreamer. A Jivan Mukta is one who has awakened from the dream while still alive on earth. Therefore to say that the Buddha or any one or anything else, divine or human, is greater than he is to say that one part of his dream still exists after he has awakened from it and is more real than he is, which is nonsense.

One could deny that any one but a Buddhist or any one but a Buddha can attain Mukti. That would be mere religious bigotry such as one finds among the blinkered exoterists of every religion; but to speak of a Jivan Mukta and couple it with the adjective 'mere' or suggest that there can be anything beyond simply shows that one does not know what one is talking about.

SIVARAMA REDDIAR

By 'SEIN'

I should like to say a little more about Sivarama Reddiar, whose obituary appeared in our previous issue. Devotees and visitors who bought books at the Ashram bookstall over the years must have noticed the grave, silent, reserved man in attendance there. A few minutes' talk with him was enough to convince one of his unshakable faith in Bhagavan. I knew that he was well versed in Advaita, so I asked him once whether he had any doubt in it.

He said, "For nearly twenty years I had a haunting doubt but it was dispelled by a few words from Bhagavan." He then told me his story.

His whole family were disciples of the saint Achutaswami of Polur, who had visited Bhagavan as far back as 1900 and instantly recognized his supreme station and told his disciples about it. Reddiar was initiated by one of the disciples of Sri Achutaswami into taraka mantra and shadmuki upasana, that is shutting the six doorways of the head and seeing a light between the eyebrows. He practised

this for nearly ten years, sometimes in solitude and sometimes in the family. The result was that he was surrounded by brilliant light and had a feeling of exhilaration. Nevertheless he still had a doubt about the reality of this state.

In 1934, by which time he was already settled at Bhagavan's Ashram, he asked Bhagavan about it. Bhagavan said: "Yes, that is the state of nidhidhyasana. You heard the guru instruct you; you assimilated his teaching, and now you experience it. But this is still on the level of the triputi (the threefold reality of seer-sight-seen). You have to go beyond that and find out who is the 'I' that experiences this light and exhilaration. They only exist for him. Who is he?"

"Even before this I had known in theory about transcending the triputi," Reddiar declared, "but only now did I grasp it as a practical policy and try to put it into practice. And from this moment all doubts disappeared. I took this explanation as my final initiation. From then on I had no more doubts. From then on it became real bliss." Seeing him, one could well believe this.

CHRIST AND RAMANA

By BANNING RICHARDSON

It is a tenet of Hinduism that all spiritual paths lead to the same goal. In a broad sense this is true, but also it hides the truth. For if one has followed one religion or another, one YOGA or another, one has still in the end to go through the process of self-analysis, of inner search and surrender which is best described in our time by Sri Maharshi. In other words the 'goal' is not a goal but a path. When one has learnt everything that one can from one's inherited or acquired religion or spiritual discipline, he has to take this prized possession and cast it to one side — the most painful of acts — and, starting afresh, follow the simple, scientific method that the Saint of Arunachala teaches us.

I have said that this Saint is the greatest contemporary exponent of this age-old teaching. This is as true for the scientific-minded Westerner as it is for the Easterner. Dr. Jung writes: 'The identification of the Self with God will strike the European as shocking. It is a specifically oriental Realization, as expressed in Sri Ramana's utterances.' No doubt such identification is shocking to the Western Christian or other orthodox religionist but, as I have implied, it is consonant with Christ's teachings, if they are approached afresh without prejudice.

If one examines the New Testament carefully one finds that Christ is trying to convince a fanatically monotheistic people that God could inhabit human form for a special purpose, and that the nature of God was not something different from man's but that one could see the image of God in a perfect man. And he proclaimed himself to be a perfect being who had presided over human destiny since the world began. This in itself was an



overwhelming dose for the orthodox Jew to swallow. One would not therefore expect that Christ would go on farther and show that this Perfect Being is latent in every man, because God is in every man. But in fact he does say this by implication, and sometimes directly, throughout his teaching. Take for instance — The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you (Luke, CVII, 20 and 21). In

other words his first lesson was, 'Heaven is within you and it is a spiritual state, not a material place.'

Having made this clear, he goes on to say, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (Mathew, V. 48). Thus he was saying in fact, 'God dwells within you; you can become perfect like Him.' This was a revolutionary teaching, and its full implications are only understood if one comes into touch with the teachings of a Ramakrishna or a Sri Maharshi.

But Christ went even farther than this. In verses 33-36 of the tenth chapter of St. John's Gospel we read — 'Jesus answered them (the Jews): Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?'

'If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the son of God?'

So we might ask today, Do you accuse Sri Maharshi of blasphemy for saying that the True Man within us is God, when Christ was executed on the same charge by part of the Jews 2,000 years ago? Just because the Church has petrified his teaching, as Judaism before his time had petrified the teaching of the Prophets, do you expect those who feel God stirring within them to join the mob who cry 'Blasphemy'?

And to pursue this argument a little farther in order to reveal the basic similarity of Jesus Christ's and Bhagavan Maharshi's teachings, one remembers that Christ answered the rich, young man who came to him and asked, 'Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life', by saying 'Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God' (Mark, X. 18). This, taken with the quotations already mentioned, clearly shows that he believed that God was in all

men and that all men could attain the perfection that he, Christ, himself revealed, through following his path — i.e., actively loving God and one's fellowmen, and knowing that the Kingdom of Heaven is within each one of us.

Finally, this view is reinforced by, 'For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit, your Father which speaketh in you' (Mathew, X. 20). Could anything be clearer than this — that Christ wanted men to realize, as does Sri Maharshi, that God is not something apart from men to be worshipped and feared at a distance, but the only true reality in each man; and that man's work is to discard the false, imaginary ego which he has allowed to deceive him and so to separate him from his true Self, which is God. If that is blasphemy, then let us acknowledge ourselves, as Christ and his followers acknowledged themselves, to be blasphemers in the eyes of the world; for that way lies salvation.

"On reaching the interior of the Heart

through search,

the ego bows its head and falls,

then shines forth the other I, the

Supreme Self,

which is not the ego, but the perfect and
transcendental Being!"

says Sri Maharshi.

But in addition to being in the true line of Spiritual teachings — the line that extends back to Gautama the Buddha and Sri Mahavir of the Jains, in one branch; and to Mohammed, Plotinus, Christ, Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras and Zoroaster in another — I believe Sri Maharshi to be the greatest modern interpreter, and indeed, in a sense, the fulfilment of modern psychology and psycho-analysis and that therefore he must be taken seriously even by Western or Eastern materialists.

Dr. Jung recognized this when he wrote, 'The wisdom and mysticism of the East have, therefore, a very great deal to tell us, provided

they speak in their own inimitable speech . . . The life and teachings of Sri Ramana are not only important for the Indian but also for the Westerner. Not only do they form a record of great human interest but also a warning message to a humanity which threatens to lose itself in the chaos of its unconsciousness and lack of self control.'

Man is unquestionably at the cross roads. He can choose the path of materialistic phantoms, seeking only better social and economic conditions, or he can turn his face towards the old light rising anew in the East, which while

by no means scorning improved conditions of life for the masses, seeks to direct man's inquisitive nature primarily towards the realisation of his own being.

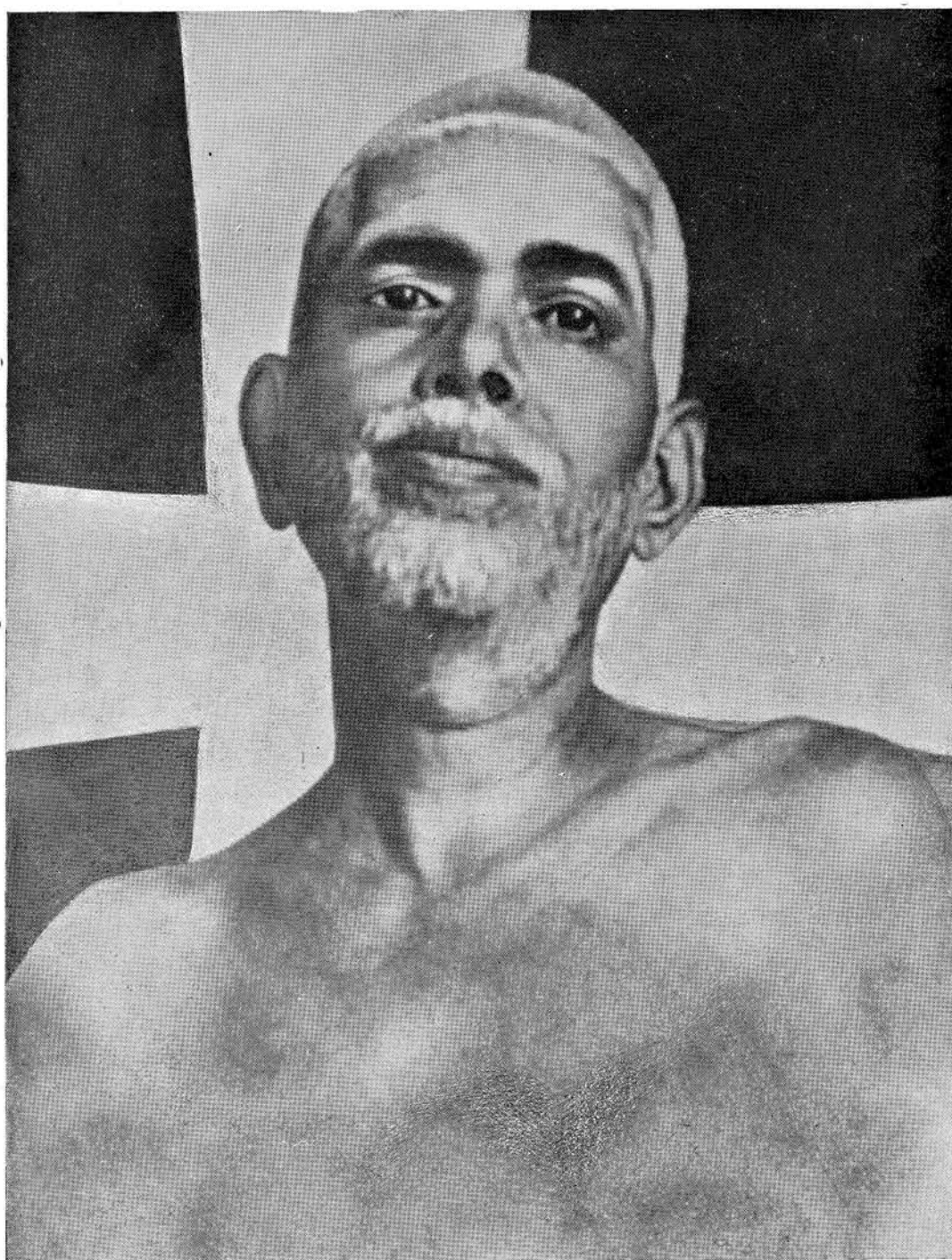
Its aim is the same as Christ's — 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you,' which has been read in countless churches every week for nineteen hundred years. But faithless, worldly-minded mankind has considered this to be merely a pleasant aphorism, not to be taken literally. Now men must take it literally or be prepared for further destruction, and indefinite chaos.

Who am I? Ask yourself the question. The body (*annamayakosa*) and its functions are not 'I'. Going deeper, the mind (*manomayakosa*) and its functions are not 'I'. The next step takes one to the question: Wherefrom do these thoughts arise? The thoughts may be spontaneous, superficial, or analytical. They operate in the mind. Then who is aware of them? The existence of thoughts, their clear conception and operation, become evident to the individual. This analysis leads to the conclusion that the individuality is operative as the cogniser of the existence of thoughts and their sequence. This individuality is the ego, or, as people say, 'I'. *Vijnanamayakosa* (intellect) is only the sheath of the 'I' and not the 'I' itself. Enquiring further, the questions arise: Who is this 'I'? Wherefrom does it come? 'I' was not aware in sleep. Simultaneously with its rise, sleep changes to dream and wakefulness. But I am not concerned with the dream state just now. Who am I now, in the wakeful state? If I originated on waking from sleep, then the 'I' was covered up with ignorance. Such an ignorant 'I' cannot be what the scriptures refer to or the wise affirm. 'I' am beyond even sleep; 'I' must be here and now, and must be what I was all along in sleep and dream also, unaffected by the qualities of these states. 'I' must therefore be the unqualified substratum underlying these three states (after *anandamayakosa* is transcended).

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

In the inmost core, the Heart
Shines as Brahman alone,
As 'I-I', the Self aware.
Enter deep into the Heart
By search for Self, or diving deep,
Or with breath under check.
Thus abide ever in Atman.

— *Sri Ramana Gita*, ch. II, v. 2.



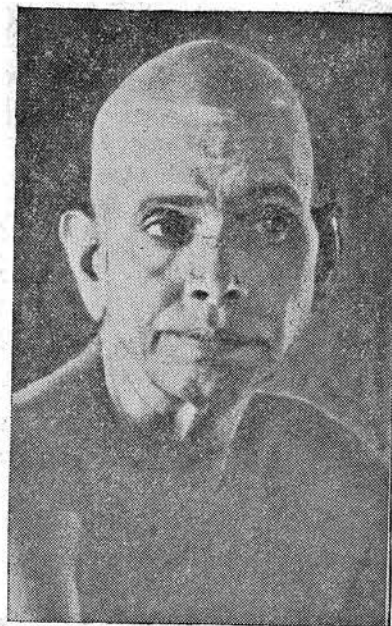
CAN A CHRISTIAN FOLLOW THE MAHARSHI?

By SAGITTARIUS

Can a Christian believe in the Maharshi? Even if he does, can he take him as his Guru and follow his path under his guidance?

First of all, what is meant by 'a Christian'? The term is commonly used in Christendom to mean 'one who believes in Christ', but it is not so used in India. Many a Hindu has belief in and reverence for Christ without ceasing to be a Hindu or claiming to be a Christian. By 'Christian', therefore, he means not merely one who believes in Christ but professes his religion and follows his teaching. This seems the more legitimate meaning. In any case it is the meaning that must be taken here, since it is only for such a one that the question can arise. The Hindu's attitude towards him is one of recognition and appreciation: "The boat you are sailing in is seaworthy and can bring you safely to port, but so can mine. I don't ask you to change over to mine but neither do I see any need to change over to yours." Can a Christian reciprocate? Can he show a like appreciation for non-Christian teachings and teachers? If not, is there any sincerity in the widespread modern demand for a 'dialogue' between the religions or is it just a euphemism for proselytism?

For a Christian the immediate obstacle to reciprocal recognition of any other religion may be Christ's own claim to unicity: "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me."¹ "If you believe in Christ," his retort will be, "it means believing everything he said, including this." The question is, therefore, whether Christ meant this literally and physically or whether it was one of the cryptic sayings



which puzzled his listeners and have continued to puzzle many of his followers ever since.

If it is understood physically and literally Christianity is *ipso facto* degraded to the level of phenomenology. Just something that once happened. When St. Paul spoke of "the Christ in you" he was according to their interpretation, indulging in mere poetic fancy. Christ is not within you, he was a separate individual outside you. There is no universality. Salvation is located in time and space.

The Christian mystic Angelus Silesius proclaimed the opposite, the higher point of view when he said: "Christ may be born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but if he be not born anew within your own heart you remain eternally forlorn." It is this inner Christ, the universal, formless, bodiless Christ, who is the 'Word', the 'only Son of God', who is unique, 'the way, the truth and the life', who is the only way by which one can come to God. With this understanding of 'Christ' the claim to unicity becomes a universal doctrinal statement. It no longer means: "This teacher is authentic and all others, past and

¹ St. John, XIV, 6.

future, are spurious." It no longer ties the hands of God. It means : "The Spirit is One." In this sense it must be true, for how can the Spirit be other than One? In however many forms the Spirit may descend into the heart of man or become incarnate for the good of mankind, it is still the same Spirit, still the "only begotten son of God". Even humanly there is only one King Lear though many actors may play his part on the stage.

The right understanding of such sayings of Christ's depends on the meaning given to the word 'I'. Christ said : "I and my Father are One." He also said, "The Father is greater than me." On the face of it the two sayings are contradictory, but only if the word 'I' or 'me' is given the same meaning in both. It obviously should not be. The 'I' who is One with the Father is the universal Self, the 'I' of every man born, if only he knew it. If it were not it would not be universal but only one among many. The 'me' who is less than the Father is the phenomenal and individual Jesus-self born in a certain time and place, equipped with a certain temperament, endowed with certain human characteristics. The Maharshi's instruction was to discover the universal 'I' as the reality of oneself. But this implies discovering the unreality of the individual characteristics of mind, body and circumstance with which it is overgrown. The modern Christian mystic Joel Goldsmith says : "However, when you have transcended mind and thought, it is then that both mind and body are governed and controlled by the 'I' that is God."²

Therefore a Christian who understands the universal implication of the word 'I' can, without falling into the facile attitude of "all religions are the same", suspend judgement on other religions, recognizing merely that the 'I' which was embodied in full consciousness in Christ and unconsciously in most men may have been fully conscious in other embodiments also.

If he does not want to suspend judgement, he can of course study other religions from their own viewpoint, as set forth by their own exponents, without the idea at the back of his mind that he must somehow prove them wrong. Their viewpoint may differ from the Christian : one mountain path may veer west and another east ; they may cross and recross, but that does not prevent them both winding in the end to the summit.

Or he can simply look for evidence of true saints and sages in any religion, remembering Christ's saying that by their fruit ye shall know them. A path that leads to the goal must go the right way, whether it is the way you have been taught to go or not. The saint or sage is the end-product of religion. A religion that can produce them is *ipso facto* one that can supply what is required of it. To criticise its theory when it shows itself sound in practice would be futile.

However, our question was not only whether a Christian can believe in the Maharshi but whether he can follow him. A Christian may recognize a Hindu or Muslim saint as genuine but that does not mean that he can follow them. You can't be both a Christian and a Muslim or Hindu at the same time. Two mountain paths may both reach the summit, but if they run different ways you must choose which one to follow ; you can't follow both.

With the Maharshi, however, this practical difficulty does not arise because he was not a Hindu. He was not a Hindu in his path or his state or his teaching, and therefore the question of the validity of Hinduism has nothing to do with the question of the possibility of following him. Realization descended on him when he was a lad of sixteen through a spontaneous act of Self-enquiry. There was nothing specifically Hindu about it.³ In speak-

² *The Thunder of Silence*, p. 85, Allen & Unwin.

³ For his own description of it see '*Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*', p. 18-19, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

ing about it later he said : " I had read no books except the Periapuranam,⁴ the Bible⁵ and bits of Tayumanavar⁶ or Tevaram. My conception of Ishvara (God) was similar to that to be found in the Puranas (myths and chronicles) ; I had never heard of Brahman (the Absolute), samsara (manifestation) and so forth. I did not yet know that there was an Essence or Impersonal Real underlying everything and that Ishvara and I were both identical with It. Later, at Tiruvannamalai, as I listened to the Ribhu Gita and other sacred books, I learnt all this and found that the books were analysing and naming what I had felt intuitively without analysis or name."⁷

So also his final state was not specifically Hindu ; for the Hindus recognize one who has attained the final perfection of constant conscious Identity with the Universal Self as being beyond all social and religious categories : outside the castes, neither householder nor sannyasin, above the social order, belonging to no specific religion but at the source of them all.

The same freedom from forms showed in his teaching. After having attained Realization he read Hindu doctrine and might expound it in full technical detail, with quotations from the scriptures, to such Hindus as required technicalities, but to those who could understand simplicity and to foreign seekers his replies were simple, direct and universal : " Ask yourself ' Who am I ? '. Seek the true Self of you. Abide as that Self which you eternally are. " Be still and know that I am God." " It is not a question of becoming but being. Just be." Because utterly simple and direct, his teaching was universal, not the exclusive approach of any one religion.

However, another kind of doubt might arise. " I understand intellectually that the Self is One and that I am identical with that One. I admit that, not having realized this Identity, I need the aid of an apparently outer and separate person to enable me to do so. But

since for me this intermediary, this personification of the Impersonal, is Christ, can it be at the same time the Maharshi ? " This is a question which requires delicate handling. In the first place, it recognizes that the Absolute, Nameless, Impersonal Formless Self is One. Therefore the differences between various personifications of this One can only be formal, phenomenal, superficial, as the Maharshi indicated when he said, " The Sat-Guru is One." The sadhaka who is floundering in the phenomenal world and struggling to climb out of it may well find that he needs the aid of such a personification, but, even though he recognizes that both are personifications of the same One, can he follow the tradition laid down by one while seeking the aid and protection of another ?

In the same religion he certainly can. Not only that, but it is normal and usual to. A Hindu may strive through invocation of the Name of Rama or Krishna or both while dependent on the support of a living Guru. Many Buddhists have sought to attain the goal set for them by the Buddha by the Grace of one who had done so. Christian and Sufi seekers have also sought the guidance of a Saint. The benefit of this is due to the phenomenal power or what the Hindus would call the ' saguna aspect ' of a Master. In his nirguna, quality-less or impersonal aspect he is formless and One with the Absolute ; therefore it is through his formal or qualified aspect that contact is established with the psychosomatic system, the body-mind complex, of the aspirant. This is obvious so long as the Master himself wears a body. In cases like that of Christ or the Maharshi where he still remains a guide after shedding the body this saguna aspect still continues, though only in its more subtle form. Incidentally this explains the importance of Christ's Resurrection and his

⁴ A book of the lives of Tamil saints.

⁵ He went to an American Mission School.

⁶ A Tamil Poet-Saint.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 6. 23-24.

promise to return. Even the saguna aspect of a Master, that is his subtle form, transcends time and space and it might therefore be argued that the guidance of the most ancient and distant Master the world has ever known should be as potent as that of one who still treads the earth to-day; but in fact it is not so. Spiritual influences are to some extent maintained by the ardour of those who receive and transmit them and dissipated by their tepidity. The radiance or vibration of the Master's influence may diminish in potency. A contemporary or recent Master may, therefore, give powerful aid in following one more

distant. This has normally been so. It is so to-day. The invisible support of the Maharshi is a tremendous power to be tapped by those who seek.

As I have already said, it would not be a simple matter to tap this phenomenal power of a Master in a case where the technicalities of the path he prescribed clashed with those of the path already being followed, and this would in most cases rule out a Guru from a different religion to one's own. But the simplicity and universality of the Maharshi's path is such that it has no technicalities and therefore clashes with no religion.

Sri Ramana Maharshi never went to the people. The people went to him, particularly those who were called. No person who had a yearning for the higher truth and sought after higher values failed to go to him. He was like the sun diffusing its rays of light all round. Those who were open received his light and his grace and were set moving on the path of Truth-Realization. He spoke very little but his very look dissolved all doubts and removed all confusion. The mind in his presence used to attain a gradual stillness, all the waves of thought fading out, leaving behind a serene quiet. This rush of quietness was commonly experienced. It used to be particularly prominent during the meditation hour in the evening when Sri Maharshi used to sit in majestic repose, his eyes emitting grace and light.

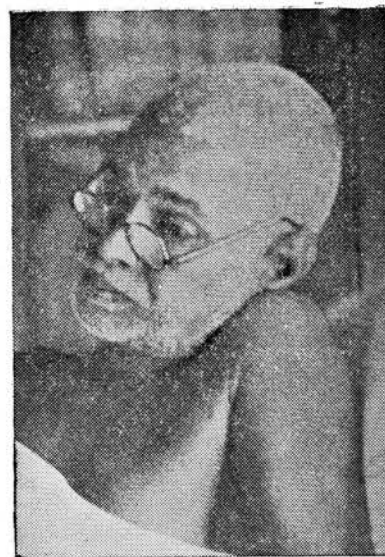
It is rather difficult for me to say anything more about this. Spiritual experiences, even if they are intense and continuous, are not capable of precise description. The influence that they exercise on the outlook and character of the individual and the great new turn that they give to one's life alone count. I have had the unique privilege of paying respect at the feet of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Every time I went to him I returned stronger and with a deeper faith in the validity of the truths embedded in our scriptures. I cannot say in what particular way I have been influenced by Sri Maharshi. But the impulsion to serve God and man got strengthened every time I went into his presence.

— M. BHAKTAVATSALAM,
Chief Minister of Madras.

SHANKARA AND RAMANA

By DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

That there is no difference whatsoever between the teachings of Bhagavatpada Shankara and those of Bhagavan Sri Ramana will be evident to anyone who has any acquaintance with the writings of these two Great Masters. Advaita experience is what they teach, and not any system of philosophy or school of thought. It is only when Advaita is wrongly assumed to be a system among systems of philosophy that it would appear that Ramana's teachings could not be contained within Advaita. Sri B. V. Narasimhaswamy makes the following remarks in Chapter xiii of his biography of Bhagavan, *Self Realisation*: "When the intellect gives place to intuition, there is no difference in the ultimate realisation, be it that of an Advaitin, Dvaitin, or Visishtadvaitin, a Saivite or Sakta. The works dealt with by him (i.e. Bhagavan Ramana) by way of translation into Tamil or adaptation are, however, of the Advaitic school". The assumption here seems to be that Advaita is a school co-ordinate with Dvaita, etc. But, then, why did Bhagavan select Advaita works for translation into Tamil? The reason obviously is that Advaita, according to him, does not stand for any limited or partial perspective, but for the plenary truth which includes and transcends all the pluralistic and quasi-pluralistic formulations of it. When Sri Kapali Sastri seeks to distinguish Ramana's teaching from Shankara's in his Commentary on *Sad-darshanam* (Asramam Publication, 1931, p. 17),



he does so because of the wrong assumption already referred to. The same is the case with the statement made by 'Who' in his Tamil commentary on Ramana's *Ulladu Narpadu* (Asramam Publication, 1950, p. 3) that the teaching contained in the *Ulladu Narpadu* is meant only for the followers of Advaita.

In order to understand the teachings of Ramana and Shankara, it is very essential to remember that Advaita is not a sectarian doctrine. Advaita is the culmination of all religious sects and philosophical schools. It is the common end of all philosophical endeavour and religious practice. The pluralistic systems are opposed to one another; and they labour under the misconception that Advaita is opposed to them. But Advaita has no quarrel with the schools of pluralism, for the principle underlying it is non-quarrel. In his *Mandukya-karika*, Gaudapada, the guru of the guru of Shankara, observes that the dualists who obstinately cling to their respective views contradict one another, whereas the Advaitin has no conflict with any of them. As non-duality

In this article the distinguished author, one of the leading philosophical exponents of the philosophy of Advaita in the world today, (for a note on whom see p. 198 of our issue of Oct. 1964) is speaking from the doctrinal viewpoint. When it comes to methodology, however, there is a vast difference between Sri Shankara and Sri Ramana, the method taught by the former, largely based on the Mahavakyas, being strictly orthodox, while that enjoined by Sri Ramana is open not only to non-Brahmins but even to non-Hindus.

is the supreme truth, duality is to be regarded as a variant thereof; the dualists see duality both in the Absolute and in the relative phenomena; but non-duality is not in conflict with the dualistic position. Commenting on Gaudapada's teaching, Shankara says that there is no conflict between Advaita and Dvaita, even as there could be no strife between one's organism as a whole and its parts. Advaita, in short, stands for the highest truth which is free from all disputations (*avivāda*). What is true of the philosophical systems *vis-a-vis* Advaita is true also of the religious cults. To quote Swami Vivekananda, "A peculiarity of Advaita is that from its very start it is non-destructive. This is another glory, the boldness to preach: 'Do not disturb the faith of any, even of those who through ignorance have attached themselves to lower forms of worship'. That is what it says, do not disturb, but help every one to get higher and higher. . . . This idea is not clearly found in any religious system. They are all parts equally struggling to attain the whole. The existence of the part is only for this. So, from the very first, Advaita had no antagonism with the various sects existing in India."

It is interesting to note in this connection that the traditions relating to Shankara's life are unanimous in saying that the great Acharya established on secure foundations the six major faiths constituting Hinduism. In a work called the *Jivanmuktanandalahari*, Shankara declares that the one who has realised the truth of non-duality gets along with the followers of the different faiths with perfect equanimity, impartiality and understanding.

The critic may ask: Does not Shankara criticise in his extensive writings the doctrines of the pluralistic schools and the dogmas of religious cults? The answer is simple. When Shankara points out the defects and inconsistencies in the various schools and cults, he does so not in the spirit of a partisan, but with a view to make them whole. As we have pointed out already, partisanship is incom-

patible with Advaita. The remark that the Advaitin has no position of his own is quite pertinent. He is not interested in building up a system of thought; his main interest is in pointing the direction by following which one will eventually come to realise the plenary truth. The philosophical schools and the faiths, whatever be their composition and character, can be of help if they are made to free themselves, as far as possible, from their dogmatisms and fanaticisms. The function of criticism performed by Advaita teachers should be viewed, not as a destructive procedure, but as a constructive help. This they are enabled to do because Advaita is not a closed system or a circumscribed set of beliefs. When the term *Advaita* is translated as *non-dual-ism*, it is worthwhile to remember, the negative prefix — *non* applies not only to *dual* but also to *ism*. Advaita is not an *ism*; in fact, even the expression *Advaita* is an approximation to the truth, not the truth itself.

As an illustration of the popular misconception about Shankara's teaching and Bhagavan Ramana's acceptance of the all-comprehensive truth of Advaita, we may cite a reported conversation between a questioner and Bhagavan. The questioner asked: "The Supreme Spirit (*Brahman*) is Real. The world (*jagat*) is illusion' is the stock phrase of Sri Shankaracharya. Yet others say, 'The world is reality'. Which is true?" In his reply, Bhagavan said that both the statements are true, but at different levels of understanding and experience, which is exactly the teaching of Shankara's Advaita. The absolute truth is that the supreme Spirit is non-dual. As Bhagavan put it, "There is only Being in Self-realization, and nothing but Being". But, he adds, the term 'reality' is used also in a different sense and is applied loosely by some thinkers to objects. It is as a concession to them that degrees of reality are recognised in Advaita: apparent reality (*pratibhasika satya*) belongs to the contents of dreams and illusions; empirical reality (*vyavaharika satya*),

to the things of the objective world in the waking state; the absolute reality (*paramarthika satya*) is, of course, the non-dual Self. When one has realised the absolute Truth, it will be evident, there is no sense in talking about degrees of truth or of reality (see 'Talks', 1958, pp. 49-50).

On another occasion, Bhagavan explained to a devotee the three modes of approach to the metaphysical problem of creation, as comprehended in Advaita. (1) The highest mode is the *ajativada* as formulated by Gaudapada. According to this mode, there is no creation, no dissolution, no bondage, no release, no one striving for release. 'Nothing whatever is born' is the truth. (2) The next mode is the *drishti-srishti-vada*, according to which creation is simultaneous, as in dreams. (3) the last mode is *srishti-drishti-vada* which holds that there is creation in stages or graded creation ('Talks', p. 421). The difference between the second and the third mode is explained very clearly by Bhagavan in the *Vichara Sangraham (Self-Enquiry)* thus: the theory of creation in sequence is taught for the sake of the low grade of aspirants, who have just begun to enquire, but who are still obsessed with the idea that the world is real. For the benefit of those aspirants who have progressed to the higher levels, the other view of simultaneous creation is presented. According to this view, the world arose like a dream on account of one's own thoughts induced by the defect of not knowing oneself as the non-dual Spirit (Brahman). To those who have gained the plenary realisation there is no problem, at all, of having to explain creation, for there is no creation. And so, this standpoint — if standpoint it may be called — is that of *ajati* (non-birth, non-creation). The term *ajati* also is but an approximation to the truth, and not the truth itself. As Gaudapada points out in the *Mandukya-karika* (iv, 74) *ajati* is meaningful only so long as *jati* carries meaning; and, that is so in the empirical world alone. The absolute truth is that no word can design-

nate or describe the Self. The purpose of the expression '*ajati*' is only to make us understand that the Self is not what appears to be born. Here again one cannot but be struck by the complete identity of the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana and Acharya Gaudapada.

We may refer to another piece of conversation which shows that Ramana's experience is Advaita-experience, and that the great sage arrived at this experience without any formal study of even Advaita texts.

The conversation is between the well-known French Orientalist, Olivier Lacombe and Bhagavan:

O.L.: Is Maharshi's teaching the same as Shankara's?

Bhagavan: Maharshi's teaching is only an expression of his own experience and realization. Others find that it tallies with Sri Shankara's.

O. L.: Quite so. Can it be put in other ways to express the same realization?

Bhagavan: A realised person will use his own language. *Silence* is the best language (Talks, p. 182).

Not only has Bhagavan Ramana implicitly recognised the identity of his teaching with that of Shankara, but also he has explicitly stated that there is complete identity. Bhagavan has rendered into Tamil Shankara's *Hymn to Dakshinamurti*, *Atma-bodha*, *Vivekachudamani*, and *Drig-drishya-viveka*. In the invocatory verses which he has added to the first two of the above-mentioned works, Bhagavan declares: (1) "That Shankara who came as Dakshinamurti to grant peace to the great ascetics, who revealed his true state of silence, and who has expounded the nature of the Self in this Hymn, abides in me." (2) "Is the teacher Shankara, who grants the knowledge of the Self, other than the Self? Remaining in my heart as the Self, he who utters the Tamil today — who is he other than that one himself?"

The original works of Bhagavan are veritable gems of Advaita literature. The two

prose-pieces, "Self-Enquiry" and "Who am I?" which were composed at the beginning of the present century, set forth the technique of enquiry into the nature of the Self, which is the direct means to release, according to Advaita. The *Ulladu Narpadu*, along with its Supplement, expounds the truth of non-duality the Self that is unconditioned pure existence, and also the disciplines that lead to the realisation of the Self. The same teaching is the theme of the *Upadesa Saram* which ends by declaring that real austerity (*tapas*) is the realization of That which remains as the sub-

strate when all trace of 'I' is gone. The purport of even the devotional hymns to Arunachala sung by Bhagavan, as of the many *stotras* of Shankara, is Advaita-Experience.

Obeisance to the succession of gurus, beginning with the Lord Siva, having Shankara in the middle, and extending so far upto Ramana in our own day!

*sadasiva-samarambham
Shankaracharya-madhyamam,
ramanacharya-paryantam
vande guru-paramparam.*

Sani	Kuja		Chandra Kethu
Guru	RASI		Mandi
Ravi Rahu	Budha Sukra	Lagna	

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Born at TIRUCHUZH near MADURAI
on 29/30 - 12 - 1879 at 1.00 A. M. (L. M. T.)
& 1.17 A. M. (I. S. T.)
Long. 78°-15' East. Lat. 9°-50' North.
Ayanamsa 9—20°-43'.

Guru	Sani	Kuja	
	BHAVA		Chandra Kethu
Rahu Ravi			Mandi
Budha	Sukra	Lagna	

Guru		Kethu	Chandra
Budha	NAVAMSA		Sukra
Mandi			
Sani	Rahu Kuja	Lagna	Ravi

Punarvasu 3rd pada : Balance of GURU Dasa at Birth 4 years, 1 m, 20 days.

The above is the horoscope of Sri Ramana in Hindu style. His horoscope in Western style appears on page 60 of this issue. Astrologers are invited to send in their comments on it.

SIVANANDALAHARI

It would be logical to say that the paths of knowledge and devotion are incompatible, since Knowledge implies realization of the non-dual Self while devotion requires two—one to worship and One to be worshipped. However, logic does not always work. Human nature is not simple, and the same mind which, holding itself in abeyance, feels non-dual Identity to be all may also melt in devotion before Him who is that All. A sign of this is that Shankara Acharya, the classical Advaitin and Vedantist, also composed devotional songs; another is that Ramana Maharshi, the great Advaitin of modern times, wrote in his 'Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala'¹ one of the greatest allegorical love-poems of all times and all religions.

He also selected ten verses from Sri Shankara's 'Hymn to Siva', of which Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan's translation and commentary is reviewed in our July 1964 issue, and arranged them in an order which seemed to him effective. These ten verses are given below, headed by their serial numbers in the original poem.

61

When the flow of the mind reaches the lotus-feet of the Lord of soul² and remains there always, just as the seeds of the *ankola* tree adhere to the tree, the needle to the magnet, the chaste wife to her husband and the river to the ocean, that is called devotion.

76

Devotion, like the cloud in the sky of the great Lord, emits a shower of bliss; he whose mind is a lake to be filled by this reaps the full harvest of life: he and he alone.

83

Not the slightest happiness accrues from worshipping gods who are born and die; of this there is no doubt. They who here adore the birthless, eternal Lord of Parvati² are the fortunate ones: they it is who attain supreme happiness.

6

Will pot or lump of clay, will atom, whether of smoke, fire or mountain, whether of cloth or thread,³ will any of these serve as a bulwark against dread death? You only strain your throat unnecessarily by logic-chopping. Hasten, you who are wise, to worship the lotus-feet of Sambhu² and attain the supreme happiness.

65

Oh Consort of Parvati²! what is impossible for him whose mind worships Thy feet? At

sight of him Yama flees, fearing another kick in the chest⁴; the gods wave lamps consisting of the flaming gems set in their crowns, and,⁵ the bride, clasps him in unyielding embrace.

10

Whether one is born a man or a god, a wild animal of the mountain or forest, a mosquito, a cow, or a worm, a bird or any other creature, what does it matter in what body, so long as the heart bathes endlessly in the supreme bliss of contemplation of Thy lotus-feet?

12

Tell me, what difference does it make whether one lives in a cave or house or in the open, in a forest or on top of a mountain, in water or in fire? He, Oh Sambhu,² is happy whose mind dwells always at Thy feet; that indeed is yoga and he the supreme yogi.

9

Oh Lord of Uma!² what a fool he is who enters a deep water-tank or a fearful uninhabited forest or roams over a high mountain to gather flowers!⁶ He does not know how to

¹ Quoted in our issue of October 1964.

² A term for Siva.

³ These are conventional terms used in Hindu logic and argument. The meaning is: Will academic philosophy help you in facing death?

⁴ This refers to the myth of Markendeya, a devotee who overcame Yama, the God of death.

⁵ Liberation.

⁶ Flowers to be offered up in worship. The water-tank is included because it is there that lotus flowers would be gathered.

live here in happiness, offering up to Thee the single lotus of his heart.

11

What difference does it make, Oh Lord, whether one be a student, a householder, a renunciate or a homeless wanderer? ⁷ Oh Sambhu, Lord of souls! when one's heart-lotus becomes Thine, Thou becomest his and dost bear the burden of his life.

91

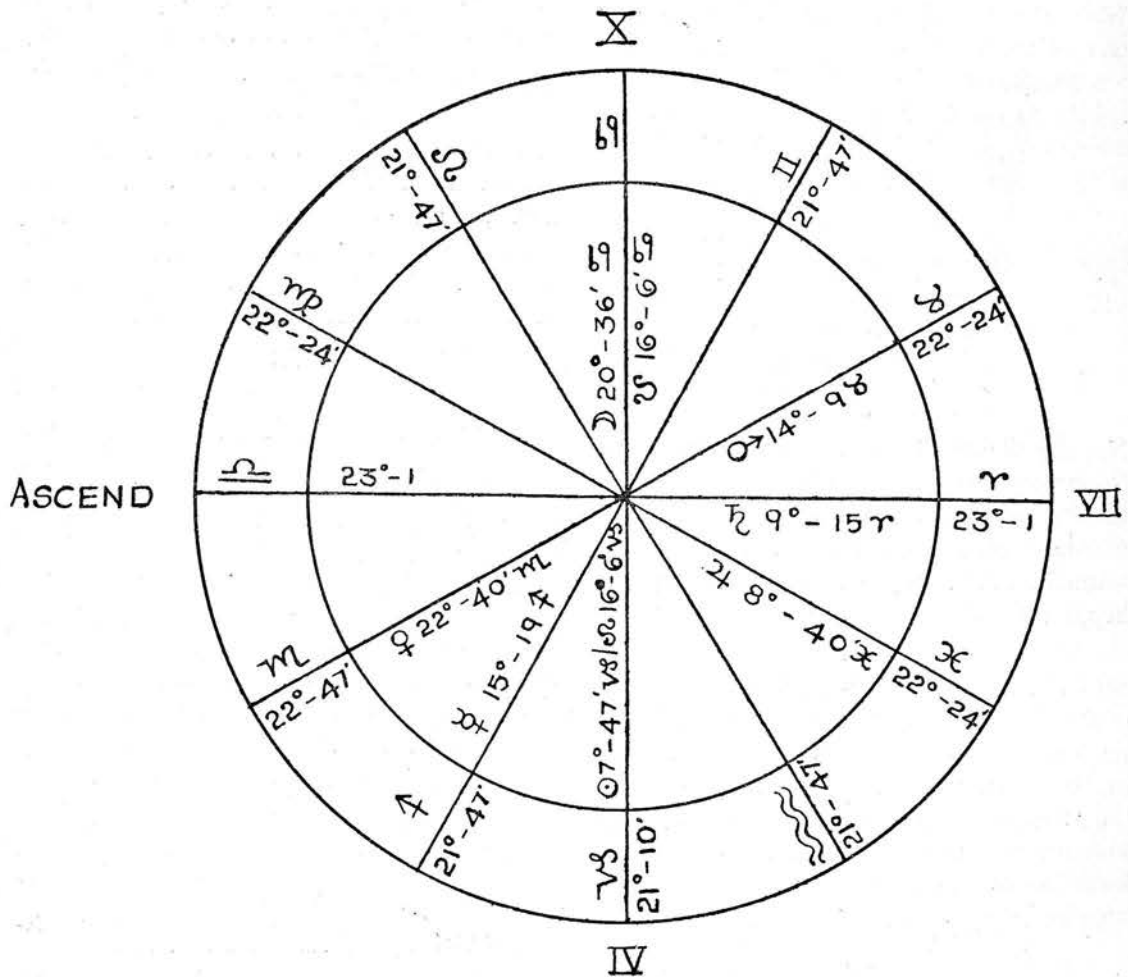
O Crescent-crested Lord, through Thy Grace the beginningless ignorance in the heart has been dispelled and the joy of Knowledge has taken its place. I meditate on and adore Thy lotus-feet, bearers of welfare and bestowers of Liberation.

⁷ These are the four traditional stages of Hindu life, according to the classical model.

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Born on 29/30-12-1879 at 1-00 A.M./L.M.T. (1-17 A.M. I.S.T.) at 78°-15' E—9°-50' N.

[TIRUCHUZH near Madurai, S. India.]



The above is the horoscope of Sri Ramana in Western style. His horoscope in Hindu style appears on page 58 of this issue.

JNANI,¹ PROPHET AND AVATAR²

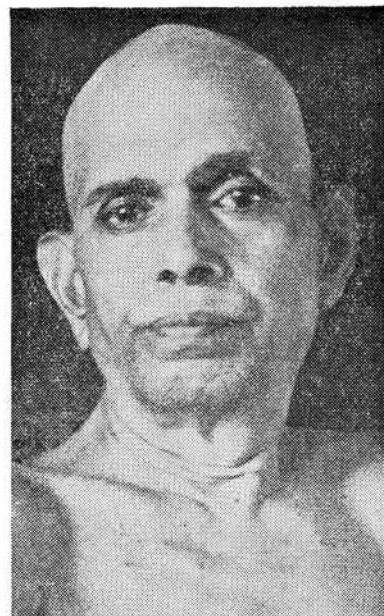
By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

Jnana marga is the 'path of knowledge', by which is meant not theoretical knowledge but pure spiritual understanding. A Jnani is a Man of Knowledge or a Sage in the highest meaning of the term, that is to say one who abides in constant conscious Identity with Universal Being. In Sufi terminology, he is one who is in a state of unbroken realization of *tawhid* or Oneness and *ittihad* or Identity, one who has passed through *fana* or 'extinction' to *fana'l fana*, 'the extinction of extinction' and is established in *baqa* or 'stabilisation'. This is a very rare phenomenon.

An Avatar, as proclaimed in the Hindu tradition, is also a rare phenomenon. The classical enunciation of the doctrine is by Krishna when he says in the Bhagavad Gita : "Whenever dharma is obscured and adharma prevails I manifest myself."³ This implies a threefold distinction between an Avatar and a Jnani, although of course it is to be remembered that an Avatar may be a Jnani and a Jnani an Avatar.

In the first place, an Avatar is regarded not as a human being struggling up towards Enlightenment and finally breaking through the veil of illusion but as a Divine Being assuming the veil temporarily for the welfare of mankind : that is to say not an ascent but a descent. In this respect the doctrine has an affinity with the Christian doctrine of Christ the Saviour, the Tibetan doctrine of Incarnate Buddhas and to some extent, the Mahayana doctrine of Bodhisattvas.

In the second place, the Avatar is, in the highest sense of the word, a functionary. He is a Divine Descent or Incarnation for the specific purpose of sustaining or restoring dharma. A Jnani may or may not perform



any visible function. He may or may not be recognized for what he is. Chuang Tsu often refers to unrecognized Sages. Buddha said of his followers : "There are bhikkhus in this company who are Arahants : having extinguished the corruptions, completed the ascetic life, done what was to be done, laid down their burden, attained their goal, utterly destroyed the fetters of existence, and who are delivered by right insight."⁴ Al Hallaj was crucified for claiming to be what he was, and other Sufis were more restrained, remaining, some of them, prudently inconspicuous. It is noteworthy that the followers of Ramakrishna regard him as an Avatar come to restore a decadent Hinduism. Many of the followers of the Maharshi regard him as an Avatar come to bring the direct path of Self-enquiry to mankind at large, Hindus and others. Nor is this to be dismissed as a posthumous development. In both cases there are ample records of those who held this view during their lifetime.

¹ Pronounced more like Gnyani.—Editor.

² Many writers use the form 'Avatara', but since the final 'a' is not normally pronounced and this is a practical, not an academic journal, we prefer the shorter form.—Editor.

³ IV, 7.

⁴ Karandaka Sutta et alia.

This second distinction may make an Avatar seem more important than a Jnani, especially to people who value action more than being and function more than state. The third distinction, however, restores the balance by showing that the Avatar need not necessarily have the total Realization of the Jnani. He may be an Incarnation of the Cosmic Supreme Being not concerned with the metaphysical Absolute. For the Jnani, it is to be remembered, the entire universe with all its Avatars and the people they come to save is a dream from which he has awakened. The Avatar, being engrossed in his function, need not be in constant awareness of this ultimate truth. Indeed, it might make for greater concentration on his function and therefore greater efficiency if he were not. The Hindus have therefore a conception of 'partial Avatars', as one might call them. In fact, some of them hold, as the modern bhakta Dilip Kumar Roy has declared in his books, that all Avatars are in some way partial and limited except Sri Krishna who is the only complete Avatar. It is noteworthy that on one occasion when the Maharshi was asked whether he was an Avatar or not his answer was simply a rebuke to the questioner for attaching importance rather to function than state, rather to doing than being: "An Avatar is only a manifestation of one aspect of God, whereas a Jnani is God Himself."

The prophet in the Semitic tradition is functionally parallel to the Avatar in the Hindu; but there is a difference. He also is primarily a functionary. He comes, like the Avatar, to purify, restore or re-enunciate religion, but he is known not as an Incarnation or Descent but a *rasool*, 'one sent', that is a messenger. In the dualistic monotheism of Semitic religion there is no room for an openly recognized doctrine of Identity or for an Incarnation. For the same reason, it is unnecessary for the prophet or messenger to be a Jnani, in a state of realized Identity. For him to be so would indeed be bad economy of material and therefore inartistic and inefficient. He would

have to keep his high state and complete knowledge secret from his followers. It is obvious, therefore, that he can do his job better without it.

Christ claimed to be an Incarnation and enunciated the doctrine of Identity — "I and my Father are One". But the Jews rejected him because of it and condemned him as a blasphemer. The Quran speaks of him as a prophet, though it does cryptically allow for a distinction in referring to him alone among the prophets as *Ruhu'llah*, the 'Spirit of God'. It may be that this describes his state while 'prophet' describes his function. In any case, this claim to Identity took Christianity out of the pure Semitic tradition and gave it a certain affinity with Hinduism.

In speaking of Mohammed the Quran retains the traditional Semitic version of the prophet as messenger: "We have sent you a messenger who is one of yourselves to recite our communications to you."⁵ And to Mohammed himself it says: "And the messengers whom We sent before you were only men to whom We granted revelation."⁶

This means that either Mohammed had not Self-realization in its true and ultimate sense of realized Identity with Supreme Being or that he kept it carefully concealed from his followers. The former seems the more likely. The chief reason for saying this is that there are numerous references to Mohammed in the Quran and none of them imply realized Identity, while a number of them do imply its absence. Even apart from that, there are a number of incidents in his life which leave little room for doubt. To take only one of them: when the first of the revelations which were to grow into the Holy Quran came to him he received it as a message through an intermediary, the Angel Gabriel, and was cast into great distress, about which he confided only to his wife, wondering whether in fact it meant that he had been chosen a prophet or

⁵ *Qur'an*, 11, 151.

⁶ *Qur'an*, XXI, 7.

whether it did not come from an evil source. This is a story which carries conviction, even apart from the fact that it comes from Al Amin, 'the Trustworthy', as Mohammed was called even before he became a prophet. It is obviously not play-acting. But it is equally obviously not the reaction of a Realized Man.

And indeed, we have Mohammed's own word for it that he was not a Jnani in the sense that the Maharshi or Buddha or Christ were, that is to say in a constant state of conscious Identity. In a well known hadith he says: "I have a time with Allah during which no angel or inspired prophet is equal to me." This may indicate a state of 'mystic union' in which not even the highest forms of created life can intervene; but in any case, however it may be interpreted, he himself went on to say, with characteristic integrity, that it was not permanent but that at other times he had to make do with the felicity derived from one of his wives.

Through his instrumentality, however, a religion was established and paths were laid down, and there is no reason for doubting that they go the whole way. Some may be inclined to doubt this statement. Indeed, the Editor of *The Mountain Path* declared in a recent editorial that "no one can guide others farther than he has gone himself."⁷ My reply would be that there is a difference between the function of a guru and that of a prophet. The Islamic creed is that there is no god but God and that Mohammed is His messenger. To assert that the message cannot be complete would be a criticism not of the messenger but of God who sent him. It is well known even among non-Muslims that Mohammed did not write or compose the Quran but recited it as revealed to him in a state of trance. It contains no explicit statement of the Supreme Identity; nevertheless there is ample evidence that some of the Sufi saints have attained a state of *baqa* or 'stabilization' in realized Identity. The very doctrine of *baqa* as the completion of

fana or 'extinction' indicates that this was understood as their goal. This explains how it is that some of the Sufi saints have alleged that they have gone beyond the Prophet and that the state of saint is higher than that of prophet. As the statement of the Maharshi quoted earlier in this article indicates it may even (if one uses the more correct term 'Sage' or Jnani instead of 'saint') be higher or more complete than that of Avatar.

A recent writer quotes the great Sufi philosopher Ibn Arabi as refuting this claim. "If a Prophet maketh an utterance which transcendeth the scope of his function as Law-Giver, then he doth so inasmuch as he is a Saint and a Gnostic, for his station as one possessing Gnosis is more universal and perfect than his station as a Messenger or Law-Giver. Thus if thou hearest any man of God say — or if he is reported as saying — that sainthood is higher than prophethood, his meaning is as we have just explained. Or if he say that the Saint is above the Prophet and the Messenger, he is referring to one person, and meaneth that the Messenger is more universal in virtue of his sainthood than in virtue of his apostle-prophethood. He does not mean that those Saints who are followers of the Messenger are higher than him."⁸

If read carefully it will be seen that this is no refutation. Indeed it admits that the station of the Gnostic (Jnani) is more perfect and universal than that of the prophet. This implies that the state of the prophet is not universal or perfect, because if it were nothing could be more so. There is no more perfect than perfect. All that it claims is that a prophet may also be a Jnani and if so is more perfect as such than as prophet. Whether he may be or not, there is certainly, as explained earlier in this article, no need to be, and there is ample evidence, as instanced above, that Mohammed was not.

⁷ July, 1965, p. 145.

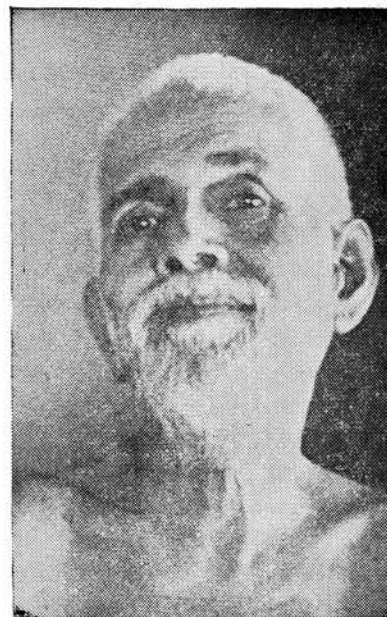
⁸ *A Moslem Saint of the Twentieth Century*, p. 161, by Martin Lings, Allen & Unwin.

INTRODUCING THE MAHARSHI TO POLAND

I met him in a bookshop, opening a book at random — Sri Ramana Maharshi ! For the first time in my life the buying of a book seemed a painfully protracted business. I could scarcely believe that one could buy this book like any other, that it was really for sale. To leave the bookshop quickly with this book in my hand, my own, not to be taken away ! . . .

On my way home I opened the book several times to be sure that I was not dreaming, that the picture of him was as beautiful as when I saw it first. I looked at it sidelong, almost furtively, afraid to frighten away the beauty, to lose it irretrievably. Who was he ?

Others have felt the same : I was not suffering from a hallucination. In her book 'The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi', the Polish devotee Uma Devi writes : "Strange things happen to quite different people coming from different social circles. They need not have mystic leanings or be peculiarly sensitive. A look at Maharshi's picture, however accidental and casual, creates in them an upheaval and a permanent inner change, shallow or deep according to the individual. Hence the innumerable requests for a copy of the picture which finds its way into many homes, offices and workshops. Wherever it goes it exerts its fascination, rationally inexplicable, nevertheless real."



I look at the picture . . . He is so near and so beautiful. What is this light that shines through so many layers ? How can one disbelieve the many stories about the Maharshi, the testimony of people who have seen him with their own eyes, who lived with him for days and months and years ? People of various religions and races — Hindus, Muslims, Christians, some of them simple folk and some highly educated ? Who can express in words the infinite silence, depth and power of his presence ?

In India high value is attached to simple silent abiding in the proximity of a holy man. No questions asked, no philosophical discussions. Sat Sangh, the company of Saints, abiding in the proximity of a Yogi or a Sage, is for an Indian motive enough for long and

Abbreviated from an article written in Polish by Jerzy Cwiernia and published in the Catholic journal 'Kierunki' (Directions). The editor of that journal poses the question : "Why have we decided to publish this article in spite of our disagreement with the author in his statement of the equal value of different religious systems . . . ?" And he answers : "Because we believe in acquainting the European mind with the most essential experiences of a basically spiritual culture." That there can be a Catholic press in Communist Poland and that it can be open to the wisdom of India even though without understanding or approval are alike signs to be welcomed.

arduous pilgrimages.¹ In spiritual life Sat Sangh is the supreme help, the bright light on the path to Truth.

The Rishis and saints are loved and worshipped by the millions because they are living milestones on the path to our real homeland, the kingdom of Truth. They are the Living God in human form, the Gurus who lead men out of darkness . . . The Maharshi is among the greatest in the whole history of India. He was termed a Jnani and a Jivan Mukta in Sanskrit, which denotes spiritual wisdom and Oneness with Truth, merging of consciousness in the changeless and timeless Reality, the actual realization of Christ's commandment : "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

We all know that there is happiness, but what it is we do not know. We do not ask what is suffering : We know that well enough. We think of happiness but do not feel it and therefore do not know it. Not knowing it, we look for it in things and achievements. Sometimes it comes unexpected and fleeting and we cannot hold it or describe it. Sometimes we find a shadow of it in art or beauty. There is a ray of happiness in beauty ; it may be a pointer—but is aesthetic satisfaction happiness ? Is happiness not something infinitely more ?

Do not desires, which often veil beauty, bar the way to happiness also ? For happiness do we not need permanence ? In seeking happiness we often merely seek for the permanence of what is pleasant, the continuity of perishable things : and that is obviously impossible. For thousands of years, in many lands and cultures, in the holy books of India and China, Judaea, Greece and Rome, in various languages and forms, one eternal truth has been proclaimed : the truth about the cause of suffering and the state of happiness free from suffering, whether one call it Tao, Reality, God, Brahman, He Who Is, or Sat-Chit-Ananda, Being-Consciousness-Bliss.

Our civilization is based on things. Things give us pleasure ; things cause us pain. An ever-growing avalanche of things to shun or to pursue seems to be the future of our civilization. In an industrialized society man's place is fixed. What he is and what he has depends on what he does. His relations with others are determined by his position in society. In the Western world in particular the industrial and economic structure is at the root of all individual relations. As a reaction, world improvement seems to be the constant preoccupation of Western man. When a European visited the Maharshi his first question was : "How can I help the world ?" And the Maharshi's answer, so characteristic of his teaching, would be : "Help yourself first ; thereby you will help the world. The world is not separate from you."

We must beware of taking this reply superficially. "What is the greatest good that a man can have ? Happiness born of peace. There can be peace only where storms and turmoils are no more, and these are created by thoughts which clash and struggle in our minds. When the mind—which is the 'me'—is no more there is perfect peace. Man will not find peace or happiness until he quietens the mind and dissolves the 'I', the person he thinks himself to be."

'I', 'mine'—the sense of difference and separation from the rest of the world—the gnawing sense of loneliness, self-centredness and undue importance given to our unique and unrepeatable person represented by the pronoun 'I'—are so ingrained in our Western culture that it is not easy for us to grasp what in actual experience is the meaning of statements such as 'the disappearance of the ego' or 'the extinction of the mind' or 'the destruction of the individuality'. How can anybody's disappearance be a means to his happiness or to his finding the Truth ? When the

¹For many Westerners also who make the long pilgrimage to Arunachala—*Editor*.

person is not there who will know? Who will be happy?

The Maharshi answers: "The I-thought is the first thought that arises in the mind. Unless the I-thought arises no other thought will. Go back to this sense of 'I' and trace it to its source, and you will discover for yourself that it is the first thought to arise and the last to disappear."

Paul Brunton asked the Maharshi: "Can the search for the 'I' be undertaken by everybody?"

To which he replied: "Yes, every one can go within himself ever deeper until all sense of 'I' disappears."

Brunton: Then what remains? Does one become an unconscious or mindless moron?

Maharshi: Far from it. On the contrary, one merges into a consciousness that is immense, immortal, all-wise. All that is needed is to know oneself as one really is and discover one's true Self.

Brunton: But will the sense of an individual 'I' remain?

Maharshi: This sense of an individual I is personal; it depends on brain and body. When a man finds his Self something arises from within and takes charge of him. This something is beyond thought. It is endless, eternal and divine. Some call it the Kingdom of Heaven, some Spirit, some Nirvana. The Hindus call it Mukti, 'Liberation'. Call it what you like, the man to whom it happens does not lose himself but on the contrary finds himself at last. Until a man starts out on this great journey of discovery in search of his highest being, uncertainty, doubt and suffering will be his constant companions. Of what use is all other knowledge when you do not know who you are? Can there be a more worthy enterprise than the search within for the essential? Yet people shun it.

The Maharshi also said: "To know yourself Liberated ask who it is that is not liberated. Knowledge of oneself and one's real

state is Liberation. Only Self-Knowledge gives freedom; nothing else. Constant turning the mind inwards is the quest for the Self (atma-vichara) while its contemplation is dhyana. Outside the Self nothing is of value. To find it you have to forget everything that you have learnt.

Tat Twam Asi — That Thou art; Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma — All is Brahman; Aham Brahmasmi — I am Brahman: these terse sentences contain the summits of India's philosophical teaching and mystic realization, of all her yoga systems and experimental search for the Vast beyond the mind. The same is the essence of the Maharshi's teaching, which is not a set of dogmas or a theory of existence. Thousands of years of inner search, of which the Upanishads are the great witness, all the profundity of Shankara and Patanjali, have found both their full corroboration and their glorious living example in the Maharshi. He teaches the operational way to Truth. He is not interested in mere logical or speculative formulas, nor does he demand faith or rely on revelation: whatever he says he knows from his own experience. We can learn from him through our own experience but never by accumulating and organizing in our minds the many statements he has made.

The Maharshi teaches that in the search for the Self one must have an open mind free from pre-conceived ideas. "All that you may say comes from the mind, which shines with a light borrowed from the Self. Isn't it pride and arrogance for the mind to make statements about that of which it is a very small and limited part? Instead of wasting time on idle speculation devote yourself to the search of truth which dwells eternally within you."

The great truths are not to be proved but experienced. "True knowledge flows from within, not from outside. Realization is not hearsay, it is direct perception." He also says: "The highest knowledge is the direct manifestation of Reality in which knower and known are one."

We read in the Upanishads : "He who knows everything to be his own self, who has seen that all is one, to him there can be no disaster or despair. Nothing can be hidden from him who has seen all in the Self and the Self in all." The Maharshi is the epitome of the Vedas and the Upanishads, of Buddha and Shankara.

The Silence and words of the Sage of Arunachala began to spread out, radiating throughout India and then over the world, finding an ardent response wherever they met a sensitive heart. The number of visitors to the Ashram at the foot of Arunachala steadily increased, drawn from many lands.

In 1882, in Cambridge, Max Mueller said : "If you ask me under what sky the human mind has brought out some of its most glorious qualities, thought deepest on some of life's most important problems and found answers deserving attention on the part of those who know their Plato and Kant by heart — I would

point to India. And were I to ask myself where to seek a corrective for the mental substance of Europe fed exclusively on the products of Greece and Rome and of the little Jewish nation, a corrective that would make our world more humane, more perfectly in tune with our real needs, more free from material pursuits and centred in the eternal again, I would point to India."

These words are more topical to-day than ever. We are living in a world governed by an intellect in pursuit of mental and material values which has already brought down on us two world wars and threatens another, the last one, for there will be no one to wage a fourth.

If our civilization and culture are to survive we must realize fully in thought and action the Maharshi's words : "Whatever one gives to others is in truth given to oneself ; once this is understood how can one refuse anything to another ?"

*A Tribute
from
The Dalai Lama*

The heritage of India is enriched with numberless saints and yogis. Ramana Maharshi represents that tradition and his spiritual greatness is guiding millions of people. Such masters light the path and bring solace to suffering humanity.



Swarg Ashram
Upper Dharmasala
Kangra/Punjab
November 5, 1965.

THE DALAI LAMA

A VISIT FROM GERMANY

Adapted from the German of GERTRUD LIETZ

With light luggage and our two bedding rolls, Anand and I left Bangalore on February 8th. Next morning we arrived at Tiruvannamalai station after one change at Katpadi junction. There we hired a 'jetka', a small horse-cart that took us in about twenty minutes the two and a half miles to the Ashram. We were expected, so some one was waiting for us. Passing through the arched entrance over which 'Sri Ramanasramam' is written in Latin letters, I had the strange feeling of having come home. I had difficulty in restraining my tears, so inexpressible was the feeling of well being.

The entire Ashram with its park-like compound is pervaded by an atmosphere of peace and devotion. It is run by a collateral descendent of the Maharshi, who left the body in 1950. His spiritual heritage is preserved and spread by his Indian and foreign devotees. Visitors come from all over the world to this holy place where mankind's perennial questions, what is the purpose of life and how it is to be realized are answered by the silent guidance and verbal instructions of an Enlightened One of our times.

Ramana Maharshi, the great Rishi of our modern age, taught that in all men Absolute Being is already real. "Every one is in fact the Self and is eternal, but in spite of this every one mistakes the body for his self. It is to dissipate this mistake that Enlightenment is necessary. Enlightenment illuminates both physical light and darkness. It is beyond both. It is neither one nor the other, yet one calls it light because it penetrates both. The nature of light is eternal. It is consciousness and consciousness is the Self and can therefore be perceived by everybody. Nobody is ever



separate from his self. Therefore the Self is in fact already realized. Only (and this is the greatest mystery) men are not aware of this but continue to strive for realization. Actually, realization only consists of freeing oneself from the wrong idea that one is not already realized. It is not anything new that can be gained. Otherwise it would not be eternal and would therefore not be worth seeking."

Again he said: "When the wrong idea 'I am this body' or 'I am not realized' drops away, the higher Consciousness or Self alone remains. Owing to their present state of relative consciousness men call this 'Realization', but the truth is that it exists eternally, here and now."

The mind springs from pure Consciousness. It is made up of thoughts. When free from ego, Being is universal Spirit, which is pure Consciousness. This is what is meant in the Bible by the name 'I am that I am'. But when captured by the ego it is too weak to withstand the affliction of thoughts. Happiness and unhappiness are only modes of thought.

Arthur Osborne, author of several books and editor of *The Mountain Path* has settled

with his wife near the Ashram and is spreading the Maharshi's teaching. Many other writers and visitors, both Indian and Western, are contributing to make the path to Self-realization more widely known. In German there is the work of Heinrich Zimmer, apart from various translations.

The path taught by Ramana Maharshi is Self-enquiry: the question 'Who am I?'. This is the path of knowledge, pure jnana marga. However, he always said that there are two paths: ask yourself 'Who am I?' or surrender completely. And surrender is bhakti marga.¹ These two paths seem to be mutually exclusive, because if one is striving to realize his identity with the universal Self through pure Knowledge it is not possible at the same time to worship a God or Guru. In fact, however, they are found not to be incompatible.

The Maharshi expected his followers to continue their active life in the world and discouraged those who wanted to renounce the world. "Change of environment is no use," he said. "It is the attitude of mind that must be changed, and if that is possible in the solitude of the forest, why not at home? So why change the environment?" Independent of outer forms, the path the Maharshi taught combines and harmonises the paths of knowledge (Jnana), love (bhakti) and unselfish action (karma).

In his lifetime and since his body's death, the Maharshi has helped innumerable seekers, both from India and the West, by the power of his invisible presence, enabling them to find peace and change their attitude of mind, while still performing their duties in life. Free from outer forms, the path he has laid down for us is entirely compatible with the conditions of our modern Western life.

The day we arrived was a Friday and therefore in the evening there was a beautiful Sri Chakra puja lasting three hours.² It was held

in the small Ashram temple built over the shrine of the Maharshi's mother. Despite the fact that no external rites are necessary for following the path of the Maharshi, a year before he left the body he had a Sri Chakra Meru, the supreme yantra, installed and himself instituted its ritual for those who benefit from this sort of more ritualistic path. Despite the great heat he sat for a full hour in the small shrine-room supervising the installation of the granite block with the Sri Chakra engraved on it and with his own hand adjusted the heavy plate of pure gold underneath it.

Attached to the temple is the new meditation hall with a sculpture of the Maharshi and a beautiful polished stone seat that was made for him. This has a more official character. In contrast to it is the Old Hall which is still vibrant with his presence. Here he sat through the years on a simple couch, conveying the message of the One Self more through silence than words. A full length, life-size portrait now rests on the couch where he used to recline.

A chair was placed for me near the Maharshi's shrine while the puja was going on. When it was finished sacred ashes were handed round on a brass tray with burning camphor in the middle of it. I was taken into the temple and felt the solemnity of the puja. Little flames were flickering in small oil lamps. The scent of the flowers offered in puja mingled with that of the incense sticks. The small, dark room was still vibrating from the chanting. At the threshold of the inner shrine I saw the Sri Chakra Meru garlanded with flowers, and in front of it the black polished lingam.

¹ For an explanation of the possibility of following the Maharshi by the way of devotion, read: 'The Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' by A. Devaraja Mudaliar in our issue of October 1964—*Editor*.

² For an explanation of this Sri Chakra and its Puja see the article 'A Chakra at Sri Ramanasramam' by Krishna Bhikshu in our issue of April 1965—*Editor*.

The Sri Chakra Yantra is a diagram of nine interpenetrating triangles of graded sizes : four of them are upright, symbolising the male principle and the human aspirant ; the other five, pointing downwards, symbolise the female principle and the descent of Grace. The whole yantra symbolises Siva-Shakti. The bindu, the minute circle in the centre, stands for the dynamic power in the heart of creation. This is the most perfect yantra of ancient India and is still used as a support for meditation to this day.

The wonderful peace of the Ashram protected by the holy hill, the cleanliness, the punctuality of the daily routine, the well prepared food served three times daily in the dining hall where all sit on the floor in long rows as in Bhagavan's lifetime and, Indian fashion, eat in silence, all this gives one the feeling of being in a house of God. The discreet friendliness of the Ashram residents adds to the impression of peace and hospitality and one can well understand those who wish to settle down there for life. When the Vedas are chanted in the new hall morning and evening one feels a breath of the ancient Vedic traditions from the time of the Rishis.

Just opposite the new hall is a small building where the Maharshi spent his last days of painful illness before giving up the body. All the objects he might have used are kept there as in his lifetime. It is looked after by one of his former attendants. The feeling of his presence there is overpowering.

The Ashram peacocks that he loved, the small striped squirrels that used to come and take nuts from his hand, the dogs and other animals, all contribute to the peaceful atmosphere, so different from our world with its rush and change, its constant crises and its struggles, outer and inner.

The sun had not yet risen when we left the Ashram guest-house and took leave. The summit of the hill was still hidden in a crown of grey morning mist. In the small horse cart that had come for us we rattled along the still almost empty streets past the huge temple in town that we had visited the previous evening. It is an enormous temple with a large stone tank for ablutions, a thousand-pillar hall and eight large towers or gopurams in the usual South Indian style.

It was here that the Maharshi went first when he left home at the age of seventeen, having already spontaneously attained realization. The experience never left him, as it does most to whom it is vouchsafed. As he himself said : "Absorption in the Self continued uninterruptedly from that time on."

I kept my gaze on the still visible temple towers as long as possible. Freed from the morning mist, the peak of Arunachala glowed in the sunlight. Low down on the side of the hill I saw a treed oasis among a cluster of rocks, a cave by which a spring issues forth, Skandashram where the Maharshi lived absorbed in Bliss, mostly in silence, before he came down to the foot of the hill where the present Ashram was built.

Ramana Maharshi was one of the great figures of our times who brought lustre to the country and exercised a beneficent influence on all who came in touch with him. I had often the desire to meet him but had never the privilege of going to his Ashram in his lifetime. I was only destined to go there after he had passed away. I have many friends who knew him and from them I learned of his greatness, his goodness, his spiritual power and moral authority. May his memory live and may he continue to inspire and ennoble us.

— SRI PRAKASA,
former Governor of Madras and Maharashtra.

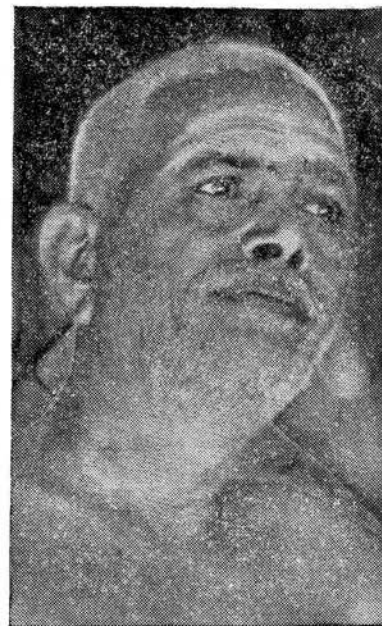
A GERMAN TRANSLATION

By LUCY CORNELSSEN

It was about fifteen years ago that some one first showed me a photograph of Sri Ramana Maharshi. I was deeply impressed by its spiritual radiance. Soon afterwards some one introduced me to the book 'Der Weg zum Selbst' (The Way to the Self) by Heinrich Zimmer expounding the Maharshi's teaching. A sudden impulse came to me to learn Tamil so as to read his writings in the original. The idea seemed fantastic and I put it from me, but some years later, when I was working in a university library, the opportunity came to me and I did in fact start learning Tamil. After a year's work I wrote to the Ashram for the books to see whether I could translate them.

It was a beautiful autumn day when the books arrived. At dusk I put some flowers in front of Bhagavan's photograph, which had its permanent place on my writing desk, arranged the books around it, lit some Indian incense sticks and sat down for meditation. I felt elated and deeply moved, but instead of this turning into ecstasy, as sometimes happens, it turned instead into a deep, cool silence unruffled by thought. I knew Bhagavan's teaching but this was my first experience of the pure Consciousness he speaks of. It was only later that I realized that I had been blessed with the very presence of Bhagavan.

Strange coincidences brought me to Arunachala where I was able to take the help of Tamil devotees in completing my translation.



The Maharshi himself was no longer in the body. It was towards Christmas that I finished my task, which I now felt to have been an order from him. However, knowing something of the German book market, I appreciated that it would be no easy task to find a publisher for it. So sitting in front of the life-size picture of Bhagavan in the old meditation hall I told him that I had finished my task and there was nothing more I could do about it. Having found me to do the writing it was up to him now to find some one to do the publishing.

On Christmas Eve the Ashram received a letter from a German publisher asking for authorisation to bring out a book in German on the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. On looking at the date I found that it was written the very day that I put my problem before Bhagavan. So this is one more example of how the wisdom and guidance of Bhagavan is at work in the world.

All prayers are granted. No thought will ever go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect some time or other. Thought force will never go in vain.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

A Tribute from France

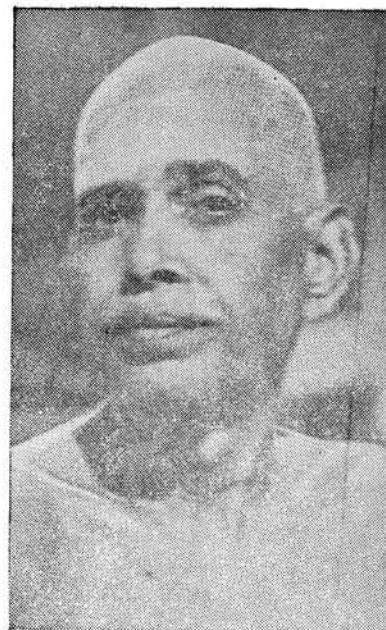
MEDITATION AND ACTION

By HENRI HARTUNG

Just as the members of a family or citizens of a nation draw together in face of a threat or misfortune, so should those who, in our times, are still guided by spiritual motives draw together to face the ever growing materialistic tendencies of the majority of their contemporaries. This need, however, cannot be met by societies or institutions or any formal or official action. What is needed is for those who remain true to the basic reality to seek first their own achievement and then make contact with others who are trying to follow the same path.

To safeguard one's own achievement is, in the beautiful words of Julius Evola, to maintain "an inward direction of Being"; it is to manifest, both in one's quest and one's activity, that transcendent Reality which exists in each one of us and remains "beyond life in the very heart of life".¹ This alone permits of the construction of a being open to higher influences; its negation leaves one cut off from his source and a prey to the uncertainty of his mind and the turmoil of his feelings.

What is needed, therefore, is to recognize other seekers of this transcendent Truth and forge links with them more powerful than those between members of any secular group, however rich or powerful it may appear. It is thus that we have to understand certain 'messages' that appear today amid the general degradation, not necessarily from a traditional organization but even more often from some person who has succeeded in maintaining his transcendent state by living in accordance with



his true Being. The recognition of such a message is like a significant look exchanged between two persons who share the same inner peace beyond social institutions and perhaps even religious creeds.

I recall such an occasion. A feeling of being suddenly outside time. A strange landscape of reddish earth with patches of vivid green rice fields, the plain dotted with hummocks and dominated by a serene mountain towering upwards in a single block. On the dusty road bullock-carts slowly lumber along as though to some distant or unknown goal. Outlined on the horizon at the foot of the mountain are the imposing towers of a vast Hindu temple. I am in Tiruvannamalai at the foot of the sacred mountain of Arunachala, a fragment of the traditional India, hallowed once more today by the presence of the great Sage, Sri Ramana, who by his motionless silence and his mere look penetrates all beings and draws them to him.

That was some fifteen years ago. A young Westerner who had just come through the

¹ 'Chevaucher le Tigre' by Julius Evola.

turmoil of war, I was seeking just such a message of meditation and serenity. Amid the violence and hatred of war and the pettiness and small jealousies of peace I was seeking wisdom incarnate. That was what drew me to India. In Bombay in 1947 I met a Hindu disciple of the Sage. A long railway journey across India, a rickety horse-cart from the station, and at last I found myself in his presence.

The questions I had laboriously prepared no longer seemed important. There was no need for speech, much less discussion : simply to breathe, to live, to be.

In the presence of the Sage it is as though an inner mechanism has been set going which brings about a subtle transformation, as though a spiritual emanation overwhelms you. Day after day I formulate some question, only to find by evening that it has been answered unspoken. I understand as never before that Truth is no accumulation of knowledge but an inner Reality not to be thought but lived.

Will the simplicity of this statement appear suspect to a rational Westerner? First of all let us not forget that it is a rational Westerner who is writing. Furthermore, let us not forget that the only criterion is the reality of our happiness. If the mere presence of the Maharshi is thus illuminating, if it speaks in silence, the task of writing about his message still remains and will necessarily be badly done, for how can one express the Inexpressible?

It is in the nature of man to seek an inner serenity sheltered from the turmoil of life. Why then seek happiness outside oneself? At the very moment when a man seeks happiness he seems to get farther away from it. For most of the time he does not know who he is even while seeking such advantages as he thinks will make him happy. In seeking fictitious good he gets ever farther from what he likes and draws nearer to what he dislikes; he binds himself hand and foot to the endless, infernal round of supply and demand; he

chases everlastingly new 'necessities' while neglecting the one thing needful.

"I shall achieve this, I am against that, I am for the other, I want so and so——" But who is this 'I'?

This is the fundamental question, the key question, that the Maharshi puts. This is his message.

Who am I? In order to realize lasting happiness it is essential to know oneself. The function of certain sages is to remind men of this, to call them back from their efforts to master the world to an effort to master themselves.

Sri Ramana teaches that by a process of reabsorption of the outer into the very centre of being the spiritual man perceives that he is neither a physical body nor an organ of perception (the five senses) or of action (hands, feet, etc) or of vital forces (breathing, digestion) or even mental forces subject to the ebb and flow of an unstable physical being. There remains only that pure Consciousness which is the Self residing in the heart and the sole source not only of the world and its phenomena but also of the mental and physical forces. I am That. What one must do is to detach oneself from the world and realize the Self.

By constantly dwelling on the question 'Who am I?' the seeker becomes aware that he cannot be the body or any part of it or even thought, reason, memory, feelings, psyche, in other words that he is something other than a constantly changing creation of the egoistic and limited 'me'.

Every one builds his own prison out of his doubts and anxieties by projecting his own idea of the world and his relationship to it. To kill this ego and become absorbed in the Self is the supreme Truth, the supreme Bliss.

But in order to do this do we have to abandon everything and renounce our world, relying only on contact with a guide? It is indeed of such a contact that I am speaking, but ultimately the real contact is with oneself.

This point is particularly interesting to the Westerner who lives in a world in which action plays a large part. It should therefore be emphasised here that spiritual life does not necessarily require renunciation of the world. On the contrary, involvement in life can be both the support and the consequence of an essential plenitude. Carry on with your occupations and do not renounce your responsibilities, said Sri Ramana.

It is not a matter of acting before or even after establishing certain principles but of pursuing the spiritual quest and worldly activity simultaneously. Meditation awakens a spiritual current in you which pervades your work. What leads to incarnate wisdom in a man is indeed this achievement of an inter-related inner reality and outer activity between spiritual and worldly life, the former illuminating the latter, the latter supporting the former. By his immobility and silence a true man thus showed me that I can work and speak providing I remain true, providing the work is not mere agitation nor the words a vain monologue. I felt not only a subtle peace but a force which drove me not to reject my Western, 20th Century way of life. How far this is from the egoism which some people impute to men of meditation who are in fact striving for the elimination of their ego!

There is no antagonism between meditating or praying on the one hand and facing the hard and unrewarding tasks of daily life on the other. In fact one cannot go without the other. They unite in building up oneself from moment to moment. Action then takes on a strange resonance as it leads to a strange humility. It ceases to be an end in itself and becomes natural through the very transcendence of its finality.

While the hands do their work the head soars to infinite solitude; and it is on account of this very enlightenment that the action becomes true, not because we wished it so out of personal vanity. Everything has to be accomplished. Each in his own way has to

achieve the work demanded by his qualities of character and the circumstances in which he is placed: but without attachment to its fruits.

'Who am I?' To know oneself, to know within oneself that transcendent serenity, is to act definitely according to that in oneself which is more than oneself. Spiritualization of one's conduct is not on some abstract plane. It presupposes a clear awareness of the difficulties which worldly life with its daily requirements entails.

Thinking of the Maharshi and his teaching I remember his eyes. Are they so piercing because of the Truth he embodies or on account of a great out-pouring? Both together: transcendent and loving at the same time, as in fact he was towards all who came to him, whether dignitaries or beggars, merchants or thieves, Westerners or Indians, Christians or Muslims, believers or unbelievers. There was compassion for all beings, for in all exists, though often hidden, that Divine Self which is the luminous source that has to be freed from the thorns of envy, laziness and pride.

I have spoken of my meeting with him as an event, but who can deny that an inner meeting is possible today also, beyond the dullness of earthly understanding. To ask oneself, 'Who am I? Who is it that is bound?' is the true way to Self-knowledge, to Liberation.

But what grace that some one in our times should bring such a message! He is an incarnation of what is incorruptible in Hindu teaching, a revelation of transcendent Truth, of a lived Reality. He is also a justification of that outer activity which is so burdensome when an outcome of our ambitions yet so lucid when turned towards our quest for Truth. By his very existence he validated the quest of all those who aim at something more than worldly success, whether in the silence of a monastery or the bustle of human activity.

(By courtesy, 'Syntheses')

A Devotee from America

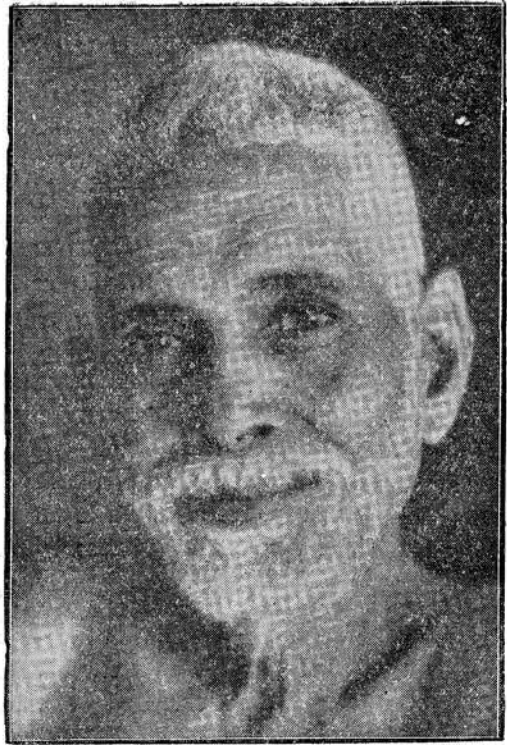
HOW MAHARSHI CAME TO ME

By ROBERT HANLON

I first became aware of the Name and Grace of Bhagavan in December 1958. Since my father's death in 1956, I had been in a grave spiritual and psychological crisis. Playwrighting efforts of many years stopped abruptly. I then worked as an advertising copywriter until the unconscious weight of the identity search made any job impossible. I started taking a variety of drugs rather heavily, and began an intensive reading of Freudian and mystical literature, with the emphasis on Zen and Yoga. As if miraculously, financial help from a new wealthy friend began at this time and made the total search for Self economically feasible.

Gradually, I started to meditate in the Zen tradition, not knowing that already the Real Presence of the Divine Lover was dictating my most stumbling efforts. I was using the koan, "What was my original face before my father and mother were born?" I would meditate for a half hour, read a page here of one book, two pages of another, until the need to meditate overpowered me once more. But I was conscious of no inward change that would relieve my cosmic anxiety. I was overwhelmed by doubts that I could ever break through to the certitudes of immortality and the spirit.

Then, in December 1958, I went to Taos, New Mexico, to visit a friend who was also engaged in the search for Self. One day we went to see a rather advanced Yogi and painter, Herman Rednick, who lived in the beautiful sagebrush desert along the Rio Grande Canyon. In his cabin he had five or six framed pictures



of Indian sages. One of these pictures was the most famous one of Bhagavan, reproduced on the cover of Arthur Osborne's biography (as above). Looking at it, I felt as if I had been waiting to see it for 10,000 years. The absolute serenity, sweetness and love in His eyes overwhelmed me; for the first time I knew there was really something to be discovered, and that here was my guide to the promised land. Tears came unbidden to my eyes. I was also conscious of powerful vibrations in the cabin which filled me with exultation. (I am now aware that these vibrations were the initial transmission of the Spirit, and that Herman was the Guru transmitting the Grace of Bhagavan, Sad-Guru, the One without a second).

Returning to New York, I obtained Bhagavan's books and started to meditate according to His teachings. I also began praying to Him, using the mantra "OM Ramana", as given in Mudaliar's "Day by Day with Bhagavan". I stopped taking drugs completely,

thanks to the ever-pouring Grace of the Divine Saviour.

Several times during the succeeding months, the idea came to me to lie down on my bed and see if I could return to the womb in a psychic sense, "to go back the way you came in", as Bhagavan told one devotee. These attempts had no results until the 22nd of December, 1959. This time, at noon, I was immediately conscious that something extraordinary had happened, that in some inexplicable way I had returned to the womb, although I was still completely conscious of my surroundings and adult identity. Then the question came, "Where did I come from before I was in the womb?"

No sooner was this question out than a white light opened above and between the eyes; in it I saw what seemed to be black objects moving about. The word "spermatazoa" flashed through my mind, with no conscious volition on my part (I was not familiar with St. Augustine's statement of the Logos Spermatikos until several years later). This word, in its turn, triggered a complete rigidity of the body, so that I was aware of being completely in the grip of a higher power. A golden light appeared at the loins and three spiralling lines of light came up the body. The great golden light stopped momentarily at the navel, then rose to the forehead, where it took on the shape of a cone. My whole consciousness went through the horn — and I was immersed in the Ocean of Bliss. Immediately I said, "Of course! I remember. This is my original face." After a very short

time, the consciousness came back into the body, which was now all white. The golden horn lingered for a few seconds, then came down again into the navel and so back to the loins. I now understood the significance of the myth of Unicorn.

Still, (such is the obstinacy of the ever-clinging ego) despite this overpoweringly blissful rebirth of the Spirit, which transformed faith into knowledge, I had no certitude that the Spirit which had led me to this beatitude of Light was truly Bhagavan. Thus was I questioning several nights later ("How do I know it is Bhagavan who has rescued me from my ignorance and not simply any 'familiar' spirit"?) — when once again my body was gripped by a superior force. Slowly my head was turned in the chair to the left, where the picture of Bhagavan which had first enthralled me in New Mexico was hanging. My gaze was held rigidly on the picture for some time while the thought came to my mind from an inner voice, "Now do you see? Now, at last, do you see?"

Now at last I saw. The power of the Holy Name of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, the beatitude and salvation in His holy gaze, have been my surety and bliss since that day. To me, now, all life is a countless succession of Bhagavan's favours; many extraordinary things have happened daily. Pain and suffering have not disappeared from my life, but I accept them now as the will of Bhagavan, to whom I have surrendered as best I can. I am conscious at all times of the Real Presence of my Saviour. May I one day be worthy of the overpowering Love which He has showered upon me.

All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God; but it is the One Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say: 'The three are really three' only so long as the ego lasts. Therefore to inhere in one's own Being, when the ego is dead is the perfect state.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

An Interpretation from Holland

A DREAM WORLD

By MME. JOICE HIDDINGHE

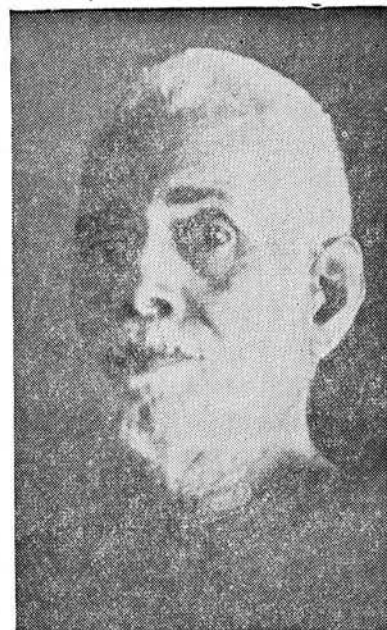
The Maharshi likes to compare life to a dream. Well, the Creator of the dream is God, the pictures which form the dream are the world, and the identification of the Divine consciousness with the pictures is the ego.

If the creation is considered as having an independent existence in itself, it is *unreal*; but if considered as dependent on the Divine, then it is *real*.

What is the exact meaning of the word, "dream", as the Maharshi conceives it? This term shocks many Westerners, and yet it is not far from the teaching of nuclear science that matter is an illusion. The atom has been reduced to an electron; and then it was discovered that this electron, which enters into the constitution of the whole of our solid world, has itself no material form; it is nothing but energy.

How is it, then, that we see the world as it appears to us with all its shapes and colours, trees and mountains? All this, answers the Advaitin, is nothing but the scaffolding built by the mind. It cannot be other than our individual consciousness which thus transforms the constantly-moving electricity into a universe having the appearance of a stable world.

Let us take the first verse from *Ulladu Narpadu*, 'Forty Verses', the Maharshi's philosophic poem :



"Because of the perception of ourselves and of the world, all must needs admit a single Principle with power to appear as many. The pictures and the seer — both of name and form, the scene and the light, all these are HE."

Here it is really the question of the one Consciousness, which is God, the pure Being. But, this Consciousness is also the individual seer as well as the world. This one Consciousness which gives to energy its many apparent forms, and which divides itself into infinite, individual separate consciousnesses, seems to be the only reasonable explanation of an external world free from matter.

In fact, nowadays, scientists also do not hesitate to consider energy one in spite of the innumerable forms it takes.

Then is not the Consciousness which interprets these forms also One, in spite of its innumerable apparently individual forms ?

Mme. Joice Hiddinghe, is a Dutch seeker who came to India in the year 1940 and stayed at Sri Ramanasramam for some time. The following article is a summary of her contribution to the book, *Etudes sur Ramana Maharshi*, published in France by Messrs. Herbert & Reymond.

It is difficult to conceive the relation between this transcendental Consciousness which is God, the Creator of the dream of life, and the individual consciousness of man, because, the latter perceives the pictures of this dream without suspecting that they are all merely an illusion and that itself and the Creator of the dream are really one and identical.

When we dream in the night, we see numerous forms, all different from one another. Nevertheless, we identify ourselves with one of these apparent forms; and in the dream, we believe it to be ourselves.

We are the creators not only of the entire dream but also of every one of the numerous apparent forms we see therein, including the particular form or person with whom we identify ourselves.

Yet the dream-person considers all the illusory forms real and different from one another. He thinks himself to be separate from them, and does not in the least suspect that himself, the forms of the dream and the creator of the dream, are one and the same.

This he knows only when he wakes up, that is, when he knows that the dream itself is an illusion. To him awake, his own dream-person, the persons in the dream and the dream itself are alike unreal.

Similarly, for the pure Consciousness, whence rises the dream of life, this dream itself has never existed.

All the search a seeker has to make, all the concentration the Master recommends for the discovery of the Self, have the one object of removing the ego-sense. It is by dint of deepening the truth of our being that we discover that this individuality, this sense of separateness on which is built our inner and outer life, does not actually exist.

At that moment, we enter into the transcendental Truth and the illusion that makes us see the world as an aggregate of separate beings and forms vanishes. What we were

taking as solid realities become a mirage, a cinematographic projection, and our own individuality appears as merely one of the forms on the screen created by ourselves.

The Union of the two consciousnesses, the Absolute (which is Truth) and the limited (which is ignorance), will automatically establish itself by the disappearance, which is at bottom an absorption, an assimilation, of the I-ness in the pure Being of the Self.

In the Sage who has attained Self-realization, we continue to perceive manifestations of the mind as well as of physical life, because we ourselves are still subject to the world-illusion. For the Sage himself the identification with the mind and the body—an identification from which springs ego-sense (*ahamkara*) with all its train of imperfections—has entirely disappeared.

This identification, from which the Sage has become eternally free, is what Christianity means by original sin. This explanation reconciles Maharshi's teaching with the words of St. Paul: "It is no more I that live, but Jesus Christ in me who liveth."

For St. Paul, Jesus Christ is God. He is therefore the Universal "I". In other words, the Maharshi's method seeks to remove the "old man" of St. Paul, so that the Universal Self may take his place.

In making comparisons like these, I evidently lower the level of the Sage's ideas; because, in doing so, I try to explain these ideas in the way they present themselves to us. For the Maharshi who is Awakened, who has attained Realization, his body and mind no longer exist; his activities may be compared to those of a somnambulist. This again is a comparison, one however the Maharshi himself has used.

The State of Realization in which the Maharshi lives, that is to say, the re-established Union between his two consciousnesses, is according to him the sole object of our life;

and it is accompanied by the greatest Bliss that man can experience, the Bliss Everlasting.

Though the Master does not often speak of this immense Felicity of this inexpressible Beatitude, yet he begins his small pamphlet, *Who am I?* with the remarkable observation :

"Every living being longs always to be happy, untainted by sorrow; and every-one has the greatest love for oneself, which is solely due to the fact that happiness is one's real nature."

It should however be noted that this Realization of one's inherent Bliss cannot be gained except by the dedication of one's entire being.

Having observed the Maharshi in the light of his own teachings, one has the natural and irresistible desire to inquire what can be that Supreme State of Realization in which he lives, a State which it is impossible to describe or explain in so many words. Since, however, what is of primary importance is less the Master's doctrine (if he has any) than his Realization, we become, as it were, the objects of our own pity when we find that what cannot be communicated to us through speech can also not be comprehended by us except when we have attained it, and then, perhaps, only to find for ourselves that it is wholly incommunicable through speech.

But, in talking to the great Sage, one gets the unmistakable impression that one is talking to a person in whom is opened a sense, which is still asleep in us. The Maharshi's words are felt to be of such vital importance to us as would be the description by one living in the world of light to a people, who always lived in a dark cave. They make us seek what we have been groping for all our life !

In the world where the Master lives, the sense of values is different and his relations with animate and inanimate objects cannot be the same as ours ; because he brings everything

back to Oneness, whereas we believe that we are real and separate individuals. His attitude towards the world may, therefore, be compared to that which enlightened Christianity attributes to Divinity. "Everything happens by God's Will," say the Christians. Everything happens by the Will of the Maharshi's Self.

Why then should he interfere in anything at all ? Is he not himself one with the Mover and the Ultimate Cause of all acts and events that unfold themselves around him ? Therefore, can there exist for him a separation — the cause of all anxiety and displeasure — a difference other than superficial between different beings ? Can he feel the desire to become useful or worry about anything when he knows that none here below is either useful or useless, and that everything is being done according to a transcendental plan and without our help ?

Western thought also does not picture God as a Being who has to struggle in order to gain His object, who must "seek" to help human beings, who likes this one and dislikes the other. God is the helper of all ; He is the eternal, omnipresent Helper. He has not to help us in the manner we seem to help one another in this ephemeral life of ours. As the Maharshi says, "Does the idea of helping people in a dream occur to one, who has awakened from it ? Does not this ideal of helping "others" imply the idea of separation and multiplicity ? A realized Sage helps man, but without the idea of "helping".

So then, the Maharshi lives in perfect serenity. Notwithstanding this serenity, we find in him the most perfect, the most elevated and the most universal charity. Monkeys and outcasts are as much his friends as Yogis and Brahmins ; and when once thieves forced his door and racked him with blows, he spoke compassionately about them.

All those who go to see him are received with the same smile, the same kindness, the same tolerance and the same understanding,

for in all of them, he sees and loves his own Self.

But here also, we must use very human language to be completely true to the thought of the great Master. Since the dream of life has ceased to exist for him, the foregoing reasoning cannot even touch him. Yet he also, when he speaks to the world at large, speaks the language of the world even if it does not strictly tally with the transcendental Truth. It is not possible for him to do otherwise.

It is the same when we think of God, because we know well that we cannot attribute to Him a personality like ours. His sight does not depend upon eyes, nor His hearing upon ears, nor His thinking upon a brain, nor His succession of ideas and impressions upon time and space. Neither can His Love be compared with our feeling of love.

Though this collection of ideas and impressions which make our perceptions of the universe cannot appear as such in God, yet He, in a mysterious manner that escapes us, is the Cause of all and the Life of all. Everything that exists, everything that happens, must be present in His Spirit. How? We do not know. So it is with the Maharshi.

How then shall we understand this great Sage who has realized his identity with the one, eternal Truth, the Absolute beyond all duality, the Self Universal, but who neverthe-

less moves and speaks with an apparent personality of his own?

Indian philosophers have solved this difficulty by calling God Brahman when considered in His Absolute Aspect, and Ishvara when considered in His relation to the world. Brahman as pure Being is necessarily beyond all human conception and is therefore indefinable. But, how does the Indian philosopher define Ishvara? Ishvara, God or Creator, according to the Yoga Vasishtha, is the first identification of the divine Consciousness with an idea which itself is divine.

We can in the same way speak of the two aspects of Maharshi's life. That by which we attribute a personality to the Sage is itself a divine idea: That in which the Sage abides as identical with the impersonal Absolute is the one, eternal Truth of our own being, the Self Universal.

One day when we were discussing these questions a young Englishman asked: "Bhagavan, why should we undertake a long journey to come to you?"

The Master explained that, after having seen him, people go back with the certainty that Realization exists, that it is possible to attain it, and that, thenceforward, they know the way that leads to it.

Certainly, no exposition, no testimony can have the value of personal contact with this venerable Sage of Peace, of Truth and of Love.

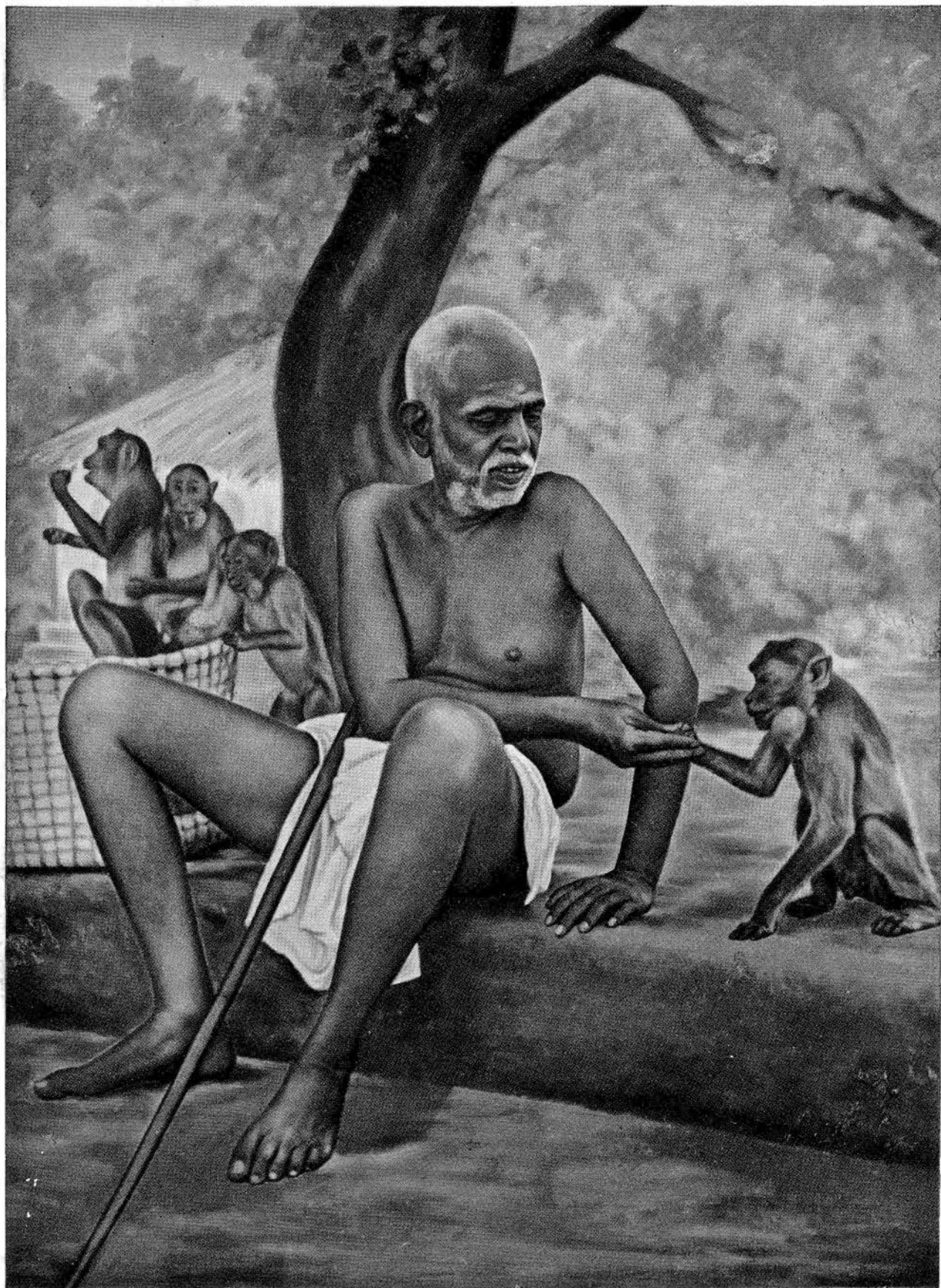
I have never had the privilege of meeting Sri Ramana Maharshi. My two efforts to go and see him did not succeed. But I have met several persons who had his darshan and had contact with him. Ordinary men try to influence people by their words; some others do it by action; but to very few is given the gift to transform men and women by the power of their silent personality. Mouna is not merely remaining silent; real mouna is peace that becomes a creative power, i.e. *parashanti*. In that sense Sri Ramana Maharshi was a Mouni of the highest order.

— K. M. MUNSHI,
President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

यदि न जननी स्तन्यं दद्याच्छिशोर्बत का गतिः
यदि पशुपतिः क्रोधं कुर्यात्पशोरवनं कुतः ।
यदि पदजुषामाचार्यं त्वं निहंसि न संशयं
अमशतपराभूता एते तरन्तु भवं कथम् ॥

What would be the fate of the babe were it not suckled by the mother ? Where is escape for the cattle if the cowherd gets enraged with them ? Where is succour for the poor man against the wrath of God ? If Thou, O Master, dost not dispel the doubts of those that seek the refuge of Thy Feet, how can they, overwhelmed by hundreds of misconceptions, ever hope to free themselves from worldly existence ?

—KAVYAKANTA GANAPATI MUNI.



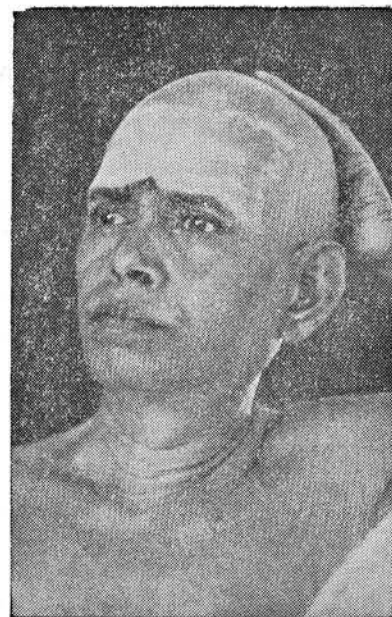
BHAGAVAN RAMANA MAHARSHI AS SEEN BY A BENGALI

By JAGANNATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

In the intellectual and spiritual regeneration of modern India the contribution of Bengal has been conspicuous. The galaxy of luminaries who have shed lustre on her in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries include Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, Rishi Bankim Chandra, Sri J. C. Bose, Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore. The Bengalis are by nature an emotional people and this shows also in their approach to religion. So when I became acquainted with the life and teaching of Bhagavan Sri Ramana what impressed me from the start was the simplicity and directness of the method he prescribed and its freedom from emotional elements.

It seems to me that Sri Bhagavan is simply reiterating the grand, eternal truths of the Vedas and the Upanishads about the non-duality of God and man. The joyous certitude that characterised their teachings was discernible in him too. They used to say : "All you people of the world, you are indeed immortal." And Bhagavan too impressed on us that we can become immortal by eliminating the illusory self or ego. "You have only to give up your long-standing habit of identifying yourself with the non-self. All effort is only for that. By turning the mind outwards you have been seeing the world, the non-self ; by turning it inwards you will see the Self."¹

Indeed, Bhagavan's method is so simple and direct that it makes an outer Guru seem unnecessary. Bhagavan did indeed say that the Guru need not necessarily take human



form or be sought for outside oneself. His Grace is always present to help those who sincerely make the effort to realize the Self. "The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others and is quite free from the idea that he is the Enlightened or Liberated One while those around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance."² Though without bodily form, Bhagavan is still the Guru to those who turn to him.

To a Bengali who has been accustomed to hear the Lord's Name chanted with fervour and devotion, accompanied by dancing and sankirtan, as introduced into Bengal by Lord Gouranga³ more than four hundred years ago, Bhagavan's method of enquiry in absolute stillness of the mind presents a sharp contrast.

And in the life of Bhagavan I am confronted with a towering personality the like of which I have never seen or heard of or come across in books.

¹ *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, vol. 11, p. 103.

² *The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, p. 120.

³ Known also as Sri Chaitanya.

Another striking fact was that Bhagavan never ran down any religion or the traditions sponsored by a religion. For instance the Hindu caste system has become the target of criticism by preachers and reformers, but Bhagavan would never attack it outright. When asked whether we should ignore caste rules he said : "Not in the beginning. Observe them to start with. They serve as a check on the vagaries of the mind and it is thus purified."⁴ On the same subject he says farther on : "Differences always exist, not only in human beings but also in plants, animals, etc. This state of affairs cannot be helped. . . . You need not notice these distinctions. There is diversity in the world but a unity runs through the diversity. The Self is the same in all. There is no difference in spirit. The differences are external and superficial. Find the unity and you will be happy."

I myself am a disciple of Sri Sitaramdas

Omkarnath Maharaj (about whom there is an article in *The Mountain Path* of July 1965) and he is a strict follower of our Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Dharma based on the Vedas and Upanishads, to which foreigners have given the name of 'Hinduism'. He is also an upholder of our Varnashrama Dharma or caste dharma. I therefore very much appreciate the Maharshi's respect for every religion. Once, for instance, he told a Muslim devotee to try to understand and follow what the word 'Islam' means : that is the total surrender of the ego.

Bhagavan's courageous message, reminding us of our heritage of the Rishis of old, gives us faith and courage despite the gloom of present day materialism, to seek liberation from bondage to the non-self, the fake ego, which causes the sorrows and frustrations of life.

⁴ From *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

SILENT RESPONSE

By K. K. NAMBIAR

People who visited Sri Bhagavan during his life-time, could not have failed to observe the characteristic pose in which he reclined on his sofa with eyes closed and his head supported with his left arm — particularly at the time of Veda-parayan and so on. Some of us, devotees, sitting around used to watch him intently during such periods. On several occasions, I used to mentally pray to him that on reopening his eyes, he should bestow a look at me and I must say I was never disappointed. So, it was crystal clear

to me that prayers to Bhagavan need not be vocal and he felt, knew, and answered the inner prayers of all his devotees.

Conversely, there were also occasions when I sat at the feet of Sri Bhagavan and intently meditated on his form with closed eyes, and most often when I opened my eyes, Sri Bhagavan appeared to be watching me. It is a great comfort even now to recall the experience of those exquisite moments which stand out so vividly in my memory. Time hasn't effaced even a fraction of those vistas.

REMINISCENCE OF A PATRIOT

By BHARATANANDA

Reminiscence of a visit to Bhagavan by Rajendra Prasad, who was later to become President of India, with the industrialist Jamnalal Bajaj and others, in 1938.

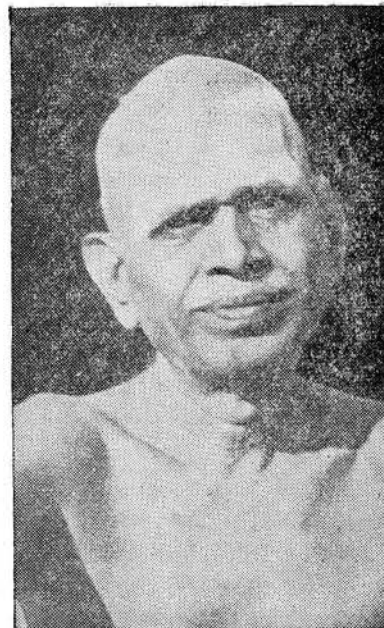
J. B. : How is Sadbuddhi to be steadily kept up ?

Bh. : All living beings are aware of their surroundings and therefore intellect must be surmised in all of them. At the same time, there is a difference between the intellect of man and that of other animals, because man not only sees the world as it is and acts accordingly but also seeks fulfilment of desires and is not satisfied with the state of affairs. In his attempt to fulfil his desires, he extends his vision far and wide ; and yet he turns away dissatisfied. He then begins to think and reason out.

The desire for permanency of happiness and of peace bespeaks such permanency of his own nature. Therefore, he seeks to find and regain his own nature, i.e. his Self. That found, all is found.

Such inward seeking is the path to be gained by man's intellect. The intellect itself realises after continuous practice that it is enabled by some Higher Power to function. It cannot itself reach that Power. So it ceases to function after a certain stage. When it thus ceases to function, the Supreme Power is still left there all alone. That is Realization ; that is the finality ; and that is the goal.

It is thus plain that the purpose of the intellect is to realise its own dependence on the Higher Power and its inability to reach



the same. So it must annihilate itself before the goal is gained.

J. B. (quoting) : "I do not desire kingdoms etc. Only let me serve Thee for ever ; there is my highest pleasure." Is that right ?

Bh. : Yes. There is room for Kama (desire) so long as there is an object apart from the subject (i.e. as long as there is duality). There can be no desire if there is no object. The state of no-desire is moksha. There is no duality in sleep, and so also no desire. Whereas, there is duality in the waking state and so desire also is there. Because of duality, a desire arises for the acquisition of the object. That is the out-going mind (bahirmukha vritti), which is the basis of duality and of desire. If one knows that the Bliss is none other than the Self, the mind becomes inward turned. If the Self is gained, all the desires are fulfilled. That is said to be 'avaptakama' in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. That is moksha.

Jamnalal Bajaj, trying to make himself clear by saying that what is meant by sadbuddhi is not the same as buddhi but means that which holds fast to the good, the right and

the chosen path, wanted to know how such steadfastness could be gained.

Bh. : What is wanted for gaining the highest goal is the loss of individuality. The intellect is co-extensive with individuality. The loss of individuality can only come after the disappearance of buddhi, sat or asat. The question therefore does not arise.

J.B. : But yet one must know the right thing, choose the right path, practise the right dharma and hold fast to it. Otherwise one is lost.

Bh. : True, strength accrues by holding to the right direction, without swerving from it.

J.B. : Difficulties are met with. How is one to get the necessary strength to overcome the obstacles which beset one's path?

Bh. : By bhakti and satsang.

J.B. : Loss of individuality has just been mentioned as a prerequisite for moksha. Now devotion and association with the wise are advised as the methods. Is individuality not implied in them : e.g. 'I am a bhakta', 'I am a satsangi'?

Bh. : The method is pointed out to the seeker. The seeker has certainly not lost his individuality so far. Otherwise the question would not have arisen. The way is shown to effect the loss of individuality of the seeker. It is thus appropriate.

J.B. : Is the desire for political independence right?

Bh. : Such desire begins with self-interest. Prolonged practical work for the goal gradually widens the outlook so that the individual becomes merged in the country. Such merging of the individual is desirable and the karma is nishkama.

J.B. : If independence is gained after a long struggle and terrible sacrifice, isn't the

person justified in being pleased with the result and elated by it?

Bh. : He must in the course of his work, have surrendered himself to the Higher Power, whose might must be kept in mind and never lost sight of. How then can he be elated? He should not even care for the results of his actions. Then only it becomes nishkama.

J.B. : How can unerring rectitude be ensured for the worker?

Bh. : If he has surrendered himself to God or Guru, the Power to which he has surrendered will guide him in the right way. The worker need no longer concern himself about the rectitude or otherwise of his course. The doubt will arise only if he did not obey the master in all details.

J.B. : Is there not any Power on earth which can bestow Grace on Its devotees so that they may grow strong to work for the country and gain independence? (Sri Maharshi remains in silence).

J.B. : Is not the tapas of the ancient mahatmas of the land available for the benefit of its present day inheritors?

Bh. : It is. But it must be remembered that no one can claim to be the sole beneficiary. The benefits are shared by all alike. (After a pause) Is it without such Grace that the present awakening has come into being?

J.B. : (After a short pause) Sri Rajendra Prasad is such a noble and selfless worker for the country that he has sacrificed a very lucrative career for this work. The country needs him. And yet he is not in good health, and is always weak and ailing. Why should there be such cruelty to such a noble son of the country? (Sri Maharshi simply smiled benignantly).

The whole Vedanta is contained in the two Biblical statements 'I am that I am' and 'Be still and know that I am God'.

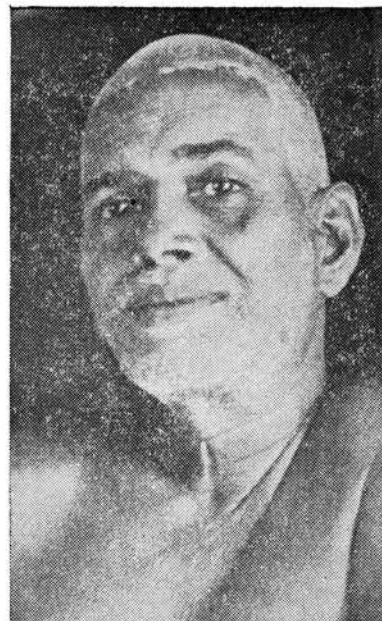
— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

BHAGAVAN OR RAMANA?

By WEI WU WEI

It should perhaps be difficult to say much that is new on the subject of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi from the point of view of his personal devotees, but there might be a passing interest in a few remarks from a point of view that is essentially independent.

Let me begin by explaining the attitude of the great Chinese Masters of the T'ang dynasty of China. When the pious Emperor sent for the 1st Patriarch, Bodhidharma, and asked him to expound the holy doctrine, Bodhidharma replied simply, "Majesty, there is no doctrine, and nothing holy about it." When a young monk arrived at his monastery, Hui-hai, known as 'The Great Pearl', asked him why he had come. He answered, "In the hope that you, Master, may be gracious enough to teach me." The reply of Hui-hai was, "I have nothing to teach anyone," and, on another occasion, "This poor monk has no teaching by which to liberate others." Not only can understanding not be transferred, but objective phenomena cannot even communicate directly, much as when you 'ring up' a friend on the telephone you can only communicate with him via the Central Exchange. But no analogy is ever exact, and here the 'Exchange' is separated in 'space' from the speakers whereas in our living-dream the Exchange, or Godhead, is always here and



now. We cannot teach one another anything directly, where understanding is concerned: we can only summon understanding from its source which is mutual and what we are.

Now I would like to say that whereas something like 90% of the recorded words of the great Chinese Masters summon the requisite understanding — or some approximation of it — in my own case, something like 98% of the recorded words of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi seem to do that. The reason for this need not be looked for in the speakers — for what I am obliged, with apologies for the absurdity, to call 'Truth', is singular and not plural — but in the circumstances of the survival of their words. In the former case the 10% wastage may be attributed to misunderstanding of the words by the recorders, to errors of copyists over some twelve centuries, and to the absence of understanding on the part of modern translators.

Our readers need no introduction to Wei Wu Wei, who is one of the most brilliant writers on Zen today. He gives here his view of Bhagavan from a Zen background. His mention of the Zen Master who said he had nothing to teach reminds us of Bhagavan's saying that asking for guidance is like being at Sri Ramanasramam and asking the best way to get there.

In the case of Bhagavan, whose words were heard and recorded by our own contemporaries, and translated into modern European languages on the spot, the wastage from these causes is relatively negligible. Yet, superficially speaking, could this so-called 'Truth' be more diversely expressed? The former represented the Negative Way, the latter the Positive.

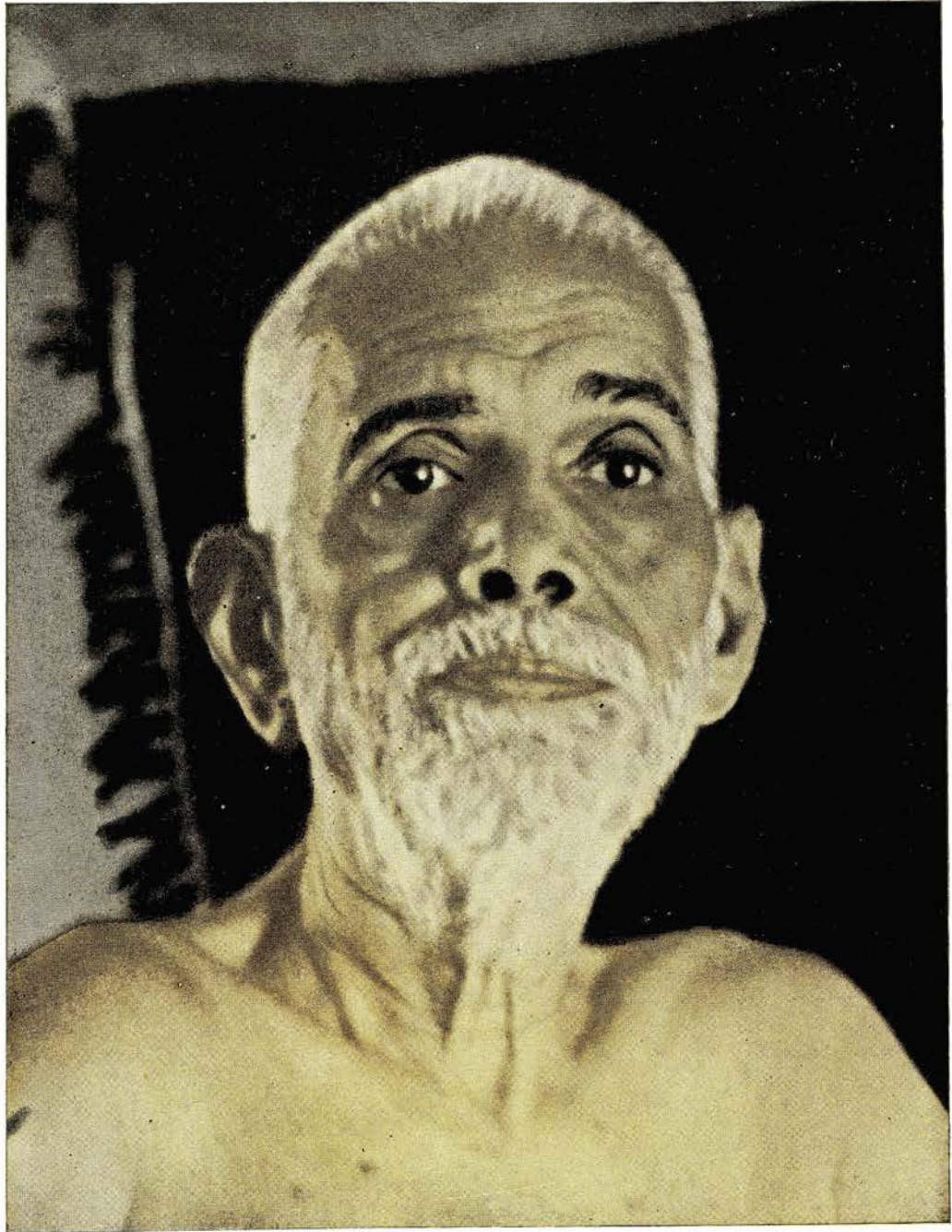
To divided phenomenal mind negative and positive are contraries, mutually exclusive, and positivity cannot be reached positively — since it lies behind the negative : to attempt it is like trying to pull oneself up by one's own shoe-laces. This may sound like a condemnation of Vedanta, but I am told by advanced Advaitins that whereas some followers stop at the first, positive stage, those who are really gifted go on to the second stage, which is purely negative. Really, however, and as far as this personal narrative is concerned, this just does not matter since noumenally there can be no difference and it is not necessary or useful to notice whether what Bhagavan said was the one or the other, since the afore-said 'Truth' lies in another direction of measurement to either.

From these remarks it may perhaps be clear why, whereas sectarian members of other religions tend to underrate, if not to condemn, the great teachers who do not belong to their own sect, non-sectarian pilgrims make no difference whatever between them, but judge them only, if at all, by their capacity for summoning revelation. From a slightly different point of view, did Bhagavan 'teach'? Did he lecture? Did not understanding come in silence in his presence, rather than in the noise of words? Does it not perhaps still come now when there are no words at all, save those recorded in print?

But there is another good reason why pilgrims who never knew Bhagavan, and who are not Vedantists, or even Advaitins — using that Sanskrit term non-sectarianally to include

all followers of non-duality in any or no religion — have as absolute a regard for him as even his own devotees may have. Who else is there to whom anyone can reasonably point, of our own days, who lived for half a century, available to all at all times, in a state of as perfect identification with Godhead as would seem possible to an apparent individual manifestation? Hundreds of us knew him personally as such, and of whom else can that be said? What a marvellous thing it is to have had such a contemporary — and to be able to compare his words and his living of life with the words, and descriptions left us by Scriptures, of past Sages? In Bhagavan alone can we test those words and those scriptures, and see for ourselves that they are not a dream or a phantasy.

I will close this commentary, these somewhat diffuse remarks by an independent pilgrim, by stating why the writer is not in his own eyes a devotee, even in an honorary capacity. It might be possible to find someone who had a more profound regard for Bhagavan, though that should be difficult indeed, but nevertheless the writer is no devotee. This is not because he does not recognise Bhagavan as a manifestation of Godhead, but because he sees that manifestation phenomenally as any other, and as what any other phenomenon appears to be but is not. Sri Ramana Maharshi as such was a phenomenal concept in mind like the rest of us, and phenomenal objects as such are not suitable objects of deification, however great their apparent qualities. We wish to worship him as a deity? He was Godhead? No doubt — but aren't we all? What else could we be? And was he that kind of deity who asks for worship? Is not that the very essence of bondage — and did he not spend his living-dream in seeking to free us? Did he even care to admit that he was a Guru? Did he not say that the Guru was within; and if we knew him as such would we want to worship him as a phenomenal object? Where is he?



Did he not ask — when he was dying, and his friends were lamenting — wherever did they think he could go to? Has that tremendous, yet so simple, statement been properly under-

stood? If there could be a doctrine, and if he preached one, what could it be but what those words imply? What else could there possibly be to say — let alone to teach?

THE SHEET - ANCHOR

By DILIP KUMAR ROY *

I don't know how I can best testify to Bhagavan's greatness which made such an indelible impression on my mind. I feel his Grace so often coursing through my blood. How can I write about that at all convincingly? Yet I do want to attest my gratitude to one to whom (I so often feel) I owe even more than I know. I will, by way of explanation, tell you just of one crisis when he helped me in a way more convincing than even a startling sense-perception.

My faith then had tottered. I have known so many saints in my life and they have all helped me in different phases of my sadhana. But in this phase I wondered if one could be sure of any lasting prop. Then two figures suddenly flowed before my mind's eye. One was Sri Ramakrishna and the other was Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. And I told myself: "Why do you doubt? Is there any contradiction in either of these?"

No, I told myself, vastly relieved. These two figures stand out as luminous as ever. "But then," I added to myself, "I have never seen Sri Ramakrishna. If I had perhaps I would have seen some contradiction in him too; who knows?"

"But what about Ramana Maharshi?" I answered my own doubt with joy and certitude. "Have I not seen him? And did I find any contradiction in him, then or afterwards?"

Strangely enough a visual memory of a godly personality helps in a way even the memory of the visual impression cannot

fathom. What I mean by this is a little difficult to put into words. But I do mean something. What? I can't quite express it. But one thing I can say which may be understandable; that is that in such abysmal inner pain I recalled again and again the Shiva-like peace on the Maharshi's marvellous face and the deep light of compassion that I saw irradiating his star-like eyes; and I could and did dismiss my doubts, though after a struggle.

"For I have seen something that is mightier than the most cankerous doubts," I told myself; "I have seen him, the Maharshi, and he has blest me." He even called me once, a friend of mine wrote from Sri Ramanasramam to tell me in 1948. But alas, I postponed and so lost the great opportunity.

I regretted not having responded to his call of compassion (what else could it be?) although I followed the path of emotional bhakti and so had once even misunderstood him. Later Sri Krishna Prem, the noted bhakta, had scolded me, saying: "What? Bhakti, you say? The Maharshi is one whose soul is overflowing with love. How could you call him a mere jnani, a man of knowledge?" And he added: "One who says he knows but does not love does not know, and one who says he loves but does not know does not love."

Yes, I understood. The Maharshi both knows and loves. That is why he is so pre-eminently great.

* For whom see our issue of Oct. 1964, pp. 234-5.

RAMANA SAT-GURU

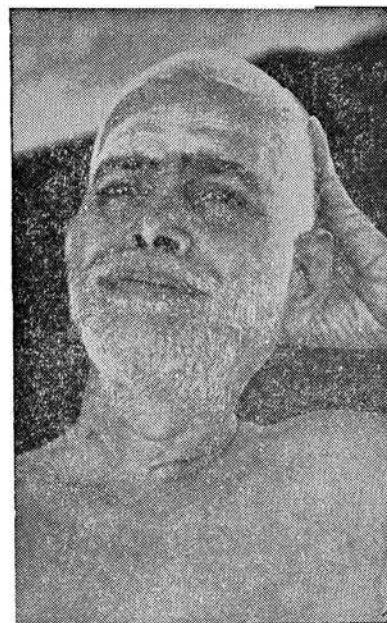
By S. S. COHEN

Sri Ramana Jayanti has come again, bringing cheer to thousands of Bhagavan's devotees, old and new, far and near. On this day they call to mind all he has done for them, all he is to them and how he has influenced their lives. Old devotees who had the rare privilege of a long stay in his physical presence (and their number is diminishing year by year) feel that since leaving the body he has not ceased to work the wonderful transformation in them that he began in life. Newcomers also feel his powerful support in their sadhana.

When Bhagavan used to say that the Guru is not the body many failed to grasp his meaning; but as time passed and he continued to show them his Grace and support in their meditation the significance of these words gradually became clear, so that they eventually ceased to think of him as a person with a body to reminisce about. In this connection, the Bhagavata gives an apt illustration of the relation of disciple to Guru in the story of Sri Krishna and Uddhava.

When Sri Krishna ended his mission on earth and was prepared to return to Vaikunta, his eternal abode, Uddhava, who was greatly attached to his person, appealed to him with tears in his eyes to take him along with him, saying: "I have strong forebodings, O Supreme Yogi, that after destroying the Yadu race you will leave the earth altogether. . . . I cannot bear to be away from your feet even for a moment. Grant that I may be taken with you to your divine abode. . . . How can I now be separated from you?" (*Bhagavata*, XI. 6).

Krishna answered that it would be in Uddhava's own interest not to cling to



Krishna's body but to stay on after him and practise Yoga in the Himalayas "after shaking off all attachments to your family and kinsfolk, keeping your mind fixed wholly on me."

"You must always remember, friend Uddhava," he continued, "that whatever is thought by the mind, perceived by the eye and ear and spoken by the tongue is the creation of the mind and therefore illusory. . . . By controlling your mind and senses you will see the world in your own self and your self in Me, the Supreme Lord. Possessed of this knowledge and immersed in the contentment of Self-realization you will experience no obstruction in life." (*Ibid.*, XI. 7).

Sri Bhagavan knew, like Sri Krishna, that nothing is more productive of the highest spiritual results than concentration of the mind on one's real nature, which is the absolute Reality, the Lord Himself, the Supreme Guru. Attachment to and service of the outer Guru in the form of the Master takes only a secondary place. The following incident, which occurred in my presence, shows how Bhagavan graded meditation higher than service.

Once the devotee who was in charge of English correspondence in the Ashram office was unavailable and the Sarvadhikari asked Major Chadwick, who was then living in the Ashram, to take his place. Chadwick refused but felt a prick of conscience for doing so. After dinner that night, when we were alone or almost alone with Bhagavan (I do not exactly remember after these 27 or 28 years) Chadwick told him about it and asked whether he had done right. Bhagavan answered that Chadwick was doing him greater service by meditating, thereby greatly relieving the latter's mind.

Bhagavan was often asked about the necessity of a Guru for the attainment of Liberation and used to answer that the Guru was necessary. And indeed, mere study of the Upanishads is unlikely to lead very far, whereas association with a Sage and absorption of his instruction based on his own experience may quickly bring about the requisite comprehension leading towards Liberation. No doubt some Sages, like Bhagavan, have attained the Goal without a Guru in human form, but these were rare beings who had already in their past lives brought their sadhana so far that only a little further effort was needed.¹

There is no need to go into the detail about Bhagavan's teaching. It is simple orthodox Advaita Vedanta as taught in the Upanishads, the Gita, the Bhagavata and the writings of Shankara, Vidyaranya, Gaudapada and others. We find in it complete consistency in likening jagrat, the waking state, to svapna, the dream state. Both are changeable and impermanent, so that when one is on the other is off, whereas he who dreams and wakes is the same person, present in both. There is a traditional story that illustrates this.

Once a king dreamed that he was a young man of the name of Chandu owning a prosperous grocery. One day Panji, a beautiful outcaste girl, came half-drunk to buy betel nuts from him. She roused his passion by her

seductive demeanour (or misdemeanour) to such an extent that he decided to marry her, even though it would mean loss of caste for him. When she became his wife Panji turned out very vicious but Chandu overlooked all her faults owing to his infatuation for her. Her wants proved insatiable, ruining his business and driving him to take up work reserved for outcastes. This went on for twenty years, during which time he had three children by Panji, of whom the eldest, a boy, grew to be even more wicked than his mother. With his increased family Chandu had to take to dishonest means of livelihood to add to his income, and he suffered the consequences. He sank lower and lower till one day his son, in a fit of rage, hanged himself. The king's officers, suspecting Chandu of being the murderer, took him to prison and beat him mercilessly. He cried out so loud that (let us not forget that he was a king in his waking state) it woke his queen who was sleeping near by. She got up and shook him and woke him too, thereby ending the ordeal of the dream-Chandu. The king was so much shaken by his dream ordeal that he shut himself up in his apartments for several days and did not resume his royal duties till he had committed the whole experience to paper. His minister made it into a book under the title, *The Autobiography of Chandu*.

How, I ask, does this autobiography differ from those pertaining to and written in the waking state? His twenty years of suffering were real to Chandu, as also was his infatuation for Panji, his criminal life and the beating he received in prison. If you argue that the whole story was concocted in the king's own mind, so also were all his waking experiences, like those of all of us. Dreams also have their time and space and natural laws, just as the waking state has. As for Chandu, he is the experiencer of the three states. In

¹ There is also the very rare case of a Guru who, like Sri Ramana, continues to act as such after shedding the body. For his disciples also no guru in human form is necessary.—Editor.

the waking state he is a king, in a dream state a merchant who becomes an outcaste, while in the deep sleep state he plays no role but is still himself. Whereas the states come and go, their experiencer is always the same.

It is said that he who understands the ten verses of the Mandukya Upanishad has no need to study the other Upanishads because they show the world to be a state of the mind, just like the other two states, and also because what it leaves unsaid but inferred is as important as what it says. From its representing the three states as the only states through which the jiva passes in its apparent peregrination we have to conclude that death intro-

duces no new state for the ordinary man but only retains what he now experiences, namely the conditions of dream and sleep or an alternation of the two, till rebirth in a new body takes place and restores the waking state also. The same applies to loss of consciousness due to drugs, anaesthetics, fainting fits or the laya of hatha yoga, misnamed samadhi. But the Sage is above all three states both in this life and after death, being established permanently in Turiya, the Fourth, which is pure Consciousness, the nature of the Self, and from which there is no return to a body. He has freed himself from the pangs of birth and death for ever. Such a one was Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Devotee: The Buddhists deny the world whereas Hindu philosophy admits its existence but calls it unreal, isn't that so?

Bhagavan: It is only a difference of point of view.

D.: They say that the world is created by Divine Energy (Shakti). Is the knowledge of unreality due to the veiling by illusion (Maya)?

B.: All admit creation by the Divine Energy, but what is the nature of this energy? It must be in conformity with the nature of its creation.

D.: Are there degrees of illusion?

B.: Illusion itself is illusory. It must be seen by somebody outside it, but how can such a seer be subject to it? So, how can he speak of degrees of it?

You see various scenes passing on a cinema screen; fire seems to burn buildings to ashes; water seems to wreck ships; but the screen on which the pictures are projected remains unburnt and dry. Why? Because the pictures are unreal and the screen real.

Similarly, reflections pass through a mirror but it is not affected at all by their number or quality.

In the same way, the world is a phenomenon upon the substratum of the single Reality which is not affected by it in any way. Reality is only One.

Talk of illusion is due only to the point of view. Change your viewpoint to that of Knowledge and you will perceive the universe to be only Brahman. Being now immersed in the world, you see it as a real world; get beyond it and it will disappear and Reality alone will remain.

— From *Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*
in *His Own Words*.

ESSENCE OF THE GITA

Selected by BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

A devotee once complained to Bhagavan that it was hard to keep all 700 verses of the Gita in one's memory and asked whether it would not be possible to pick out the most important verses for remembrance. Bhagavan accordingly selected 42 verses which he arranged in an appropriate order. Further asked if any of these could be regarded as the most essential, he mentioned Book X, v. 20, that is the verse which comes fourth in his enumeration : "I am the Self, Oh Gudakesa, dwelling in the heart of every being ; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings."

Since this issue of *The Mountain Path* is devoted to Bhagavan Ramana, we here reproduce this condensation in its traditional Ashram translation instead of our usual chapter.

The Song Celestial

Sanjaya said :

1. To him (Arjuna) thus filled with compassion and in despair, his eyes distressed and full of tears, spoke Madhusudana these words : ii. 1.

The Blessed Lord said :

2. This body, Oh son of Kunti, is called the *kshetra* (field); Him who knows it, the Sages call, the *kshetrajna* (Knower of the field). xiii. 1.

3. Know Me also as the Knower of the field in all the fields, Oh Bharata : knowledge of the field and of the Knower of the field I deem to be true Knowledge. xiii. 2.

4. I am the Self, Oh Gudakesa, dwelling in the Heart of every being ; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings. x. 20.

5. Of those born the death is certain, and certain the birth of those dead : therefore for what none can prevent thou shouldst not grieve. ii. 27.

6. Never is He born nor does He die ; nor, having been, ceaseth He any more to be : unborn, abiding, eternal, ancient, He is not slain when the body is slain. ii. 20.

7. Not to be cleft is He, not to be burnt is He, not even to be wetted nor yet to be

dried is He : abiding He is and all-pervading, stable, immovable, and from everlasting. ii. 24.

8. Know That to be indestructible whereby all this is pervaded ; of this Immutable none can work destruction. ii. 17.

9. Of the non-existent there is no being, and of what exists there is no not-being ; the definite ascertainment of both is seen by the Seers of the Essence of Truth. ii. 16.

10. As ether everywhere present is not polluted by virtue of its subtlety, even so the Self abiding everywhere is not polluted in the body. xiii. 32.

11. Nor sun nor moon nor fire illumines It : and whither having gone men return not, That is My Supreme Abode. xv. 6.

12. Unmanifested, Imperishable is this called ; and this they proclaim the Supreme State, from which when once attained they return not, That is My Supreme Abode. viii. 21.

13. Without pride, without delusion, victorious over the blemish of attachment, ever abiding in the Self, their desires abandoned, released from the pairs called pleasure and pain, they go undeluded to that Immutable Abode. xv. 5.

14. He who forsakes the ordinances of the Scriptures, and acts under the influence of desire, attains not perfection, nor happiness, nor the Supreme State. xvi. 23.

15. He who sees the Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, perishing not as they perish, he it is who sees aright. xiii. 27.

16. By devotion alone, without 'otherness', Oh Arjuna, can I be known, seen and in essence entered, Oh Parantapa. xi. 54.

17. The faith of every man, Oh Bharata, accords with his essential character; man is instinct with faith: as that wherein a man has faith, so is he. xvii. 3.

18. He that has intense faith, and to that faith being devoted has the senses controlled, gains Knowledge; and having gained Knowledge he swiftly attains Supreme Peace. iv. 39.

19. To those who are self-attuned and who worship Me with loving devotion I give that union with understanding whereby they come to Me. x. 10.

20. Out of compassion for them and abiding in their Self I destroy with the resplendent Light of Knowledge their darkness born of ignorance. x. 11.

21. In those in whom ignorance is destroyed by Knowledge of the Self, Knowledge like the sun illumines That Supreme. v. 16.

22. High, they say, are the senses; higher than the senses is the mind; and higher than the mind is the understanding; but one who is higher than understanding is He. iii. 42.

23. Thus knowing Him to be higher than the understanding, **steady**ing the self by the Self, Oh thou strong of arm, slay the enemy in the form of desire, so hard to overcome. iii. 43.

24. Just as a burning fire makes ashes of its fuel, Oh Arjuna, even so does the Fire of Knowledge make ashes of all works. iv. 37.

25. Him whose every enterprise is without desire or motive, whose actions are burnt up in the Fire of Knowledge, the wise call a Sage. iv. 19.

26. All around the austere Sages, free from desire and wrath, who have subdued their

mind and have realised the Self, radiates the beatific Peace of Brahman. v. 26.

27. Little by little one should realise tranquillity, by judgment with a steadfast purpose; making the mind abide in the Self, one should think of nothing at all. vi. 25.

28. Towards whatsoever the mind wanders, being fickle and unsteady, therefrom it should be withdrawn and brought under the sway of the Self alone. vi. 26.

29. The saint who devoutly seeks Liberation, with the senses, mind, and intellect subdued, without desire, fear, or wrath, is indeed ever Liberated. v. 28.

30. He who is steadfast in yoga and looks on everything impartially, sees the Self dwelling in all beings, and all beings in the Self. vi. 29.

31. I undertake to secure and protect the welfare of those who without 'otherness' meditate on Me and worship Me, and who ever abide thus attuned. ix. 22.

32. Of these the Jnani, who is ever attuned, whose devotion is centred in Me, is the most excellent; because to the Jnani I am exceedingly dear and he is dear to Me. vii. 17.

33. At the end of many births the Jnani finds refuge in Me, recognizing that Vasudeva is all. Such a high Soul is very hard to find. vii. 19.

34. When one puts away, Oh Partha, all the desires that are in the mind, and in the Self alone, by the Self, is well satisfied, then is one called a man of steadfast wisdom. ii. 55.

35. That man attains Peace who, having cast away all desires, remains without longing, devoid of 'I' and 'mine'. ii. 71.

36. He by whom the world is not disturbed, and who is not disturbed by the world, free from exultation, impatience, fright, and agitation — he is dear to me. xii. 15.

37. He who holds honour and dishonour equal, equal the friendly party and the foe,

who has renounced all enterprise — he is said to have transcended the gunas. xiv. 25.

38. The man who revels here and now in the Self alone, with the Self is satisfied, and in the Self alone is content — for him there is no work to do. iii. 17.

39. For him there is no purpose either in doing work or in leaving it undone ; nor is there in all beings anything which serves him as a purpose. iii. 18.

40. Content to take what chance may bring, having transcended the pairs of oppo-

sites, 'free from ill-will and even-minded in success or failure, though he works he is not bound. iv. 22.

41. The Lord, Oh Arjuna, dwells in the Heart of every being and His mysterious power spins round all beings as if set on the wheel. xviii. 61.

42. To Him alone surrender, Oh Bharata, with all thy being ; by His Grace shalt thou obtain Peace Supreme, the Abode Eternal. xviii. 62.

Mr. Thompson, a very quiet young gentleman who has been staying in India for some years and studying Hindu philosophy as an earnest student, asked : *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* says : 'I am the prop for Brahman.' In another place it says : 'I am in the heart of each one.' Thus the different aspects of the Ultimate Principle are revealed. I take it that there are three aspects, namely : (1) the transcendental, (2) the immanent, and (3) the cosmic. Is Realization to be in any of these or in all of them ? Coming to the transcendental from the cosmic, Vedanta discards the names and forms as being *maya*. Again Vedanta also says that the whole is Brahman, as illustrated by gold and ornaments of gold. How are we to understand the truth ?

Bhagavan : The Gita says : *Brahmano hi pratishtaham*. If that *aham* is known, the whole is known.

Devotee : That is the immanent aspect only.

B. : You now think that you are an individual ; outside you there is the universe and beyond the universe is God. So, there is the idea of separateness. This idea must go. For God is not separate from you or the cosmos. The Gita also says : I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the heart of all beings. I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings. Thus God is not only in the heart of all, He is the prop of all, He is the source of all, their abiding place and their end. All proceed from Him, have their stay in Him, and finally resolve into Him. Therefore He is not separate.

— From *Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*
in His Own Words.

SRI ANANDASHRAM SWAMI'S VISIT TO SRI RAMANASRAMAM

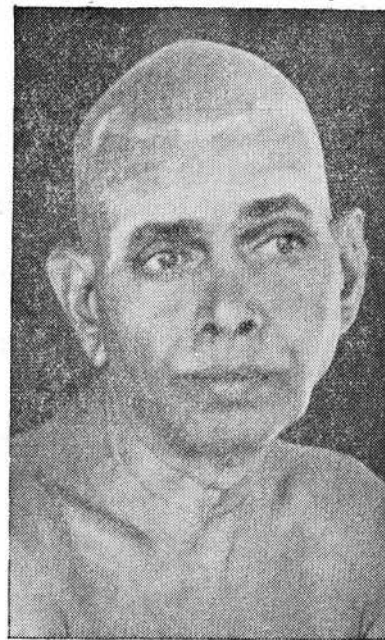
By DR. K. SHIVA RAO *

It is difficult to recall events which took place over two decades ago. But the visit of His Holiness Srimat Anandashram Swamiji to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, being out of the ordinary, is vividly imprinted in my memory.

His Holiness with a small party was touring the South in a car, and on his return journey arrived at Tiruvannamalai on an evening in October, 1941. At that time, the late Dr. M. Anantanarayana Rao had almost completed building a house about a furlong from Sri Ramanasramam. I was living there at that time. Dr. & Mrs. Anantanarayana Rao were still in Madras and arrived the following morning.

Along with a few friends I duly received His Holiness at the roadside with *nadaswaram* and conducted him to the house where a room was specially prepared for his use.

The next morning at about 8 o'clock there was the memorable audience with the Maharshi. Bhagavan was as usual sitting on the couch in the old hall with his back to the east; he turned to the doorway at the south the moment His Holiness entered. They greeted each other with smiles. His Holiness sat on a seat on the floor. For over half an hour they merely gazed at each other. No words were exchanged. The audience then terminated.



I must add that for vast numbers of persons a darshan and the silent gaze of Bhagavan solved problems and communicated peace. Of course when any sadhakas asked questions, they were appropriately, though briefly, answered. Bhagavan usually spoke in Tamil and some devotee nearby acted as interpreter for those who did not know that language.

At about 4 in the afternoon, the same day or the next, I accompanied His Holiness and the party, all barefooted as usual, on a *pradakshina* around the holy Arunachala Hill, which covers about eight miles and a half. On our way back we entered the great Arunachaleswara Temple and offered archana to the deities.

Dr. M. Anantanarayana Rao and I did *pada puja* to His Holiness during his stay.

His Holiness was persuaded to stay for three days, though he had programmed for only two. It was an extremely happy occasion for all of us.

* For whom see the obituary notice in Jan. 1965.

SRI BHAGAVAN'S TRIUMPHANT GAZE

By PROF. N. R. KRISHNAMURTI

My First Darshan

It was in April 1914 that I first saw him. On our way to Tirupati, my parents, uncles and their families halted at Tiruvannamalai. Our party of about twenty, including half-a-dozen youngsters, proceeded to Virupaksha Cave for Sri Bhagavan's darshan. I was then about fifteen years old. I made my obeisance to Sri Bhagavan along with the rest. Sri Bhagavan's benign gaze was fixed on me ; but I paid little attention to him as I ran about the place along with the other boys. We found a good-sized beautiful white conch shell inside the cave. We boys had a lot of fun blowing it. Nobody troubled to prevent us.

After my return home to Tiruchirappalli, when my father was practising as a lawyer, a great change came over me. Till then I had never cared to go to any temple. But now I felt dragged as it were by some mysterious fascination to the huge and magnificent Mathrubhutesvara Lingam in the rock temple in the centre of the city. I would go up the hill almost every evening. Once inside the temple, a great peace overwhelmed me and the joy I felt was indescribable. All the same I was, as usual, keenly interested in my studies. I was then in the S.S.L.C. class. Notwithstanding this spiritual diversion, I maintained a high rank, taking the first place in the school in English, in the S.S.L.C. examination that year.

When I entered college a further change came over me. This was noticeable during the weekly hour for English Composition in



the class room. The tutor would announce the subject for composition as soon as the class assembled. Every student would finish his composition during the hour. But alas for poor me ! I would just write the subject heading on the paper, sit statue-like for the whole hour, and then hand over the blank sheets to the tutor. No ripple of thought could cross my mind which, though fully conscious, stood like a block of stone, immobile, I simply could not muster the thoughts even for a few lines, however much I wished.

The above state continued for the two years of my Intermediate class. Even today it is a wonder to me how I passed the Intermediate examination with just a few marks short of a first, to enable me to secure the coveted seat in the B.A. Honours course. I had to take Physics, though my original desire was to take English Literature. That could not be, as I had done poorly in English with just a pass mark. Judged from this distance of time it looks as if I had lost the volition of free original thinking so much needed in English, though the capacity to remember and repeat facts taken from books was not much impaired.

It was rough sailing during the years of my Physics Honours course. My efforts to study books brought on a very severe ache inside my brain. I would seek relief in closing my eyes and lying still most of the time I was not in class. I wonder how I got my yearly promotions. It must have been due to the kindness of my sympathetic Professor through whom Sri Bhagavan's grace must have operated.

Second Darshan

In January 1919, during the second year of my honours course, I had occasion to visit my sister in Tiruvannamalai. The very morning I arrived there from Tiruchirappalli I had darshan of Sri Bhagavan at Skandasramam. This time also Sri Bhagavan's gracious look was forcibly impressed on me. Returning to my sister's house after darshan, I lay down to sleep after breakfast. It was not ordinary sleep. For over two hours I was fully conscious and at the same time totally unconscious of my body and its surroundings. It was with some difficulty I was roused for lunch. Even after being roused I felt that everything around was like a dream. Of course, people around me saw my puzzled expression and made fun of me.

After my return to Tiruchirappalli, I slowly recovered my ability to study, but I had to extend my three year course to four years. I was lucky to get a second in the University lists when I did take the B.A. Honours degree examination in 1921.

Third Darshan

My third darshan was about the last week of June in the year 1922. Mahatma Gandhi had started the Satyagraha movement against the British Government in India. His non-violent civil resisters were being ruthlessly beaten, killed or imprisoned. I was angry that a person of such high standing as Sri Bhagavan was not moving a finger for the country's libera-

tion. Humiliation and suffering of the good and exaltation of the wicked was the order of the day. All this could never happen I told myself, if there was an omniscient, benevolent, omnipotent God. This Maharshi was wasting time uniting a hypothetical soul with another hypothetical Oversoul or God. I became an agnostic and made it my business to fight anybody who, neglecting the practicalities of life, dared to postulate the existence of soul or God. Here was my opportunity to fight the Maharshi, let him dare to speak a word of soul or God.

I went to Sri Ramanasramam, just then shifted to its present premises where the holy remains of Sri Bhagavan's Mother stand enshrined. I was accompanied by my friend, the late T. K. Sundaresa Iyer and my brother-in-law Kuppuswami Iyer. Sri Bhagavan was alone, seated on a bench placed under a tree. Earlier I had told my companions that I would not prostrate before the Maharshi. But lo! a strange thing happened. The instant we reached his presence, I had fallen flat, face down, before him in the traditional mode of prostration. This of course caused in me some embarrassment, which, however, I soon got over. Fixing a steady look at the Maharshi's face, I jerked out my question in Tamil "You are now sitting like this, but what is your next state (i.e. after death)"? My idea was to elicit from him the reply that there is a soul which survives the dissolution of the body and gets united with the Oversoul or God; so that I could fight it out and prove the contrary. Minutes passed, but no reply was forthcoming. Two pairs of eyes were interlocked in a steady gaze, and there was absolute silence. The thought barely passed within me, "Is this man taking shelter in this silence to avoid answering an inconvenient question".

Just then Sri Bhagavan's ringing voice exploded, "You said, state; what do you mean by state?". If a bomb shell had exploded under my seat, it could not have been

so shattering as this sudden counter question most unexpectedly delivered. I must answer him. I began to think : " Well, I did not ask him about the body which would be buried or burnt. There is something inside the body, the thinking apparatus, the so called mind ; it is about this I asked. Now if I say that the question is about the state of the mind, he will naturally ask me to define mind, and so I must have the answer ready for such a question. So within myself I raised the enquiry " What is mind ? ". But alas ! no answer was forthcoming ; my mind was paralysed, its thought power dead ! Like a helpless mute, I sat. Just then, there was a fierce glow in Sri Bhagavan's eyes which held my eyes in a tight grip ; a radiant smile of victory spread over his divine face. I lost sense of body and world, the insignificant I that I was

being swallowed up in pure Awareness-Being in which all name, form, time, space and action were utterly lost, in a state of utter silence a-glow with self effulgent I-AM-I-AM without beginning or end. Recovering consciousness of body and surroundings, with the inner glow still effulgent, there was no more question to be asked or answered. Revelling in the joy of that thrilling defeat, I quickly prostrated and made a headlong flight.

Wonder of wonders is this matchless gaze of Sri Bhagavan's, how potent, how joyous. It cannot be expressed in words. From my fifteenth year till this day when I am sixty-seven, that gaze is still rivetted on me, and the absorption of the ego in Arunachala-Siva-Ramana which is pure spirit continues with ever increasing vigour.

A MESSAGE FROM H. H. SRI RAMA DEVI

The redemptive grace of the Satguru is the most outstanding contributory factor in spiritual unfoldment. The spiritual power activated through the mystic touch of the Master transports the consciousness of the disciple to the realm of transcendent wisdom.

Maharshi Ramana personified the force and purity of spiritual silence. By his inherence in wisdom and his spontaneity in Self-abidance he revealed in himself the truth epitomised in

the Mahavakyas that the soul is identical with the Absolute.

Maharshi's life was a silent hymn of praise to the Supreme and a ceaseless teaching of the mystery of life and universe. In him was a wonderful blend of all-transcending aloofness and active sympathy for suffering souls.

May his silent grace continue to inspire and illumine all his devotees and all aspiring souls who look to him for guidance.

In a sense, speaking of Self-realization is a delusion. It is only because people have been under the delusion that the non-Self is the Self and the unreal the Real, that they have to be weaned out of it by the other delusion called Self-realization ; because actually the Self always is the Self and there is no such thing as realizing it. Who is to realize what, and how, when all that exists is the Self and nothing but the Self.

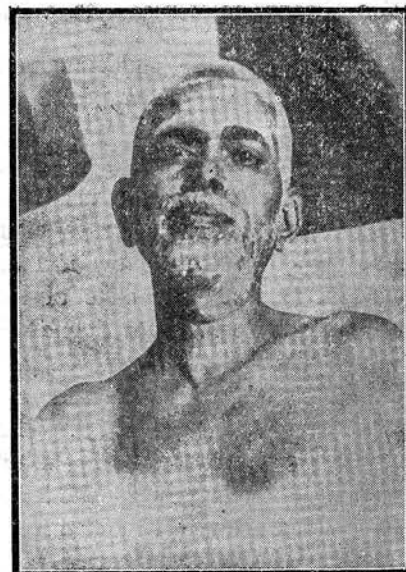
— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

THE WHITE RADIANCE OF ETERNITY

By PROF. K. SUBRAHMANYAM

About a quarter of a century ago, a group of four persons, myself in the number, went to Tiruvannamalai to have our first darshan of Bhagavan. We slept overnight in the town and set out for the Ashram in the morning, after the usual bath. On arriving at the entrance to the Ashram grounds, we paused and surveyed what lay before us. At some distance within was a big white building that dominated the scene. In between were a number of sheds, some of which we would have to pass and some we might have to enter. At the end of our short walk of exploration we would arrive at the white building and there hoped to have our darshan. With this plan in mind, we first entered the Publication Department of the Ashram and then went into the Ashram Office, both of which were in the same building. Then, following some persons who were moving ahead, we walked towards the adjoining shed.

On stepping across the threshold, occurred the most overwhelming experience of my life. For here, just on the other side of the threshold, gazing full at us, the new arrivals, was Bhagavan himself! Nothing had prepared us to find him here. Not a whisper had escaped from within the hall; there had been no unusual gathering or movement of people outside it. But, here in perfect silence sat Bhagavan and those who had come seeking him; he, partly sitting and partly reclining on a sofa; they, seated facing him, in rows on the floor for the whole length of the hall, not



less than fifty of them. Into this fellowship of serenity, seemingly waiting to receive us, we stepped, without a moment's preparation of the mind, and were absorbed into it the same instant. It was as well that the mind had not set about preparing itself, for then, on receiving Bhagavan's gaze, it might have proceeded to respond self-consciously. Taken unawares, the mind was overwhelmed before it could even feebly affirm its existence. In its place was Bhagavan's silence — awareness with only peace for its content.

What we had hitherto called "silence" had been very different; a respite from speech, perhaps to replenish the exhausted energy for the sake of speech yet to come; or a manner of "inward chatter", a succession of jerky thoughts whose utterance was only inaudible to others. Even such "silence", if it is pervasive or prolonged, seems to most people abnormal, morbid, weird — even suggestive of danger and calamity. The story goes that King Ajatasatru of Maghada once set out to pay a visit to the Buddha and his *bhikshus* (said to number more than a thousand) who were then residing in a big mango-grove at a little

distance from the royal capital, Rajagriha. The king with his large retinue approached the grove, entered it and even proceeded into it for some distance ; when panic seized him. Turning to his guide he asked, " Surely some ambush is laid for me here and you are leading me into it ? Not a sneeze have I heard, not a clearing of the throat from that large *sangha* which dwells here, as you said ! " Men recognize " normalcy " only in continued speech, inward when it is not outward. Speech is the ego's customary manner of self-affirmation, its habitual satisfaction. Where the ego is aggressive, speech is strident ; swearing and oaths are the ego's violent explosions. For this reason it must have been that Jesus asked people to communicate with others with a quiet " yea, yea " or " nay, nay " and never to swear. But if one identifies one's being with the ego and if the only proof of being alive which one recognizes is the mind's incessant chatter (outward or inward), how can one find true silence — Bhagavan's presence — endurable ? Our feeble intelligence can be only indirectly aware of a bright, white smooth surface, by the scribbles on it. If there is no scribble, there is no whiteness for us. It

was by Grace that at the moment when we stepped over the threshold of that shed our minds were not engaged in scribbling or interested in any scribble. We saw the pure whiteness in a flash.

That moment vanished, but my being had been fertilized. Silence and seclusion could not fill me with dread thereafter. The life of a recluse can be more charged with power (I could at least understand) than the lives of those who shout and rush about. The distant peak is a peak, not an appearance among the clouds. Nirvana, Sunyata, Mindlessness, Nirguna Brahman or Nirvikalpa Samadhi are terms that need to be received with reverent attention, not with frightened bewilderment. In course of time, one might enter into the truth of Lao Tzu's saying, that though thirty spokes meet in the hub of the wheel, the hole, the void at the hub-centre, is the wheel's *raison d'être*, its true use.

The speech and the silence that we ordinarily know are at the same level ; they are modes of each other. But Bhagavan's Silence, lying deeper, could well bear both of them on its surface.

A TRIBUTE FROM CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS

Apart from being Founder President of the London Buddhist Society, *Christmas Humphreys* is the most widely read English writer on Buddhism today. We have pleasure in publishing this tribute he has sent us :

The spiritual grandeur of the late Ramana Maharshi is unrivalled in the twentieth century. Only those still bound in the limitations of some particular religion could challenge this belief which, as a Buddhist, I have held since I first met those who had the good fortune to sit at the Master's feet. And when I

read his recorded conversations with those who sought his wisdom I recognized that conscious identity with the Unborn, Unoriginated, Unformed, as the Buddha called the Absolute. May I honour myself by paying humble tribute to one who left the world with such an example of attainment.

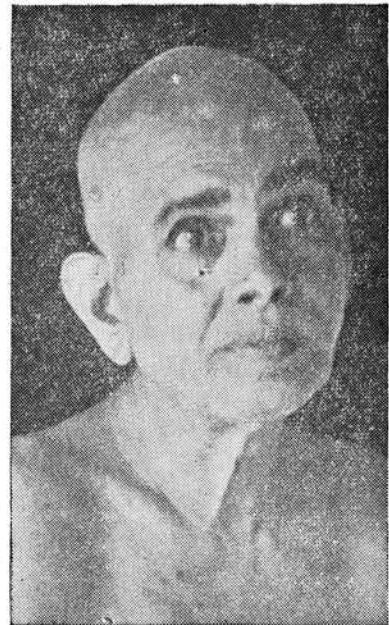
DIVINE GLIMPSES

By 'VISHNU'

Bhagavan is God Himself and in saying this I do not refer to any of the personal gods of any religion but to the Universal Principle or Pure Consciousness. I dislike to compare him with any past personage, for there is no meaning in comparing Incarnations of that One Principle which has no second ; but yet for our understanding if at all we want to compare, it can only be with Christ or Buddha.

I never forgot, whenever I was talking with him or sitting in his presence, that here was God sitting and talking. It is our greatest fortune that the Supreme Consciousness appearing in the garb of a human body graciously undertook to come down to our level of understanding and bore the tremendous task of imparting to us the Truth of Atma Vidya. Such a thought always made me understand him and his talks better and more clearly.

Once a few very learned Sanskrit scholars were sitting in the Old Hall discussing portions of the Upanishads and other scriptural texts with Bhagavan. Bhagavan was giving them proper explanations and it was a sight to remember and adore ! At the same time,



I felt genuinely in my heart, 'Oh, how great these people are and how fortunate they are to be so learned and to have such deep understanding and be able to discuss with our Bhagavan. Compared with them, what am I, a zero in scriptural learning ?' I felt miserable. After the pundits had taken leave Bhagavan turned to me and said : "What ?", looking into my eyes and studying my thoughts. Then, without even giving me an opportunity to explain, he continued : "This is only the husk ! All this book learning and capacity to repeat the scriptures by memory is absolutely no use. To know the Truth, you need not

The author of this article is one of the seniormost disciples of Bhagavan and one also who enjoyed special privileges. He was one of the few who helped Bhagavan in his work in the kitchen described elsewhere in this issue. He was also one of the few chosen to witness the drawing up and signing of the Will by which Bhagavan left the management of the Ashram to his collateral descendants, that is to the family of his brother Niranjanananda Swami (for an account of whom see our *Ashram Bulletin* of Jan. 1964.) It even happened on occasion that Bhagavan postponed some small function when his professional work called him away and held it only after his return.

When he first went to Bhagavan as a young man he was a modernist and a free-thinker. He told the two friends who took him that he would not bow down to him. He bowed down all right ; and it was he who stayed and they who left ! We are grateful to him for giving a few items from his vast fund of reminiscences.

undergo all this torture of learning. Not by reading do you get the Truth. BE QUIET, that is Truth. BE STILL, that is God."

Then very graciously he turned to me again and there was an immediate change in his tone and attitude. He asked me: "Do you shave yourself?" Bewildered by this sudden change, I answered, trembling, that I did.

"Ah, for shaving you use a mirror, don't you? You look into the mirror and then shave your face; you don't shave the image in the mirror. Similarly all the scriptures are meant only to show you the Way to Realization. They are meant for practice and attainment. Mere book learning and discussions are comparable to a man shaving the image in the mirror." From that day onwards the sense of inferiority that I had been feeling vanished once for all.

One more assurance from Bhagavan which also he gave as a personal instruction is of absolute value for me in my sadhana. I cried to him that I knew nothing about Vedanta nor could I practise austerity, being a householder; so I prayed to him to help me by showing the Reality or the Way to It. I also frankly admitted that Bhagavan's own method of Self Enquiry was too hard for me. He then graciously said: "You know *Ulladu Narpadu* (Truth in Forty Verses). It imparts Pure Truth, deals with It and explains It. Go on reading it verse by verse. The words of the verses, will in course of time vanish, and Pure Truth (Sat) alone will shine, like the snake relinquishing its skin and coming out shining." This is my sadhana.

One day I was sitting near Bhagavan's couch and I felt puzzled by the ancient teaching that everything that appears in the world is maya or illusion. I wondered how it could be, when I saw Bhagavan, the couch on which he sat, the barrier separating me from Bhagavan and myself. How could all these be

false? I asked Bhagavan, explaining my doubt: "Bhagavan, can all of us be unreal and non-existent? Please enlighten me." Bhagavan laughed and asked me whether I had any dream the previous night. I replied that I saw several people lying asleep. He said: "Suppose now I ask you to go and wake all those people in the dream and tell them they are not real, how absurd it would be! That is how it is to me. There is nothing but the dreamer, so where does the question of dream people, real or unreal, arise; still more of waking them up and telling them that they are not real? We are all unreal, why do you doubt it? That alone is real." After this explanation I never had any doubt about the unreality of the objective world. I constantly feel the reality in their unreal nature.

On another occasion he said: "Everything is unreal, like dream objects. However at a certain stage there exists Truth, the Reality, and World, the unreality; and a Jnani's job is to awaken the ignorant to the fact that what they see and feel is unreal and that the Reality is their own Being. This can be compared to an elephant dreaming of a lion and suddenly waking up and finding that the lion is unreal and that itself alone is real. The elephant is the jiva or individual, the dream is the unreal world and the lion, the Jnani or Guru. The Guru is the link between the unreal and the real." On another occasion he said: "There is no Jnani (Realized Man), Jnana (Knowledge) alone is."

About the Jivanmukta, Realized while still living, Bhagavan said: "The Jivanmukta is one without any thoughts or sankalpas (inherent tendencies). The thought process ceases completely in him. Some Power makes him do things. So he is not the doer but the one who is made to do."

RECOLLECTION OF SRI RAMANA JAYANTHI

By D. S. SASTRI

D. S. Sastri, the author of this article, is writing for the first time in THE MOUNTAIN PATH. He is, however, already well known to our readers, being the 'Brother' to whom Nagamma's letters were written.



On Friday the 7th of January, 1966, the birthday of Sri Ramana Maharshi will be celebrated at the Ashram, when devotees from far and near will assemble to pay homage to the great sage. Mahapurushas of this type are born once in several centuries for the uplift of mankind. Some of them teach the path of Karma Yoga, some the path of Bhakthi Yoga and some the path of Jnana Yoga. Bhagavan belongs to the last category.

At birth, everyone enjoys bliss; is the embodiment of Ananda. Very soon thereafter, the pangs of hunger make the new born cry for food and when that desire is satisfied, the child sleeps soundly and relapses into its original state of bliss. As the child grows, the need for clothing arises and in due course for housing also. Thereafter desires multiply and a family grows around. A person thus gets buried in the joys and sorrows of family life and believes that this mundane world is real, forgetting his original state of bliss.

Bhagavan therefore tells everyone to find out who he really is. That is the vichara marga — the path of Self-Enquiry which he taught to people who approached him for enlightenment. He maintained that that path was very easy. He used to tell the devotees "First find out who you are. You were ori-

ginally at the time of birth, the embodiment of bliss. You have subsequently built around you this samsara — family — and have created for yourself a world of continuous and unending sorrow and misery. If you give up the feeling of ego — this family, this world and the like — and realise that your Self is unconnected with the rest, you will then attain Moksha — (freedom from bondage) ”.

If this path — call it Vichara Marga, i.e. Self-Enquiry or Jnana Marga, i.e. path of knowledge — is so very easy, one may well ask why people do not take to it *en masse*. The path is perhaps easy to understand but extremely difficult to follow. What every person wants is enough food and clothing and a roof to live under. If however all these necessities of life are provided and one is asked to live all alone, will one do so? No: one cannot do so for the simple reason that man is a 'social animal' and desires grow in abundance wherever one may happen to live.

The greatest punishment in jail life is said to be solitary confinement. Every person has desires and these grow in proportion to their fulfilment; and there is no limit to them. With desires sorrows come. Just as there is no end to desires, there is no end to sorrows.

That is why ancients have said "*Kowpeena vantah khalu Bhagyavantah*." "He who owns only a loin cloth is really the richest." Hence it is, the sannyasi is enjoined to have only "*Karathala Bhiksha : Taruthala vasah*," i.e. eating only as much of the two palms of his hands can hold and living under the shade of trees. The sannyasi is expected to be absorbed at all times in his Self. That is called Sat-Chit-Ananda. That is Brahman.

Bhagavan instructed all who approached him to pursue the enquiry "Who am I?" with the assurance that whoever does so suc-

cessfully will realise the Truth ultimately. No one can say how many understood this great truth or believed in the path of Self-Enquiry but this much is certain that the lives of countless people have been revolutionised by their contact with Bhagavan and their minds have consequently been turned towards God. That is what Mahapurushas do when they are born in this world. These birthday celebrations are intended mainly to remind us of those great souls so that we could follow their example and precepts to the best of our abilities.

NO FURTHER CHANGE

By PROF. G. V. SUBBARAMAYYA

Questioned as to what changes he underwent after coming to Arunachala, Sri Bhagavan replied : "I am ever the same. There is neither sankalpa (will) nor change in me. Till I reached the Mango Grove I remained indifferent, with my eyes shut. Afterwards I opened my eyes and began functioning actively. Otherwise there is no change whatsoever in me."

"But Bhagavan," said one, "we do note many outward changes in you."

"Yes," replied Bhagavan, "that is because you see me as this body. So long as you identify yourself with your body you cannot but see me as an embodied being."



Devotee : Do a person's actions in this life affect him in future births?

Bhagavan : Are you born now? Why do you think of future births? The truth is that there is neither birth nor death. Let him who is born think of death and palliatives for it.

— From *Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*.

EASY YET DIFFICULT

By G. L. N.

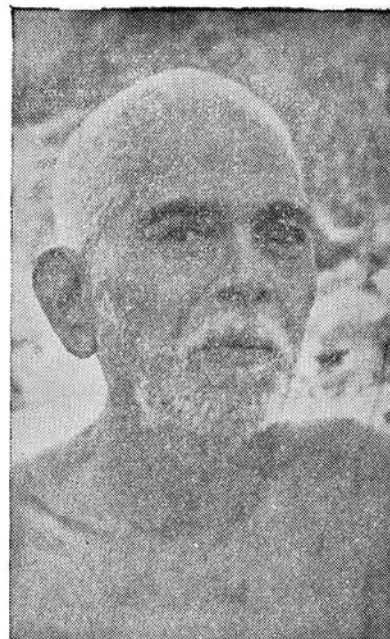
This is a brief account of how my contact with Sri Ramana helped me. Truth transcends individuality ; what I depict is my limited personal understanding of him.

My contact with him began in 1930. It was by Divine Providence, not by my planning, that I was able to spend a continuous period of three years at Sri Ramanasramam. It was a great blessing.

I was a science graduate. I had learned about the atomic structure of the universe and how matter finally resolves into energy and the mind also is a form of energy. So the entire world of mind and matter, when traced to its source, is one uniform Energy or God or whatever you choose to call it.

This was my attitude of mind when I first went to Sri Ramanasramam. Bhagavan was then translating his 'Ulladu Narpadu' (Forty Verses) into Telugu at the request of Yogi Ramiah. After finishing it he threw the book to me and said : "You are an Andhra ; see if there are any mistakes of grammar in it." This was an act of grace, for it was that translation which was responsible for turning my mind inwards and setting it on the right path.

The essence of what Bhagavan said to me in my talks with him was : "You say that on final analysis all that I see or think or do is one ; but that really comprises two notions : the all that is seen and the I that does the seeing, thinking and doing, and says 'I'. Which of these two is the more real, true and important ? Obviously the seer, since the seen is dependent on it. So turn your attention to the seer who is the source of your 'I' and realize that. This is the real task. Up to now you have been studying the object, not the



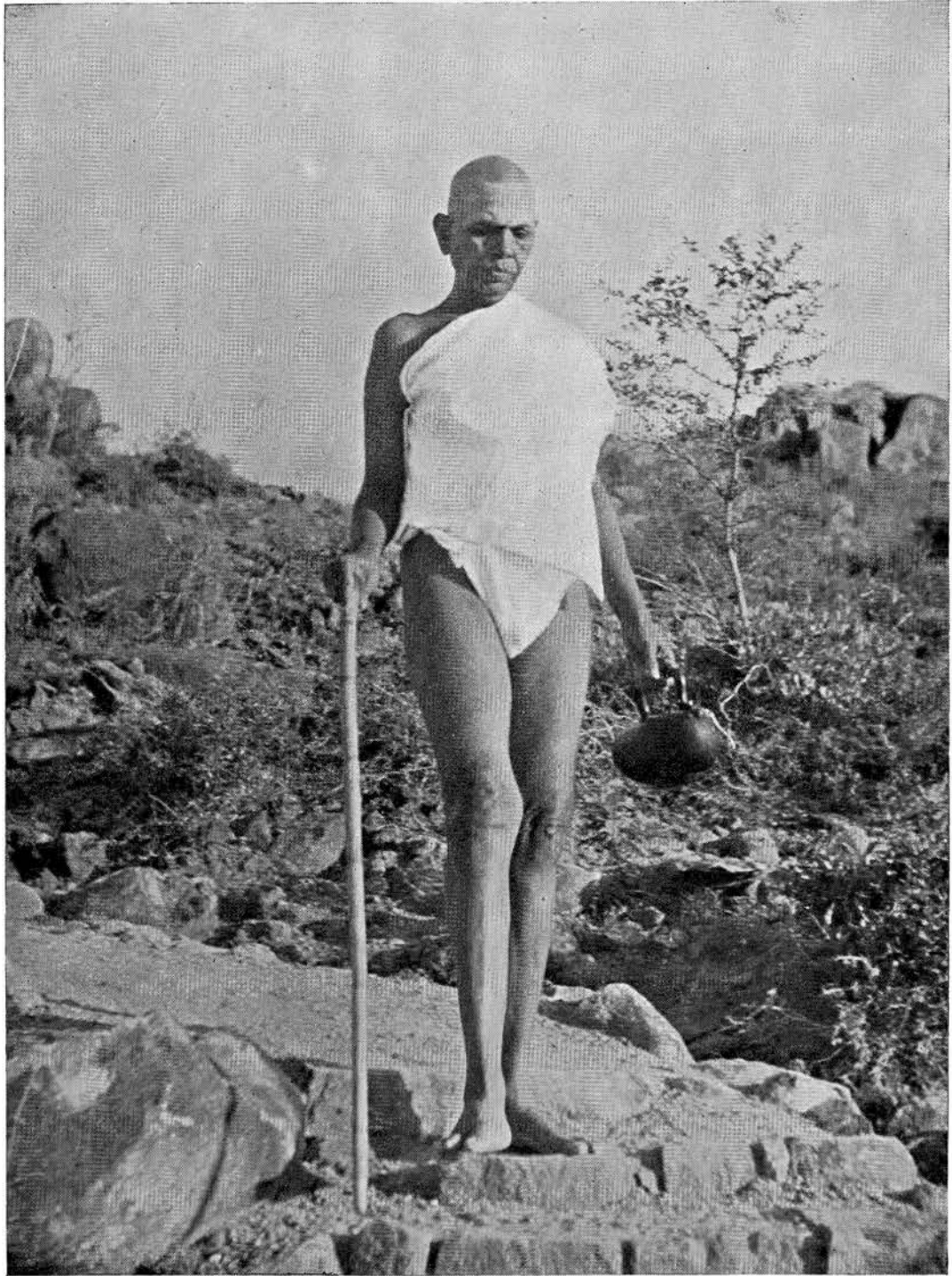
subject ; now find out for what reality this word 'I' stands. Find the entity which is the source of the expression 'I'. That is the Self, the Self of all selves."

This direct, simple teaching was like a tonic to me. It swept away the unrest and confusion that till then had haunted my mind. It is, of course, the essence of 'Ulladu Narpadu' and the central theme of all Bhagavan's writings. The simplicity of it made me burst out : "Then Bhagavan, Self-realization is very easy, just as you say in the poem 'Atma Vidya' !"

Bhagavan smiled and said : "Yes, yes, it seems so at first, but there is difficulty too. You have to overcome your present false values and wrong identification. Therefore the quest requires concentrated effort and steadfast abidance in the Source when this is reached."

However, even while warning me, he also added words of solace : "But don't let that deter you. The rise of the urge to seek for the 'I' is itself an act of Divine Grace. Once this urge gets hold of you, you are in its clutches. The grip of Divine Grace never relaxes and finally devours you, just as the prey in a tiger's jaws is never allowed to escape."

Those who take refuge at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord of Mercy, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi—their minds freed of attachment to riches, lands and relatives, and to caste and the like, and ever made purer by seeking Thy Benign Grace—these rid themselves (of the misery) of darkness, and in the steady light of Thy ever-protecting Grace, which shines like the golden rays of the rising sun, they abide happy, sunk in the Ocean of Bliss.



JANAKI MATA

It has become our custom to publish in each issue an article about some saint, mystic or guru. We had decided that in an issue devoted entirely to Sri Bhagavan this would not be quite appropriate, but just before it was time to go to the press we received chapters of a still unpublished life of the woman ecstatic Janaki Mata who has a considerable following and at the same time is a whole-hearted devotee of Sri Bhagavan, so we decided to construct an article by stringing together extracts from this.

While occupying herself all day long with household work, Mata sought God by adoration, self-surrender and intense devotion and prayed for his mysterious divine force to guide every step of hers. From the moment she first came to Bhagavan Sri Ramana he was her all. For her Bhagavan Ramana represented the confluence of manifold manifestations of the pantheon. The pace of progress was accelerated thenceforth. The daily puja took a different turn. Names and forms lost their significance. Instead of doing puja to a particular deity, she used to worship whatever manifestation of the Formless presented itself at the moment. Once it would be Krishna and the next instant Siva, and then all forms ended by merging into the Paramatma, the All-Per-vading Spirit. One thing was clear to her : that the Formless God assuming one form or another for a brief time and finally withdrawing into the endless tract of the Void and becoming the Cosmic Self, would not be of much help to her for practical guidance and that the one guide on whom she could depend was Bhagavan Ramana. "There is only one thing worth achieving," she decided ; "the root cause of the universe, the One without a second. I must attain it, realize it and experience it with Bhagavan's Grace."

She decided that her duty to the family was over and she could seek the Goal as a celibate or recluse. Doctor (her husband) assured her of his whole-hearted co-operation. "Though



you are still in the family, you may live as though in an Ashram," he said. . . .

Mata was physically and mentally exhausted by her experiences, so Doctor took her to Sri Ramanasramam. Sitting among the other devotees in the hall there in the evening she reflected with a heavy heart that there was only half an hour till the evening chanting started and then she would have to leave as they had

to be back home next day. It was said that without the guidance of a Guru an aspirant could fall into mental disorder, and Bhagavan, who was God to her, was reported to have said that he was not a Guru and had no disciples.¹ What was she to do? How could she find an occasion to speak with him alone and ask him?

Probably in response to her thoughts, Bhagavan suddenly got up from the couch and went out of the hall, contrary to his daily routine. Considering this a gesture of the Grace of the Lord, Sri Mata also went out. Every one else remained seated. After waiting for a while, Mata saw him returning from the side of the cowshed and hastened to meet him. Coming to him, she prostrated herself at his holy feet in obeisance with tears of joy trickling down her cheeks. The attendant ordered her roughly to get up and not obstruct Bhagavan's path, but Bhagavan told him curtly to stand aside. Mataji quickly poured out her heart before him, telling him of her spiritual experiences and beseeching him for protection and removal of the obstacles in her quest for Liberation. She mentioned also her fear of becoming deranged through having no Guru to guide her on the quest. Bhagavan, whose compassion is infinite, replied: "Who told you that you have no Guru? I am here as your Guru. Nothing will upset your mind."

On the night of October 12, 1937, when all around her were asleep, Janaki Mata felt what seemed to her like a powerful explosion in the back of her head. She leapt up from bed, unable to bear the strain. There was a flare-up along her spinal cord from muladhara at the base of the spine right up to sahasrara in the brain. She saw a brilliance like lightening all along the sushumna between these two points. There was a sort of conflagration followed by flames, some blue and some like lightning, ascending from the muladhara to the sahasrara with a hissing sound like that of an angry serpent. It even tried to burst open the top of

her skull and she had the impression that the force was trying to escape into the ether beyond. She did not think her physical body would stand it. She woke up the others who were sleeping nearby and climbed up to the open terrace on the roof. She did not want to die there, as she was only a guest, so she prayed that her body should last at least till she reached home or the Doctor would be terribly upset. Still the strain did not stop but continued as violent as before. She turned then to the light in her and said to it: "If you are going to leave the body do so unencumbered by wants, desires and worries so as not to get tossed into another womb for another reincarnation. But if you are not quite sure of Liberation wait till I am in the holy presence of my Sat-Guru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana."

On being thus addressed the mysterious force gave up its efforts to burst open the skull. Its activities within the body continued but became bearable and much less unpleasant. The body seemed to be disabled. She could neither lie down nor sit but had to recline against a pile of cushions. Both inwardly and outside her, brilliant and mysterious scenes ablaze with luminosity rushed past, including figures of the gods. The light inside with the effulgence of a hundred thousand suns kept rushing up with rocket speed and dashing against the skull. It carried in it a galaxy of all the deities she had worshipped at various times till then. . . .

Next day Sri Mata was taken home to Cuddalore. There she was bed-ridden and continued to have a series of spiritual experiences. Each time the kundalini shot up there was purging of the bowels. It seemed as if she was purging away the dross of a multitude of previous births. . . . The thirsty kundalini had

¹ Bhagavan's saying this must be understood to imply that the Guru, being beyond duality, cannot postulate any relationship for himself. When Alan Chadwick asked him about it once he explained this and added that from the point of view of the disciple the Guru-disciple relationship is real.

eaten away the flesh of her body and consumed half her blood. Solid food was out of the question. She could take only an ounce or two of liquid food per day. This state of affairs continued for twenty-six days. She bore the ordeal with exemplary patience. Supernatural powers began to manifest in her. While lying in bed one day her body began to rise slowly in the air, retaining its horizontal position, until it was floating in mid air several feet above the bed. Her daughter's mother-in-law, who was lying in the next bed, cried out, asking her what was the matter. She replied : "I am not interested in acquiring or exhibiting supernatural powers. Let them not manifest in me!" On this the body slowly came down again to the bed.

The saying of Sri Ramakrishna that if such a state continued for more than twenty-seven days the body would collapse, unable to bear the strain, flashed through her mind. It had already lasted twenty-six days. She explained this to Doctor and begged him to take her to Bhagavan. He was reluctant at first owing to her great weakness but allowed himself to be persuaded. Bhagavan cast his gracious glance upon her and bade her be without fear. Without even touching her he injected a current of divine strength into her. It was like transmitting electric current from a generator. Next day she took leave of Bhagavan and returned to Cuddalore in her normal state.

* * *

The wonderful experience that Sri Mata had stiffened her body and benumbed her physical faculties. The sahasrara in the crown of the head was illumined by a radiant and delightful light. She was in a state of grandeur which cannot be put in words. Even the most eloquent description would fail to do justice to that grand and lofty state. The feeling of delight and tranquillity surpasses all imagination. All the pleasures of the physical world pale into insignificance when compared to that Eternal Quietude.

Nevertheless the kundalini still continued trying to break through the sahasrara and continue her journey beyond the physical body. Sri Mata cried out aloud : "What are you trying to do? I and Bhagavan Sri Ramana are inseparable! Against the downpour of the Guru's Grace you can do me no harm."² On this the force in her desisted from its attempts and her body recovered its suppleness and sense of feeling. After this experience she told Doctor that she had at last attained her long cherished goal and been set free from the round of birth and death, so the purpose of her earthly life was fulfilled.

* * *

It was three days before Doctor could join Sri Mata at Ramanasramam. When he did he found her completely changed. She had a detached mind and the freedom of a parrot that has escaped from its cage into the open expanse of the sky. Just as its joy in freedom prevents it returning again to its cage, so Sri Mata was not in a mood to get entangled in family life again. Doctor spent a sleepless night. He had undergone the grief of separation at the death of his first wife. Now his second wife was lost to him even though still alive. He was brooding "Have I not given her all my love and affection? Have I not sacrificed my personal desires to hers, though I had the authority to exercise my rights? Have I not done everything conducive to the attainment of her goal? I have given her all the comforts of a happy life. Why is she indifferent to me now?"

It grieved him to leave her at the Ashram without even any money, but she told him that her inner voice was commanding her to be a sannyasini, and as that mode of life suited her

² The bursting of the kundalini through the crown of the head is not necessarily fatal or even injurious. It is, in fact, the normal process, as described by Unnamulai in her article 'An Experience of Kundalini' in our issue of April 1965. It can be dangerous if the aspirant is not ripe for it. The kundalini path or process in general can be dangerous if not guided by a Guru.

taste she would adopt it and remain at the Ashram for the rest of her life. The Doctor and their children were stricken with grief but their appeals and even their tears had no effect. Doctor wrote to his various relatives telling them that Sri Mata was lost to the family. He decided to leave an aunt for a month to see to her welfare and return home to Kakinada with the children next day.

Next morning, however, while she was sitting in front of Bhagavan, the thought flashed through her mind that she had pro-

mised him to remain in the family for five more years. She therefore immediately said that she would go back with Doctor to Kakinada. Bhagavan gazed steadily at her and then said: "Did I ask you to become a sannyasini? Look at me: I have not taken sannyas and do not wear the ochre robe. You have only one family but I have to shoulder the burden of all these devotees and their families." It dawned on her then that renunciation must be in the heart and that inner purity is more important than outer renunciation.

YOU WILL KNOW IN DUE COURSE

By ACHARYASWAMI

Once I mustered courage to put a question to Bhagavan about transmigration or reincarnation. I put my question in English and it was translated by Swami Ramanananda Saraswati. "If, with the decay of the physical body, the light within reverts to the all-pervading Light how can there be any transmigration or

reincarnation of the soul?"

He smilingly replied with a quotation from the Bhagavad Gita meaning: you will know in due course.

I am glad to say that after long and deep consideration I have been able to fathom this sublime theory.

In yoga *samadhi* is used to indicate some kind of trance and there are various kinds of *samadhi*. But the *samadhi* I speak to you about is different. It is *sahaja samadhi*. In this state you remain calm and composed during activity. You realize that you are moved by the deeper Real Self within and are unaffected by what you do or say or think. You have no worries, anxieties or cares, for you realize that there is nothing that belongs to you as ego and that everything is being done by something with which you are in conscious union.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

THE EVER-PRESENT

By DUNCAN GREENLEES *

"It is expedient that I leave you" — CHRIST

* * *
"Herein is no cause for sorrow" — BUDDHA

* * *
One of the Lord Buddha's last recorded sayings was, "All compounds must dissolve; herein there is no cause for sorrow." That precious and beloved body, so long treasured in our hearts as Sri Bhagavan, was, as a physical vehicle, a compound and had to separate in time into its component elements, disappearing from those eyes which so long delighted in it with reverent affection.

So too, Sri Krishna found it expedient that His Gopi-devotees be made to enrich their love for Him by withdrawing His outward Form from their adoring eyes. Then He sent Uddhava to hint to them how they could now be *always* in His presence and find Him ever dancing in their hearts. When the eye of love has no longer to seek with yearning for the Beloved outside, the eye of the inner heart is turned within, and there realizes His living ecstatic presence.

And so it has been with us. The inevitable happened on that April evening in 1950, and the dear body which had been so long the centre, the focus of our hearts' gaze ceased to delight our eyes. Can we say that He is dead? Bhagavan dead? The word could have no meaning. How can He who lives in all the universe ever taste of death? "You think I am going away? But where am I to go? I shall remain here with you!" That was His promise while he was preparing us for the seeming separation. And those of us who loved Him here in Tiruvannamalai hold firmly to the faith, which we feel confirmed by continual experience, that He has kept that pro-

mise, and is still to be contacted here in the Ashram as of old.

Like Surdas, darkening the physical sight so that he might see clearly the Light within, He has dimmed our outer sight to His radiance, only that the inner vision might be filled with His eternal Light. He has veiled the outer Form we loved so well, that its beauty might no longer draw our gaze away from the everlasting Presence enthroned in our inmost Heart.

Painful was that veiling to our human hearts. Yet in these days of seeming deprivation, happy indeed are we if we be driven thereby inward, to see and love Him there; shining as the Heart of all, the ineffably radiant Self, manifesting ever as the Self of our self, the very Being of our being, the ever-blessed Awareness of all Truth, the Stillness of omnipresent Bliss —Satchidananda.

Our hearts were kindled to deep affection while He taught us by word and example, while He silently showered the nectar dew of Grace upon us all. Today they turn to Him

* For whom see the obituary in this issue.



within, by day and night, no less than of old ; and they rejoice to find that Grace wells up unceasingly from the Fountain of the One Self, who alone is all Wisdom, Love and Power.

At His tender feet, that trod the mountain path so long for us, our grateful love and

undying memory we lay. May He accept these poor gifts of our hearts, and pour His grace on all who wander in the darkness of the unknown tracts of primal ignorance. His Light shines, with the everlasting clarity of God's own Light.

MAHARSHI RAMANA AND SELF-ENQUIRY

By SRI-LA-SRI PANRIMALAI SWAMIGAL

Great saints like Maharshi Ramana who have attained Self-Realisation and lived in the stage of eternal supreme consciousness have disseminated spiritual knowledge amongst seekers of truth to ennoble their lives.

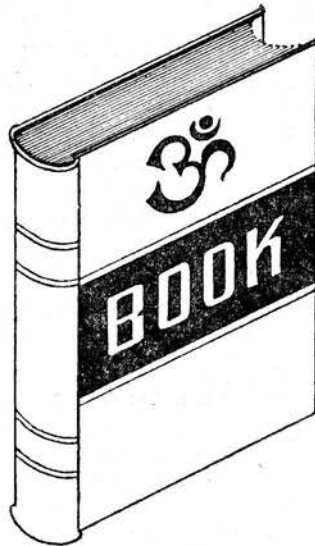
Maharshi Ramana has chosen the path of Knowledge for serving humanity. His teaching through Atma Vichara, that is, enquiry within : "Who am I ?" and tracing the mind

to its primal source as a Sadhana for Self-Realisation, has enabled many a spiritual aspirant to still the mind and realize the true Self as the self-effulgent, omnipresent Spirit. By abiding in mouna or silence, he radiated serene calmness and peace (santi) all around.

It is but befitting that the *Mountain Path* should have brought out a Special Jayanti Number to reveal to the world the greatness of Maharshi Ramana — the Sat Guru.

The individual being which identifies its existence with that of the life in the physical body as 'I' is called the ego. The Self, which is pure Consciousness, has no ego-sense about it. Neither can the physical body which is inert in itself, have this ego-sense. Between the two, that is between the Self or pure Consciousness and the inert physical body, there arises mysteriously the ego-sense or 'I' notion, the hybrid which is neither of them, and this flourishes as an individual being. This ego or individual being is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore it is to be destroyed by any possible means ; then That which ever is alone remains resplendent. This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-Realization.

— BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.



REVIEWS

PATH TO BEATIFIC PEACE, VOLS. I AND II:
(Rama Sakti Mission, Mangalore, pp. 198 and 262, Rs. 2.25 and 3.50.)

The first volume of 'Path to Beatific Peace' contains a life sketch of Sri Rama Devi followed by extracts from her letters to devotees. The second volume is composed of more formal expositions.

From childhood Rama Devi used to fall into states of samadhi and ecstasy with visions of the Gods and intuitional perception of her own inner nature as the One Self or the Divine Mother. After growing up she went through twelve years of arduous sadhana before starting to guide and instruct others. This sadhana was as unobtrusive as it was severe, since she continued her work as a housewife the whole time, never shirking duties or responsibilities.

In guiding her disciples now, Mother insists on their facing life fully and converting their family and professional duties into means of sadhana. She attaches little importance to ritual. She prescribes total surrender to God or Divine Mother and at the same time recommends concentration on the great Advaitic utterances such as 'That thou art'. To the theorist these two attitudes appear contradictory but in practice they may well be combined or alternate according to the mood of the devotee.

Her guidance is towards purity through concentration, strength through surrender. "The power of a concentrated mind is immense," she writes; "When the mind is taken off from its pursuit of shadows in the outer world and directed inward it gains an insight into its own various

planes of consciousness. The inner world can be surveyed only by a mind disciplined in concentration. The weaklings have always complaints to make, but the man of strong mind and gigantic will prepares himself in silence for the great conquest." But—and here is the necessary paradox—this strength is to be combined with and attained by perfect purity and utter surrender, so that it is not the ego that is strengthened.

WITH ROBES AND BOWL, GLIMPSES OF THE THUDONG BHIKKHU LIFE: By Bhikkhu Khantipalo. (Wheel Publication, No. 83-84, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon, pp. 76, no price stated.)

It is truly admirable the way Bhikkhu Khantipalo brings out both the austerity and the beauty of the life of a Siamese bhikkhu in this little book. If he can describe a dedicated Buddhist way of life so ably he has certainly no need to traduce other religions, as he did in an earlier book reviewed in these columns.

Since Buddhism is making its impact as yet mainly on intellectuals in the West, there is inevitably a tendency among many of its new adherents to look upon it mainly as a philosophy and narrow down the Noble Eightfold Path to the single item of Right Understanding. A book like this, showing what a dedicated life is called for by understanding that really is right will be an excellent corrective to such an attitude. This does not imply, of course, that the conditions of life of a Siamese bhikkhu can be transferred to a Western country—but the spirit that gives rise to them can.

HERE LIES THE HEART, A TALE OF MY LIFE:

By Mercedes de Acosta. (Reynal, pp. 372, \$5.75.)

A brilliant writer and a member of the exotic social set of Greta Garbo, Ivor Stravinsky, Aldous Huxley, Isadora Duncan and other such legendary figures, Mercedes de Acosta nevertheless dedicates her autobiography to "Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi the only completely egoless, world-detached and pure being I have ever known".

She came to India to visit Bhagavan in 1938 and was enormously impressed. Unfortunately, however, her account of him and of the Ashram is full of inaccuracies. Also many of the sayings she attributes to him show a faulty memory. For instance, he would never have said that a world war was imminent or told her that her destiny lay in America. He was concerned to turn the mind away from outer circumstances to the inner Essence.

Clearly apocryphal is the episode from which she derives the title of the book. "When I was in India in 1938, the great sage, Ramana Maharshi, placed his hand on my right breast and said, 'Here lies the Heart—the Dynamic, Spiritual Heart. Learn to find the Self in it.' That was not Bhagavan's way of speaking; moreover he scrupulously avoided touching people, especially ladies, or being touched by them.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

OPEN SECRET: By Wei Wu Wei. (Hong Kong University Press for Asia east of Burma; Oxford University Press for other countries. Pp. 194, HK Dollars 15.)

In this his fifth volume, the author, whose variations on the same theme are well known to readers of *The Mountain Path*, has surpassed himself and almost succeeded in revealing without distortion or dilution the eternal secret known to Lao-tzu, Huang Po, Shen Hui and Ramana Maharshi. While he asserts disarmingly "I am not only not an expert, but not even a student of the subject," he expounds and annotates, with reference to Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese sources, the Hridaya Sutra, which sets out to transmit transcendental knowledge and does it by teaching us "how to see correctly" and providing "an original and dynamic reaction to all scriptures, doctrines and methods."

Avoiding all metaphysical jargon, all myths and symbols and clichés of conventional religion, using contemporary language accurately yet tellingly, Wei Wu Wei presents the purest advaita in a series of swift expositions, often in the form

of a lively dialogue between himself as teacher and himself as pupil. The reader, as he watches, eager and breathless, this strenuous game of hide and seek, gets delightfully mixed up with both the roles and like Hanuman, humble and courageous by turns, crosses the ocean of nescience, despite rocks rampant and marine monsters catching flying objects *via* their shadows, and discovers at last the Goddess of Truth.

The directness of approach and the strength and resilience of the writing are illustrated by the following snippets:

All the visible universe is the Buddha.

All perceiving is the Buddha mind.

The whole mind is the impersonal mind. All judgments and problems vanish when split mind is made whole.

In deep sleep we go sane for a short respite.

Bondage is wholly the notion of "I". And Liberation is liberation from the idea of liberation.

Non-volitional living is the process of being lived.

We do not love others. We *are* others.

All objects are the perceiving of them; the perceiving of them is what they are.

That cannot be free. This cannot be bound.

"I" is the answer to every question.

Any old devotee in dear old India would accept the suggestion (at p. 173) that Maharshi's charming cow Lakshmi was fully 'enlightened' and was indeed a bodhisattva. But it needs a ripe scholar to justify the belief and a daring literary artist to formulate it thus (p. 172): "Any phenomenon can function prajnatically." What a horribly exotic adverb! But how functionally inevitable, having been pragmatically called up by the context to be ecstatically recognized in it by the attentive reader!

K. S.

THE GOLDEN STRING: By Bede Griffiths. [Fontana Books (Collins), pp. 192, 3s. 6d.]

Though this autobiography of Father Griffiths can be fully appreciated only by those who are conversant with the letter and the spirit of the teaching of Christianity in its various forms — ancient and modern, as a story of an "unbeliever" finding his way, through trying vicissitudes of life, to an enlightened Faith in the Divinity at the centre of all Existence, it has a genuine ring. The writer's remarkable experience of God in Nature even during his school days, his revolt from the rule of organised religion and industrial civilisation, his experiments in simple living in the bosom of Nature, his discovery of the function

of prayer as the link between man and his Maker and his eventual admission into an order of the Catholic Church are all described with engaging candour.

There are passages in the book testifying to the author's broad interest in the philosophies and spiritual traditions of the East — Buddhist, Chinese and Indian. We are sorry to note, however, that his understanding of Hindu philosophy and his perspective of Indian history are very limited (pp. 172, 182). Vedanta is not the whole of Hindu philosophy; Shankara is not the whole of Vedanta. The thought of the Upanishads is much older than "the first millennium before Christ". His plea for the introduction of the doctrine of *sin* alongside the doctrine of illusion to make Vedanta "gain its full significance", betrays want of understanding of a very fundamental truth underlying the Vedic and Vedantic tradition, viz. man is divine at his core and can realise his divinity. There is no sin to stand between the human soul and its Parent God. There is only the veil of Ignorance.

INTRODUCTION TO COMPARATIVE MYSTICISM: By Jacques de Marquette. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, pp. 228, Rs. 6.50.)

Calling for a systematic study of mysticism which he looks upon as the likely form of the coming world-religion, the author of this work first defines what mysticism is not. He draws a distinction between mysticism and spiritualism, mysticism and occultism, and mysticism and "psychism". He mentions the main characteristics of mysticism as being a certain immediacy, ineffability, effectivity as well as passivity.

Dr. de Marquette then proceeds to give a rapid survey of the landmarks in mysticism as it has developed in India, among the Buddhists, among the Greeks, the Hebrews and the Christian schools, ancient and mediaeval. There is a satisfying chapter on Islamic mysticism.

Speaking of the Sufis' classification of the several planes of existence to be traversed in their line of ascent to the Supreme, he draws pointed attention to the fact that there is not one Light but many flashes that may well mislead the seeker unless he is forewarned. He quotes Al Bistami who "tells us that after diligent practice he had access to a world of radiant light which he mistook for God and worshipped for twelve years. Then he received a greater measure of Grace, discovered that he had been worshipping the light of his soul and he turned to the Real."

There are interesting parallels drawn between the fundamental experiences of the mystics of the early Christian Church and those of Buddhist monks. Plotinus, the Gnostics, the influence of Muslim Thought on Spanish mysticism, etc. are some of the interesting topics touched upon. The style is difficult and we are afraid that will limit the appeal of the book.

THE ETERNAL LAW: By R. Krishnaswami Aiyar. (Ganesh & Co., Madras-17, pp. 172, Rs. 4.)

Though entitled *The Eternal Law*, this book does not deal with the fundamental truths that have imparted an unbroken continuity to the way of life known as Hinduism, but elaborates upon certain *forms* given to them by the system builders at some stage of their career. It is these forms in the several fields of experience — individual and collective — that are sought to be eternised with all their characteristic features which, whatever their justification at one time, turn out to be disabling limitations when extended unduly.

The author gives a detailed exposition of the *Sastraic* scheme of human life, its goal, the prescribed means to reach it, the human body and its several sheaths, the worlds, the statutes of the Divine — individual, universal and transcendent. The discussion points more to the past than to the present. The observations on family planning, relaxation of marriage-rules etc., are not helpful, to say the least.

It is difficult to agree with the author that "congenital untouchability can go only when the embodiment got at birth ceases to be. The embodiment is not due to mere chance but is regulated by the law of Karma." Segregation on the basis of birth is certainly not among the basic tenets of the Eternal Dharma of the Vedas, but a social phenomenon that was, perhaps, inevitable at one time during the historical development of the peoples. But it is clearly a travesty of the universal spirit of Hindu Dharma.

M. P. PANDIT.

ETHICAL PHILOSOPHIES OF INDIA: By I. C. Sharma. Revised and edited by S. M. Dargert. (Allen and Unwin, pp. 374, 42s.)

This book is an effective refutation of the charge that is constantly made by European scholars that India has no ethics worth the name and that the indifferent treatment of the subject indicated the absence of a moral standard in India. The book under review proves conclusively that it is wrong

to regard ethics as non-existing in our philosophical systems, but that on the contrary it is based on metaphysics, and thoroughly practical, well-suited to our society and motivated by the ultimate goal of mukti. The book is very comprehensive and stretches from the Vedic period down to modern times. The ethics of each age is carefully expounded and the treatment of the subject is clear and correct. The author in the course of the exposition exposes several fallacies in the popular and prevailing accounts of Indian philosophy. He justifiably complains that students of Indian philosophy usually ignore the Brahmana literature and that without an adequate knowledge of this branch they are not able to understand the unity pervading the hymns and the Upanishads and mistakenly think that the latter represent a revolt against the ritualistic cult of the Brahmanas.

Beginning with the historical background of Indian ethics, Dr. Sharma proceeds to discuss the ethics of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Carvaka system, the Jaina and the Bauddha systems. He then takes up the orthodox systems and his review of the Mimamsa ethics particularly is very illuminating. He explodes the familiar notion that jnana and karma are mutually antagonistic and that Mimamsa and Vedanta also are so. He points out that Sankara did not oppose morality and ritual on the lower, empirical level.

After dealing with the ethics of the Gita, the author takes up for consideration contemporary ethics as taught by Tagore, Radhakrishnan, Gandhi and Nehru. The concluding chapter discusses current questions like the relation between capitalism and communism, the ethical implications of communism and so on. The book is substantially informative and is very learned and where it differs from the conventional views, it is always for right reasons. This is a volume which every student of Indian philosophy should make it a point to study.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

TOWARD ENLIGHTENED LIFE: By Swami P. Parampanthi. (Published by the author, Viraj, Dibrugarh, Assam, pp. xiii and 205, Rs. 5.)

'Enlightened' in the title implies activation by Spirit. The plan of the book makes this clear. The first part of it consists of four chapters on the teachings of Jesus, Zen, Vedanta and J. Krishnamurti. The second and larger part of the book provides guidance in consolidating spiritual insight and applying it to practical life. The chapters are on meditation, creative living, dealing effectively with problems, etc.

The author's earnestness, the range of his reading and the delicacy of his perceptiveness are evident. He derives aid from many sources, e.g. Eckhart and Kierkegaard. His earlier writings ranged over modern physics, psychology, natural science, etc. in their relationship to religion. All this is symptomatic of the temper in which the return to religion is being made in the modern age—not in the simple joy of a home-coming but with a defiant display of evidence in support of one's lawful claim to one's own house.

The second part of the book, the section on 'creative living', is the most useful; but all sections contain helpful suggestions. Nevertheless the author's love of exhaustiveness (firstly, secondly, etc.) may prove exhausting to the reader. And fluent writing by himself with the sayings of the sages to illuminate only the turnings in the passages would have been preferable to the method of the scrap-book.

RELIGION AND MAN. (Orient Longmans, pp. 40, Rs. 3.)

ATMAN AND BRAHMAN in Vedic Religion. (Bhavan's Book University, pp. 54, Re. 1.)

Both by H. H. Jaya Chamaraja Wadiar.

In November 1961 His Highness delivered the two lectures that constitute the first book as the Ranade Lectures of Karnatak University; and in December of the same year the three lectures that form the second book as the Munshi Foundation Lectures at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Bombay. All five lectures are expositions of the Sanatana Dharma in its pristine form, known as Vedanta: the contents of the Upanishads, the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, particularly as interpreted by the great Shankaracharya and known as Advaita. The Sringeri Shankaracharya bears witness to the authenticity of the interpretations set forth in the first book in his Foreword to it. Sri C. Rajagopalachariar has contributed a similar Foreword to the second book, testifying to the author's scholarship and commending the lucidity of his exposition.

Advaita, whether as experience or dogma, is difficult to communicate. As experience it is said to be experience with no experiencer. As dogma it affirms a unitive state of consciousness within which the frontiers of the intellect's ideas cannot be convincingly delimited. All that the author can do, therefore, is to set forth the relationship between the terms or thoughts which are commonly employed in expounding Advaita, 'Vedic

thought', 'the concept of Rita', 'the doctrine of Brahman' are all phrases redolent of the lecture hall, where Vedanta is dealt with as a landmark in 'Indian culture' rather than as a power that transforms life. But this is hard to avoid.

PROF. K. SUBRAHMANYAM.

THE CREST JEWEL OF WISDOM: Trans. by Charles Johnston. (J. M. Watkins, pp. 104, 12s. 6d.)

This is an English translation of Vivekachudamani, usually attributed to Shankaracharya the Prince of Advaita philosophy, although some scholars dispute his authorship. In any case the value of the book as a lucid exposition of the basic principles of Advaita cannot be minimised.

The translation is faithful and at the same time in fine English. The translator is to be congratulated.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA.

GURUVANI

The first issue of the annual *Guruvani*, reviewed by us in October 1964, was excellent; the

second is better. Well edited, well written, well got up, it sets a standard hard to emulate. The article by the editor herself, Pratibha Trivedi, on 'Kundalini Yoga' is a really masterly bit of work. Admirable too is M. P. Pandit's exposition of the need for a Guru.

The annual consists largely of reminiscences by devotees of Swami Muktananda, explaining how, by the power of Shaktipada, he awakens the dormant Kundalini in a disciple and thereafter watches and guides its development.

THE BIHAR SCHOOL OF YOGA

The Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar, N. India has brought out a handsome commemoration volume on the occasion of its second annual international yoga convention. This contains felicitations from a very wide range of sympathisers, both Indian and foreign. A long essay entitled 'Mechanics of Meditation' mentions various aspects of yoga and gives practical hints on kriya, japa and dhyana. The efficacy of japa is stressed and its different forms are discussed. The portion dealing with ajapa japa as a means to samadhi may prove helpful to many.

NOTICE

Sometimes we receive complaints of non-receipt of the journal rather late. Copies are posted to subscribers in the first week of January, April, July and October every year and should reach our subscribers in India by the second week at the latest.

We request readers to notify us of non-receipt before the end of the month of publication in the case of readers in India and within three months in the case of readers overseas. *Delayed complaints of non-receipt will not be attended to.*

Sometimes readers do not notify us of change of address in time and subsequently complain of non-receipt. We request readers to notify us of change of address so as to reach us one week ahead of the month of despatch. Otherwise we cannot be responsible for loss in transit.

Subscribers abroad are requested not to send the subscription in *currency* notes, but either by International Money Order, British Postal Order or cheque or draft on any bank in India, U.S.A. and U.K. They should be drawn in favour of THE MOUNTAIN PATH only.

Receipts for subscriptions are sent only with the journal and not separately.

Subscribers whose subscriptions end with the current issue for January 1966 are requested to renew their subscriptions at an early date.

January 1, 1966

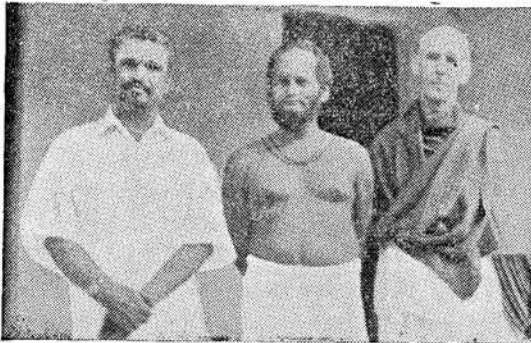
V. GANESAN
Managing Editor



Ashram Bulletin

SWAMI MUKTANANDA

Swami Muktananda is regarded by his followers as the successor of Swami Nityananda, about whom there was an article in our issue of April 1965. There is an article by him in our present issue describing a visit here during Bhagavan's lifetime. In December he paid us a visit accompanied by a few of his followers, including Smt. Pratibha Trivedi, the 'Mother' of his ashram.



Sri Swami Muktananda (CENTRE), with Sri T. N. Venkataraman and Sri Arthur Osborne

People were attracted by his genial, friendly manner and ready accessibility. He is said to concern himself with the actual training of disciples by kundalini-marga rather than with theoretical expositions, and certainly people here showed no disposition to ask him doctrinal questions.

A LONDON BRANCH

The attention of London readers is drawn to the letter of N. Vasudevan about a branch being established in London. May the blessing of Sri Bhagavan be on it and may it long flourish.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

(Registered under Act XXI of 1860)

Objects

The objects of the Kendra are:

- (1) To bring together the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and other persons interested in the study and pursuit of spiritual values through *jnana marga*, or the way of knowledge;
- (2) To provide an educational centre, open to men and women of all races and religions, where the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi will be studied and disseminated and the techniques of self-enquiry will be practised and developed;
- (3) To organize classes for the study and discussion of religious and philosophical works;
- (4) To organize meetings for discourses, celebrations, bhajans, parayana, worship, meditation, etc.;
- (5) To maintain a library and reading room;
- (6) To arrange for the editing, printing, publication, sale and distribution of books, pamphlets, periodicals, pictures, etc., concerning the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and on religion, metaphysics, ethics, psychology, culture and related subjects;
- (7) To maintain close and continuous contact with Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, and to help in its efforts and activities;
- (8) To do all other acts in furtherance of the above aims and objects.

Membership

Any person who declares his faith or interest in Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi or his teachings may be admitted as a member of the Kendra.

Governing Body

The Governing Body of the Kendra shall consist of nine members, besides the President, not

more than three Vice-Presidents, a Treasurer and not more than two Secretaries.

* * *

May Bhagavan's Grace be on this Kendra and prosper it.

MOUNTAIN PATH NEWS

We were pleasantly surprised to find the following very generous appreciation of our April 1965 issue in *The Middle Way*, the organ of 'The London Buddhist Society', signed by the President of the Society himself:

The Mountain Path, April 1965.

This venture of Mr. Arthur Osborne, to whom we are indebted for two invaluable books on the life and teachings of the late Ramana Maharshi, is clearly an immediate success, and becomes, if neither is insulted by the comparison, the Hindu equivalent in India of the Maha Bodhi Journal. At ten shillings a year for four issues its 70 pages makes us jealous, if such were possible to a Buddhist, but we are at least capable of appreciation and congratulation. In this issue are several notable articles, including three which tell us a great deal about the vexed subject of Tantra, Hindu and Buddhist. Mr. Osborne's Editorial, "Self-Knowledge", is quite admirable, while the Lama Anagarika Govinda's "Principles of Buddhist Tantrism" insists, to our still mild surprise, that Buddhist Tantra existed long before the Hindu version which entered Tibet from Bengal in the 8th century. At least the basic distinction between them is here made clear. Other articles, by H.H. the Dalai Lama on Concentration, on Hermetic Symbolism, and on "This"—and all That" by Wei Wu Wei, are well worth study, and we welcome an entirely new translation of the Bhagavad Gita by Professor Kulkarni and the Editor.

T.C.H.

In view, however, of the purely Buddhist fare offered by the Maha Bodhi Journal and the widely varied menu of *The Mountain Path*, including Christian, Buddhist, Islamic and other items, the term 'Hindu equivalent' seems hardly apt. Perhaps in a deeper sense, however, it is apt, since what Westerners call 'Hinduism' is the Sanatana Dharma, the 'Eternal Harmony', and must therefore be genuinely catholic and universal, encouraging all true spiritual currents.

'SPONTANEOUS AWAKENING'

Readers who appreciated the story of Helen in the article 'Spontaneous Awakening' in our October issue will be interested to hear that another, though very different, case of spontaneous awakening, this time of a lady from New Zealand, is reported under the title 'The Experience of Turning About' in the August issue of 'The

Middle Way', the organ of the London Buddhist Society.

VISITORS

Mr. and Mrs. Stack came on a first visit here as friends of Miss Merston. Soon afterwards they came on a second visit as guests of the Ashram. Mr. Stack, who is general manager of Dunlop Rubber in India, writes: "I can assure you that both my wife and I enjoyed and benefited from our last visit to the Ashram and we hope it will not be long before we will be able to return."

* * *

Dr. Bowen, professor of physics at Johannesburg University, has been here twice before. We were much pleased that this time Mrs. Bowen



Dr. and Mrs. Bowen

came with him. Many readers have come to *The Mountain Path* through Joel Goldsmith and his followers; this time we were interested to see the movement going the opposite way: it was through *The Mountain Path* that Mrs. Bowen discovered Joel Goldsmith and contacted a group of his followers in South Africa. We send them our best wishes.

* * *

Zofia de Mello, German by birth but an Indian citizen by marriage, felt before ever coming here that Arunachala is her spiritual home and Bhagavan her Guru, and her stay here has only confirmed the feeling.

Years ago, before she ever left Germany, she had a vision of a frail human figure composed of pure light meeting her



Zofia de Mello

face to face. In place of his countenance was an effulgence not of this world, and when she drew near to him she was herself absorbed into the same luminosity. She recognizes now that it was Bhagavan.

On another occasion scenes from her past lives swept before her like a cinema reel—different forms, speaking different languages, once this, once that, once a boy playing in the street, once an old merchant in a cloth shop in some Islamic land turning to God as death approached, but always her. In the last picture on the reel she saw herself with her present features standing on the very summit of a hill with the pure air and sky all around her. And on her first visit to Arunachala she recognized the hill.

Once when she was in India her father back in Germany fell seriously ill and her mother, afflicted by distress, began to worry about her too. Suddenly an elderly man leaning on a stick appeared to the mother. She was frightened at first and then felt the kindness, the grace, the protection of him, until at last she, an elderly German woman who had never even conceived of God in human form, had the astounding thought: "This man is God!" When visiting Zofia here later she saw a picture of Bhagavan and recognized that it was he.

* * *

Mrs. Veera Hedenlo, a Swedish lady who has been staying at the Ashram for some weeks already and wishes to stay for a few months longer, feels quite happy and at home here and tells us the following story about her coming:

About 10 years ago I came in touch with a guru who initiated me into the line of devotion to Sri Krishna. He belonged to the Chaitanya school of Bengal. After I had served him for five years he gave me his last teaching and turned me away. As I felt no difference between Guru and God I suffered much from the feeling of separation.

Then Paul Brunton's book 'A Search in Secret India' came in my hand and after that I began my seeking for another teacher. At this time I did not yet feel any attraction to Sri Bhagavan so the Mother at Sri Aurobindo Ashram became most important to me. Through correspondence I was in touch with Her for about three years and she slowly revived me from my sad condition.

During my sadhana I was living in a never-ceasing flow of dreams and experiences and when this in time came to an end I fell into distress, thinking that I had lost the Grace.

Then the little collection of Bhagavan's sayings called: 'Erase the Ego', came in my hand and the moment I opened it the answer shone clear before my eyes on page 3: "The highest

form of grace is Silence. It is also the highest spiritual instruction. All other modes of instruction are derivations from silence and are therefore secondary. Silence is the primary form. If the Guru is silent the seeker's mind gets purified by itself. Mouna is the utmost eloquence. Peace is the utmost activity. How? Because the person remains in his essential nature and so permeates all the recesses of the Self. Thus he can call up any power into play whenever it is necessary. That is the highest Siddhi."

At the same time I had an experience of the presence of Bhagavan. He remained with me for three days and after that I knew that a new step had been taken in my sadhana.

Some months later I came to know about Arunachala and *The Mountain Path*. I felt the attraction of the Hill and the Mother said I should go to Sri Ramanasramam.

When I began my sadhana on the Hill I first tried to walk barefoot as it is said one should. In a short time I found it impossible and one day sitting on a rock I said to the Hill—I am in love with you—but you are too hard for my feet—what am I now to do?

The Hill smiled, as though to say: "Better wear your shoes and go thinking of My Feet than you go barefoot thinking of your own." From then on I began wearing my shoes while on the Hill and spent several weeks going to different parts of it.

One happy morning, when I was going from Skandashram, where I used to go, suddenly both my shoes were broken. I was surprised because I had used them for not long a time. I put them in my bag and proceeded barefoot.

After a while I felt the Hill say: "Today you have completed union with me; feel, there is nothing more parting us." At the same time I felt the oneness with the stones and the power radiating from the Hill during my barefoot travel and slowly I returned to the Ashram very happy.

* * *

We have also received one of our rare but always welcome visits from Prof. K. Subrahmanyam, a staunch friend both of the Ashram and *The Mountain Path*. Our readers will remember him for his articles 'Beyond Psychology' in July 1964 and 'Transcendence of Karma' in Jan. 1965. A simple, friendly and unassuming person, Sri Subrahmanyam is a retired professor not of philosophy but English and expresses his profound understanding in a style free from the academic terminology of professional philosophy.



Mrs. Veera Hedenlo

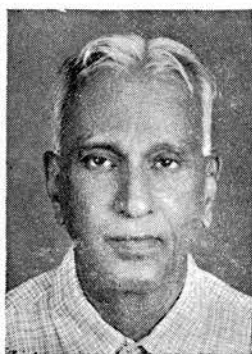
THE BOOKSTALL

To fill the gap left by A. Sivarama Reddiar (whose obituary was published in our previous issue) we have been fortunate in securing the services of S. L. Narasiah. A Telugu Brahmin, he came here with his family and had darshan of Bhagavan as early as 1935. After that, however, he was posted to various parts of India on government service. He served abroad also for some years, in Tokyo, Washington and New York.

He retired in 1961 and has since then been travelling about India looking for a suitable place to settle down. On arriving at Sri Ramanasramam, he decided that he would like to stay here and that the bookstall management, just vacant, would provide him with congenial occupation. His courtesy to all comers well fits him for the work, as also does his wide linguistic range. He speaks English and a number of Indian languages, including the three most necessary here: Tamil, Telugu and Hindi, and knows Sanskrit.

FAREWELL

A. Devaraja Mudaliar has been a frequent visitor to Bhagavan from as far back as 1900, as he himself tells us in his book 'My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana'. After retiring from his practice of the law he became a permanent resident here. As explained in our editorial of Jan. 1965, people were not usually encouraged to settle down here in those days; however exceptions were made in some special cases, Major Chadwick (for whom see our Ashram Bulletin of Jan. 1964) and Devaraja Mudaliar both being allowed to build cottages for themselves on the Ashram premises.



Devaraja Mudaliar

Devaraja is a man with a keen, alert mind and a ready will and was often called upon by Bhagavan to translate his replies to foreigners. He had a strong feeling for accuracy, due perhaps to his legal training, and this stood him in good stead in compiling a record of visitors to the Ashram over a certain period and of the explanations given to them. This has now been published in two volumes under the title 'Day by Day with Bhagavan'.

While some persons scarcely dared speak to Bhagavan, Devaraja was one of those who used to sit near his couch and talk freely with him. This did not imply any lack of respect. Indeed (as appears from his article 'The Maharshi and the Path of Devotion' in our issue of Oct. 1964) Bhagavan was God to him and his devotion was as simple and complete as a child's. He often referred to himself as Bhagavan's child.

During Bhagavan's lifetime he often used to sing Tamil spiritual and devotional songs in his presence. Since that time he has continued this daily practice, like Ramaswami Pillai, to whom we are introducing readers in this issue.

Although still upright and alert, Devaraja is now beginning to feel his 80 years. In addition, his eyesight is failing badly. He therefore finds it too much of a strain to stay alone in his room here and has gone to live with his daughter. His address will be: 66 Nellukara St., Kancheepuram, about a hundred miles away.

Visitors to the Ashram will miss his genial and friendly personality and the enormous fund of anecdotes about Bhagavan which he had at his command. The Ashram also will miss a staunch and experienced devotee from the earliest days. May the Grace of Bhagavan be with him and prolong his life and health in his new environment.

POSTAL DISSERVICE

We are sorry to have to announce that, without consulting the Ashram or *The Mountain Path* or the residents here, the postal authorities have closed down our Ashram postal delivery service. Letters can still be sent out from the Ashram but for delivery we are dependent on the general post office in town. Our editor's letter of protest has not even been answered.

OBITUARY

Dr. Evans-Wentz

Although not specifically attached to this Ashram, Dr. Evans-Wentz was at one time a well known figure here. A profound student of Tibetan Buddhism, he made himself widely known by his translations of 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead' and the 'Life of Milarepa'. After leaving Tibet he came here to learn from Bhagavan and a number of his questions and Bhagavan's replies to them, especially on the subject of sadhana for Westerners, are to be found in 'Talks with Ramana Maharshi'.

We learn that he passed away in California, where he was living in retirement, on 17th July this year.

* * * *

Duncan Greenless

Another friend of the Ashram and occasional visitor here who died recently was Duncan Greenless. A colourful figure and a prolific writer, he was primarily attached to the Theosophical Society, but he revered Bhagavan and came here from time to time both in Bhagavan's lifetime and after. He was one of the contributors to the Golden Jubilee Souvenir published in 1946 on the 50th anniversary of Bhagavan's coming to Tiruvannamalai.

Some of his questions also are reported in the 'Talks'. For instance, he said once: "After leaving the Ashram in October I was aware of Bhagavan's peace enfolding me for about ten days. All the time while busy with work there was an undercurrent of that peace of unity. . . . Then it faded out entirely and the old stupidities came in instead."

To which Bhagavan replied: "It will become constant when the mind is strengthened. Repeated practice strengthens the mind, and such a mind is capable of holding on to the current. In that case, engagement in work or no engagement, the current remains unaffected and is not interrupted."

* * * *

Swami Madhavananda

Although not particularly connected with this Ashram, a great loss to the spiritual cause in general is the passing of Sri Swami Madhavananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, who died on October 6th in Calcutta at the age of 78 after a long illness. He joined the Math in 1910 and became successively the editor of 'Udbodhan', President of Advaita Ashram, Mayavati, General Secretary of the Mission and, in 1962, its President as well.

He was well loved for his saintly character, stern integrity and genial temperament and admired for his vast learning. This is evidenced by his monumental work of translation of the commentary of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada on the Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad as well as other valuable works both in English and Hindi.

We condole sincerely with the Ramakrishna Mission over the great loss they have sustained.

* * * *

Sri Krishna Prem

Yet another loved and esteemed figure whose passing we deplore is Sri Krishna Prem. An Englishman in his purvashrama, he has long been known as a devotional worshipper of Sri Krishna in his Ashram at Mirtola. He came here once in the lifetime of Bhagavan, for whom he had the most profound reverence. In April 1964 we published a letter of his felicitating the infant *Mountain Path* and wishing it well. He died on Nov. 13th and will long be remembered and regretted.

* * * *

BOUND VOLUMES

Bound volumes of the 1965 issues are available. They are priced Rs. 6.50. Foreign 14s., \$2.00, postage included.

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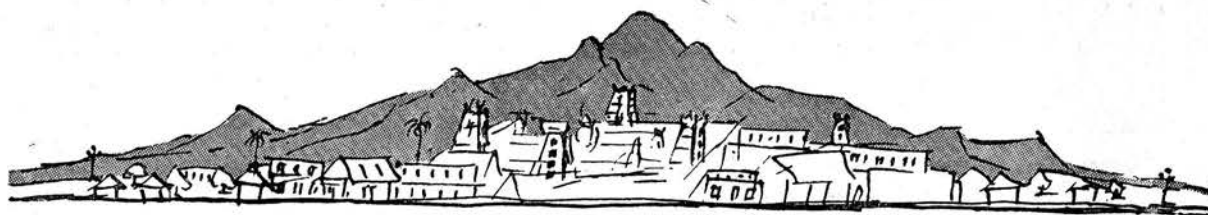
BACK NUMBERS

Copies of the issues for January, April and July 1964 are still available (those of January and April had to be reprinted because the circulation shot up far above what was anticipated). Only October 1964 is out of print.

* * * *

FORTHCOMING ISSUES

Our next issue will be mainly concerned with PRAYERS AND POWERS; that of July with REINCARNATION.



We have great pleasure in reproducing the picture of Arunachala drawn by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Himself. Our grateful thanks to Sri Kunjuswami who has kindly lent it for publication.

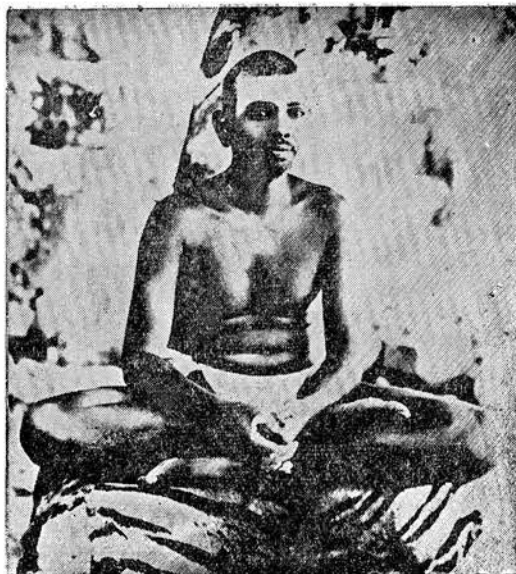
INTRODUCING...

Krishna Bhikshu (and the 'Bhikshu' is a technical appellation not implying monk or mendicant like its Buddhist equivalent) is well known to our readers as author of the important articles 'A Chakra at Sri Ramanasramam' (April 1965) and 'Above Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy' (October 1965), both showing a wealth of reminiscence about Bhagavan and familiarity with aspects of his teaching not often publicised. He is a man of insatiable curiosity, keen intellect and a variety of interests, one hard to get the better of in conversation, and indeed apt to give a headache to the other party. He was born in 1904 in an unorthodox and reformist family and grew up not merely a non-believer but an active disbeliever in Hinduism. A precocious youth, he read all that was available on the Brahmo Samaj and began to wonder whether what was written against Hindu tradition was not true. He read widely and began to study philosophy but acquired a distaste for religious literature. He took an interest in history also, became proficient in Telugu literature and began to study law for a profession.



Krishna Bhikshu

The great change in his life came in 1927, at the age of 23, when he was studying law in Madras and met Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni, the outstanding Tantric devotee of Bhagavan about whom there is an article in our issue of April



1965. Powerfully influenced by him, he turned to sadhana, using japa or incantation, as he did. He came to Tiruvannamalai with Ganapathi (Nayana, as he was called) and a few years later Bhagavan indicated to him the proper lakshya (spiritual aim) for his sadhana. His restless mind drove him to visit other Swamis also. He frequently went to Sri Aurobindo for darshan. He visited Sri Yogesh Babu of Benares to get an insight into psychology and Sri Kamakoti and others to acquire a thorough knowledge of Hindu orthodoxy and its justification. Influenced by a remark of Swami Siddheswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission (later to be for many years its representative in France) that he should seek rather to express than to repress his intellectual propensities, he became a poet, dramatist, actor and astrologer, giving little thought to his practice of law. For a while he followed the raja yoga taught by Sri Ram Lal Mahaprabhu of Amritsar. Having heard an exposition of the Brahma Sutras and Bhagavata by Sri Mandalika Venkata Sastri, a famous Pandit of Yellur to whom the Kanchi Shankaracharya gave the title of 'Sastra Rathnakara', he decided to learn Sanskrit and read the scriptures for himself. At this time also Sri Medavarapu Sastri of Kurnool initiated him into Advaitic sadhana. His mode of spiritual practice was confirmed in 1939 when Bhagavan authorised him to continue pranayama and pranava japa.

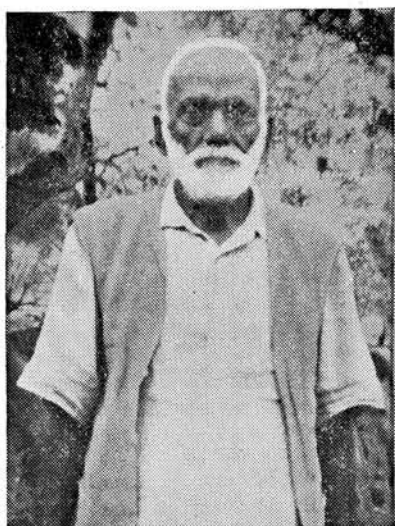
As a result of his wide study and long practice, Krishna Bhikshu became convinced of the truth and value of Hindu tradition and is now always prepared to defend it when attacked. Despite his wandering from guru to guru and his sampling of various studies, he became convinced that

Bhagavan was safeguarding and controlling him throughout and that the feet of Bhagavan were his sole shelter. He was a frequent resident at the Ashram but only settled down here permanently after Bhagavan had left the body. He expects to spend the rest of his life here.

Krishna Bhikshu is the author of 'Sri Ramana Leela' a lucid and informative biography of Bhagavan in Telugu. He has also written a commentary, not yet published, on the 'Arunachala Pancharatna'. He has translated the 'Tripura Rahasya' into Telugu and written a number of Telugu poems and dramas. On the behest of the woman saint of Jillallamodi Ammagaru, he translated Valmiki's *Ramayana* into Telugu prose. Now he is concentrating on japa, the form of sadhana with which he has most affinity.

* * * *

Ramaswami Pillai is one of the seniormost devotees still living here. He used to visit Bhagavan right back in the Skandashram days and became a permanent resident of the Ashram in 1922, the year when the present Ashram at the foot of the hill was founded. He was a college educated young man with a robust body and genial disposition and was from the start noticeable for the zest with which he tackled the many kinds of manual labour that were necessary for building up an ashram. Years later, when the present buildings had been erected and labourers were employed, he was the person in charge of Ashram labour and never minded lending a hand



Ramaswami Pillai



himself when anything had to be done. He was an asset to the Ashram Office in many ways, being always ready to go into town to make purchases or do whatever needed to be done.

In the later years, when Bhagavan's knees were badly swollen with rheumatism and Ramaswami Pillai himself was already well advanced into middle age, Bhagavan slipped and fell one day in his daily walk on the hill, injuring his foot. Without a word to any one, Ramaswami Pillai set out next day to make a path up the hill, shoring up the steep slope into steps, chiselling steps in the slabs of rock, putting a firm stone edge to the path. From dawn to dusk he worked, single handed, for weeks together, until the path was made. Little is done to keep it in repair now that Bhagavan is no longer here in the body to walk on it, but after all the years of monsoon rain beating down on it the path still remains, so thoroughly did Ramaswamy Pillai do his work.

He was a member of the Ashram Committee, which was set up to assist the management after the Mahasamadhi of Sri Bhagavan, till its dissolution in January, 1964.

Another outstanding feature about him is his love of spiritual songs. He has a stentorian voice and a vast repertoire and every day, morning and evening, he still joins with a few like-minded devotees in a session of devotional singing (*Tamil Parayana*) initiated by Bhagavan himself, consisting of hymns composed by various poet-saints of the Tamil land, including Bhagavan.



Letters TO THE EDITOR

A few weeks ago, just before waking, I saw in profile the lifesize head of a man whose skin was very dark. He was beardless and about forty-five to fifty. I felt that so great was the spiritual power of this being that if he turned and looked into my eyes I might not be able to sustain my own being. At that moment, as he started to turn, a tremendous light broke forth of dazzling and blinding strength which utterly obliterated his head and filled the space in all directions. I awoke profoundly moved but without any idea as to who this great Soul might be.

Today I received the July 1965 issue of *The Mountain Path* and in the photo on page 155 I recognized the Man. It was Sri Maharshi, not as he is pictured in the frontispiece of your magazine or in benign old age but with that strange intensity of my dream.

CORNELIA BAGAROTTI,
New York.

The back cover of the book 'Erase the Ego' reads:

"Venkataramana was a lad in his teens in Madurai in South India. Urged by an inner call, the boy played the truant, slipped away from home and soon found himself in the solitary caves of the Arunachala Hills. There he forgot the world and, insensible to hunger and thirst and reckless of the ravages which crawling creatures wrought on his body, he immersed himself in concentrated meditation.

After a number of years of this phenomenal tapas, incredibly unrelieved by any break whatsoever, he emerged with the realization of the Supreme Reality and of the identity of his Self with it. Liberated by that realization from the chains of finitude, he became a Jivanmukta."

A few days back I completed your 'Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge', Jaico edition, 2nd impression, wherein at page 17 you have stated that Bhagavan had 'Awakening

"with no quest, no striving, no conscious preparation" and at page 24 you have stated "Sri Bhagavan was already in constant, unbroken awareness of the Self and he has said explicitly that there was no more sadhana, no more spiritual effort after this."

I believe the back cover of 'Erase the Ego' is inaccurate and needs correction.

V. B. GANATRA,
Bombay.

The statement on the back cover of 'Erase the Ego' is incorrect and misleading. I am grateful to you for pointing it out. The publisher has been informed and has agreed to change it in the next edition.

Editor.

The review of 'Theurgy' in *The Mountain Path* of July 1965 (pp. 197-8) mentions a quotation attributed by the author to Bhagavan, i.e. "Realization is nothing but seeing God literally." This remark does in fact appear on p. 20 of 'Glimpses of the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi' by F. Humphreys. Presumably, in view of Bhagavan's usual remarks on Realization, this particular comment was originated by Frank Humphreys. I wonder if you would be kind enough to comment on this, please, as the book as a whole seems to indicate that Frank Humphreys was deeply influenced by Bhagavan.

P. T. MURRAY,
Scarborough.

Frank Humphreys spoke with Bhagavan a few times and was deeply influenced by him, though not deeply enough to settle at Tiruvannamalai or continue to follow Bhagavan and pay visits to Tiruvannamalai when occasion offered, as a number of other Western devotees did. It is quite clear from the sentence quoted that he had not

fully understood Bhagavan's teaching. Bhagavan's instruction, in accordance with the orthodox Hindu tradition of Advaita, was to transcend the 'three' of seer-sight-seen and attain to Oneness. He never represented Realization as 'seeing God'. His attitude when people asked him to enable them to see God was that reported by H. W. L. Poonja on p. 156 of the July 1965 issue of *The Mountain Path*: "I can enable you rather to be God than to see God." He never departed from the truth of Advaita or directed attention to a God who could be seen. In v. 8 of the 'Forty Verses' Bhagavan definitely states: "That alone is true realization wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with It." A writer like Mouni Sadhu who claims to expound Bhagavan's teaching should understand this.

Editor.

* * * *

I often think that Muruganar is the Nightingale of the Silent One, whose poetic imagery, which springs from divine at-one-ment, stirs the heart of man with celestial song. Kindly convey to Sri Muruganar our sincere love-garland which mocks time and distance to settle about his holy feet.

GLADYS DE MEUTER,
Johannesburg.

* * * *

I was sorry to see an article of the type of 'Spontaneous Awakening' by D. E. Harding published in the October issue of *The Mountain Path*, a journal which, in my opinion, has achieved a very high standard.

While 'Helen' may well be in some spontaneously awakened psychic state, to assert or imply that this is necessarily a state of a high degree, or any degree of spiritual illumination brought on by sitting "wide awake with an empty mind" and that she has therefore become "a most gifted mystic" is to make statements which are purely and solely the author's personal opinion!

He informs us that he guided her reading, knew what characteristics would finally pertain to her "virtually permanent state", so that in fact he acted as a sort of unobtrusive guru! Who are Mr. Harding and 'Helen' that they can describe such a state where the greatest spiritual masters have declined to do so?

The description given, if it means anything at all, is somewhat reminiscent of the account of prolonged psychic states of bliss experienced by

Echammal, an early woman devotee of Bhagavan. In this he abruptly terminated the devotee's experiences!

PROF. L. O. BOWEN,
Johannesburg.

As I said in my editorial of July this year, it is possible to have pre-glimpses of Realization. These are, indeed, less uncommon than might be supposed. That described by D. E. Harding in his little book 'On Having No Head' (reviewed in our issue of April 1964) bears the hallmark of authenticity and sufficiently justifies him in acting as a theoretical guide to some one struggling in the throes of spontaneous awakening.

The experiences described by Helen are undoubtedly spiritual. Psychic experiences are always in the realm of duality—you and the visions you see; Helen's state is unitive—"joy, oneness, clarity" and "just brightness, no-thinking."

You speak as though there were something reprehensible about trying to describe mystic states and experiences, but many mystics do—St. Teresa is a good example.

Editor.

* * * *

Congratulations on 'Spontaneous Awakening'. Helen's experiences are so obviously genuine. It is indeed heart-warming to read of such a manifestation of Grace.

I must also congratulate you on a most skilful piece of editing—first printing Robert Linssen's article on the theory of no-thinking and then following it up with the article describing Helen's practice of it.

MICHAEL WESTON,
London.

* * * *

Congratulations. I have been wondering how long you could keep up the standard, but I must say that the latest number (October) is the best yet. I particularly appreciate the article about Helen—so transparently spiritual, such a sign of Grace.

And I never cease wondering at the poetry you publish—Derek Southall, A. Rao, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and yourself—this is not the usual magazine verse one reads but poetry of a high order. Why is it not known to the literary journals?

JAMES LEE,
London.

Harindranath Chattopadhyaya has long held a seat in the hall of fame. Personally I consider him the best English poet India has produced. The others are to the best of my knowledge unknown.

Editor.

* * * *

I am particularly impressed by the two articles 'Starting the Contemplative Life' (July 1965) and 'The Contemplative Way of Life' (Oct. 1965), both by Joel Goldsmith. From the article by I. G. Schultz in July 1965 I see that this great mystic is no longer alive but I am anxious to know more about him and his 'Infinite Way'. Are there any 'Infinite Way' groups in India, particularly in Bangalore? And are his books available in India? And what is the address of Mrs. Schultz, so that I can write to her for further particulars.

DR. R. S. PADAKI,
Bangalore.

Joel Goldsmith has written over a dozen books, one of them entitled 'The Infinite Way'. They are published in London by Messrs. Allen & Unwin and can be ordered through any bookshop. For news of 'Infinite Way' groups it might be best to write to his widow, Mrs. Emma A. Goldsmith, 465 Dune Circle, Kailua, Hawaii. The address of Mrs. I. G. Schultz is: 239 Flensburg, Friedrichshoeh 8, West Germany.

Editor.

* * * *

Ever since *The Mountain Path* brought me up against the reality of Bhagavan and his guidance I have felt ill-at-ease with the brittle ritualism formerly held necessary; and your October editorial, marshalling the evidence of all recent Hindu saints and sages, has finally convinced me to shed the fetters. I do so with immense relief and with enormous gratitude to you and to Sri Ramana.

HUGH DIXON,
London.

* * * *

Whilst bigoted men of diverse religions disagree over the means of combining, spiritual men and women unite through *The Mountain Path*.

RONALD HODGES,
Nairobi, Kenya.

* * * *

It has been a very pleasant surprise to see the extraordinarily high quality of the articles appearing in your fine magazine and once more I have to express my heartiest thanks to my excellent

friend Prof. Rafael Lozada for having put me in touch with such a fine source of spiritual wisdom and enlightenment.

FERMIN VALE-AMESTI,
Venezuela.

* * * *

Your July edition provided me with enough nuggets of wisdom to last a lifetime. May you long continue to provide so much joy and inspiration to so many people in the four corners of the earth.

DEREK SOUTHALL,
Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire.

* * * *

The Mountain is difficult to traverse but the compassionate Ramana has laid out a Path on it for us to reach the summit of living, which is Being. But, engrossed as we are in mundane pursuits, it is even beyond many of us to feel like taking to the Path. Ramana of infinite Grace should himself turn our minds toward the Path, for he is not only the Path and the Goal but also the Guide. *The Mountain Path* is certainly his instrument, and I pray that it may grow from strength to strength, bringing solace to many a suffering soul.

R. GANAPATHI,
'Kalki', Madras.

* * * *

Recently I was in a frame of mind akin to doubt and despair, leading to extreme irritability. To resolve this doubt I went through all relevant articles in previous issues of *The Mountain Path* and did find an answer to the problem vexing me. But nevertheless it was an intellectual understanding and could not somehow mitigate the unhappy feeling. What finally did cure me of the ailment was Ramana Guru himself, whose assurance, felt in the heart, of continued grace and guidance dispelled all doubts and cleared the atmosphere of gloom and depression for me.

What I wish to say is that your journal certainly has Bhagavan's grace, for he guided me to just those articles which would solve my problem. It was really amazing how I pored over those articles in the hope of discovering some light on the problem troubling my mind and then, just before retiring to bed, as I looked at Bhagavan's picture while still ruminating over all I had read, the Master set all doubts at rest by an assurance in the heart.

NARGISH DUBASH,
Bombay.

* * * *

May I congratulate you on the very good work that you are doing? I look forward to getting your esteemed journal every quarter.

C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN,
Deputy Union Minister of
Information and Broadcasting.

* * * *

We consider Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi as our Guru, like Bhagavan Sri Nityananda. Therefore His Ashram is our Ashram and His devotees are our Gurubandhoos.

SWAMI MUKTANANDA and
PRATIBHA TRIVEDI (Ammal).

* * * *

With Bhagavan's continued guidance, I hope to have the first meeting of our London group of devotees on 2nd Jan. 1966. If you agree, I suggest the name 'Sri Ramana Devotion Centre' for the establishment and 'Self-Study Group' for the devotees' association. It appears that Bhagavan wants it as a mere little branch of the main Ashram tree. I sought Bhagavan's guidance by opening the *October Mountain Path*. It opened at page 231, which gave this answer.

N. VASUDEVAN,
24 Laleham Avenue, Mill Hill, London, N.W. 7.

* * * *

We are grateful indeed for having discovered through Bhagavan's Grace that *The Mountain Path*

is available. Its loving service is very much appreciated.

R. O. STUART,
Natal.

* * * *

Congratulations on the *October Mountain Path*. I was particularly struck with Robert Linssen's article 'The Silence of the Mind'. As the editor of 'The Middle Way', though just about to hand it over, I am becoming more and more jealous of your success.

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS.

* * * *

What a good, balanced number the current (October) issue is, and full of meat. My congratulations on maintaining the standard, for indeed there is no other magazine quite like it.

CLARE CAMERON,
Editor of 'The Science of Thought Review'.

CORRECTION: The saying 'I am that I am' is not in GENESIS, as stated in the Editor's reply to R. Balasubramaniam on p. 209 of our issue of July 1965, but EXODUS, ch. III, v. 14. In a new version of the Bible it is translated as 'The God who IS'. The traditional Latin rendering is 'Ego sum qui sum', meaning 'I am who I am'.

Editor.

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