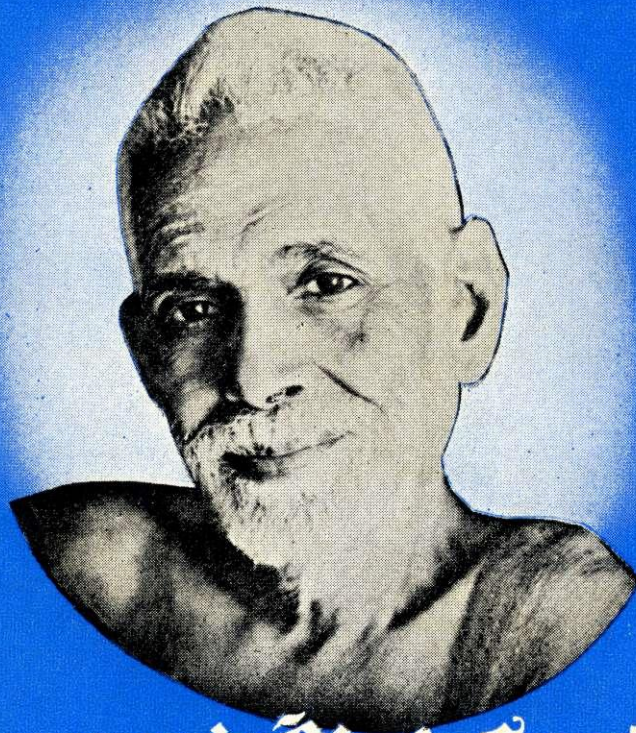




# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Vol. 17, No. III

July 1980



Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary



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

Fearless I seek Thee,  
Fearlessness Itself! How  
canst Thou fear to take  
me, O Arunachala?

—*The Marital Garland  
of Letters, verse 67*

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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.*

Vol. 17

JULY 1980

No. III

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— Editor.

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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.

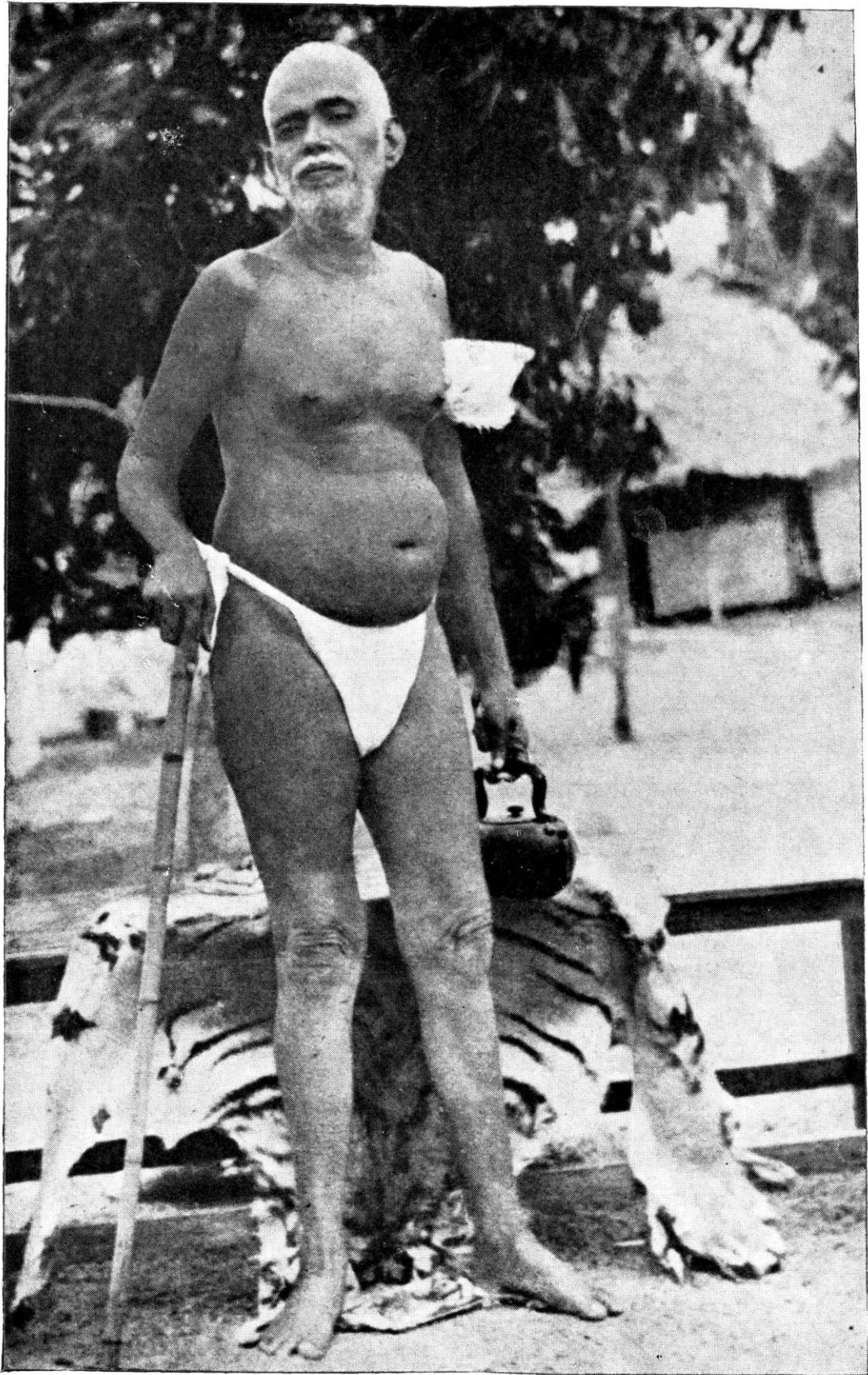
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**THE MOUNTAIN PATH**  
is dedicated to  
**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**



# *The Mountain Path*

Vol. 17, No. III, July 1980

EDITORIAL

## THE JOURNEY INWARD

---

**M**INIMUM secular education which can equip an individual to cope with the world of today is, for a start, a matter of fifteen years of slogging for, roughly, six hours a day, five days a week and nine months in the year. These figures increase progressively as the student levitates to the higher levels of learning. There are then those who go in for "specialisation" and from there to "research" and finally disappear into the rarefied atmosphere of "pure research" never to be seen again except as silent participants in terribly sophisticated seminars held under the aegis of acronyms.

The continuing unbridled phenomenon called "knowledge explosion" is constantly changing the mode of teaching, substance and patterns of division in education, substituting, among others, the training of memory by the teaching of the library art of reference. The result, predictably, is a multiplication of cadres of gatherers of facts-for-the-sake-of-facts which themselves are likely to be put to use only in the 21st century. But much of this garnered treasure may well go unused because by then Man may already have had new types of visions.

The point that is laboriously, and rather cynically, being made by all this is that we accept without protest the dedication of our best years to equipping ourselves to lead well-paid, well-housed, successful, satisfying

lives and also to send our individual hostages to fortune to expensive schools and institutions of higher learning and Developed Countries in that order. The highways to progress and material success are getting clearly marked in secular education.

Religious education which aims at producing professional priests of various categories who can officiate at the innumerable religious observances which punctuate the life and death of a Hindu, has also become much better organised than before. Even this education is a matter of ten years in residence with a teacher followed by at least five more years of apprenticeship under an experienced senior practitioner.

That is, there are rules and regulations and age specifications in regard to secular and religious education and practices.

It is spiritual education which continues to be what it has always been — a private, individual pursuit. Many of the aspirants of this course of study and practice do not have a regular teacher, a *guru* though all of them need the guidance of such a director from time to time. Even this guidance can only be given in the form of hints and suggestions and, where these are unvocable, by a look or a touch. Students who take to this study also belong, in age, to a range which stretches from youth to old age. Signposts on this spiritual journey

are few and far between and often go unrecognised because of the inexperience of the traveller and the strangeness of the territory. The spiritual quest is a lonely, long voyage of pure discovery.

There are conditions, of course. The journey inward has first to be desperately desired. It cannot be undertaken merely to satisfy academic curiosity. All other quests of man are outward-oriented but the desire to know himself (his Self) demands an inward journey into a world different from the outside world because it is void and endless. One has to be mentally and psychologically mature and ready for it, nay more, must have an insatiable hunger for it. It must be undertaken because that and that alone is what one wants. One must *cry* for it.

Of all experiences that man derives or plunders from life, this is the only one which can really be called unique and indescribable. That may also be the final agony of the living saint, that having himself had this incomparable experience, he yet is unable to communicate it to others.

But the amusing part of it all is that while we are able to understand the need for years of study to become a specialist in a branch of medicine or a designer of new machines or a priest who can contract or expand a programme of rites and rituals to suit a customer's demand, we feel mildly disappointed if we do not get results fast as apprentices in spiritual practice. We sometimes even go to the extent of imagining we have received some intimations of an unworldly perception because, suddenly, briefly, a new kind of joy pervades us. This could be a real or fictitious experience. In either case there are miles to go yet.

Most people who turn to spiritual practice are usually people of middle age or older. So, often, there is the assumption that the preliminary lessons in spiritual theory and practice can be dispensed with as having been

learnt in the course of thirty or forty years of working and living. Unfortunately, this is far from the truth. Man learns many things from secular education and the experiences of life, but none which will help him in his spiritual quest except, perhaps, a sense of humility.

In the case of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi it was spontaneous enlightenment preceded by years of unidentified very deep sleep which had probably been misjudged as dull-wittedness or slothfulness or accepted as a sign of adolescence. That moment of illumination marked his separation from worldly relationships. He moved away to live for years and years in a state of undisturbed spiritual absorption, totally alone. The discipline of silence entered him unbidden as he kept moving farther and farther away from human contact. It needed a Ganapathi Muni and a mother's death to bring him back to the people.

The question can be asked whether great saints and sages have *sui generis* a role to play in the human community. The answer simply could be that by the very virtue of his having been born in a human community, the sage cannot really escape playing a role in it. The fact of birth and entry into this community has implicit in it not only one more term of continued physical existence on earth, but the responsibility of a function during that period.

But the Self-realised sage is also by definition an individual who has *been cleansed* of all his *prarabdha karma* or the plus and minus accretions of previous births. So, in a technical sense, as it were, he has nothing to give this world and nothing to take from it.

But it is almost axiomatic that the spiritual sublimity of a saint gets recognised by people in some way or other, sooner or later, and travels on its own power, as it has done in the case of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, to distant corners of the earth!

## The Nature and Function of the Guru

---

By  
Arthur Osborne

**M**AN's mind is poised between the Spirit and the outer world which reflects the Spirit. Turned inwards it receives intuitions of the Spirit; turned outwards it receives sense data of the manifested world.

That is how it should be, but in fact it is apt to become engrossed in the outer world according to a fictitious reality and forgetting that it is a manifestation of the Spirit. That leads to its forgetting the Truth of the Spirit and becoming obtuse on the inward side through which spiritual influence should flow. Therefore the Spirit, unable to penetrate directly through the inward side, manifests outwardly in order thus to attract the attention of the mind and turn it inwards. This outward manifestation is the Guru. The Tamil poet-saint Tayumanavar refers to the Guru as a decoy: "Eating and sleeping, suffering and enjoying, bearing a name and having a place of birth, it appeared as the Silent Guru, like a deer used to decoy other deer." Understood thus, whatever serves to proclaim the reality of the Spirit to a man and to turn his mind inwards can be called a Guru; and in this sense the Sage Dattatreya could say that he had many gurus.

Those rare persons who are already near to spiritual awakening can be illumined by the Inner Light acting directly with no outer agency, and for them, as the Maharshi said, no outer Guru is necessary. For those who come near to this, reminders coming from natural forces, creatures and episodes may spark the illumination, as Dattatreya indicated. For most people, however, the Guru takes the form of an outer individual — a deer used to decoy other deer.

This indicates the need for a Guru and shows what his function is. For any one to whom the Golden Gates do not open spontaneously and for whom some spiritual discipline is necessary in order to make him poor enough to pass through the eye of a needle, a Guru is necessary. And the function of the Guru is not primarily to teach him doctrine or theory. There is no doctrine or theory that cannot be learned from books; and yet a book does not normally act as a Guru. There was a time when doctrinal truths were normally kept secret or revealed only gradually, stage by stage. D. T. Suzuki quotes a Ch'an Master as saying: "Ask of your self, inquire into your self, pursue your self, investigate within your self, and never let others tell you what it is, nor let it be explained in words."<sup>1</sup> Not only did he not give the disciple an explanation in words but he even forbade him to accept one if offered. This can be compared to an arithmetic master not telling his pupils the answers to their sums until they have worked them out. There are some modern arithmetic books in which the answers are given at the end, but still the pupils have to work the sums out; the answers serve only to check whether they have done the work rightly or not. There is no merit in knowing the answers if you have not done the work. So it is with the expositions of doctrinal theory so easily obtainable nowadays. The Chandogya Upanishad goes even farther than the Ch'an Master whom Suzuki quotes, for there the Guru gives the pupils a wrong explanation to see which of them will be taken in by it and which will see through it and come back for a correction.

It follows, then, that the function of the Guru is not to expound doctrine. He may do this incidentally, but the expositions can be obtained just as well from books. This is what the Maharshi meant by saying that he taught in silence: not that he did not give expositions but that they were not his essential teaching. Some of his disciples never asked him any questions of doctrine at all — they knew all that before coming. In the compilations of question and answer which his Ashram has published<sup>2</sup> it will be seen that most of the questions are asked by visitors or newcomers. The real function of the Guru is to awaken a spiritual current in you and turn you inwards, impelling you on towards liberation from the illusion of the ego-self into realization of universal Being.

This implies that the need for a Guru is not a specifically Hindu dogma and does not need to be illustrated by quotations from Hindu scriptures. It is a fact of nature as universal as physical parenthood. What is, perhaps, specifically Hindu is the unequivocal equating of the Guru with God. As the Maharshi said: "God, Guru and Self are the same." This also, however, although concealed for contingent reasons in most religions, is a universal truth and is therefore capable of exposition outside the technical terminology of any tradition.

Being *is*. Once the illusion of a separate individual 'me' is dissolved, this universal Being is felt as the sole reality of me and I call it 'Self'. So long, however, as the psychosomatic instrument appears to subsist as a real and separate entity I call it 'me' and regard pure Being as 'other', that is as 'God'. It is the same Being. It is only belief or disbelief in the reality of the illusory ego which makes pure Being appear to be God or Self. God or Self manifested outwardly in human form as a decoy to lead one back to the Formless Self is the Guru. Thus God, Guru and Self are One.

It is said in the Upanishads that he who knows Brahman is Brahman. For that matter,

every one is, every cat and dog is, in the sense that there is no other than the One Self manifested in all beings. This is not pantheism. It does not mean that the sum total of all beings added together makes up God but that God manifests as all beings without ever ceasing to be the universal Unmanifested Self. The nearest analogy (though all analogies are incomplete) is a dream, since all the dream creatures are manifestations of your mind, having no existence outside you, while you continue as you were, complete and unchanged, before, during and after the dream. Actually there never has been a doctrine of pantheism. The best definition of the term would probably be: "A Western misinterpretation of Eastern doctrines".

The difference between the Guru or Realized Man and others is that the Guru is consciously identical with the Spirit, implying by the word 'consciously' not merely theoretical understanding but the living awareness or experience with which one knows that one is a man. Even so, saying that the Guru is no different from God does not mean that he has the power of God. There is an important distinction made by the Sufis according to which a Realized Man cannot say "I am God" but can say "I am not other-than-God". The former saying might imply the supreme blasphemy, that the ego is the Self; the latter denies the existence of the ego. Illustrating the identity between the Realized Man and God, there is another often-used analogy, also imperfect but nevertheless significant: he is identical as the water in a tumbler is with that of the Niagara Falls — of the same substance but differing vastly in scope and power.

It is not only in his state of being but functionally also that the Guru is held to be not other than God. Supreme Being, as God, is the Source, Father or Creator of the individual. But in becoming individualised the creature loses his awareness of Identity. Then God materialises as Guru to lead him back to the Source or Father. This is the basis of the Christian doctrine of the Divinity of Christ



and his Identity with the Father. It is no mere historical accident that Christ was Divine and One with the Father but the expression of a profound truth. Christ, as he himself said, is the Way; and it is God who is the way back to God. So it is with the Guru. Not only his state but his function is divine. As the Maharshi often said: "the Guru is One". In however many different forms he may appear, it is the one divine spirit of guidance wearing different masks.

This, of course, is giving its loftiest meaning to the term 'Guru', implying one poised in constant conscious Identity with Universal Being and consciously performing a divine function. It was in this sense that the Maharshi always used the word. "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 darkness or the bondage of ignorance. His self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstances, and he is never perturbed."<sup>3</sup>

A Guru in this full and perfect sense is a very rare phenomenon. It follows therefore that many who function as gurus must have a lesser qualification. A guru may be simply one who has been initiated into that function as a priest has been ordained into the priesthood. A certain power and grace will flow through him, although he is not a realized man. Even though he is, the term 'realized' may mean something very different from the constant state of conscious identity which the Maharshi and his followers imply by the term; it may imply spasmodic realization or merely the realization of some higher state of phenomenal being.

By the law of symbolism every person one comes in contact with reflects some possibility within oneself; one's relations with him reflect one's inner economy, so to speak, that is the ordering and disposition of one's potentialities.

Just as the outer Guru in the full and perfect sense of the word reflects the inner Guru or Self in the Heart, so the incomplete or imperfect guru reflects various potentialities in the disciple. He will transmit the spirit of guidance, but it may come through tainted by his individual qualities, like water flowing through an unclean pipe. The individual strain may not greatly weaken or corrupt the spirit of guidance but it may pervert it completely. In the Quran Allah is spoken of as He who guides aright and He who guides astray. To one with an anthropomorphic conception of God as a benevolent old man this would sound blasphemous, but once one conceives of God as pure impersonal Being it becomes obvious that both the out-going and the in-coming tendencies express Him. From the universal viewpoint of a man's totality of lives from the going-out into manifestation to the re-absorption into pure Being, like the simultaneous view of the whole course of a river seen from the air, the course of each lifetime fits into place; but from the point of view of the aspirant the wise choice of a guru in this lifetime is of vital urgency.

This raises the practical questions—How to avoid the false guru who misguides? How to find a true guru? How to distinguish the true from the false? How to recognise whether and to what extent a guru is potent for good? Or whether or to what extent he is realized? Unfortunately there is no guaranteed method. Things are not so easy. Knowledge of doctrinal theory is certainly no safeguard. It may afford protection against some errors but not against a false guru; there are cases of people with impeccable theoretical grounding being led astray. The best safeguard is inner purity and sincerity, since inner qualities are reflected outwardly in the persons with whom one is brought in contact. Impure forces cannot gain a footing unless there is some ally in the citadel to give them entrance. But inner purity and sincerity are not easy of attainment; one in whom they were perfect would no longer need a guru.

If one does not have the rare blessing of meeting a perfect Sage such as the Maharshi, it is better to let caution outweigh enthusiasm in accepting a guru, for the benefit that may accrue is less than the harm. On the side of benefit it is to be remembered that no one can lead others farther than he has gone himself, so that if the guide has not attained the Goal his disciples are not likely to either. On the other hand, faults of character are no less infectious than physical diseases. That is why Hindu Sages warn aspirants so insistently to seek the company of saints and to avoid the impure. And to the influence of his guru, for good or bad, a man is susceptible as to none other, since the relationship is one which invites such influence.

Of course, a guru who has not attained the Supreme Goal may be wise and benevolent and a great aid to his disciples within his limitations; only not all are: there is the danger. So flattering is it to be regarded as a guru that even an ego which has been severely disciplined may rise up again and develop faults such as arrogance and hypocrisy, craving flattery, shouting down opposition or criticism or accepting praise which does not belong to him, allowing himself to be treated as what he is not. That is the beginning of a decline which can be expected to grow worse and to infect his followers. It is no use taking a guru unless one has implicit faith in him, and one should be very wary in bestowing implicit faith.

People are caught in a dilemma: on the one hand, a trustworthy guru is no longer easy to find, and on the other hand they believe that they have no hope of spiritual development without a guru. I will repeat what I have said elsewhere about the position of such people. "What of the predicament of those who in our times seek an authorised and realized guru and do not find one? As they look around they perceive, not in one religion but all, an aridity in the channels where Grace once flowed. They hear strident voices proclaiming themselves gurus but would do well to remember

Christ's prediction that there would be false Christs and false prophets to deceive, if it were possible, even the elect. Christ's saying that he who seeks will find is a universal law; but a law must have some technique, some means of action; what is this in an age when the former life-lines to those struggling in the turbulent waters of samsara have been withdrawn or have rotted and become unfit to bear the weight of a man? Willing to follow an authorised and realized guru in any religion, they look around and do not see one."<sup>4</sup>

They must have implicit faith in God. The Guru, after all, is only the intermediary between the individual and God, between man's outward-turning mind and inner essence. If the submission and aspiration are strong enough the Grace will flow, even without a visible channel. "There certainly are laws regulating the flow of Divine Grace, but the Grace is more than the law. Or it might be more accurate to say that a commonly applicable law is overridden by an emergency law. That guidance comes only through regular channels may be the commonly applicable law; but Divine Providence will not therefore leave men without succour in their time of need. To deny this possibility of overriding the regular law would be to attempt to tie the hands of God."<sup>5</sup>

One hears of more and more cases nowadays of the Spirit blowing where it listeth, of Grace and intuitional understanding descending directly on some aspirant without the mediation of an outer guru or the formalities previously held necessary. And while legalists may still try to bind men with the letter of the law, the Masters themselves bring about a relaxation. "If ours is a time of emergency when a relaxation has come about in the formerly rigid laws of orthodoxy, the first persons to see this and react to it would naturally be the guides themselves; and it is noticeable that all the prominent gurus of India from the time of Sri Ramakrishna onwards have diverged from the orthodox pattern....."<sup>6</sup>

One response to the peculiar needs of the time is the possibility of following a Guru who is no longer physically embodied. One case is Ramana Maharshi; another is Sai Baba;<sup>7</sup> there may be others too. When the Maharshi was a youthful Sage on the sacred mountain of Arunachala he always refused to accept initiation.<sup>8</sup> Being identical with its Source, he could not subordinate himself to the channels through which it flowed. When disciples gathered round he refused to designate himself a Guru, since for the Enlightened there can be no others and therefore no relationship; but he explained that from the point of view of the disciple the Guru-disciple relationship is a reality. He declared that there is no difference between Realization with a body and without. For him who is established in conscious Identity with Pure Being the body is only an appearance and nothing is either gained or lost by its dissolution. From this it follows that one who is a Guru when embodied can be a Guru equally when disembodied. When some disciples asked before his body's death what they could do if he left them without guidance he replied cryptically: "You attach too much importance to the body," indicating that its disappearance would make no difference to the guidance.

The initiation that comes thus to his followers is independent of ritual, but it was in his lifetime also: a sustained, penetrating look, a dream or vision or just the inner certitude of having been taken up. Those who have been taken up by him since he left the body are in no

less certainty as to his guidance than those who followed him already in his lifetime.

Formless initiation is one of the relaxations of orthodoxy that has come about in recent times. It had been used also by Sai Baba and Swami Nityananda<sup>9</sup>; perhaps by others too. Sai Baba died as far back as 1918 and yet he too appears to his followers in dream and vision and guides and supports them.

The Guru is the Spirit of Guidance. Ultimately this is to be found within oneself. Whatever awakens it is acting as Guru. "The purpose of the outer Guru," the Maharshi said, "is to turn you inwards to the inner Guru." And yet in this regard also there is no easy formula, no guarantee against error, for just as the aspirant may be misled by false outer gurus reflecting undesirable qualities in himself, so he may dignify various inner urges with the name of "Guru". Constant vigilance and intelligent purity are necessary.

<sup>1</sup> *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism*, p. 320, Rider.

<sup>2</sup> *Talks with Ramana Maharshi*, and *Day by Day with Bhagavan*.

<sup>3</sup> From *Spiritual Instruction*.

<sup>4</sup> Guidance and Orthodoxy, from *The Mountain Path*, Oct. 1965.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> For whom see *The Incredible Sai Baba*, by Arthur Osborne, Rider, London, and Orient Longmans' Calcutta.

<sup>8</sup> See *Initiation Rejected*, by Nagamma, *The Mountain Path*, Oct. 1965.

<sup>9</sup> For an article on whom see, *The Mountain Path*, April 1965.

---

I cannot soar the heights you show,  
 Nor dive among the deeps that you reveal,  
 But it is much that High Things are — to know,  
 That deep Things are — to feel.

J. INGLOW.

## BHAGAVAN'S FATHER

*The following is a collection of some incidents in the life of Sri Sundaram Iyer, father of Sri Bhagavan, from the frank recollections of his sister's son, P. K. Ramaswamy Iyer, father of the writer R. Subramaniam:*

**S**UNDARAM Iyer was a private vakil at Tiruchuzhi in the eighteen eighties. He had not obtained any degrees or diplomas in law. By his intelligence and common sense, by his clever advocacy and winning manners, by his character, personality and integrity, Sundaram Iyer not only commanded a lucrative practice in the Court of the Sub-Magistrate of Tiruchuzhi but had won the love, esteem and confidence of the people of the locality. To the oppressed and downtrodden, to the poor and distressed, he was verily the Lord and Master. The so-called criminal tribes acclaimed him as their protector and benefactor.

Once the magistrate of the area happened to camp in a village a few miles from Tiruchuzhi and Sundaram Iyer had to appear in some cases posted for hearing at the camp. The magistrate had to reach the village in his double bullock cart, and with great pomp the bullock cart sped along the road, in the dense shade of the avenue trees. Soon it overtook Sundaram Iyer's cart and went ahead without choosing to keep company with the vakil's cart. The poor vakil was left far behind in his modest carriage and the magistrate, amidst official pomp and the jingling of bells, soon disappeared around the bend of the road.

What awaited him around the bend, the poor magistrate could not have foreseen; otherwise, he would have chosen to keep company with the modest vakil. Thieves surrounded his cart. The liveried servant protested in vain. The magistrate's personality and his threats were of no avail. The cart driver stood rooted to the spot in terror.



*Sri Sundaram Iyer*

The thieves snatched the despatch box and were about to retreat in good order. But Lo! from behind the hedge came a shout; "Oh! the vakil sami is coming!". The box was left on the road and the thieves took to their heels. The magistrate didn't hurry on but waited for the other cart. He got down from the cart and with folded hands apologised to Sundaram Iyer for leaving him behind. "Hereafter I will understand whom the people love and esteem. It is a lesson for me and it has made me shed my official pride and learn humility," he said, and for the rest of the way they kept company.

2. Once there was a theft in the police inspector's house at Tiruchuzhi. Jewels worth several thousand rupees were stolen. The

inspector moved heaven and earth to trace the jewels and the thief, but it was of no avail. The inspector's wife was inconsolable. She repeatedly requested her husband to seek the help of Sundaram Iyer. The inspector was too proud to heed her advice. Days passed and the inspector became desperate. Unwillingly he approached Sundaram Iyer, told him the facts and appealed to him to help him in tracing the criminal. Sundaram Iyer protested, saying that where he had failed what could a poor non-official do? Sundaram Iyer knew too well what it was to try to help the police. It was quite likely that the inspector would turn against him and all those who helped him and would charge them with complicity in the crime. The inspector swore by all that he held holy and sacred and ultimately prevailed upon Sundaram Iyer to agree to help him.

Word went round that the vakil sami would like the offender to return the jewels. They were soon brought intact and left in the custody of Sundaram Iyer. In the dead of night, they were placed on the door-step of the inspector's house and men secretly mounted guard upon them from the opposite house until dawn. Early in the morning, the inspector's wife opened the door and, to her amazement, she found her box with the jewels intact inside it

3. The Raja of Ramnad happened to camp at Tiruchuzhi to arrange for the work of reclamation and renovation of the sacred shrine of Bhuminatha at Tiruchuzhi. All the officials and local worthies called upon him and paid their respects. The Raja had heard about Sundaram Iyer and he was anxious to make his acquaintance and invite his cooperation in the task he had undertaken. The Raja was thoroughly disappointed when Sundaram Iyer did not call on him even though he had camped at Tiruchuzhi for three days and three nights. Towards the end of the third day, the Raja sent for Sundaram Iyer. The Raja asked him why he alone had not cared to call on him when all the other important people had done so and whether he had in any way offended him. Sundaram Iyer replied that he did not think of calling on the Raja because he was a man of humble status who had no business with the Raja and he had considered himself not worthy of the Raja's notice. The Raja was overjoyed to meet this great man who in his humility did not realise his own importance and that nothing could be done at Tiruchuzhi without him. The Raja requested Sundaram Iyer to cooperate with him in his efforts to renovate the temple. The work went on and he proved to be of great help to the Raja.

**He, who knows not, and knows not that he knows not,  
is a fool. Shun him.**

**He, who knows not, and knows that he knows not,  
is a child. Teach him.**

**He, who knows, and knows not that he knows,  
is asleep. Wake him.**

**He, who knows, and knows that he knows,  
is wise. Follow him.**

*Persian Proverb.*

# BEYOND THOUGHT<sup>1</sup>

By

Dr. K. S. Rangappa

*"O Rama, those that have their eye of Knowledge opened or, in other words, realise their true Self, disport themselves as men, come into the possession of empires. They are never grieved any more, they no longer desire anything; nay, they ask for neither good nor evil. Whatsoever they do goes the right way. They perform every duty and yet they do nothing. They are no more deceived by this magic show of the phenomena of living; they run more after joys of the flesh. Even as it is impossible to measure the depth of the sky, so it is to measure the serene felicity enjoyed by the mind from which all desire has been banished. This state of liberation is won only by the Knowledge of the Self, and not by any other means."*

— *Yoga-Vasishtha Ramayana.*

**A**TTACHMENT to the ephemeral has been the undoing of civilisations. History has demonstrated it ever so often. Yet new civilisations rarely profit by the lesson, like most youth from the wisdom of the old. But yet it is not a lesson that can be given up (as did Bernard Shaw in despair, saying we learn from history that we do not learn from history) as long as the urge for survival persists. The lesson has to be placed before every generation in a variety of ways, hoping that the minority which makes history will be the one that will assimilate the cumulative experience of the nation or race, if not of the species, and apply it to the affairs of mankind.

The quintessence distilled from travail by man is the best safeguard, next to instinct, against self-extinction. And it is best enshrined in mythology which engenders a nation's values. It follows that a nation which lacks mythology, or ignores it, is ever wobbling in its ethical standards and philosophical aim of life.

To a nation's mythology can be traced the philosophical basis of its living aims. It can even be said, as with India, that mythology springs from its philosophy. India's philosophy is enshrined in the Upanishads and the Vedas. Indian epics and Sanskrit literature are case histories, as it were, of the philosophy applied

to life. To the extent they portray fundamental human nature, the problems that arise when they are in action and demonstrate the way out of them through an understanding of ever-alive truths, they provide guidelines for viable civilization.

Among scientists it is said that the ubiquity of a natural law or a discovery depends on the formation of the problem which led to it. The more basic the question posed, the more widely applicable and useful its solution. Savants of old in India posed for themselves the primary question, as simple as it is profound — "Who am I?" — as timeless as homo sapiens. They concentrated all human capacity, to the severe exclusion of all else, for ages, for generations after generations, on the solution of the one question which began to rack the species from the dawn of its thinking power, and will as long as that faculty lasts.

That there could be no question more fundamental than "Who am I?" is seen by the encompassing sweep of its solution — "Knowing which," as the Upanishads say, "One knows all that is to be known." Besides the proven solution to this question of questions, the Theory of Relativity or the Unified Field

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Brahmavadin*, Quarterly, Vivekananda Kendra, Triplicane, Madras.

Theory are solutions to mere fringe problems which remotely point a faint finger to the one answer which sets all questions at rest. In fact physics and mathematics of today are edging towards a Law comprehending all phenomena. When they arrive at a comprehensive formula, they will discover, perhaps with chagrin and surprise, that their quest is far from over. It is doubtful, too, if they will find the cause for it. They may find, as some like Dirac have found, that physical measurement has severe limitations, and stands powerless before fundamental philosophical problems posed by the human intellect. They will find, too, that the solution of all physical problems has only left them in a *cul de sac*.

By instinct or inspiration, (or by revelation, as the Hindu would have it) the ancient seers of India arrived at the fact that problems and solutions not applicable to the gamut of human experience — why, of all animate and inanimate things — would prove to be logically inadequate or invalid, or both, as the ultimate answer to human problems. This fact, on the face of it obvious to the point of looking like a platitude, is yet to be realised by science. And when the realisation comes, science will know why it stops helplessly where it does, why it fails to furnish an adequate solution.

The recognition, vital and crucial, of Hindu philosophy is that human experience, contrary to the implicit assumption of modern science, is not confined to the waking state, but to all the three states to which it is inescapably subject. The standards of space, time and causation of one state, the philosophy recognises, are not the same as those of the other two. One dreams, for instance, of sailing lightly in the sky like an eagle. The dreamer does not question, or is not even surprised at, the phenomenon *while* dreaming. In other words, gravitation was not, *during* the dream, an inhibiting Law. One can similarly recall dreams which defy the waking Laws of time, space and causation.

Such incongruous dreams are, of course, summarily dismissed, *after* waking up, as nothing but fantasies of the “unbalanced” mind. But such a dismissal, it must be noted, is grossly irrational and altogether untenable. For it must *never* be forgotten that the dream *is* waking while the dream is on. As one does not, and cannot, dismiss the experience of the waking state as unreal, one does not and cannot dismiss the experience of the so-called ‘dream’ state as unreal while dreaming. In other words, each state is valid while it lasts.

The undeniable equality of the waking and dream states in the eyes of correct logic has naturally to be extended to the third state of human experience, namely, the state of dreamless sleep, wherein no experience of space, time or causation obtains — and yet cannot be deemed a state of total void. For if it were a state of nothingness, memory would be impossible; one would not wake up to recall one’s blissful experience of the time before one went to sleep. Non-existence during every deep sleep would then be a death, and every waking a new birth, which is contrary to fact and experience.

Having arrived at the equality of status of all the three states in the eyes of reason, it follows that any truth which is not valid for the entire range of experience cannot obviously claim to be the truth. Conversely, what is that which is valid for all the three states? This must have been the quest of the ancients — the quest for that which remains unchanged and perfectly valid in each and all of the three states of experience.

Thus the sages must have arrived at the definition of Truth, the only Reality. “That which never, never changes, the ever, ever permanent” was therefore the most fundamental philosophical problem, the ultimate aim of all searching thought.

To compress ages of unceasing spiritual analysis into a moment of inspired illumination, the ancients hit on the answer to the core-

problem — the answer that puts an end to all questions. The first and foremost discovery was that nothing relating to the physical body, nothing perceptible by the senses, nothing conceivable by the mind, nothing that can be ratiocinated by the intellect is unchanging, is permanent. For each of these instruments, themselves impermanent, subject to change, cannot possibly comprehend the permanent, the unchanging.

It follows from this that ultimate Reality has to be something which survives the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. Keen and rigorous analysis of *all* the three states of experience revealed to the ancients that there *is* something which fully satisfies the demand. It was discovered that nothing comes out unscathed, nothing remains unchanged from human awareness, *except* the *I*, which witnesses all experience, and yet itself remains untouched by the experience, like pure gold emerging from the fire.

Nothing exists, or can exist, without the *I*. Anything aware of its own existence cannot but feel, "I exist" in waking, dream or dreamless sleep. Yet the *I* is not the ego which identifies itself with the perishable body and its adjuncts. For the ego rises and sets daily with the awareness of the body, mind and intellect. In deep sleep one is not aware of any of these, and yet one is not non-existent, since that One witnesses the rise and fall of the perceptibility of all of them.

The attributeless nature of the *I* can be easily exemplified. The *I* of childhood is the same in youth as in senile age. The *I* is not different for male or female, or for man or animal. A limb or eye lost does not obliterate the *I*. That is, the *I* is independent of the physical and mental — and yet, neither is possible without the indefinable *I*, which survives all that mind can conceive of, and the mind itself (as in deep, dreamless sleep).

The ONE, surviving *I*, the ever-present witness of the furl and unfurl of the perceptible

universe, is therefore beyond thought, beyond the senses, immortal and immutable. This is the Truth derived by logical analysis of the totality (all the three states) of experience common to all living. The *I* is pure being, unalloyed, indivisible Self, the Atma, Paramatma, the Soul, God, eternal Witness. In other words:

Life is thought;  
Thought is life;  
And the *Reality* is neither  
The Light of Life,  
The source and destiny  
Of all that is, is *I*  
The Truth unchanging.

Mythology, literature, art and religion of ancient India have the common aim of bringing home the ephemerality and dreamy unreality of seeming life, and therefore of its relative unimportance, the sole purpose of life being the realisation of the inviolable, eternal, *I*, from which *seems* to spring the perceptible universe, into which again it *seems* to dissolve. Realisation of this Truth means, in the words of Ramana Maharshi, the attainment of the conviction that the *I* is not the limited body or the ego, but the all-embracing, timeless, Infinite, with the same certitude that one naturally believes that one is not a beast or a boulder.

Such an unremitting identification of one's real Self with the universal Reality, it will be observed, takes the wind out of all human passions and desires, and steers the ship of life smilingly to serene waters. Anchored always in the unchanging *I*, freed from motive for selfish pursuits, life runs smooth in quiet joy with the same vigour as ever before, but without fear of failure or elation at success.

#### REALITY

*That* which thou art  
Is the Self, the Indefinable;  
The *It*, the sole Reality, true soul;  
The Atman, nameable and nameless too.



That *I*, the body is not;  
 Nor the senses nor mind;  
 Not known, nor knowable,  
 Waking or dreaming;  
 Yet the *I* is knower indispensable,  
 Infinite, eternal,  
 Bliss ever, immeasurable!

#### Convergence of Science and Vedanta

The quest of science, as of philosophy, is the search for Reality. Science aims at a formulation ubiquitous in its sweep of physical phenomena responsible for the perceptual world. All matter was first reduced by science to ninety-two natural elements, then all elements to a handful of fundamental particles. Different types of forces and radiations fell into a single category of electro-magnetic waves. All perception was then no more than space or time or matter or energy or gravitation or various combinations of them. Then Einstein came along with the theory of Special Relativity, demonstrating the equivalence of matter and energy. With General Relativity he brought time and space into a single continuum. The final act climaxes the drama of science with the Unified Field Theory, which promises to unite all physical phenomena of the universe and express it as one elemental field in which everything conceivable is a passing ripple or concretion.

Simultaneously, Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy, accepted by philosophers of science, asserts that Reality can never be felt by the "rabble of the senses", since physical reality changes in and by the very process of observation and perception — recognised and spelt out by the Upanishads (that Reality is beyond perception, that is, beyond mind) ages ago.

Science, therefore, now stands on the brink of an abyss of thought and quest.

While science despairs of ever perceiving or knowing Reality, it senses intuitively that Reality has to be, and does exist, as the substratum, the fountain-source of the perceptible

universe — again, a fact the Upanishads have held for ages.

While science is handicapped in its quest for Reality by its self-imposed limitation of considering only one of the three states of existence, Vedanta reaches its goal by digging down through *all* three states of experience. It points out that our unquestioning acceptance of the dream, during the dream, as waking has to lead to questioning the actuality of the waking state during waking. Simultaneously, the realisation that dream is indubitably a creation of the mind, establishes logically that waking is a projection of the mind, no less — a conclusion modern science is coming to recognise by its own narrow and complex routes.

Vedanta thus demonstrates through analysis of inner experience that Reality is that which is experienced as the pristine, undifferentiated unity in, and only in, the state of dream sleep.

Most people, however, are unaware of *It* as the blissful Reality, infer as they do the bliss *after* the dreamless sleep. By its very nature of non-duality, Reality is indefinable. For, to define or objectify the *It* is to limit the limitless.

If Rational thought can accept Relativity and space-time continuum (though they lie beyond comprehension of the mind), it has to accept the logical derivation of Vedantic Reality—the One which appears as many with the onset of the ego and the mind in the waking as well as the dream states. If modern physics agrees that there is no *absolute* space and no *absolute* time, Vedanta demonstrates, as we have seen, that there is *no* space, *no* time and *no* causation apart from mind, all being creations of the mind, and mind itself being non-existent during dreamless sleep. For the simple fact is, just as Einstein's hypothetical occupants of a closed elevator in space have no way of knowing whether they are in motion or at rest, one can never assert that the so-called waking is not after all a dream. One is never

dreaming, it must be noted, as the dream *is* waking while it lasts. The dream is always in the *past* tense; and the present is always waking, even in the dream. The "unreality" of the dream dawns only when it gives way to waking. And "unreality" means that the space-time-activity was a mere fancy, a bizarre concoction of the mind. To the enlightened one who has attained this unshakeable conviction, waking is but another dream to be dismissed as inconsequential—however much the senses try to hoodwink him to the contrary.

Vedantic Reality, experienced as non-dual unity in dreamless sleep, and which *appears* as many in the other two states, is in fact a logical extension of the Theory of Relativity. The concept of Relativity suffers from inadequacy and incompleteness, in as much as its

deductive base rests on only *one* of the three states of experience. Vedantic Reality, on the other hand, standing as it does solidly on the totality of experience, is therefore the ultimate generalisation, the most fundamental Truth.

Although the Vedantic concept of Reality is logically derived, freeing the understanding of Reality from the subjective mysticism of the saint; to grasp the Ultimate Truth—*It* being after all beyond thought—is difficult; and to *realise It* is all but impossible.

The "cosmic religious experience" of Einstein, the *sat, chit, ananda* (existence, awareness and bliss, all rolled into *One*) of Vedanta, and the "kingdom of God is within you" of Jesus Christ is only attained by what is traditionally called as *Sadhana* and the Grace of the Divine.

Does the soul consist of a kind of energy differing from that studied by physicists, expressing itself by other laws and generated by the cells of the cerebral cortex? Or should it be considered as an immaterial being located outside space and time, outside the dimensions of the cosmic universe and inserting itself by an unknown procedure into our brains, which would be the indispensable conditions of its manifestations and the determining agent of its characteristics?.....Among the multitude of the weak and the defective are some completely developed men. These men when closely observed appear to be superior to classical schemata. In fact the individual whose potentialities are all actualised does not resemble the human being pictured by the specialist. He is much more than the sum of all the facts accumulated by the particular scientist. We never apprehend him in his entirety. He contains vast unknown regions, His potentialities are almost inexhaustible. Like the great natural phenomenon, he is unintelligible. When one contemplates him in the harmony of all organic and spiritual activities one experiences a profound aesthetic emotion. Such an individual is truly the Creator and centre of Universe.

ALEX CARELL.

# MIND AND EGO

By

Dr. M. Sadashiva Rao

THE purpose of any sadhana is purification of the mind. The impurities to be removed are collectively called the 'ego'. An understanding of the nature and working of the mind and of the ego is of value for knowing how sadhana brings about purification of the mind.

## The Mind

The mind (*antah-karana*) is a single entity with multiple functions. It is, in reality, the Self, or pure and infinite consciousness (*atma*) which has come to be limited in the individual (*jivatma*) on account of the impurities constituting the 'ego'. The functional parts of the mind are named: *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkara*, and *chitta*. Sankhya and Tantra recognise the first three to which Vedanta has added *chitta*.

*Manas* is the part of the mind in contact with the world and its experience through the five sense organs and the five organs of action. It is involved in thinking (*manana*) and in the formation of thoughts.

*Buddhi* is the intellect or the higher mind which regulates *manas*, the lower mind. It is involved in moral and spiritual attainments such as: *viveka* or discrimination between the Real and the unreal; and *vairagya* or dispassion or voluntary restraint on desires and attachments. *Buddhi* is impersonal consciousness.

*Ahamkara* is personal consciousness which arrogates as 'I am so-and-so'. It gives a sense of individuality, a sense of unity of body and mind and of permanence in a changing world to the ego or 'I'. It is also the basis of egotism which we have called the 'ego'. However, the sense of 'I' which is a reflection in the mind of the Self, can lead an individual to the realisation of the Self.

*Chitta* is the part of the mind concerned with the subconscious. It is involved in the formation and revival of *samskaras* (also called *vasanas*) which are impressions left in the mind, of egotistic motives of the actions of individuals and, if deep enough, stored in the causal body in 'seed-form'. It is also the cogniser of name-and-form (*nama-rupa*) in the physical world through formation and revival of the concerned *samskara*. It can store experience in the form of memory and also forget and renounce experience (*tyaga*). *Chitta* is brought under control and purified in the course of sadhana.

## How the Mind Works as a Whole

How the mind operates as an integrated whole is best explained by taking the simple experience of an individual with a sense object.

An individual comes across a rose flower in a garden. His sense organs of sight and smell convey a sense-message to his *manas*. If the individual is disinterested (dispassionate), *manas* rejects the message. If he is interested and has a strong desire for flowers, *manas* accepts the sense message and relays it to the other three parts of his mind. *Chitta* revives his *samskara* for cognition and also his *samskara* for desire. Each of these *samskaras*, located in minute seed form in his causal body, begins to move into the heart and thence into the mind, growing in size as it moves to form thoughts. The individual gets the thought: "This is a rose flower," and also the thought of desire for the flower. *Ahamkara* prompts *manas* and the individual gets the thought: "I must get hold of this flower." *Buddhi*, the decision maker, conveys its agreement to *manas* and the latter conveys the decision to the organs of action and the individual takes possession of the flower.

This graphic account of the working of the mind illustrates two important conclusions:

Firstly, it is the *samskara of desire* which determines normally the action taken by an individual.

Secondly, it is *vairagya* or dispassion in an individual that can prevent his *samskara of desire* from functioning.

#### *The Ego*

We are now in a position to explain the nature of the 'ego' and how it functions. The *samskara* of desire in the foregoing example of the working of the mind represents 'ego' or, more correctly, *egotism* of the individual. (We prefer to use the term 'egotism' so that it is not confused with ego 'I' standing for the individual *jivatma*.) According to the Vedanta and other systems, *egotistic motives* of the actions of an individual leave *samskaras* (impressions) in the mind of the individual which predispose him to act with the same motives in future. For example, if he performs actions with strong *selfish* motives and repeats such actions often enough, they leave deep impressions in his mind which are recorded as a *samskara* in his causal body in 'seed' form. This *samskara* is revived by his mind, in the manner explained in the foregoing example, to prompt him to repeat the same motive for actions not only in his present life but also in his future life after his death and re-birth.

The above last statement needs further explaining.

Man has three bodies: the physical body which acts, the subtle body which carries his mind, and the causal body which carries his *samskaras* and other 'causes' of his re-birth. The subtle and causal bodies (making a single unit) survive his physical death. Later, when the time comes for his re-birth in the physical world, his subtle and causal bodies are born in a new physical body. Therefore, when an individual is born in the world, he brings with him not only the mind but also the *samskaras* of his

past life on earth. The inherited *samskaras* are revived in the course of his new physical life and come out of the subconscious as thoughts to influence him to act with the same selfish motives with which he had acted in his past life.

*Samskaras* are the impurities of the mind which create a veil between the mind and the Self. They are called the 'ego' because they generate highly egotistic motives for actions such as inordinate desires, rank selfishness, hatred, jealousy, etc. They bind an individual to the cycle of births and deaths since their creation in every life provides new 'causes' for re-birth.

#### *The Path of Action*

*Samskaras* are a serious impediment if man wants to lead a happy life in the world. However, he has ample opportunities in his life to get rid of them through righteous actions.

For the benefit of the reader, the path of righteous actions is briefly explained below. It will also throw more light on the 'ego'.

To call motives 'good' and 'bad' in moralistic terms is neither valid nor useful. It is necessary to define motives for action in terms of *gunas*, which are the three component forces through which *prakriti* or nature functions. The component forces are called *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *The function of sattva is to reveal SAT of the Self. The function of tamas is to veil the Self.* *Rajas* is the energising force which activates both *sattva* and *tamas*. The movement from *tamas* to *sattva* in all human endeavours is a movement for spiritual advancement towards the Self. *Sattvic* motives for action are: desirelessness, purity of heart, compassion, love, devotion, faith, etc. They are not binding and take one towards liberation and the Self. *Tamasic* motives for action are: desires, selfishness, egotism, hatred, jealousy, anger, deception, cruelty, etc. They are binding and take one away from the Self. Desire for the fruit of action is binding. The conceit: "I am the doer," is also binding.

Desire is at the root of all egotistic motives for action. Man cannot avoid action in the world. His karma will not let him do so. Therefore, he must have a code of conduct for performing actions that do not bind. The code of conduct is simple. It consists in first developing *vairāgya* or dispassion so that his *samskaras* do not find any scope to influence him. Then he must perform the actions which fall under his duty without any desire for the fruits thereof and without the least feeling that he is the doer. His past *samskaras* will wither away in due course by being dissipated into thoughts of which he will take no notice on account of his *vairāgya*. This is the path of Karma or action extolled and prescribed in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*.

#### *Destruction of the Ego*

There is only one way open to an individual to liberate himself fully and for ever from the bondage of *samskaras*. It is *sadhana* or spiritual effort involving concentration of the mind and meditation. The simplest and the most effective is Self-enquiry which is a direct assault on the 'ego'. It is the *sadhana* taught by Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi in which the practice consists in concentrating one-pointed on the single thought 'I', standing for one's own ego or being, with a tranquil and inward-turned mind. *In a calm and tranquil mind*

*engaged in meditation, subconscious samskaras come into open consciousness in the form of thoughts at a much faster rate than in the course of the normal life of the individual.*

In regard to this Bhagavan says: "All kinds of thoughts arise in meditation. That is only right; for what lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless it rises up, how can it be destroyed?" (*Maharshi's Gospel*, I, P. 19)

*Samskaras*, in the form of subconscious fears, fixations and complexes, come out as thoughts. The simple act of throwing the thoughts out of the mind, as often as they come, exhausts them and removes them from their moorings. When concentration goes deeper and the mind gets fully introverted, it reaches the causal body and dislodges the more refractory *samskaras*. Finally, on the loss of most of the *samskaras*, the mind sinks into the heart. If with sustained effort the mind is made to dwell in the heart, while engaged in worldly duties and also during regular practice of meditation, the most refractory *samskaras* get destroyed by being resolved in the Self. With constant practice, when the last traces are fully removed, the mind gets perfectly attuned in infinite consciousness. The *sadhaka* will then find a complete transformation of his life and outlook.

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**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.**

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI.

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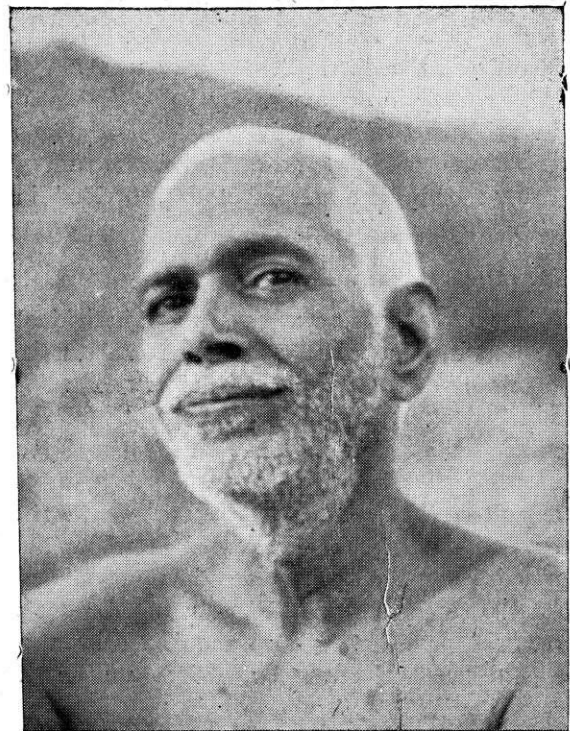
# SURI NAGAMMA

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By  
Joan Greenblatt

**S**RI Bhagavan's beloved child has returned to her Master, her all, and will for ever abide in the devotees' hearts. It is her pen pictures of Sri Bhagavan which have conveyed His immense compassion and deep humanity to us in such an intimate way. No one can read her Letters and not be affected by them—such is the quality of her innocence, purity and close association with Sri Bhagavan.

For me and my husband, our chance meeting with her during the recent Jayanti celebrations at the Ashram was a long awaited prayer come true. We walked into her tiny room in the guest compound; she was like a child—guileless and without any airs. We introduced ourselves and she remembered us since we had written to her through her brother, D. S. Sastri. We sat for a while, heart speaking to heart. We could not help but feel Sri Bhagavan's presence as it flowed from her



*Suri Nagamma*

while we silently sat by her side. This was the beginning of our evening vigils. We would sit in her room and listen to the wonderful stories of her days with Sri Bhagavan. Sometimes Sri Kunju Swami would also be in the room, and we witnessed two sparkling faces, childlike and innocent, with complete absence of ego-sense. Just to watch them, even though we could not penetrate the language, was a rare joy in itself. Two stories I remember vividly:

“The first death anniversary of cow Lakshmi was being celebrated in the Ashram. I was away at the time and unaware of the celebra-

tion. Sri Bhagavan began saying, even a few days before the event, that Suri Nagamma would surely come for it. He repeated this again and again. Finally my sister-in-law, who was staying at the Ashram at the time, wrote to me about Sri Bhagavan's words and the celebration. I left immediately for the Ashram. That whole day Sri Bhagavan was saying: 'Surely Suri Nagamma will come: she cannot stay away.' When I arrived late that evening, Sri Bhagavan remarked: 'She has come.' Viswanatha Swami speaking to me said: 'How can we say Sri Bhagavan has no children? No mother could have been as concerned for a child or solicitous as he was for you.'

On another occasion she told us how even animals lost body-consciousness in the presence of Sri Bhagavan: "On one occasion, a devotee was playing the veena beautifully and singing along with it. All others in the Hall were completely immersed in the music. Then I noticed a wonderful sight. Lakshmi the cow was stretched out in front of Sri Bhagavan's couch, completely absorbed. The white peacock began dancing in the centre while the Ashram dogs sat motionless in apparent repose. It was a scene of the ancient days — of a Rishi's Ashram." She also told us that at Skandashram even the peacock and cobra, naturally inimical, sat peacefully side by side.

One evening I sat on the steps outside Nagamma's room quietly waiting for the rest of the devotees. She found me and asked me to come into the room. We sat side by side in silence. Our hearts were speaking to each other in that silence. Nagamma then began to sing a poem which she wrote long ago on Sri Bhagavan. In a sweet voice in a very frenzy of adoration she sang verse after verse till the others arrived.

Another evening we brought Suri Nagamma her latest book, *Letters and Recollections of Sri Ramanasramam*, and asked her to inscribe a copy for the Ashram in America and Canada. With blessings we received the book back along with a new verse she composed that very night. Sri Balaram Reddi translated the verse from Telugu into English: "Having implanted the Lotus Feet of Ramana Guru in thy heart and drunk the abundant nectar of peace embedded therein, Child, ever live like a humming bee that roams about (world over, singing the praise of Bhagavan)."

We asked her how she remembered in such detail all that took place in Sri Bhagavan's presence. She told us she would leave the Hall and write little notes when Sri Bhagavan went on his daily walks. At night she would sleep till midnight and, upon waking, begin her letters, elaborating on these little notes. She always felt as if Sri Bhagavan was sitting by her side.

All at the Ashram will miss her presence, her walk through the Ashram grounds with head bent in utter humility and simplicity. Her doors were always open to devotees and at all hours people would be coming and going, eager to listen to her stories and reminiscences. She said: "It has been a habit with me that I cannot keep anything to myself; whatever I hear I want to tell others."

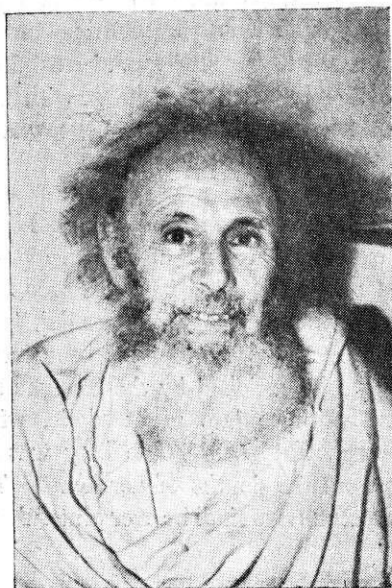
Kunju Swami, radiant with the most beautiful smile, exclaimed to us after hearing of her physical passing: "She has not gone away; she has only come to Tiruvannamalai." Devotees all around the world have been and shall continue to be enriched by the treasure she left for us. In those late night vigils, while all slept in peaceful repose, one lady was awake writing from the depths of her heart. To her, Suri Nagamma, we shall be ever grateful.

## A Deeply Effective Darshan of Bhagavan

By

J. D. M. Stuart and  
O. Baumer-Despeigne

**A**BHISHIKTANANDA<sup>1</sup> had the darshan of Sri Ramana Maharshi on two occasions, once in January 1949, and again six months later. He noted in the Diary that when he was introduced to Sri Ramana, "the Maharshi replied with a gesture of the hand, accompanied by a smile filled with a kindness that was impossible to forget." But at first he did not know what to make of the Sage to whose darshan he had looked forward for so long. As he sat in the darshan Hall the chanting of the Vedic hymns had the effect of relaxing the fetters of his mind. "Even before my mind was able to recognize the fact, and still less to express it, the invisible halo of this Sage had been perceived by something in me deeper than



*Sri Abhishiktananda*



any words...In this Sage of Arunachala and of these times, I saw the real Sage of eternal India; it was like the very soul of India piercing to the depths of my own soul and

<sup>1</sup> Abhishiktananda was the Indian name of Dom Henri Le Saux, a French Benedictine monk, who lived in India from 1948 until his passing away in December 1973. He became an Indian citizen in 1960. He was profoundly influenced by Sri Ramana, as can be seen from his books (especially *The Further Shore* ISPCK 1975) and from his private Diary, from which most of this article's quotes are taken.



joining it in a mysterious unity. It was a call which rent everything, split everything, which opened wide an abyss."

A feverish cold forced him to return home to Kulittalai. But as he lay in bed, "in my feverish dreams... it was the Maharshi who unremittently appeared to me... the Maharshi bringing the true India which transcends time." Then he added significantly: "My dreams also included attempts—always in vain—to incorporate in my previous mental structures without shattering them, these powerful new experiences which my contact with the Maharshi had brought to birth; new as they were, their hold on me was already too strong for it ever to be possible for me to disown them." After this Abhishiktananda saw Sri Ramana once more, in July 1949, when he gave darshan shortly after one of his operations. This time he was better prepared to profit from the grace: "I did my best not to allow my efforts at rationalization to get in the way as on the first visit, and tried simply to attend to the hidden influence." (*Secret*, P.11) As he had already begun to glimpse the eternal in Sri Ramana, the withdrawal of his physical presence did not break the bond that was forming.

Abhishiktananda had been studying the Upanishads for several years and felt the attraction of advaita. His contact with Sri Ramana, a living example of advaita, gave to his study and meditation an existential direction. He realized that advaita is nothing until it is *Ived*. He therefore sought to open himself to Sri Ramana in every way that he could, by meditating on the Maharshi's own profound poems and on the *Sri Ramana Gita*, trying to listen beyond the words to the depth of spirit from which they came; at the same time he took every opportunity of meeting those of his disciples who had most deeply realized Sri Ramana's 'message'. (*Secret* p. 14).

On his next visit to Sri Ramanasramam in November 1951, Abhishiktananda discovered — or was discovered — by Arunachala; and this

also drew him nearer to Sri Ramana. "I was truly reborn at Arunachala under the guidance of the Maharshi." (Diary 29.7.55) For many years he had been leading an austere life as a Benedictine monk, and since coming to India, he had begun to live as a *sannyasi* in his ashram at Kulittalai. Now he discovered what it was to live as a hermit in the caves of the Holy Mountain. In 1952 he spent five months there, mostly in *mauna* and living on *bhiksha* and he returned for further periods each year until 1955. Before him was the ideal of Sri Ramana, of the Desert Fathers in Egypt, and of his own St Benedict, who loved the solitude of his cave where "alone in the presence of the heavenly Witness, he abode with himself."

In these times the grace of Arunachala took hold of him in ways which are of course indescribable in words, though he gives hints in his Diary and in letters to his friends.

It was Sri Ramana who led him to Arunachala, and it was there, partly through silence, and partly through the words and example of other holy people, that he deepened his understanding of Sri Ramana's *upadesha*. This experience, so early in his life in India, was decisive. In fact it was many years before this experience was fully 'integrated' and finally, it seems, in the heart attack of July 1973, when he hung between life and death, and realised that "the Awakening is independent of any situation whatever, independent of all the *dvandvas*, and in the first place of the *dvandva* called life-death." (Diary 11.9.73).

In March 1953 he wrote in his Diary:

"There is something in the caves of Arunachala. Sages have lived there and have impregnated the rocks with their inner life — and yet there is more to it than that... Brahman himself inhabits the cave of the heart, say the Upanishads. Here is the cave of Brahman himself... On entering this place which is so isolated and so pure, these words sang in my heart: "This shall be my resting place for ever; here will I dwell for I have a delight therein... (a verse sung at the profession of

a Benedictine monk). How will God's will for me be manifested in the coming days?... Boldly take the final plunge into pure advaita, is what is constantly whispered by the voice which continually sings in the depth of my heart."

The following quotations from his Diary will indicate how deeply Abhishiktananda digested, integrated the *upadesha* of Sri Ramana!

"They — Sri Ramana and Arunachala — have become infused into my flesh, they are woven into the fibres of my heart!" (24.11.56)

His teaching is simply to go back to the source of myself and to *grasp* (but not intellectually) that the 'authorship', the *Aham*, which governs our corporal and mental activity, cannot be divided into two — God and myself." (19.7.52)

"Advaita is neither a doctrine, nor a system. It is the supreme experience here below, one which forbids an absolute meaning to the form of multiplicity which marks everything in the world that comes before our senses or our mind...Advaita is the fundamental dimension of being." (30.3.64)

"Ramana Maharshi is not a *brahmavid*; there is no other *brahmavid* than Brahman. Brahman knows himself in his Ramana-murti. Ramana is Brahman's own pure consciousness of himself. There is nothing left in Sri Ramana which could congratulate itself or delight in knowing Brahman or in the fact that Brahman knows himself in him, Ramana. There is only pure *Cit* in itself, *Citsvarupa*, pure *Ananda* in itself, *svarupananda*, *anandamaya*, because he is nothing but pure *Sat*, *sanmatra*. The mental and physical functions of Ramana are pure *Brahma-shakti*, pure radiance of the self-awareness in himself of Brahman and Ramana-murti.....The *shakti* of the *jivan-mukta* is the very power of Brahman at work in the world." (23.11.56)

"My deepest ideal—that to which unconsciously everything in me is referred, is that

of Sri Ramana...and this ideal could never have rooted itself at this depth in my psyche if there had not been a meeting with an obscurely felt call, a 'surfacing', an awakening." (2.7.71)

Finally it will be of interest to note another important aspect of the advaita which Abhishiktanandaji lived as a consequence of his 'initiation' by Sri Ramana and Arunachala. He once described himself in his Diary as 'at once so deeply Christian and so deeply Hindu, at a depth where Christian and Hindu in their social and mental structures are blown to pieces, and are yet found again ineffably at the heart of each other.' (30.6.64) He could say without qualification: "The experience of the Upanishad is true, *I know it is*." (11.5.72); yet equally he would never deny the truth of his Christian experience. He was and remained to the end of his life, a Christian priest with a profound sense of responsibility towards his Christian brethren.

"Christianity, Vedanta — are they not in the end two points of view from which man seeks to understand the mystery of God? Two irreconcilable perspectives — but is not God precisely the meeting point of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*)?" (16.5.58) "The *Purusha* of the Upanishads is the non-dual interiority of man and God." (28.12.71) "Christ is the revelation of what I am..." (9.2.65) "The Father is the mystery of my origin and the Spirit is the mystery of my relation to my origin." (5.6.55)

While living in a cave of the Holy Mountain, he had written: "There is one fact which overrides all: the religious experience which I have had in a non-Christian environment with an intensity never known in my previous life, and in real continuity with all that I had obscurely felt hitherto. Sri Ramana's advaita is my birthplace, *mulagarbha*. Faced with that, all reasonings are shattered." (3.9.55)

The severe heart-attack in July 1973, from which Abhishiktananda nearly died on the

spot, was an experience of intense realisation. "In seeing myself so weak, so incapable of thought, of movement, I was freed from being identified with this I which had previously thought, willed, moved about, and been worried about each and everything. Disconnection. All the consciousness with which I was moving

about was no longer mine, but as for myself, I still was..." (11.9.73).

It may be seen from the above extracts how deeply Abhishiktananda drank in the *upadesha* of Sri Ramana Maharshi, and then went on to live his own authentic experience of the unique Mystery.

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## GOD AND HIS NAMES

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By  
K. Subrahmanian

Does God answer to names like Rama, Krishna, Jesus, etc? God is formless and nameless. How can he answer to such names?

The body does not bear a name when it is born. A child is given a name and it learns to respond to it. The body does not respond to the name but the mind does.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that when a man dies, we say remove 'It', viz the body, and not remove so and so, the man. Where there is no mind, there is no name.

God is pure awareness that transcends the mind. Everything in the universe is Self. We don't understand this, as we limit ourselves to our body. Even as the nameless 'mind' responds to a name through association, God who is nameless will respond to any name that may be chosen by a devotee. The Name will lead him ultimately to the nameless Self.

Tennyson, the English poet, often went into a trance by repeating his name several times. "A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has often come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once, as it were, out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being; and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life."<sup>2</sup>

Repetition of any name is useful in the initial stages of one's sadhana. This leads to a single thought which eventually dissolves in the Self. When a child learns a language, it writes the letters of the alphabet in bold type. When it has learned to read individual words, it no longer is aware of the individual letters of the alphabet. When it has learned to read sentences, it is hardly aware of the words. Words are in sentences; the letters of the alphabet are in the words. Everything is in the Self.

<sup>1</sup> *Talks with Sri Ramana*, pp. 507-8.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Tennyson, *Mahurshi Memoir by his Son*, Macmillan, London, 1897, Vol. I, p. 320.

## Religions or Philosophy?<sup>1</sup>

By

K. Ramakrishna Rao

IT is curious to note that, till recently, most of the writers on philosophy refused to recognise any philosophy in India, the land we adore for its spiritual and philosophical heritage. It is surprising, even now, to find adherents of this view in India itself. Celebrated Western scholars in philosophy have published books on the History of Philosophy, the contents of which show not even a reference to Eastern thought; and yet the title boldly stands as the History of Philosophy. Bertrand Russell, however, is the first to call his work on the history of philosophy Western Philosophy, thus recognising the existence of Eastern thought.

Those who fail to see any philosophy in India argue thus: India is rich in religious thought, but there is no philosophy as such. Philosophical thought has been enslaved by scriptural dogma. Philosophers blindly accept dogmas and consequently their thought suffers philosophical eclipse. Philosophical thought should always be unfettered by any authority. But, unfortunately, Indian thinkers could not do away with authority. A few who did so preferred to be religious thinkers. Religious thought is entirely different from philosophical speculations. Hence the dominance of religious and spiritual dogma blinded the Indian thinkers to philosophical light.

Such an anomalous situation has been created by the lack of a clear conception as to what exactly constitutes religion and how it differs from philosophy.

What is religion? Religion has been defined in several ways. Every philosopher who attempted to define religion saw to it that the definition was in agreement with his epistemological or ethical system, Kant takes religion

to be "the recognition of all our duties as Divine commands". The conception of duty follows his "categorical imperative". If one fails to see the sequence or questions the categorical imperative itself, Kant's definition would no more be convincing. Hegel defines religion as the "Knowledge acquired by the finite spirit of its essence as Absolute spirit". If one refuses to be a pantheist of Hegelian brand this definition fails to have any recognition whatsoever. Max Muller felt religion to be "the perception of the infinite". According to Huxley it is "reverence and love for the Ethical Ideal". Matthew Arnold defines religion as "morality touched by emotion".

In spite of this apparent divergence, all these definitions claim religion to be an ideal way of life. Religion is an intrinsic hypothesis implicitly assumed by individuals. It dictates what ought to be the right course of action. It is not something objective but subjective, differing from individual to individual, however minute the difference may be. But from a broader viewpoint individuals may be classed as falling under certain sects. Materialists also may be said to be religious. Marx's description of religion is correct from his own standpoint. Since religion is the way of life, for a materialist, materialism would be the religion. So the truth of Marxian doctrine goes with the intoxicated actions of the materialist.

It may be said that while religion assumes the existence of God, the creator, materialism bears no reference to God. Materialism explains the formation of nature by matter and

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Call Divine*, Vol. III, p. 393-402, 'Status of Religious Philosophy'.

motion, not feeling any need to explain anything by postulating an unknown entity. How can we reconcile this and say materialism is a religion?

This objection also fails in relation to certain religions which are still flourishing. They have nothing to do with God. For example, no one has any doubt about calling Buddhism a religion. But Buddhist thought nowhere makes any reference to God. The same is true of Jainism. These two religions do not regard God as the creator or as omniscient or omnipotent, the controlling power of the Universe. So while influential religions like Buddhism and Jainism make no reference to God it is meaningless to assert that every religion should believe in God and so on.

Philosophy is the search for the ultimate reality. This disorderly, chaotic, perceptual world leaves us no trace of its reality. It is for philosophy to go beyond the corporeal world and pursue the nature of ultimate reality. The behaviour of individuals is conditioned by two sorts of knowledge — knowledge pertaining to the immediate necessities, and knowledge pertaining to the more remote necessities. The latter are moral while the former are physical. Recently developed sciences belong to the physical side. Religion and philosophy belong to the realm of the Eternal.

If religion is the way of life what should be the relation between philosophy and religion? As an ideal way of life religion dictates what ought to be the right course of action in the light, not of the immediate perceptual world, but of ultimate reality. Philosophy gives religion the nature of ultimate reality. In the light of this reality religious thought takes its course of development, makes certain hard and fast rules and commands the obedience and subjugation of every one who assents to its teachings. So, religion has its origin in philosophy. If philosophy is a pure science religion would be its applied aspect. It means that there could be no religion without philosophy.

Every religion has a philosophy of its own. Christianity has its own philosophy; Mohammedanism has its own metaphysics; Hinduism has its own epistemological argument; and Buddhism has its own ethics. Not to speak of the main religions, even the different sects of the same religion differ on their views on the nature of ultimate reality. Buddhism, for instance, gave rise to four sects — Madhyamika, Yogacharas, Sautrantikas and Vaibhasikas. Each group has a philosophy of its own. Madhyamikas are nihilists (*Sunya Vadins*), Yogacharas are subjective idealists (*vijnana Vadins*) Sautrantikas and Vaibhasikas are realists (*Bhahyanumeya Vadins* and *Bhahyaprayaksa Vadins*). The same religion, because of its sects and to justify Hinayana and Mahayana divisions, gave rise to different, but brilliant, systems of philosophy. So it is far from any doubt that every religion has a philosophy of its own.

In view of the above consideration, it is clear that if one recognises the origin of a religion at a place, it implies that he should recognise the origin of philosophy also. For the origin of a religion some kind of philosophy or other is an *a priori* condition. Provided proper conditions prevail, philosophy becomes a religion, resembling a process of revolution. Philosophical seeds sown in a fertile mind flourish as plants giving moral shade in many who believe and attach themselves to them. Such is the case in India. As such every philosophical system is a religion and every philosopher is a religious prophet.

It may be asked then why in the West so many systems of philosophy remained stationary as mere philosophical theories without evolving into religions. This state of affairs in the West may be ascribed to the temperament and the attitude of the peoples of the West, which are radically different from the Indian. Indians are instinctively or temperamentally more religious. The very style of Indian life uninfluenced by Western or Muslim civilization, will serve to illustrate this point of view. Habits and certain ways of behaviour

have been determined and systematized for an Indian and he blindly follows them. A primitive Indian, in the sense of being unaware of modern civilization and knowing nothing about scientific hygienic conditions, never eats or drinks anything before washing his face and cleaning his teeth every morning. Perhaps it is the reason why we find a minimum number of dental disorders in India when compared to other kinds of disorders and other countries. No Indian steps into the dining hall or bedroom with shoes on. All these habits are observed without knowing the reason for doing so. But originally they were meant to prevent any unhygienic particles of dust or germs from being brought into the house. We can cite numerous examples of this kind. In ancient India everything thought to be good had been systematized; and one had no alternative to copying it. The traces and phases of such systematized or mechanised behaviour still endure even after several hundred years. Imagine how strong those bonds are! In the light of these facts it is not surprising that every fruit of philosophical speculation underwent here a miraculous transformation and evolved into a kind of religion. So, the great practicality that characterises the Indian is the primary cause for the non-existence of pure philosophy as such in India.

It is commonly said that religion is dogmatic while philosophy is rational. But it is not true to say that religion as such is dogmatic. Religious thought is as rational as philosophical speculations — neither of them is fully rational as both of them involve certain questionable assumptions. But it would be correct to say that religious rituals and actions are dogmatic at times. Action belongs to the physical side of the organism and some sort of dogmatism and emotionalism are inevitable.

Another objection often levelled against us is that philosophers in India blindly followed the Vedic contentions, and to prove the validity of their arguments they appealed to the Vedas. Vedas were the standard test of truth

and nothing could be said against them. Such dogmatic assumptions curtailed the freedom of thought and controlled philosophical developments. So how can we assert that India once reached the highest philosophical heights and so on?

The argument fails to substantiate itself, firstly, because we have certain heterodox systems which do not accept the authority of the Vedas, and secondly, because the other systems do not lose their philosophical value merely because they sincerely pinned their faith on the Vedas. Say, for instance, in writing some poets follow certain rules. Most of the poets in India followed what is known as 'chandhas'. In English poetry also we find some meter or other. If a surrealist comes and says that this is no poetry because it blindly followed certain rules, we merely laugh at him. Even those who agree with him that poetry should be freed from the fetters of meters are inclined to accept the earlier poetry written according to meter as genuine poetry. Similarly one might say that philosophy in India must be freed from Vedic dogmas. But this should not lead him to say that earlier philosophy which accepted Vedic authority is nonsense and not philosophy. By following the Vedas Indian thought did not lose its philosophical value. On the other hand, it showed the flexibility and comprehensiveness of Vedic thought.

India gave rise to some very influential religions which are rich in philosophical thought. Every religion is a philosophical system. The existence of several religions in India implies the existence of several enduring systems of philosophy which are not mere fantasies or intellectual curiosities. These religions are the applied fields of deep human thought. Religion is a step ahead of philosophy. The flourishing of religious thought in India reflects her progress in the realm of remote necessities. To assert that Indian philosophy is mostly religious philosophy is not in any way to deny its significance or minimize its value.

# THE WAY TO THE REAL<sup>1</sup>

By  
A. T. Millar

I propose to examine a fundamental element in the Quest, and that is the *gradual* development in the *sadhaka* of spiritual awareness or insight. It is very important to stress the fact because, contrary to a widely held assumption, there is no *immediate* entry into Enlightenment. It is only in the last few years, for example, that Zen *satori* has come to be seen for what it really is, viz., abiding in Ultimate Subjectivity *suddenly* after years of agonised searching (what Western saints have called the *Dark Night of the Soul*). Even when this happens, a further period of effort may be required to stabilise this condition or attitude so that it becomes a way of life and a continuum of Transcendence. Only a gradual development, steady growth, is possible, because the path winds uphill all the way and the Way is often strewn with thorns.

The Way itself is nothing more than a gradual development of *insight* or *bodhi*. In India, Tibet and elsewhere there is the mataphor used of opening the *Third eye*. This *Third Eye* is none other than *bodhi* or insight and, it goes without saying, that it is impossible to have a *third eye* unless you first have two eyes and train them to *see*. This is what Don Juan, the Mexican seer, always stressed in his talks with Castaneda.

A Guru or Master is indispensable in this gradual ascent. No man can pull himself unaided out of the deep well of ignorance or *avidya*. The mental and intellectual pursuit of Truth is a waste of time. That is why a famous Zen Master in Japan, when he was still a *sadhaka*, one day burnt all the books in his possession including a rare edition of the *Diamond Sutra*.

All the great Teachers or Gurus demand not only complete allegiance and sincerity from the disciple but also arduous struggle, determination and self-effort. They turn away disciples who stop trying and continue merely to bask in the guru's presence or personality. (This erroneous attitude on the part of the disciple is like a man taking a brick and rubbing it day and night with wet leaves hoping thereby to transform the brick into gold). Some might stupidly condemn the Guru's action as not in accordance with love and patience but this is to measure a Sage by one's own, petty standards. The Guru's *Compassion* is surely the most mysterious part of the *mysterium tremendum*, if it is not the Central Mystery itself.

This arduous struggle and high endeavour demands renunciation of the world. It is only a Sage who can later on tell a confused Paul Brunton that it *is* possible to find truth *without* renouncing the world<sup>2</sup> This is because as a Sage he is now beyond duality and Ultimate Reality itself. He speaks from the summit of the mountain, "remaining in Real Being, transcending all thought —" (*Upadesa Saram*, V 9).

The gradual Awakening, the thorny ascent, the arduous struggle, is implicit in the teachings of Guru Ramana.

"To be absorbed into one's Source  
Is Karma, Bhakti, Yoga, Jnana"

These lines from the *Upadesa Saram*, as translated by Allen Chadwick, clearly indicate the difficult Path or Paths that are to be followed

<sup>1</sup> For Sri Bhagavan's teaching on the subject, see Chap. 4 of A. Osborne's book, *Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*.

<sup>2</sup> Reported in Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*.

but *they are not to be confused with the Goal itself*. Whatever Path is chosen, be it Bhakti or Yoga, it is only a 'path', a 'road', and nothing more. To be bogged down by the Path is to be led completely astray. To be bogged down in ecstasy or *samadhi* is to attain nothing. It might be compared to a patient in coma who lies helpless and unconscious in hospital for years and years and only the body goes on functioning, thoughts and actions being dead.

There is a passage in the *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book I, which gives the *sadhaka* an idea of what is entailed in order to reach the Goal. The Guru is asked how one can reach the Self and he answers: "The fact is you are ignorant — Attempts are directed to remove the veil of ignorance which is merely wrong knowledge".

The wrong knowledge is the false identification of the Self with the body, mind, etc. This false identification must go. It is the Guru's compassion which teaches the method of removing these false identifications. And surely to achieve this, the Guru's guidance is absolutely necessary, at *every step on the Way*.

Does the Guru follow a definite method in teaching his disciple? The answer is in the affirmative and may be simply expressed as a way of taking the disciple from lower to higher stages or levels of spirituality. The Guru's teachings have to take the aspirant beyond the false identification with body, mind and intellect and on to the levels of 'spiritual' knowledge and consciousness. Having reached this very high level, the Guru has now to take the *sadhaka* into a realm beyond all these — the realm of Pure Consciousness or Self.

Self-Realisation is not Self-Realisation if it is momentary or if the thought or feeling of

remaining in such a state persists. An eternal abiding in Reality without the knowledge or thought or feeling of so abiding is called *Sahaja*. This is the true goal of all spiritual effort. It has nothing to do with *samadhi* or ecstasy or feeling-toned states. As Guru Ramana put it: "Remaining permanently in the primal state *without effort* (my italics) is *Sahaja*". In the State of *Sahaja* one is liberated from both ignorance and enlightenment. It is what the Buddha called abiding in "the unborn, the not become, the not made and the uncompounded". This stage without effort can only be reached after much sustained effort.

The terminology the Guru uses will be meaningful only to the *sadhaka* because the whole process is a very intimate affair — one might almost call it collusion — involving complete rapport. The important fact to remember is that the Guru meets his disciple on the latter's *own terms*, or *own level*. The Guru knows best how to follow the *sadhaka's* gradual progress and guide him on his journey to the Real.

There are too many books, too many *shastras*, too many *mantras*, too many *japas* and *bhajans* around today and they bewilder the *aspirant* and shatter his private *sadhana*. It is not enough to be *told*, it is not enough to *read*. that "Peace is your Real Nature", "no-mind, no world", "all is Pure Consciousness", "the Self is Pure Bliss", etc. The only sensible resolve is to *find the Guru*. It is worth any sacrifice involved because, if He *is* found, then the fear of death disappears in dying to oneself.

"After the first death, there is no other".<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Dylan Thomas.

O Lord, though I and Thou are one, yet I am Thine, but thou art not mine,  
just as the waves belong to the ocean and not the ocean to the waves!

SRI SHANKARA.



## SONG OF AT-ONE-MENT—(IV)

By  
K. Forrer\*

13. "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me."

(St. Mark VIII, 34)

OF all the ways of following Christ, the enquiry into the origin of the I-sense is the shortest of them all.

Its starting point is the little 'me', 'myself', which has to be denied to find the great Me, the Self.

Self denial, ego denial, if it is to be accomplished to perfection, must be more than an ethical act, which is only the preparation for self denial. True self denial asks for the complete destruction of the human ego, the utter effacement of the individual.

Since the ego is nothing but the mind, which in turn is nothing but a string of thoughts threaded on the 'I-thought', it means that only the destruction of the mind, the erasing of all thoughts, leads to the ultimate Goal, namely, the realization of one's true Identity, the 'I AM that I AM'.<sup>1</sup>

One who thus stems the flood of thoughts is indeed a HERO, for such is the meaning of the word.<sup>2</sup>

To 'take up one's cross' then means initially to welcome death, the death of one's ego. The cross, once taken up, in due course takes us up and acts as the Divine Tool of stilling the flood of one's thoughts by nailing them fast to what is then no longer a mere implement of execution, but the TREE of LIFE, on which the 'I-am-the-body-idea' expires to be replaced by the deathless 'I AM'.

Thus the cross to the Christian is the indispensable key to the Kingdom of Heaven, which is *within*.

And to 'follow Me' therefore is to follow the 'ME' within by pursuing the 'I-sense' in one's consciousness until it merges with the supernal 'I-I', the Ocean of Bliss and Life Eternal.

Then the brain, though a lamp in this world of darkness, no longer dominates our existence. It has no greater use than the moon in a bright summer sky, pale and insignificant beside the Glorious Sun.

14. "If ye abide in me, and my words in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

(St. John XV, 7)

TO begin with, to 'abide in Me' is to hold firmly to the Divine Guide and Teacher, keeping Him in mind at all times. At first we may need many and varied reminders and the different religions have devised a host of forms and ways of doing this.<sup>3</sup>

At first, too, remembering is only occasional and at great intervals. But in good time each pilgrim finds his own special kind of reminder that keeps him in touch with the Divine and which is most efficacious for him personally.

Eventually he remembers more devoutly and more frequently until the occasional drop becomes a steady drip, finally growing into an unbroken stream of remembrance.

Only at that point can it be said that we abide in Him truly and also that His words abide in us.

\* Continued from our April issue.

And at that point, too, the whole world takes on a new perspective. He is seen everywhere and in everything, in the most trivial as well as in the most grand.

He is no longer someone strange or other than oneself, but one's innermost Being, one's very Self.

And to abide in the Self, to abide in the Substratum of all is to *be* that Self or Substratum, and in that state, whatever is being asked is also granted without any lag of time, since indeed there is no time, no division, no two, and hence neither asking nor doing unto anyone.

That State is always and its realization is the most natural thing, for it is ever realized.

Yet while not abiding thus, to hold tenaciously to the remembrance of the Lord is a sure way of Liberation.

15. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven"

(*St. John III, 27*)

ALL things are created within the endlessness of space; nothing can escape it.

Space in turn with all its things is contained within the endlessness of Heaven -- who is there to escape It?

Apart from space no-thing is perceived.

Apart from Heaven no-thing is received.

Without knowing it, we are ever in Heaven and all things surge from It and merge with It without ever leaving It.

And again: where is space without the seer, and where is Heaven?

Space and Heaven being contained within the seer, to know him is to possess all; who would then concern himself with receiving?

16. "Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his structure?"

(*St. Matt. VI, 27*)

THE ghost-self of man, the shadow-self, can do nothing of itself, just as the shadow of a man is utterly bound to the movements of that man.

While the ego lasts, man is not free to do as he pleases.

Even if he thinks himself free at times, he realizes at others that he is bound, and thus he oscillates in his sentiments between two extreme poles.

Just as sunlight, which contains no shade in itself, when it falls on the earth, casts a shadow, so does Absolute Freedom; when making its image in man, show itself under two relative aspects: freedom and bondage.

Absolute Freedom knows no bounds, no limits, whereas man, even while postulating freedom for himself, must admit the relativity of it, and such freedom is itself a fetter.

Whatever man's action may be, it comes not of himself, just as the mirror image does not act of itself.

Action goes on automatically whether man wills it or not; man can neither begin his work nor end it without the will of heaven, for all is centred in That and all that is manifest, whether material, psychological or otherwise, is but a spontaneous and instantaneous projection of That, which alone IS.

Even to 'take thought' is not under man's control: thinking goes on whether he wills it or not, and thinking he cannot halt without the Will of Heaven, nor can he cause it to flow without the Will of Heaven.

Were every man an independent cause of his action, how could prophecies come true?

Prophecy is possible only if all things ever manifesting are all and without exception contained in the Eternal Now from whence they spring, unfolding in due course.

Only thus can a prophet ever see what will be, because it already is, in solution, as it were, uncrystallized as yet

There are no accidents in the 'accidental' sense; all is accident, or nothing.<sup>4</sup>

17. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father! — But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

(*St. Matt. X, 29, 30*)

NO matter how small a thing, how trivial an event may be, down to the minutest detail, all is willed by the Father.

All is predestined or nothing.

Predestination is from the point of view of time only. In Eternity there is neither 'pre' nor 'post', there is but NOW.

That NOW, which is Time Absolute, manifests as relative time with past, present and future. But the present alone is real: before and after are but figments of the mind.

'Life and Light', consciousness, are ever now, at no other time can they be experienced.

The 'now' in time is our anchor-point in the 'NOW' of Eternity.

'NOW' is the bridge between heaven and earth. Volition and non-volition, effort and effortlessness, confusion and clarity, doubt and faith — all are but spectral colours of the one Light, which is colourless.

And when the ego dissolves, volition and effort resolve in the one Will, which is effortless and free of opposites.

To experience the Eternal NOW as what it is, without the mirroring river of thought, wipes out all concepts, all doubts as to free will and predestination.

18. "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

(*St. Matt. VI, 34*)

TO surrender to the present is to set one's foot onto the bridge to heaven.

To cast aside 'thought for the morrow', is to cast aside attachment to this world of dualities. Deeds performed without desire sow no seed of new attachment.

Thus life after life the ego's grip is gently loosened until the power of Karma<sup>5</sup> has, consumed itself.

Truly to cast aside 'thought for the morrow' is to discard all thought whatsoever.

Only in this wise can action be free from karmic obligation. To discard all thought is to merge with Reality. At one with That, where is action, where are birth and death?

19. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

(*St. Matt. VI, 33*)

STRIVING to grasp worldly or spiritual possessions is as futile as pursuing a mirage in the desert.

Like the Fata Morgana, it leads to nowhere. While we take our bearing on the shimmering illusion in the sky, the real Oasis remains hidden and we suffer thirst in the midst of plenty for truly we have never left that Oasis and the desert is but a creation of our mind.

But if karma makes us deal with material things, how are we to escape their luring fascination?

To give away our possessions is not possible unless we are destined to do so.

And if we give away all we have, but remain attached to it in thought, we still possess it, we are still possessed by it.

Therefore truly to give away all possessions is to become indifferent towards them, by performing our worldly duties without selfish ends.

There is but one way to accomplish this: namely by directing one's thoughts towards the kingdom of God, by handing over all things, including oneself, to Him.

To think of Him, to bear Him in mind at all times, or to trace the source of one's 'I' relentlessly, that is seeking the kingdom of God.

Thus our thoughts are turned inward and away from the Fata Morgana of worldly matters, and all our doings, however material they may appear, become service of the Lord.

So seeking the kingdom of God, the cares of the world are increasingly diminished and material burdens lightened until they altogether vanish.

And the more we think of Him, the more He takes over our burdens, the deeper we become absorbed in Him, and the closer our 'I' moves to the 'I-I' Universal, until it finally merges in That.

Then 'all things are added unto us' without affecting our freedom, for then there is neither attachment nor desire, for all things are dissolved in That.

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<sup>1</sup> That all thought and things must go before Realization can take place is indicated in Jesus' saying: "Whoso loveth aught but me, whoso cleaveth to father or mother, or many other things, he is not worthy of me. I came not upon the earth to bring peace but a sword; to cut away all things (!), to part thee from brother, child, mother and friend, which are really thy foes."

And further, "whosoever shall leave aught for my sake shall be repaid an hundredfold, and whosoever will possess me must deny himself and all things (!) and whosoever will serve me must follow me nor go any more after his own."

Or as it is expressed in the language of the contemplatives of the Christian faith: "the practised hand (in contemplation) must leave them (the thoughts), and put them away deep down in the cloud of forgetting if he is ever to penetrate the cloud of unknowing between him and God." (*Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 61, Penguin Classics)

<sup>2</sup> Sanskrit: *Dhira* from *dhi* — think, and *ra* — to halt, to stem.

<sup>3</sup> From time immemorial the very landscape in which people lived was filled with names and features that pointed heavenwards. Sacred mountains and rivers, miraculously formed valleys, holy rocks and trees, etc., all bore the marks of the Divine in the lore of the Peoples of the earth, thus serving as bridges to Heaven. And even when people emigrated to new countries, they took with them the old role and names, transplanting them in the new soil, re-establishing the vital links between Heaven and earth.

The architecture of temples, churches and even houses, too, the sacred scriptures and inscriptions, images of Saviours or statues of their Mother in holy groves and niches, hermitages of saints, icons, rosaries, medallions and a host of charms, all serve the one purpose: to prompt the memory to recall the Great Beyond.

<sup>4</sup> Accident: from Latin *ac* — to, and *cidere* — *cadere* — fall. This literally means to 'fall to', without the bias of chance which it acquires in the mind. That which really 'falls to' is not just one object to another, one incident to another, but the potential and unmanifest to the movement of manifestation which is *now*.

<sup>5</sup> According to the law of karma all man's actions have their reward in due course. A negative act has its negative reward, a positive act has its positive reward. Reward does not necessarily follow immediately. It may come years after, in fact in a later life. Karma is beyond man's control, for this life is the fruit of past lives and takes its course in strict accordance.

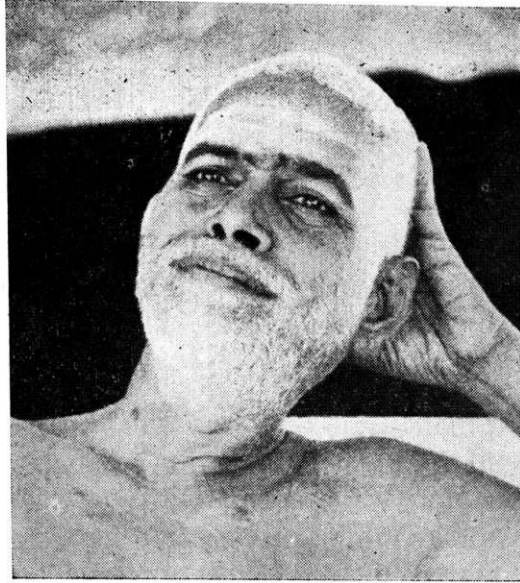
But karma bears the seed of its own destruction, e.g., it is not Reality Itself, but a shadow reality, hence not eternal and therefore must come to an end.

Man's business is not to concern himself with karma and rebirth, but with transcending both by focussing his attention on the Real, that which he truly is, and not what he seems to be.

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**It is a blessed secret, this of living by the day. Anyone can carry his burden, however heavy, until nightfall. Anyone can do his work, however hard, for a day. Anyone can live sweetly, patiently, lovingly and purely until the sun goes down. And this is all life ever really means to us — just one little day.**

(Anonym)



## Scenes From Ramana's Life—III<sup>1</sup>

By

B. V. Narayanaswamy

This is a conversation between the Maharshi and Bezwada Sundararama Reddi from the Nellore district. It took place on the morning of 23-2-30.

**Bezwada:** What to do to get *moksha*?

**Maharshi:** Learn what *moksha* is.

**B.:** Should I not leave wife and family?

**M.:** What harm do they do? First find out what you are.

**B.:** Should not one give up wife, home, wealth, etc.?

**M.:** Well, first learn what *samsara* is. Is all that *samsara*? Are there not people who live in their midst and get realization?

**B.:** What steps should I take as *sadhana*?

**M.:** That depends on your qualifications and stage.

**B.:** I am going on with *vigraharadhana* (worship of a form of God).

**M.:** Go on. That leads to *chitta ekagratha* (one-pointedness). Get one-pointed. All will come right. People fancy *moksha* is somewhere and has to be searched for after kicking out *samsara*.

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<sup>1</sup> Continued from our April issue.

*Moksha* is knowing yourself within yourself. Keep on to a single thought. You will progress. Your mind itself is *samsara*.

**B.:** My mind is being too much tossed. What to do?

**M.:** Fix yourself to some one thing and try to hold on to it. All will come right.

**B.:** I find concentration difficult.

**M.:** Go on practising. Your concentration must come as easy as your breathing. That would be the crown of achievement.

**B.:** *Brahmacharya*, *satvic ahara*, etc., are all helpful, are they not?

**M.:** Yes, all that is good.

Then Maharshi is silent, gazing at vacancy and setting an example to the questioner for him to imitate and follow immediately.

**B.:** Do I not require yoga?

**M.:** What is that but concentration?

**B.:** To help in that, is it not better to have aids?

**M.:** Breath regulation, etc., are of much help.

**B.:** Is it not possible to get a sight of God?

**M.:** Yes. You see this and that. Why not see God? Only you must know what God is. All are seeing God always. Only they don't realize it. Find out what God is. People see and yet they don't see, because they don't know God.

**B.:** Should I not go on with *kirtan*, *nama japa*, etc., when I worship?

**M.:** Yes. *Manasa japa* (mental repetition) is very good. That helps with *dhyana*. The mind gets identified with that *japa* and then you know what real *puja* is—the losing of one's individuality in that which is worshipped or revered.

**B.:** Is *Paramatma* always different from us?

**M.:** The difference is the view a man has now. But by thinking of him as not different, you achieve identity.

**B.:** That is *advaita*, is it not? Becoming oneself.

**M.:** Where is becoming? The thinker is all the while the same as the Real. He ultimately realizes that fact. Sometimes we forget our identity, i.e. as waking individual self. In sleep Bhagavan is perpetual consciousness.

**B.:** Is not the guru's guidance needed in addition to idol worship?

**M.:** How did you start without advice?

**B.:** From puranas, etc.

**M.:** Yes. Someone tells you, or Bhagavan himself — in which latter case He (God) is your guru. What matters it who the guru is? We really are one with the guru and Bhagavan. The

guru is really Bhagavan. We discover that in the end. There is no difference between them. "Guru is God" is the idea.

**B.:** If we have some merit the search will not leave us.

**M.:** Yes. You will keep your effort that way.

**B.:** Will not a cleverer man be a great help in pointing out the way?

**M.:** Yes, but if you go on working with available light you will meet your guru, as he will be seeking you himself.

**B.:** Is there a difference between *prapatti* (surrender) and the yoga of the rishis?

**M.:** *Jnana marga* and *bhakti* or *prapatti* advocated by Sri Aurobindo are the same. The goal is the same. Self-surrender leads to it like enquiry. Complete self-surrender means you have no further thought of 'I'. That is what *bhakti* leads to, and also *jnana*. Then all your *samskaras* are washed off and you are free. You should not continue as a separate entity at the end of either course.

**B.:** Don't we attain *swarga* (heavenly regions) as a fruit of our actions?

**M.:** Why, that is as true as our present existence in this world. But, if we enquire what we are and discover the Self, what need is there to think of *swarga*, etc.?

**B.:** Should I not try to escape from birth and death?

**M.:** Yes. Find out who is born, and who has the trouble of existence now. When you are asleep do you think of birth and trouble, etc.? You think of it now. So find out whence this trouble arose and you have the solution. You discover none is born. There is no birth, no trouble, no unhappiness in fact. Everything is That. All is bliss. We are then freed from rebirth in truth. Why feel over misery?

**B.:** Chaitanya and Ramakrishna wept before God and achieved success.

**M.:** Yes. They had a powerful *shakti* drawing them through those experiences. Entrust yourself to that power to take you on to your goal. Tears are often referred to as a sign of weakness. We cannot attribute weakness to these great ones. These symptoms are passing manifestations while the great current is carrying them on. Let us look to the end achieved.

**B.:** Can this physical body be made to disappear into nothingness?

**M.:** Why this query? Why not find out if you are this body?

**B.:** Can't we appear and disappear like Viswamitra and other rishis?

**M.:** These are debates about physical matters. Is that our essential object of interest? Are you not the *Atman*? Why think

about other matters? Seek the essence. Reject other disquisitions as useless. Those who believe that *moksha* consists in disappearance err. No such thing is needed. You are not the body. What matters it how the body disappears — in one way or another. There is no merit in disappearance of body in one way over the other. Everything is one. Where is superiority or inferiority in the one? See Chap. XIV of *Ramana Gita*. The loss of the 'I' is the central fact — and not of the body. It is the *dehatma buddhi* (the idea that I am the body) that is your bondage. It is the discarding of it and perceiving the Real that matters. Should you pound to pieces something golden before seeing it is gold? What matters if it is round or powdered when you perceive the truth of its being gold? The dying man does not see this body. It is the other man who thinks about the manner in which the body dies. The realized have no death. Whether the body is active or drops off, he is equally conscious and sees no difference. To him nothing is superior to the other. To an outsider also, the manner of disappearance of a *mukta's* body is unimportant. Mind your own realisation and after that it will be time enough to see which form of death is preferable!

Are you the body? During night, when you are fast asleep have you body consciousness?

B.: No.

M.: What exists always, is the 'I'.

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## TRANSFIGURATION

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By  
Mary Casey

'Life brilliant and perfect'  
hear this and believe  
known by soul clear as light  
as springwater the one note  
of bird-throat in canopied night

quick the word pierces  
clear to the soul  
wait now and listen  
the soul unseen is near  
clear as the vision here

of the silent bird that called  
the lovenote into singing  
in sunshine no more  
but the soul in light shines clear  
vision to soul in waiting

see my dearest the bird  
vivid and vivid-winged  
crimson with quick shed bright blood  
of the living heart of the rose  
O brilliant and perfect this bird

(*Narina's Trogon*)

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# Garland of Guru's Sayings

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By SRI MURUGANAR  
Translated from Tamil by  
Professor K. Swaminathan

831

This variegated universe  
We see appearing all around us  
Is a mere dream we dream within  
Ourselves. Those who know this and watch it  
Uninvolved destroy the treacherous  
Veil of *maya*. Others know not  
How to see through Illusion's tricks.

832

Jnanis true who have experienced  
The nondual Self of Pure Awareness  
Stand unbewildered by these many  
Varied phenomena, holding them  
As only dry, false, empty phantoms.

833

Seeing how transient is the world  
Lord Buddha gave up wealth and Kingship.  
When one has seen how false and fleeting  
Is what is present to the senses  
How can one be worldly-minded?

834

Courageous ones who know no fear  
Find and renounce the world as worthless  
And so gain wisdom true. Others  
Are foolish folk by falsehood blinded.

835

Renouncing this phenomenal world  
Which seems to, but does not, exist  
We gain (the great ones say) the Self,  
The Awareness shining all unseen.

836

After we have renounced whatever  
Can be renounced, That which abides  
And cannot be renounced is True  
Being shining in the Heart, the fount,  
The flood of Bliss.

837

Those who have made the hardest sacrifice,  
That of the ego,  
Have nothing more to renounce.

838

The saint's pure mind as Shiva eternal  
Shines and hence has no desires.

839

The mighty sage who walks about  
Possessing yet desiring nothing  
Puts to shame (how wonderful)  
The generous monarch who gives much  
But must stop giving at some time.  
(The sage's wealth is inexhaustible).

840

The house-holder who knows he is not  
Only the body family-bound  
Is a more advanced renunciant than  
The ascetic who feels proud at heart  
That he has given up all attachment.

841

Only because of different *vasanas*<sup>1</sup>  
Auspicious or bad, as the case may be,  
The mind is dubbed as good or evil.

Those who know know that the mind  
Is ever the same and neither good  
Nor evil in itself.  
( 'desires derived from past experience).

842

The dense, dark folly of dividing  
Mind as my mind and as yours  
Is the false knot we are tied up in.  
One single mind alone there is,  
The clarity and strength  
Of one supreme awareness.

843

There seem to be as many I's  
As there are bodies. But in truth  
They are all one I, the Self, alone.  
Become yourself this one integral  
Being-Awareness and behold  
All I's together as one sole Self.

844

Probing with keen and steady mind  
The illusive, sorrow-laden ego,  
Wear away the knot that binds  
Body and spirit. There can be  
No real bliss, no peace serene,  
Save in the heart where this knot has been  
Cut asunder.

845

By practice of self-enquiry sharpening  
The weapon divine of silence,  
Dig out, uproot and cast away  
The weed, the ego. Thus can be released  
The fount of bliss serene.

846

Except destruction of the idea  
That 'I am the body', make no other  
Strenuous effort. This body-sense  
Is the sole cause of every kind  
Of bondage, pain and sorrow.

847

What is moksha, bliss supreme  
Attained by few? And what is noble  
Renunciation? What is Death  
That brings on Immortality?  
What the highest human achievement?  
All, all are but the ending  
Of the foolish false illusion  
That 'I am the body'.

848

And this one thing alone is *shravana*,  
*Manana*, *nidhidhyasana*,  
Grace, silence and the state supreme,  
Peace serene, devotion, penance,  
Gift-giving, dharma, yoga, all.

**Bhagavan: (19)**

Gift-giving, penance, sacrifice  
Dharma, yoga, bhakti, heaven,  
The highest virtue, peace, truth, grace,  
Silence, Death-experience without  
Death, renunciation, the bliss  
Of freedom, everything is but  
The ending of the attitude  
That the body is oneself.

849

Many and various ornaments,  
Differing in name and form, are all  
Made of one common substance, gold.  
Even so, in every kind of dharma  
The sole stuff is self-sacrifice.

# REINTEGRATION<sup>1</sup>

By  
Wei Wu Wei

## PART II

### AWARENESS

*Unliving — I am Aware.*

*Living — 'an I-me' is being-conscious in space-time.*

What sentient-beings know as 'consciousness' may be regarded as 'relative awareness', which may also be cognised as what, relatively, they are, whereas, Absolutely, sentient-beings are 'absolute awareness', and nothing else whatever. Nor is there anything else for them to be, for absolute awareness, i.e. being absolutely aware, is total and ultimate *subjectivity*.

Therefore what every sentient-being must be, and is, can be so described, with the inevitable *proviso* that, absolutely, there is no such objective thing, state, or condition, that, as a concept, it is null and void, and could never in any manner be conceived, since what the verbal symbol implies would then be conceiving what is so-conceiving; which as such is inconceivable.

Whatever is subjective can only be the subject of objects, as which it becomes relative. Therefore the phrase 'absolute awareness' can only imply what objects are when they are apperceived as being their subject, whereby their relative identity or conceptual definition disappears, leaving absolute absence, which is the only Presence, which is just 'awareness as I'.

All reasoning as such is relative, therefore absolute awareness cannot be cognised rationally; but when relativity is negated, such 'absolute awareness', becomes nameless, indescribable, and incognisable, remains in abstraction as 'is-ness'. We never can know what we are absolutely, for as such we are no thing to be known, and every knowable thing, by being knowable, is thereby relative.

Seeking to *know* what we are is therefore absurd, a contradiction in relative terms. Necessarily we must be, but not as anything, for there is no 'thing' for anything to be. There is nothing to find or to discover, guess or imagine. As I-I just AM. And every sentient being may know it, for such 'knowing' is Being.

### COMMENT

All relativity is psychic and only exists mnemonically in conceptual space-time, and until this is clearly seen and profoundly understood it is difficult to know how sentient phenomena appearing in that dream could ever come to apprehend and, finally, to apperceive what absolutely they are, since relatively — as what they *appear* to be in relativity — they are very precisely no thing whatever but what each of them, man or monkey, bird or beetle, is as I.

Seeking, however, is finding.  
Since the Sought-is-the-Seeker,  
But 'finding' is precisely this apperceiving.

*(to be continued)*

<sup>1</sup> Continued from April 1980 issue.

## Ramana Maharshi and How Not To Grow Old

By  
Douglas E. Harding

### 1. *The Diagnosis*

THE other day a friend of mine went to see an inmate of an old people's home. The old lady wasn't senile but she had lost almost all her sight and hearing. She couldn't read or watch television, and people didn't talk much with her: communication was too difficult. Apparently she had led a normal active life, and pursued with fair success the unpretentious goals of home and family. At all events it was now over. No action, no challenges, no goals, no pleasures, no interests. It's doubtful whether her handicaps made all that difference. What had she left to live for, any way? What she wanted, she said, was for it all to end.

Earlier this year I was staying with a highly-placed executive who works in a firm of American aircraft manufacturers. He told me what had happened to his older colleagues — conscientious and successful like himself — when they retired. A surprising number of them died in a few months or a year or two. Physically they were in good shape, economically they were comfortable, psychologically they were finished. Like the lady in the old people's home, they had no reason for carrying on. Life was meaningless.

In the West, and particularly in the U.S.A., the frightening problem of growing old begins to intrude itself all too early in life. "If you haven't made it by 35 you never will" they say. And, if you *have* made it, the rest of your life, presumably, is somewhat of an anti-climax. Either way, you lose! The advertising industry, accurately sensing and skilfully directing the popular mind, puts all its emphasis on youth, blown up and glamorized to the point

of deification. Under the spell of these shining gods and goddesses of screen and hoarding, mums aim at being sisters to their daughters, dads at being the younger brothers of their sons. Granddads dress themselves up in short pants and juvenile head-gear and go off camping, while grandmas have cosmetic surgery. The mortician makes sure that not even corpses look their age. Everyone knows that the curve of life peaks around 30 years, and thereafter one should try to look and behave and think as if one were stuck on that peak, and put off descending till the bitter end. And bitter it has to be. In the modern world old age has little dignity and no value of its own, no bright virtue to compensate for its humiliations and handicaps. Every way it's a come-down. If not actually a disease, the prognosis couldn't be worse. If not actually a crime, the penalty is never less than capital punishment.

Given these typically Western attitudes, it comes as no surprise that old persons are congratulated (if at all) for *not* being old persons! On the contrary, they are praised for walking or talking or driving or playing ball-games like someone half their age. As if one were to commend a child for being middle-aged. How sad, not to say insulting, is the implication that old age is an affliction. It *is* an affliction when, backward looking, it has no outlook or meaning or work of its own.

But of course these pathetic attempts to prolong youth, and suppress the hard facts of ageing and dying, don't work. What's left for the has-been to be? The enchanting goals pursued by childhood and youth having been gained, and so inevitably stripped of every enchantment that distance had lent them, what comparable new goals loom up for the

older person? Well, he or she can always try making a collection — of sea-shells, postage stamps, silver trophies, scalps blond and brunette, dollars, press notices, honorary degrees, directorships, disciples, good deeds—it all comes to the same thing in the end: more disenchantment. Nothing fails a man like a successful collection. Nothing gathers thicker layers of time's dust. And if he eventually succeeds in creeping from under his collection and escaping into a Haven for Senior Citizens (more rudely, a creche for wrinkled infants) he is still liable to find himself in the collecting business — piling up bingo numbers or clock-golf scores, perhaps. Anything to fill in the time and crowd out the waiting spectre of death.

I have just been watching a television programme about a Christian hospice in London, for patients suffering from terminal diseases — in plain words, a good place for dying in. The opening shot was of a social worker (she seemed a dedicated and compassionate young woman) persuading a dozen old dears to sing a song. And the song — believe it or not — was *Goodbye Blackbird!* Not *Goodbye Life* (whoever heard of such a song, or hymn?) but *Goodbye Blackbird!* What a way of spending the last hours of that astounding adventure which began so promisingly 70 or 80 years ago! At the end of the television programme a sensitive and humble priest-nurse explained that he saw no point in thrusting religion at the last moment on folk who had managed to get by all their lives without it. Of course he was right.

One of the great ironies and contradictions of the modern world is that, while all this effort goes into *warding off* old age, equal effort goes into bringing it on prematurely. When a machine takes over a man's work, and the meaning and dignity that go with it, what's left for him to do? In highly industrialized societies it isn't only the old-in-years who find themselves with too much leisure on their hands: everyone is ageing fast to the degree that life is becoming pointless. It's

no use smashing machines: they've come to stay, and along with them the wastelands of spare time which automation and the silicon-chip technology are beginning to open out. How to relieve the aimlessness, the boredom arising out of the ever shorter working day and working week and working life, to say nothing of mass unemployment itself? A man with nothing to do is done for.

Such is the disease.

## 2. *The Remedy*

“Those who do not seek the purpose of life are simply wasting their lives,” says Maharshi uncompromisingly, in a sentence which sums up the illness — and points to the remedy. It has to be (and, as we shall see, it *is*) strong medicine if it is to cure a disease so deep-seated.

Let me tell you about another friend of mine — a young man who, having taken an excellent degree at Oxbridge, entered the British Foreign Office. A fine career stretched out in front of him. But in fact after a couple of years he resigned his appointment, cut himself off from family and friends, and went to live a hermit-like life in an isolated Welsh cottage. There he spends long hours every day in sitting meditation, silent, with eyes closed, immobile, solitary.

Notice a curious thing: this young man is in much the same state as the old lady I described at the beginning — only with this huge difference, that he has *chosen* the handicaps she is the victim of. He has deliberately taken upon himself, while still in the prime of life, the restrictions that belong towards the end of life. She is struck blind; he keeps his eyes closed. She goes deaf; he retires to a place where there's nothing to hear. She suffers from loneliness; he wants to be alone. She has lost interest in life, in its pleasures and goals; he is earnestly practising just such detachment. The sum is the same but the sign is the opposite: in one case minus, in the other plus.

Why is my friend behaving so 'unnaturally'? His purpose is to find the meaning of life,

and how birth, suffering, old age, and death itself can be transcended. And his method is that of vaccination and homoeopathy: cure like by like: give yourself a mild attack of the disease now, and thereby build antibodies that ward off the real disease when it strikes. It is the method of Jung, who writes: "As a physician I am convinced that it is hygienic..... to discover in death a goal towards which one can strive; and that shrinking away from it is something unhealthy and abnormal which robs the second half of life of its purpose." It is also the method of Plato ("Philosophy is the practice of death."), of St. Paul ("I die daily."), of Rumi ("Die before you die"), and of Sri Ramana Maharshi himself ("What if anyone is dead? What if anyone be ruined? Be dead yourself, be ruined yourself").

When should this homoeopathic treatment begin? My friend started in his twenties. Maharshi in his teens. You could say the sooner the better, but there are no rules. Everything depends on the needs of the individual. Commonly, the problem of life's meaning comes to a head in middle age, after the ordinary goals set by society have been attained, and no new ones offer themselves. Jung found that most of his middle-aged patients were suffering from no clinically definable neurosis, but from the senselessness and emptiness of their lives; they were holding onto the delusion that the second half of life must be governed by the principles of the first, and failing to recognise that for the ageing person it is a duty and a necessity to give serious attention to himself.

Traditional India agrees. The ancient and noble ideal of the four *asramas* — or stages of life — lays down the norm. Firstly, *brahmacharya*, the child and the youth learning the skills and knowledge and discipline proper to the human condition. Second, *grahastha*, the life of the working householder and parent, contributing to the upkeep and continuation of the community. So far, so good. A fair start, you might say, a useful flexing of the muscles before getting down to business. For

now the real adventure begins; the serious challenge that sorts out the men from the boys, the work to stretch and prove a man. Having taken care of his social duties and reached middle to late-middle age, he enters the satge of *vanaprastha*, a time for the loosening of bonds and breaking through to freedom. With this in view, he winds up his remaining obligations to his family and goes off to see the meaning of it all, and particularly his own meaning, his true identity. But first he has to find his spiritual teacher, and then take to heart his instruction and undergo his training — a discipline which may well make the rigours of the two previous stages seem mere child's play. Hopefully the question of Who he really is had been there in the background all along, but now it becomes his sole passion, and for the answer no price is too high. And when, sooner or later, that price has been paid, and he sees what in fact has always been obvious and scot free (namely, his true Nature as the One and Only, the Alone, the Real) he enters the fourth and final stage — *sannyasa*.

This is the crown of life. This is what the other three stages were for; without it they are pointless. Not to arrive here is not to arrive at all. To stop short of this is to stay immature, a case of arrested development. The *Jnani* or true *Sannyasi* (for whom other traditions have other names) is the only real grown-up — which means grown up to more-than-cosmic dimensions. Outwardly an insignificant and ageing human he is inwardly and in truth, ageless and boundless as space, free as the wind, the King of the World, the Deathless Splendour, the All. Outwardly useless and unemployed (and indeed inwardly he has nothing whatever to do), his work for the world is non-stop, exacting and effective as no mere human work could ever be. The paradox is that he has no job, and never takes a moment off.

Compare this paradigm of human life as a steady, four-stage ascent, an enterprise that grows more challenging and outrageously

ambitious as it goes on, a game played for mounting stakes and sure to break the bank in the end — compare this with the sad picture we began this article with, of human life faltering and failing scarcely half way through, and make your choice. Once the stark alternatives are clearly perceived, what choice is there? Isn't it plain which is the half life and which the full life; what the disease is and what the cure is? The disease is life arrested midway. The cure is life completed.

Cure for whom? you may well ask. If so few Hindus down the centuries have gone the whole way, have cared or dared to take the full-strength medicine (in spite of all this traditional encouragement), how many non-Hindus are likely to swallow it? Is the average Westerner with time on his hands likely to seize the God-sent opportunity of devoting it to discovering and then enjoying *Who* has all this time? And in any case how could such a personal and hidden attainment as Self-realisation begin to transform the community in which it happens? Let's be realistic, for God's sake!

In the short term these objections are valid. In the longer term, over the forthcoming centuries and millennia, who can say what changes the pressures of life — its inner logic — may not demand of the human spirit? After all, the genus *Homo* has already come an awful long way. Having painfully graduated from simple animal consciousness to human self-consciousness, why shouldn't man go on to divine Self-consciousness? Doesn't the incidence (occasional but remarkably persistent and widespread) of that ultimate mutation known as the Sage or Seer, throughout the last three thousand years of the species' history, hold out some promise for (say) its next three million years? The Seers themselves, including Ramana Maharshi, describe their state as the *natural* one. In any case the commonness or

otherwise of a social phenomenon is no measure of its social effectiveness. Just as the ideal of perfect physical health, though rarely attained, nevertheless affects the lives of millions today, so the mere rumour of perfect spiritual health (to wit, Self-realisation) could one day exert still greater influence. What middle-aged man could stay wholly indifferent to the choice confronting him — to live on as God, or perish as man — once he saw it clearly?

But all such speculation is beside the point. It is nonsense to speak of growing (or declining) numbers of enlightened people living in such and such a place at such and such a time. There is only One who sees Who he is, here and now. In the fourth *asrama* all travellers join forces; and anyone who arrives here does so *as* all the others too, and *for* them. As Maharshi so often pointed out, there are no others! It follows that the best way to solve these very human problems of boredom and ageing and dying, is to solve them for oneself, at this moment and absolutely — by ceasing to be human at all, by being Oneself, changeless and immortal. In the last resort they aren't long-term social problems, or other folk's business: they are my own business, now. "Find the Self", says Maharshi, "and all problems are solved." "Until the questioner is found, his questions cannot be answered." "See yourself, and all is understood."

Strange to say, it is this so-called last stage of life which underpins and includes the three earlier stages, which keeps them going, which alone is quite real. It is not — repeat, not — an optional extra. Nor is it ever ineffectual. "Realisation of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity," says Maharshi. For in fact, as he adds: "The realised being does not see the world as different from himself." He *is* the world set to rights instantly

## SHARING FRUIT

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By  
K. K. Nambiar

During one of my visits I had lunch at the Ashram, and after my usual session with the Sarvadhikari (Niranjanananda Swami) discussing Ashram business matters, I felt like going and sitting outside the Hall where Bhagavan was resting. As the door was closed and no one was to disturb Bhagavan during the afternoon rest period, I quietly went and sat outside on the steps where Bhagavan could not see me even if the door was opened. I sat with closed eyes. After sometime, Bhagavan seems to have told his attendant to call me inside. When I went in, Bhagavan sat upon his couch inside the mosquito curtains and asked me why I was sitting outside, when I could have gone in and sat inside, even though he was resting. Just then, the attendant brought some orange juice and a few *nongus* (*Palmyrah* fruits). Bhagavan asked him to give me a portion of the orange juice and also asked him to pass on a couple of *nongus* to me. I drank the orange juice and was fiddling with a *nongu*, as I did not know how to break and eat it. Then Bhagavan demonstrated to me an easy method of eating a *nongu*, i.e. to press the tip of the thumb into one of the holes of the top face (where the fibre had been chopped off exposing the holes), causing the soft kernal of the *nongu* to pop up through the other hole, when it is to be sucked in by the mouth. Bhagavan was doing it dexterously. I also tried the same method though somewhat clumsily and enjoyed the fruit. Afterwards I stayed on in the Hall for sometime sitting in meditation in one corner.

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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.

MAX MUELLER, 1882.

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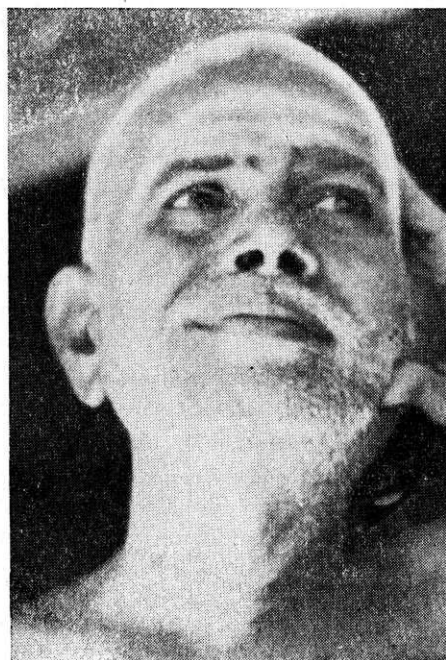
## Sri Ramana the Divine Sage<sup>1</sup>

By  
Sri Swami Sivanaanda, Rishikesh

**B**EAUTIFUL beyond all dreams, is the most enthralling inner life of the divine sage Sri Ramana. Its spiritual adventures and its divine achievements quicken higher aspirations and upward urges in the depths of our being, impart to us a sense of the significance of our life, give our existence a profound meaning and a great purpose, show its divine possibilities, illustrate its grand Goal, and what is more, point out the royal path reaching it even here on the terrestrial plane and in this very clay tenement.

The heavenly beauties and the ethereal glories of his transcendent life, the divine life, are revealed only to those who have "eyes to see"; those who have faith in him, pray to him, adore him in thought and spirit can sense and feel them and those who are absolutely pure and ripe enough to live his life can experience them. The very thought of Sri Ramana in a noble heart induces an attitude of adoration and beckons it to his view and ways of life. Sri Ramana is an eternal invitation to consummate perfection; he is the call divine.

For a realization of the Self, for becoming like him, the greatest message Sri Ramana gave to aspiring and enlightened mankind is an individual enquiry of 'Who am I?'. Self-realization or an experience of the omnipresent Reality must always follow a preparatory peeping into the inner regions of our deeps, a heroic battling of our way into the very meaning and source of life, a burning love and a consuming zeal for the attainment of the divine light and grace; otherwise one is sure to lose one's way in false paths and face defeat, disillusion and madness. So an enquiry after the subjective centre, that Real Man, the meta-physical entity that is lurking dormant in the



heart of the intellectual, vital and physical encasements of every individual, is the first step.

But the introspective cognition of the Self by the self becomes possible and flowers into the most effective operative power only after a certain necessary period of successful psychological training and discipline of the entire man. By conscious exercise of the power of the will, in the light of knowledge acquired after a profound study of *prasthanathraya* and of experience, one has to throw out secret thoughts, eliminate inner hankerings, overcome subtle desires, abandon selfish interests, and lift the soul out of all human passions and prejudices, predilections and cross purposes. This *sadhana* engenders in the aspirant an

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from *Call Divine*, January, 1953, pp. 146-8.

emptiness of the heart, stillness of the mind, a philosophic poise and a spiritual vision.

*Vichara*, the ever-present reflection on the why and wherefore of life and things; *Viveka*, the ever-present discrimination between the perishable and the Imperishable; the unreal and the Real; and *Vairagya*, the passionate revolt against selfishness and sensuality—these three constitute the life-belt, the wings and the eyes of every earnest seeker after Truth. Much of Sri Ramana's *sadhana* is occult and hidden from the ordinary view because his period of spiritual practice was covered in his previous births and it was only in this life that his revolutionary self-unfolding came to its acme. Without prolonged strenuous efforts of head, heart and hand, and continuous unique discipline involving thorough cleansing, education and illumination of self in past incarnations, so complete a Self-experience of Sri Ramana would have been impossible. Even in this last physical embodiment, he took resort to *Vichara*, *Viveka* and *Vairagya*. The characteristic pose of Sri Ramana, the 'madman' who lost himself in the transcendent joy of the divine Self, is a perpetual challenge to the pomp, glories and bliss of earthly kings and emperors. The extreme indifference of Sri Ramana to the thrills and wonders of the world gave us a measure of his empyrian greatness. A simple reflection

on his philosophic poise, his perpetual peace, his inner spiritual joy, thrilled one into a possession of a new mind, a new heart and new eyes. The heights of discernment, the religious indifference, the profundity, the fullness, the grace his life exhibited, are comparable to those of Lord Dattatreya and Sri Dakshinamurthi.

For contemporary humanity the life of Sri Ramana made the unseen a living Reality, the unknown a conscious experience. In him God became flesh; Truth found its fullest expression; the Self manifested itself in all its completeness. This great end is awaiting every living being. Sri Ramana is the spiritual destiny of every man. Self-expression by self-enquiry, self-knowledge and self-finding is the meaning and the goal of all conscious life. Sri Ramana is the call divine. He calls every aspirant unto himself, unto his perfection, unto his Realization. As a seeker he struck the path, trod it, reached the divine destination, became what he beheld at that end, brought its beauties into earthly life and shared his infinite peace and joy with millions of souls groping in phenomenal ignorance, sorrow and sickness. May Sri Ramana's divine grace descend upon everyone more and yet more abundantly, to effect Self-knowledge and Self-illumination here and now.

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It is interesting to notice how closely the metaphysical speculations based on modern science agree. They all uphold the traditional distinction between appearance and reality, and known reality, they suggest, is mere appearance of phenomena. But behind the appearance, there must be a real essence or an ultimate force, beneath the outer phenomenon an inner reality—as essence. Force and inner reality are not, they hold, to be known by an intellectual faculty since what our reasons and senses know is always the spatially temporarily limited phenomenon to the making of which our minds have contributed. Nevertheless, since they are in some sense known, they must be known by the process of revelation to an intuitive faculty of direct insight. Thus, with regard to the most fundamental issues of metaphysics, the speculation of modern physicists seem to bear out and support what is perhaps the main traditional mystic view.

JOAD.

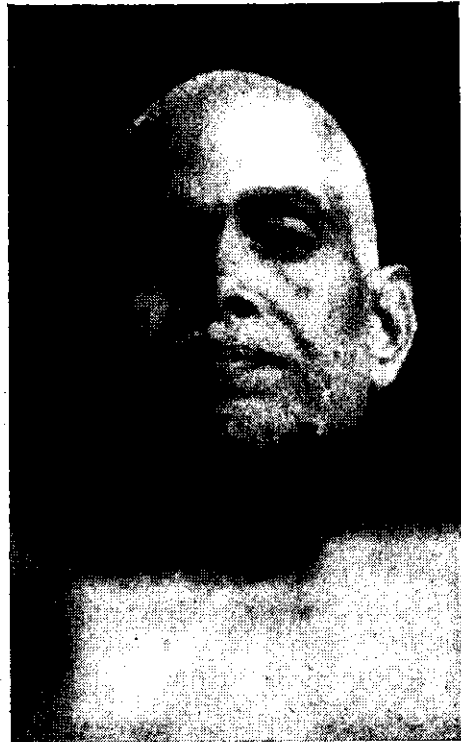
## Understanding Bhagavan Ramana

By  
R. Viswanathan

*“THAT you are already and here and now.”* What a very heartening assertion when it comes from the lips of Bhagavan Ramana! Who will not be charmed to have the assurance from the great Sage? The exhilaration, however, is bound to evaporate in most people when they understand the implications of the realization which is conveyed by the assertion. Let not the reader be discouraged at this point. The ‘effort’ is not ‘Himalayan’ or impossible if one understands the psychological process involved in it correctly, and sticks to it with unflinching determination. Let us pause to consider how many precious years are spent to get a degree (10+2+3 and such), how many precious years again pass by before one gets into a job or profession. But people usually flinch and shy away from any process directed to confer the eternal Plenum, a life of peace and fulfilment! What a wonder!

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, who was physically with us till a few decades back, was in reality Freedom, Being and Truth. Therefore the occasional words that fell from his lips were spontaneous expressions of the Supreme qualities he was. They were all directed to arouse these qualities inherent in every individual who approached him or read the words in books. His presence and words lit the torch which everyone carried, though unconsciously.

Now the importance of the question of human bondage and human freedom is this: if it is believed that the so-called ideal is achieved by human effort, then it could not be something eternal and infinite, that is, it cannot be spiritual, because that which is produced or conditioned cannot by its very nature be



eternal. The eternal must have existed long before the effort producing it. Whatever is produced by efforts would be lost. The spiritual man, rightly or wrongly, is in quest of what has existed for all time. If the ideal thus has existed for all time, then why does it not affect our life? There must be some obstruction preventing our enjoying the ideal and that has to be removed. The endeavour then will not be for achieving something positive but for achieving something negative, that is freedom. Thus freedom alone can be the goal of a spiritual discipline. In brief, natural life must be regarded as bondage and freedom recognized as the spiritual goal.

When we ask "Freedom from what?" the natural answer can only be freedom from ignorance, because if the supreme good has existed for all time—if we are That already as assured by Bhagavan—then only our ignorance has kept us away from it. It is natural for each to seek what is real and blissful, and if we do not seek it the reason can only be our ignorance of it. We do not know it to be real, at least as real as the worldly good.

The ignorance is rooted in the basic and fundamental error of considering the temporary body to be our real self and making the body the standard of all our judgements. We consider all that serve the bodily needs to be good and all that fail to do so as bad. Living the life of the body, our values are riches, pleasure and fame. Thus our happiness and unhappiness depends on objects, persons and circumstances. It is derivative and relative. It is in this context that Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi gave the world the mantra 'Who am I?' in the form of a query. Our truthful answer to this question, followed by the needed change of attitude to life and living, will reveal to us who we really are, and then establish us as That which formed the basis of the Maharshi's assertion.

Attachment to objects has to cease before we can seek the eternal. The pleasures which the object yields are not inherent in them but are created by our desires to have them. The greatest characteristic of a spiritually awakened man is to know that objects have no power to please or displease us. Our happiness or unhappiness depends on ourselves. Therefore, instead of endeavouring to improve the circumstances, our endeavour should be to improve ourselves by fixing our attention on the truth again and again. Instead of trying to make the surface of the earth thornless, let each put on a pair of shoes. The causes of passion have to be sought inside us rather than outside. Our notions of good and bad are not absolute but relative. Things are not good or bad in themselves but seem so in rela-

tion to our appetite. They are merely modes of thinking often formed by the trick of comparing. One and the same thing is found good, bad or indifferent by different persons, and often by the same person at different times.

Human bondage results from infirmity in moderating and checking the emotions. When one is prey to his emotions he is not master of himself. He is at the mercy of fortune and often is compelled to follow the worse while knowing the better. Self-determination arises from self-consciousness which is a negation of external influences. Man is in bondage because he is not only spirit but spirit in flesh. This is why man has the impulse for freedom. Man wrongly believes he is wholly a part of nature because he finds himself governed by nature in so many ways. This is his bondage, the result of his ignorance. He has to see well the causes of the passions. This will be the beginning of the knowledge of the Self in reference to God because we know truly only when we know things in reference to God. Maharshi often said that the Self, World and God are one. Although Bhagavan had said that everything is pre-determined, he has also asserted that determinism does not hamper morality or spirituality. To quote his words: "As for freedom for man he is always free not to identify with the body and not to be affected by the pleasures or pains consequent on the body's activities."

The above analysis based on the Being and words of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi must enable the reader to see the truth of the sentiments uttered by him thus:

**Maharshi:** There is no greater absurdity than this—that we seek to gain the *reality we are*. It is ridiculous. *A day will dawn* when you yourself will laugh at your past efforts. What will be on that day is *here* and *now*.

**Disciple:** So it is a great game of pretending.

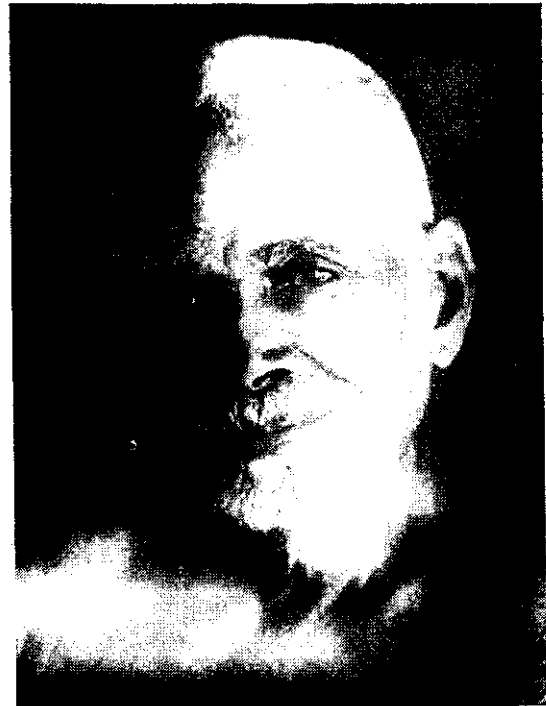
**Maharshi:** Yes.

## INTRODUCING....

..... Sri G. Bhoganatham Pillai

**S**RI Bhoganatham Pillai had his first darshan of Sri Bhagavan in December, 1926, when he was 21 years old. He had come to Tiruvannamalai for the Kartikai Deepam festival and had visited the Ashram. He was then working at Tirukoilur. His second visit to Ramanasramam was in 1928 when he had a chance to see Seshadri Swami just two weeks before he died. At that time Sri Bhoganatham was trying to select a spiritual guide for himself and was vacillating between Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana. One night, Ramana appeared to him in a dream, slapped him and advised him to observe moderation in food and clothing. This Sri Bhoganatham happily understood as a sign of Sri Bhagavan's personal acceptance of him, and from that time onwards he has been a Ramana devotee.

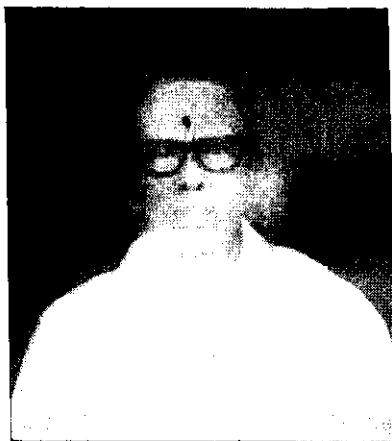
His own family background had been one of religious inclination. His maternal grandfather had personally served two saints in Cuddalore and had arranged the erection of memorials for them. His mother, a devotee of



Goddess Meenakshi in Madurai, had named Sri Bhoganatham after Palani Bhogar, one of the famous eighteen saints who had worshipped Lord Siva.

Four years after his first meeting with Sri Ramana Maharshi Sri Bhoganatham received an invitation to the Ashram for Sri Ramana Jayanthi. Wondering how the Ashram knew his address, he nevertheless decided to take it as an invitation from Sri Bhagavan himself and attended the Jayanthi. From then on he attended every Jayanthi and Maha Puja (at the Mother's shrine), until 1950.

He was also present on Sri Bhagavan's Mahanirvana on April 14, 1950, and was



*Sri G. Bhoganatham Pillai*

one of those who helped in the final ceremonies of commitment.

One of his children had once invited Sri Bhagavan to come to Cuddalore. The Maharshi had replied that if he came to Cuddalore his devotees who came to Tiruvannamalai to see him would be disappointed, and so he could not ever leave Tiruvannamalai. Then Sri Bhoganatham Pillai's wife requested the Maharshi to send some of his devotees at least to visit them at Cuddalore. From then on Muruganar, Viswanatha Swami, Rajagopala Swami, Ramanapadananda and Somasundara Swami used to visit Sri Pillai's house at Cuddalore regularly. Sri Bhoganatham became an ardent admirer of Sri Muruganar, Bhagavan's poet-disciple.

Sri Bhoganatham's two brothers, Sri Somasundaram and Sri Nathan, also became

devotees of Sri Ramana, and their families still live in Ramana Nagar.

Once, in 1940, a college professor came from Bangalore to Sri Bhagavan in a mood of disappointment and frustration when his claims for promotion and his desire to go abroad for further studies were thwarted. Sri Bhagavan just said to him: "Stay." The college professor has been living at Sri Bhoganatham's house from that day on and is now known as Thinnai Swami.

Sri Bhoganatham Pillai retired as Superintendent of the South Arcot District Revenue Board in 1960 and came to live at Ramanasramam in May, 1979. He has since then been serving as the Ashram store-keeper. One of Sri Bhagavan's oldest living devotees, Sri Bhoganatham has dedicated himself completely to his chosen Master and commands respect from every one at the Ashram.

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## Nirvana 'Star' Seen in Madras

By

N. K. Srinivasan

I recall the divine occurrence that I witnessed on the day of the Brahmanirvana of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, 14th April, 1950. My memory is fresh; it seems as if it took place yesterday.

It was a hot day in Madras. My father, mother and we children (myself and my three sisters) were relaxing on the open terrace of our small house. It was around 8-30 p.m. and we were conversing pleasantly. Suddenly we stopped speaking; there was absolute silence. The sky was extremely clear, with millions of stars seen brightly. We saw a bright meteor traversing the sky from southwest to northeast. It was a slow movement — a few seconds elapsed. My father immediately remarked: "Bhagavan might have passed away." We had heard earlier that Bhagavan had been seriously ill. "Only on such occasions are such meteors seen," he added.

I was only seven years old then. It is remarkable how deep an impression this event has made on my mind, and even today, I can recall and see it in my mind's eye.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

INDIAN STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY: By R. Pandeya. Pub.: Motilal Banarsidas, Bungalow Road, Delhi. Pp. 229. Price: Rs. 45.

Professor R. C. Pandeya is the professor and head of the department of philosophy in the Delhi University. In this volume he has collected 19 essays most of which, he says, were published by different Indian and foreign universities.

The essays are mostly confined to the sphere of logic and theory of knowledge, especially of Buddhism and Jainism. There are also other essays on some general logical concepts. They are divided into two parts, the first consisting of 14 essays and the second of 5. The second part deals with general topics though even here the first two deal with Buddhism. The first essay deals with the future of Indian Philosophy. The author argues against both an exclusive specialising of the Indian classical philosophy and a total abandonment of Indian philosophy in favour of modern European thought. He suggests that one should abandon the preoccupation with our traditional philosophy and find out its spirit, combine it with modern methodology and idiom, and apply it to our contemporary situations. One feels that the writer could very well have applied this method to a current concrete problem to exemplify his thesis. As many as seven essays discuss the epistemological and religious aspects of Buddhism. In discussing the Jaina concept of *Syadvada*, he asserts that this *Syadvada* should not be regarded as an Indian version of multi-valued logic. In the paper on Karma and Rebirth, he argues that Karma in the sense in which we use the word cannot be a cause of rebirth, but if Karma is taken as *manasa karma*, this *can* cause rebirth. The last two essays deal with the possibility of inter-religious understanding and the Gandhian idea of man. Regarding the former, his conclusion is striking and strange. Inter-religious understanding is neither possible nor helpful in achieving the goal of a harmonious life free from clashes and conflict.

The essays are characterised by a simplicity of style and expression but their penetrative analysis and the resulting profundity of thought are unmistakable. One need not of course endorse all his conclusions but this in no way affects the thorough sifting of the concepts by the author. Clarity of thought is abundantly revealed in discussion on these topics. The production of the book is very good and leaves nothing to be desired.

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

SANKARA ON THE ABSOLUTE. A Sankara Source-Book, Vol. I, By A. J. Alston. Pub.: Shanti Sadan, 29 Chepstow Villas, London, W-11. Pp. 259+ix. Price: Not Indicated.

This is the first of the six volumes projected under the general title of "Sankara Source-Book" and divided into 16 chapters as the conspectus at the end of the present publication indicates.

The present volume is no more than a general introduction on the sources of Sankara's doctrine, his life and works, giving a clear and comprehensive idea of the nature and contents of the *Sruti* and *Smriti* texts, *Bhagavatgita*, *Brahmasutras*, and *Paramarthasara* that form the sheet anchor of Sankara's philosophy of the Absolute. We are introduced to pre-Sankara interpreters of the sources like Bhartprapancha who held a non-Absolutist view and also to the running Advaitic tradition in interpreters like Gaudapada, Dravida, Brahmanandin and Sundara Pandya. Equal importance is given to the exposition of *Mayavada* or *Avidya-vada* as found in pre-Sankara works and the date and original works of Sankara are decided in the light of the latest researches carried out by scholars abroad like M. Biradeau, P. Hacker, and S. Mueda, besides Indian scholars like T. R. V. Murti and T. M. P. Mahadevan. The conclusion reached is that *bhasyas* on *prasthanatraya* as well as *Adhyatmapatala* of Apastamba-Dharma-sutra, *Vivarana* on the *Vyasabhashya* of *Yogasutras* and *Upadesasahasri*, both prose and verse parts, are authentic works of the great Acarya. The other *stotras* etc. including *Daksinamurtistotra* are described as additions of followers of the School. We are told that Sankaracharya had possibly more affinity with Vaisnava theism than Saiva theism of his day (c. 700 A. D.). A brief survey of the post-Sankara Advaita Schools like those of Suresvara, Padmapada and Vacaspati is also included in the first chapter.

The plan of the project is to give Sankara's ideas on select topics by giving translations *in extenso* of the important basic texts, interspersed by short and pithy comments of the author. Some explanations are there for the non-specialist added as 'Notes' and, for the specialist, there are exhaustive references to up-to-date discussions in learned journals and books.

This well-arranged and well-selected anthology of Sankara's thought in elegant English on the Doctrine of Nescience (Ch. II), Knowledge of the Absolute (Ch. III), the Absolute as Being, and Consciousness and Bliss (Ch. IV) is to be welcomed as a dependable

guide to the mansion of Sankara's philosophy. It combines ease with grace and accuracy with clarity. The development of ideas in their historical setting, the exposition of relevant basic texts in translation and illuminating comments providing a clear perspective of Advaitic philosophy — all add up to the merits of the work which is flawlessly printed.

It is an indispensable aid to a true understanding of Sankara's thought without the incursion of later improvements. To cite some examples: (1) "Sankara speaks of nescience not as a power (*sakti*) but as a state (*avastha*), an undesirable state or passion (*klesa*) which afflicts the individual" (p. 66); (2) "We have *a priori* familiarity with the existence of our own self...onto this content but vague and general notion we superimpose a variety of mutually contradictory determinate ideas" (p. 115); (3) "Sankara's doctrine must not be taken as an 'ontology' in the Western sense, but as a practical path of mysticism in which all duality is eliminated from the student's experience step by step." (p. 170).

It is a rewarding study and we look forward to a speedy release of the other volumes projected.

DR. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY.

**THE SECRET DOCTRINE:** By H. P. Blavatsky. (3 Volumes) Pub.: Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 696+817+520. Price: Rs. 200.

Students of the Eternal Wisdom will require no introduction to "The Secret Doctrine", the mighty work written by H. P. Blavatsky and published in 1888. Since then many editions have appeared, some with alterations of the original text. The latest edition, published by the Adyar Press, in Madras, adheres to the original and is beautifully produced, with a host of interesting photographs of the personalities mentioned.

Its subtitle of "The Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy" gives some idea of the impact that this remarkable work had on the thinkers of the day. It attacked the narrow dogmas of the Church and illuminated the findings of science, with extraordinary forecasts which have since been verified or appear probable. It clearly shows the unity underlying all religions and is encyclopaedic in its reference. The Secret Doctrine, the Eternal Wisdom, is declared to have been "the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world." To quote from a letter from Blavatsky, "...the whole Hindu Pantheon is explained based on exoteric translations and explained esoterically proving Christianity and every other religion to have taken their dogmas from India's oldest religion."

No effort has been spared in producing all material relative to its origin and an interesting and compre-

hensive history is given of the genesis of the book. Meticulously edited by Boris de Zirkoff, the only known surviving relative of H. P. Blavatsky, it is in three volumes.

The first volume gives the story of Cosmic Evolution, the genesis of our manifested universe, from potential primordial matter, through the development of the elements, to the slow evolution of life. A fascinating section is devoted to the evolution of symbolism as it relates to the spiritual unfoldment of man, to cyclic evolution and karma.

Volume two, entitled Anthropogenesis, traces the genesis of man from the beginning of sentient life to the emergence of mind, its development through ancient civilisations and lost continents, to its glorious future in unfoldment of his true divinity. To quote from P. 25, "Man was regarded in several systems as the third Logos. The esoteric meaning of the word Logos (the Word) is the rendering in objective expression, as in a photograph, of the concealed thought. The Logos is the mirror reflecting Divinity, and the Universe is the mirror of the Logos". A section is devoted to the archaic symbolism of the world religions. Both volumes conclude with a section wherein science and the ancient Secret Doctrine are contrasted. Interesting modern photographs illustrate the points.

It is fascinating reading, as meaningful and useful today as it was when it hit its startled readers in 1888.

Volume three gives a useful concordance, bibliography, and a general index which is primarily an index of ideas and only secondarily of words, terms, etc. A useful way of studying the Secret Doctrine is to follow through on one aspect which automatically spurs the reader to study allied aspects, thus building up a comprehensive picture of the whole. The present index is ideally suited to this method.

The book remains as vital and inspiring as ever. As with all inspired writings, a quality emerges which is subtler than the written words.

DORIS WILLIAMSON.

**THE BUGBEAR OF LITERACY:** By Ananda Coomaraswamy. Pub.: Perennial Books, Middlesex, England, Pp. 150. Price: £ 3.25.

The name of the author conjures up in one's mind a modern renaissance figure, an authority on Indian art and culture and the "Dance of Shiva." He passed away in the year of independence and the younger generation may not be familiar with the fact that Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy was one of the most versatile minds of his generation, who combined in himself the role of a scientist, naturalist, interpreter of Indian art in its wider perspectives, a literary critic



and a philosopher. Most of his life he spent in the United States, being curator of Asiatic art at the Boston museum of fine arts and he wrote more than 600 publications during a long literary career from 1895 to 1947.

The book under review, a collection of eight essays first published in England in 1949 and long out of print brings to the modern reader a new realm of thought, which may be destructive of several of our commonly held assumptions. But the ideas formulated bear the authority of a lifetime of scholarship, and to use the author's own words: "from a strictly orthodox point of view.....endeavouring to speak with mathematical precision, but never making affirmations for which authority could not be cited by chapter and verse; in this way making even our technique characteristically Indian." For everything he wrote he had authority: *na amulam likhyate kincit.*

These essays reveal the author's usual vigour of thought and content, couched in his charming manner of pin-pointed, direct, chiselled simplicity and limpid purity of style. Although he was writing for scholars his writings are easy and clear to the layman too, as the footnotes are relegated to the concluding pages where the reader can ignore them if he so desires.

#### THE HIERARCHY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH:

By D. E. Harding. Pub.: University Press Florida, Gainesville, Florida, U.S.A. Pp. 268. Price: Not indicated.

This again is a scholarly book of a different sort, as the author is fairly well acquainted with relativity theory and modern philosophy, but as far as possible avoids the technical jargon of either. The subject matter relates to an enquiry into the nature of man and his relationship to the entire cosmos. In several sections of the book the reader is reminded of "Yoga Vasishtha" and "Tao of Physics", which open up newer vistas of Being than the vast heavens can hold. Is the world my dream? Am I its sole dreamer? Is the dreamer himself a dream within this dream? For man is no more confined within his body, but traffics with the outside world with his latest scientific equipment; and, as the author remarks: "In every way the kind of life I live can only be lived by one whose body is not chiefly protoplasm, but wood, steel, brick, glass, cotton....."

These are no more dead but alive as a whole; and being disjointed at the behest of the human will, man has more than animal vitality and unrivalled organic efficiency, and hence is an improvement on the organ of flesh and blood.

The book is in one sense an autobiography, an experimental self-portrait to answer the question: "What

am I?". And the author himself confesses at the end of the book that he has not answered it, rather he has become more of a puzzle than ever.

**SHARING THE JOY OF LEARNING:** By Dastur Dr. Framoze Ardeshir Bode. Pub.: P. N. Mehta Education Trust, 324, Dr. D. N. Road, Bombay. Pp. 145. Price: Not indicated.

What could be more inspiring than the teaching of Zoroaster that man's highest joy comes from being a soldier of God, fighting His battles with the weapons of Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds? Dr. Bode shares this joy with his readers in this collection of his various articles from Indian and foreign journals. They deal with the spiritual, ethical and philosophical teachings of the first great Giver of Light, the prophet Zarathustra, whose lifetime goes back into what history would call "the night of time". Dr. Bode's researches and studies in the two ancient tongues of Iran, Avesta and Pahlavi, have earned for him the solid reputation of a sound scholar, so this book deserves the careful attention of every student interested in comparative religion.

Of special interest is the article on "the Seamless Web of Consciousness" where he points out that the one reality, the Absolute, is that essence which is out of all relation to conditional consciousness and of which conscious existence as a human being is a conditioned symbol, a similar exposition to the teachings of Bhagavan. The difficulty of such a realisation is clearly indicated in the very first sentence by Dr. Bode:

"The nature of consciousness cannot be fully known or defined, as the very instrument—the mind—which makes an attempt to define it is the result of consciousness and is involved in it."

The ancient fire lit by our sages and seers is not dead; it is only smouldering on its ancient altars. White hot are the ashes, ready to reburst into flames. Books like Dr. Bode's help the aspirant to share in the joy of learning and living the higher life.

ARGUS.

**THE AUTHENTIC YOGA:** By P. Y. Deshpande. Pub.: Rider and Co. London. Pp. 163 Price: £ 3.75

To the author, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are an epitome of the science of Mind aiming to free man from his helpless subjection to the mechanical choices he has to make as the 'seer' facing the 'seen'. His mind is a conditioned mind, a product of the impressions of the long past; yoga teaches him to develop a meditational mind which 'brings about a veritable mutational transformation of the conditioned mind'.

In the words of the commentator (who holds that Vyasa and those who base themselves upon him are wide off the mark): "Man as the end-product of the mutational energy of the flow of nature must inquire and find out the right way of looking at himself and the world, to be true to his nature. He must find out when and how his view of what is, within and without, acquires the dimension of reality; and he must also find out what it is that interferes with and distorts the right view of reality. If man fails to do this, he must go the way of many an extinct species. And the whole drive and purpose of Yoga Darsana is to help man acquire a right vision of reality and thus save him from total extinction."

#### THE RISE OF ESOTERIC BUDDHISM IN TIBET:

By Eva M. Dargyay. Pub.: Motilal Banarsidas. Jawaharnagar, Delhi 7. Pp. 271. Price: Rs. 50.

It is generally assumed that Tibetan Buddhism is an offshoot of Buddhism from India. The author, a German scholar, studies this question in depth and traces other influences in the Tibetan Religion viz. Chinese and Iranian. She examines the records of the Old School of Buddhism in that country and analyses them in two lineages: one, of the Pronouncements and, the other, of the Concealed Treasures. Due to political upheavals there were times when some of the important manuscripts were hidden and later brought out under more favourable conditions. She has been able to construct biographical accounts of about twenty of the teachers of the Old School. The tradition of Padmasambhava and the extent to which the Old School goes beyond this master of Tantra is discussed.

The treatise is an able historical research into the most significant aspect of the Tibetan civilization—the occult and the spiritual. It presents a good deal of basic data for scholars to work upon.

**GOSPEL OF SWAMI RAMDAS:** By Swami Satchidananda. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 845. Price: Rs. 95-00.

Scholars speak or write from mental knowledge. Saints speak from direct experience of the Truth. That is why their company is always elevating, purifying and transforming at its best. They may terminate their physical career at any time but their words and their thoughts continue to inspire humanity for all time. Records like the present *Gospel* provide perennial *satsang* and we cannot be too grateful to Swami Satchidananda for his meticulous account of days with 'Papa' (that was how Saint Ramdas was affectionately known and called by all who received the alchemy of his smile) from 1951 August to 1957 December.

The diary has been arranged with commendable editorial skill and the detailed list of the contents and the Index make this volume a ready reference manual for seekers on the spiritual Path. The well-known musician and minstrel of Lord Krishna, Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, once asked him: "Tell me Papa, how can one attain Him, the Elusive Swain?" The answer was quick: "By wanting him not *among* other things, but *above* other things." Papa's utterances and replies have an impact of the Soul and cut through the maze of the mind in ignorance.

All know that his Way was *Ram Nam*. But, there are conditions under which alone it is spiritually efficacious. "Before Ramdas was initiated, he was repeating 'Ram Ram'. Guruji gave him 'Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram'. After repeating the Guru Mantra for some time, Ramdas found that though the previous mantra gave him some degree of peace, the Guru mantra proved for more effective and resulted in higher experience which he had not had before. His mind became still very quickly...When the Guru gives you initiation, he imparts spiritual power to you with the mantra." Elsewhere he describes the different types of Samadhi which he lists as three: "Savikalpa Samadhi is that state when one sees the effulgent form of God, and enjoys divine ecstasy. Nirvikalpa Samadhi is that state when you have transcended all names and forms and you lose your little self in the nameless, formless and changeless being of God. So, Savikalpa Samadhi is saguna sakshatkar and is within the three gunas. Nirvikalpa samadhi is nirguna sakshatkar and is beyond the gunas. There is still a higher state in which you remain in the nirvikalpa samadhi and at the same time behold the whole universe as the form of God. One who is in this state, realising his oneness with the Eternal, lives and moves like a child seeing his Beloved everywhere. This is called Sahaja Samadhi."

Clarifying his own state of consciousness, Papa says: "Ramdas is not a pure advaitin. He believes in the co-existence of dvaita and advaita. The Jivanmukta retains his higher subtle individuality; he moves about and acts in the world realising that he and God are one. Ramdas, in this body, is active and doing things. Whatever he may do, he is at the same time conscious that he is the eternal and all-pervading Reality. So, in that state there is separation and unity simultaneously."

And there are many other topics of interest. Speaking of the several ways in which the saint awakens God-consciousness in another, he explains: "The saint simply looks at a person, or touches him, or thinks of him, and the thing is done. The first method is compared to that of the fish that hatches its eggs by simply gazing intently at them; the second to that of a bird sitting on her eggs to hatch them, and the third

to that of a tortoise that only thinks of her eggs in hatching them."

There is humour too: "Even Sanyasins have worries. They may have only trifling worries, but having nothing else to think of, they magnify them."

Finally, there is the question: Is realisation a sudden or gradual experience?

A: Realisation is in fact a sudden experience. But the preparation for it is gradual and can be accomplished only by a steady and ceaseless practice."

To read this magnificent book is to educate oneself.

M. P. PANDIT.

**HOW TO PRACTISE BEING A YOGI:** By Swami Gitananda. Pub.: Swami Gitananda, Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry. Pp. 52. Price not indicated.

**THE BREATH OF LIFE.** Author and Publisher: Swami Gitananda, Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry. Pp. 60. Price: not indicated.

Dr. Swami Gitananda is the dynamic organiser of Yoga classes in the famous Ananda Ashram in Pondicherry. His life being a synthesis of East and West, I have pleasure in reviewing his two excellent books on Yoga which lead the student step by step on a three month course of physical health, vital energy and mental peace. He gives the reader lessons on physiology, philosophy, psychology, hygiene, diet asanas and pranayama. The book has been copiously illustrated by photos and drawings, beginning with his laughing profile and continuing with the easy poses of his Shakti Meenakshi.

Step by step, over thirteen weeks, the aspirant is taught the fundamentals of Yoga. He gives prominence to Pranava Pranayama. By an impressive drawing he shows the radiation of the Prana Shakti, and he also includes lessons on Shad Chakra Pranayama, Dhyana, Kundalini, Laya, and Mantra and Tantra yogas. He maintains throughout that yoga is the foundation of spiritual realisation.

**RAJA YOGA SUTRAS:** By Swami Jyotirmayananda, Pub.: Yoga Research Foundation, Miami, Florida, U.S.A. Pp. 264. Price: \$ 2.99.

Swami Jyotirmayananda, otherwise known as the genius of yoga, is an expatriate Indian Yogi who now teaches yoga and Vedanta in Florida, U.S.A. The book under review gives a detailed study of the mind, its latent powers, the methods of its control, and its spiritual enlightenment. He gives a clear exposition of the aphorisms of Patanjali Maharshi, threading the numerous thoughts together into a clear and cogent

whole. The Swami's explanations, written in a clear and concise style, give an insight into the heart of the Maharshi who composed these age-long sutras for the good of humanity.

The eight limbs of the Raja Yoga of Patanjali form the foundation and fundamentals of all systems of yoga. In addition to analysing each sutra, Jyotirmayananda gives a number of practical methods for calming down an agitated mind.

Patanjali speaks of God as *Purushavish*. The Swami explains; "God is the best of all souls; while individual souls are trapped in the bondage of world processes, God is ever free. He controls maya and is not affected by it. By meditating upon God and by surrendering to Him, a yogi liberates himself from the fetters of Prakriti."

YOGI SHUDDHANANDA BHARATI.

**SECRET OF ARUNACHALA:** By Swami Abishiktananda. Pub.: I.S.P.C.K. Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110 006. Pp. 187. Price: Rs. 20.

Having met Ramana Maharshi just before sunset, a few months before leaving the body, the author, a French Benedictine monk, decided to solve, if possible, the Secret of Arunachala, which was obviously at the root of the secret of the sage. Swami Abishiktananda, up to then living his Christian vocation under the conditions of a Hindu sannyasin, with Shantivanam on the bank of the Kauvery as his ashram, returned to Tiruvannamalai and spent several periods of time in different caves on the sacred hill. Apart from the record of the meeting of the monk with the sage, the book contains the story of his meetings with a number of long-standing devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The meetings are conveyed in life-like sketches drawn by a typically alert French mind; shortcomings are not overlooked, but the book is without malice and is full of human sympathy. This very personal trait makes the book easy reading; but what about the secret of Arunachala?

In the introduction it is mentioned that Swami Abishiktananda reserved the publication of this small book for after his own death, hesitating obviously to uncover experiences and emotions too intimate to be revealed to the public. There should have been no need for such hesitation, for the experiences of the monk on his search for the secret of Arunachala were the experiences which will be met with by every sincere soul longing to be blessed by the darshan of truth. Too honest to pretend, the Swami describes the result of his search himself at the end of his last visit to Tiruvannamalai in March 1956: "I think the best description of my real condition since Arunachala would be to compare it to the dawn-*arunodaya*-when even before

the sun has risen, the sky is already aglow. Light ( *jyoti* ), peace ( *shanti* ), bliss ( *ananda* ). The birds are already singing, my heart too is singing. Joyful expectation of the appearance of the glorious orb."

The 'Secret of Arunachala' remained unrevealed in words. It is not meant to be caught between the covers of a book. As is well-known, it has to be discovered by the experience of each individual, by giving up his or her individuality. This secret too is also hidden within the passages of this book.

LUCY CORNELSEN.

**SPIRIT OF THE HIMALAYA:** By Swami Amar Jyothi. Pub.: Truth Consciousness Inc., Tucson Arizona, U.S.A. Pp. 123, Price: Not Indicated.

This is a fictional account of a sadhu's search for truth which indulges most of the romantic fantasies which spiritual aspirants cherish at the beginning of their search; there is the guru from the previous life, the ascetic practices in a cave in the Himalayas, meetings with strange sadhus with miraculous powers, and of course, eventual Realisation and a subsequent career as a guru. It belongs to the same literary genre as Jonathan Livingston's *Seagull* and Hesse's *Siddhartha* but it lacks the magical qualities which made those earlier works so appealing. There is the occasional spiritual gem to be found, but it is essentially a book of fantasy with little or no relevance to the problems that most of us face on the spiritual path.

**A WESTERN APPROACH TO ZEN:** By Christmas Humphreys, Unwin Paperbacks, London, Price: £ 2.25, Pages 212.

Christmas Humphreys is probably the most prolific and widely-read Buddhist writer operating in the West today. The reason for his popularity is not hard to find; his enthusiasm for all things Buddhist, backed by an exhaustive knowledge of the subject, is conveyed with a clarity and simplicity of expression that invariably make his books a pleasure to read. With over 50 years' experience of practicing, teaching and organising Buddhism in England, his views on the progress and evolution of Buddhism in the West must be treated with respect, even by those who disagree with him.

"A Western Approach to Zen", first published in 1971, is another reprint in the Mandala series. The basic premise of the book is that it is impossible for Western Zen students to undergo traditional Zen training because there are too few qualified Zen masters available in the West. Therefore, a new system must be devised which can both be taught by unenlightened teachers and be practised without the direct super-

vision of a Zen master. The author, surprisingly, has made no revisions for the present edition. In the last ten years, the increasing number of Zen masters taking up residence in the West, particularly in the United States, has made his basic argument slightly less tenable. The alternative system which he advocates in this book is an excellent course in mind-training, but its claim to be the best available system for the Western Zen student is becoming progressively less viable as more and more students experience the direct teaching that comes from personal contact with a Zen master.

About half of the book is taken up with an articulate and succinct summary of basic Buddhism, starting with Theravada, progressing through Mahayana and culminating in Zen. Although it is a good summary, many Buddhists would probably take exception to some of the author's Theosophical ideas, particularly his pre-occupation with the higher and lower self, and one incredible statement which reads: "The goal is the full development of the total man on all his seven planes, and even the Zen master has a long way to go yet."

His advice to Zen students is equally unusual, for he recommends that in the early stages of Zen practice, they should concentrate on mental and intellectual training. He recommends "profound unceasing study to the best of the mind's ability," and at a later stage, "deep meditation on some theme...to extract the last drop of its meaning." He believes that intellectual effort and concentration exercises are necessary to stabilise the mind, and that such a preparation is more likely to bring about a breakthrough to pure Zen awareness than any other method. Concurrently with this, he encourages his students to examine their minds to see how conditioned they are, and then, having done so, to remove their conditioned responses and by continual mental alertness prevent more conditioning taking place. Finally, in his Zen classes he attempts to stimulate spontaneous intuitive responses to brief questions or statements such as: "We all know that the lower self...is unreal...Who or what knows this?"

Mr. Humphreys freely admits that what he teaches is possibly not Zen at all, but he is essentially a pragmatist. He states: "In the face of knowing smiles from my youngers and betters, I hold to my thesis for I find that it works."

Ultimately, that is the only criterion by which to judge any system, and if a man of such proven integrity and experience says that it works, then one may assume that it does. One may disagree with his ideas and scoff at his methods, but one cannot really criticise a man who has produced a stimulating and partially successful solution to an apparently insoluble problem.

D.G.

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# ASHRAM BULLETIN

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**BHAGAVAN'S  
30th ARADHANA DAY  
CELEBRATED  
AT THE ASHRAM**



*The beautifully decorated Samadhi shrine of Sri Ramana Maharshi on May 12, Aradhana Day.*

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***Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi, participates in the  
Brahma Nirvana Celebrations  
at Sri Ramanasramam***

**This year, being Sri Ramana Maharshi's Birth Centenary Year, Sri Ramanasramam at Tiruvannamalai celebrated Bhagavan's 30th Aradhana Day also as a three-day festival beginning May 10.**

*The first day opened with a programme of vocal music by the BOMBAY SISTERS and party at the specially constructed PANDAL near the dining hall in the ashram. All the songs sung on the occasion were either those written by Bhagavan or about Him.*

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The second day featured three *nadaswaram* recitals by *Sri Murugayyan* and party of Sri Arunachaleswara temple — one at dawn, a second during morning puja and the last as a special session at 10-30 in the morning. The evening programme also featured a thrilling musical discourse on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings by *Sri Sadhu Ram Swami*.

On the third morning, May 12th, there was, besides the daily ceremonial morning prayers and chanting of selections from the *Upanishads* an elaborate ceremonial *puja* session at the beautifully decorated shrine. The entire Ramana Auditorium looked splendid hung with garlands made of fragrant flowers, thanks to the devoted efforts of *Sri Ramachandra Khoday*. Thousands of

poor people also ate at the Ashram that day. In the night, Sri Sadhu Ram Swami continued and concluded his series of talks on Sri Bhagavan.

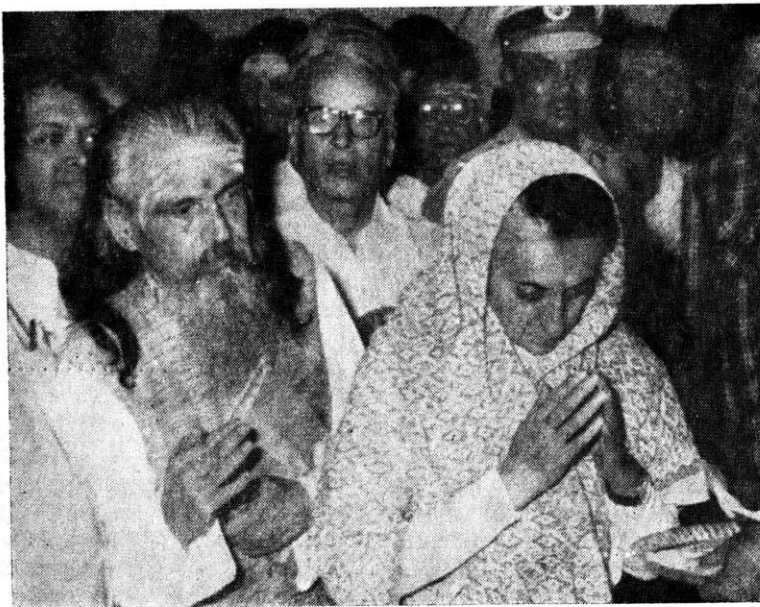
On the third day the Ashram was honoured by the presence of *Smt. Indira Gandhi*, the Prime Minister of India. She arrived by helicopter and was escorted into the Ashram by Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, Ashram trustees and distinguished members of the Centenary Committee. The Prime Minister was received with the traditional ritualistic welcome with *poorna kumbham*.

The Prime Minister was taken to the *Samadhi* of Bhagavan where she offered worship. She then unveiled the bronze statue of the Maharshi made by the eminent sculptor, *Sri Kalasagaram Rajagopal*. The Prime Minister also released the Birth Centenary Souvenir, *Ramana Smrti*, a compendium of special tributes to Bhagavan.

In a short speech addressed to those gathered in the Auditorium, she said that she felt honoured at being given the opportunity to participate in a function connected with the illustrious saint of India and invoked Sri Bhagavan's blessings for the welfare of the people of the country.



*The Prime Minister conveying her great pleasure in participating in Sri Bhagavan's Aradhana celebrations.*



*Smt. Indira Gandhi receives prasad from the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan.*

*Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, is seen on her right; behind him is Sri P. Thandavarayan, Trustee of the Ashram. In between the Ashram President and the Prime Minister is seen Sri K. S. Venkataraman, retired Judge.*



*Smt. Indira Gandhi is seen absorbed in meditation at the Ashram's Old Meditation Hall. Our Managing Editor is seen next to her.*

"May His spirit guide us to a future that is worthy of our past heritage," She said. The Prime Minister also listened to a few songs sung by the "Ramananjali" Group with orchestra, and wished them success in their coming world tour.

Later, the Prime Minister also sat for a while in meditation in the Old Meditation Hall.

On her return to Delhi the Prime Minister sent a message to the Ashram President. "I was glad to be able to visit the Ashram," she wrote, "The atmosphere is so peaceful."

\* \* \* \* \*

#### RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

In the series of special functions organised at the Delhi Kendra during the Centenary Year, a memorable event was the public meeting held on April 25, when *Sri Swami Ranganathananda*, President of Sri Ramakrishna Mission, Hyderabad, gave a moving and thought-

provoking discourse on Sri Ramana Maharshi. *Sri Gulzari Lal Nanda* presided over the function.

Another notable programme was the series of ten talks in Hindi by *Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje* during April-May. Her first five lectures, which commenced on Sankara Jayanti Day, were on Adi Sankara's life and teachings. As usual, the lectures were interspersed with numerous quotations from the *Puranas* and other Scriptures as well as from the writings and sayings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The last five lectures were devoted to Bhakta Meera's life and compositions. The large audiences were able to survey and enjoy the richness and continuity of the Hindu tradition and its full modern manifestation in the person of Sri Bhagavan.

*Sri Gopal Sharman* and a talented band of artistes sang *Bhajans* in Hindi in the Kendra Auditorium on May 11.

The *Mahanirvana* Day was observed on April 14th as well as on the actual *tithi* on May 12.



*Sri Swami Ranganathananda addressing the Ramana Kendra, Delhi. (from l to r) Professor K. Swaminathan, Sri Gulzarilal Nanda,*

### AN APPEAL FOR FUNDS

*Ramana Kendra, Delhi, is engaged, among other activities, in two sustained and on-going programmes: (i) printing and publishing in a series of ten volumes the Tamil poems of the great saint-poet, Muruganar, and (ii) rendering service to the poor in some resettlement colonies. In order to stabilise and expand these activities, the Kendra badly needs and hopefully seeks generous support from friends who feel that the Kendra can contribute something substantial to the cultural and spiritual life of the Capital. The Centenary Year 1980 calls for renewal of effort to place the Kendra on a firm financial footing.*

Donors of Rs. 500/- and above will be enrolled as Life Members. Donations may, if so desired, be earmarked for: (i) Library & Reading Room Fund or (ii) Publication Fund or (iii) The Seva Samiti Fund.

Donors are eligible for tax relief under Section 80-G of the Income-tax Act.

Cheques or drafts may be sent crossed and made out in favour of *Ramana Kendra, Delhi* and sent to:

The Treasurer,  
RAMANA KENDRA,  
8, Institutional Area,  
Lodhi Road,  
NEW DELHI-110 003.

### MADRAS

At a public meeting held at the Kendra premises on May 4, 1980, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan released the book *Paramartha Deepam*, a prose rendering by Sri Sadhu Om of Sri Muruganar's *Guru Vachakakovai*.

The first copy was received by Smt. Ananthaswami.

Dr. Mahadevan was all praise for the contents of the book, and also for the notes and comments provided by Sri Sadhu Om. The work is divided into three parts,—philosophic enquiry, meditation thereon, and final experience of the Truth. Dr. Mahadevan was of the view that *Guru Vachakakovai* could rightly form part of *Ramana Prasthanatraya*.

Sri K. K. Nambiar, Chairman of the Kendra, presided.

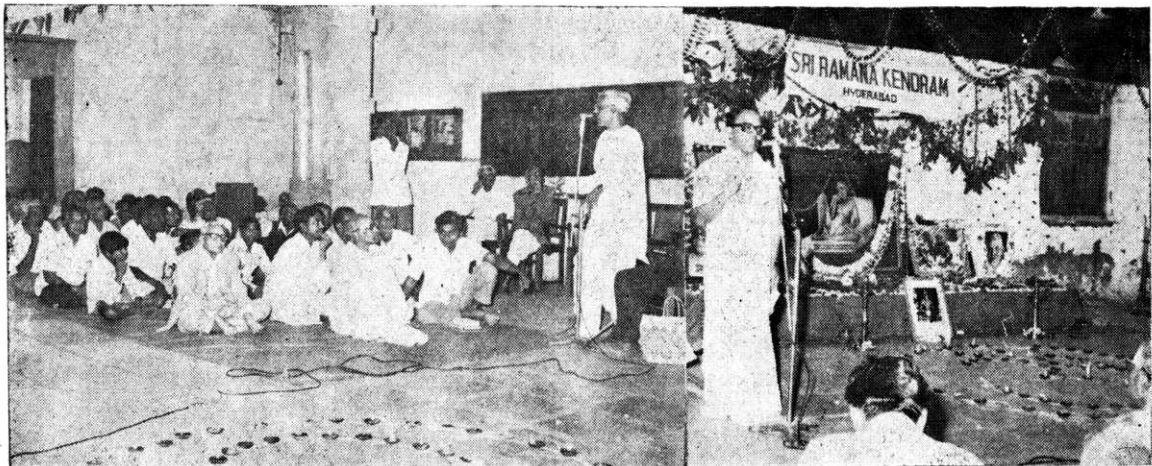
### PALGHAT

Bhagavan's *Brahma Nirvana* was celebrated at Vijnana Ramaneeya Ashram, Koppam, Palghat in a fitting manner by the Ramana Kendra.

The celebration started early morning with Ganapati Homa, followed by puja, *Ashtottara*, *Archana* and *Akhanda japa*. At noon there was poor-feeding.

In the evening after the reading of *Bhagavad Gita* and *Sat Darsanam*, the veteran Sanskrit scholar and reputed Bhagavatothama Brahmasri Vaisravanath Raman Namboodiri spoke about the significance of celebrating the Samadhi Tithi of Mahatmas.

Sri A. Swaminathan (Govt. Victoria College) narrated the important events in the life of Sri Ramana Maharshi.



### Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary Celebrations at Hyderabad

Sri G. Krishna, Assistant Editor of *Indian Express* addressing the devotees. Dr. K. Subrahmanian, member of our *Editorial Board*, and President of *Ramana Kendra*, Hyderabad, narrates interesting incidents in Sri Bhagavan's life.



### AT BOMBAY

Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary was celebrated by the Bombay Ramana Kendra, which had just acquired land for a building for the Kendra, at a function arranged at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Auditorium.

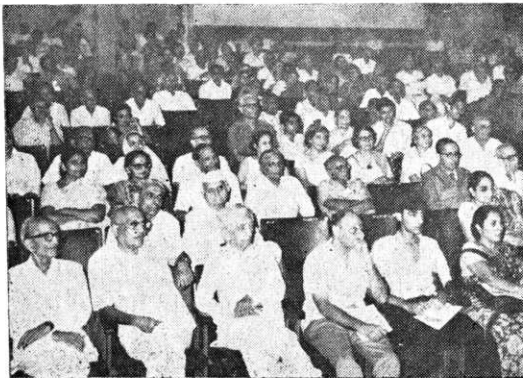
Mr. Justice J. C. Shah presided over the function and Mrs. Lucia Osborne and Smt. Mani Sahukar spoke warmly of the unique character of Bhagavan. Later, a film on Bhagavan was screened for the audience.

As it happens every time when the devotees of Bhagavan get together and talk about Him, His presence is felt by all so that the function becomes imbued with a quiet joy as it happened on this occasion also.

### UPADESA SARAM IN CANADA AND U.S.A.

In this year of Bhagavan's birth Centenary, readers of THE MOUNTAIN PATH will be interested to know that Swami Dayananda Saraswati taught *Upadesa Saram* at Thunder Bay, Canada from October 2 to 7, 1979 and at Sandeepany West, Piercy, California, U.S.A. for over a month beginning December 19, 1979.

In his lecture tours, Swamiji frequently took up the texts *Upadesa Saram* and *Sat Darshan* in place of the Upanishads; moreover, they form an integral part of his two-and-a-half year course in Vedanta which he taught twice at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Bombay, and which he has been teaching at Piercy, California, since November 7, 1979.



↑

**BOMBAY:** *The Birth Centenary Celebrations of Sri Bhagavan:*

Mr. Justice J. C. Shah addresses the large audience of bhaktas. (from l to r) Sri N. S. Ramanathan, Mrs. Mani Sahukar, Mrs. Lucia Osborne, Sri N. D. Sahukar and Sri P. V. Somasundaram.

←

A view of the gathering.

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(Souvenir)

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SRI RAMANASRAMAM P.O.,  
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South India

### FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

GURU POORNIMA (Vyasa Puja)	Sunday	27- 7-1980
KRISHNA JAYANTHI (Gokulashtami)	Monday	1- 9-1980
DAY OF BHAGAVAN'S ADVENT TO ARUNACHALA	Monday	1- 9-1980
VINAYAKA CHATURTHI	Saturday	13- 9-1980
NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL (Commences on)	Friday	10-10-1980
SARASWATHI PUJA	Saturday	18-10-1980
VIJAYADASAMI	Sunday	19-10-1980
DEEPAVALI	Thursday	6-11-1980
SKANDA SASHTI	Thursday	13-11-1980
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (Commences on)	Thursday	13-11-1980
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM	Saturday	22-11-1980
SRI BHAGAVAN'S JAYANTHI	Tuesday	23-12-1980
PONGAL	Wednesday	14- 1-1981
CHINNA SWAMIGAL ARADANA	Monday	19- 1-1981
MAHA SIVARATHRI	Wednesday	4- 3-1981
TELUGU NEW YEAR DAY (Lunar)	Sunday	5- 4-1981
TAMIL NEW YEAR DAY (Solar)	Monday	13- 4-1981

## OBITUARY

## SRI S. S. COHEN

A staunch Theosophist, *Sulaiman Samuel Cohen*, having come under the influence of Sri Bhagavan in 1936 never swerved from the feet of his Master. His contribution to Ramana-literature has been impressive<sup>1</sup>. He belongs to the team of European elite-devotees of Sri Bhagavan like Paul Brunton, Major Chadwick, Duncan Greenles, Maurice Frydman, Dr. G. M. Mees and Arthur Osborne. His surrender to his Master has been total and complete.



Sri S. S. Cohen

As a person Sri Cohen was extraordinarily warm and jovial. His ready wit and practical jokes attracted people to him. His help to seekers, especially to youngsters, proved very useful and practical.

In the death of Sri Cohen seekers in general and Ramana-bhaktas in particular have lost an inspiring spiritual personage. Though he was ill for the past few years, he always kept himself interested in the activities of the Ashram. He expressed gratitude to the Ashram repeatedly for looking after him in his last days when he needed help most.

## MR. PETER ELSSAESER

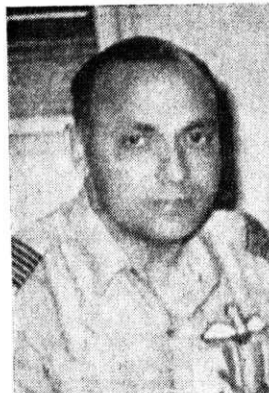
Mrs. Trudel Elssaeser of West Germany is well-known to our readers since almost every year we publish an account on her and about her stay at the Ashram in our *Ashram Bulletin* column. Her husband was equally devoted to Sri Bhagavan and had associated himself with all the activities of the Ashram by generously contributing donations.

After prolonged illness Mr. Peter Elssaeser passed away in France, where this elderly couple, settled down after retirement.

We offer our condolences to Mrs. Trudel Elssaeser and to the family and friends.

<sup>1</sup> He has written: *Guru Ramana. Residual Reminiscences of Ramana, Reflections on Talks, Forty Verses on Reality, Srimad Bhagavatam and Advaitic Sadhana.*

## SRI KAILASH KHANNA



Sri Kailash Khanna

The entire family of Sri H. C. Khanna of Kanpur is dedicated to Sri Bhagavan. His second son, *Kailash*, was exceptionally attached to Sri Ramanasramam and devoted to Sri Bhagavan. Whenever he got leave from his official work Kailash came to Arunachala with his family and spent all his holidays at the Ashram.

So it comes as a shock to hear that Kailash, with his wife

*Suneeta*, daughter *Ritu* and son *Gagan*, died in a car accident in Cairo where he was serving as Air-Attache to the Embassy of India. His eldest son who is living in Bombay, *Pavan*, alone survives.

We convey our condolences to the elderly parents of Kailash and to his brothers and sister and to all his kith and kin and friends. Kailash will ever remain alive in the hearts of all those who came in contact with him.



Smt. Suneetha Khanna

## SRI T. S. BHADRACHALAM PILLAI

*Sri T. S. Bhadrachalam Pillai* has served the big temple Sri Arunachaleswara Temple, in the capacity of President of the Devasthanam Trust. He was a member of the Ashram Trust board also. His services as the Chairman of the local Co-operative Bank are noteworthy.

He passed away at the ripe old age of 75 years.

## SRI T. R. SUNDARA SASTRI

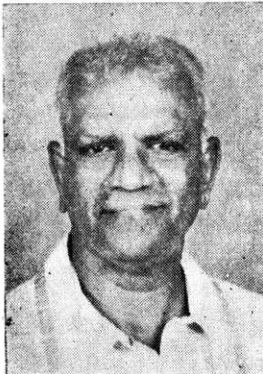
*Sri T. R. Raju Sastri* was a great Sanskrit Scholar who had studied the Vedas. He was serving the Ashram during the days of Sri Bhagavan attending to all ritual

activities of the Ashram. His younger brother, *Sri T. R. Sundara Sastri*, was equally dedicated to Sri Bhagavan and was the Chief Priest in all major ritualistic functions at the Ashram.

We record here his death at the age of 67 years and convey our condolences to his family members.

#### SRI. S. S. V. S. MUTHIAH CHETTIAR

It is literally true that no ritualistic function or celebration at Tiruvannamalai's big temple, Sri Arunachaleswarar Temple, could take place without the towering personality of *Sri S.S.V.S. Muthiah Chettiar*. This touch of indispensability applies equally to functions at Sri Ramanasramam also. From 1950, after the *Brahma Nirvana* of Sri Bhagavan, Sri Chettiar has been serving the Ashram with vigour and interest in various capacities such as Com-



*Sri S.S.V.S. Muthiah Chettiar*

mittee Member, Treasurer and Trust Board Member. The rapid growth of Sri Ramanasramam owes much to the encouragement extended by this tireless worker. He was a pillar of strength to the Ashram President, Sri T.N. Venkataraman, in all constructive activities.

Special mention should be made of his priceless contribution in helping to perform the *Kumbhabhishekams* at the Ashram in 1967 and again in 1980. He took a very active part in the Centenary Celebrations during January, 1980. He continued to be a Trustee of the Ashram till he breathed his last.

Sri Chettiar's public services in many capacities are well-known. Everyone will miss this genial and good-hearted devotee.

We offer our heartfelt condolences to his entire family.

#### LAKSHMI AMMAL

Our Ashram Chief Priest, *Sri K. Krishnamurthy*, popularly known as '*Kittu*', is dedicatedly serving the Ashram by doing *puja* to the shrines of Bhagavan and His Mother. His mother, *Lakshmi Ammal*, who was living with him, passed away at the age of 78 years.

#### ERRATA

In our April, 1980, issue:

P. 82, "Coming In...from Out in the Cold," the last line should read:

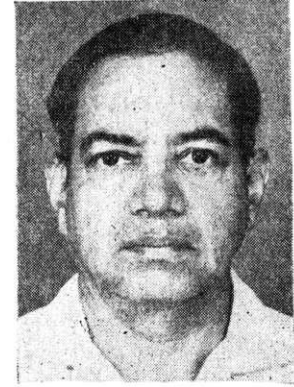
"that everything IS BEING ITSELF."

p. 94, the title should be:

"God Realization Is No Realization At All."

#### SRI V. R. SRINIVASAN and SRI RAMAMURTHY

*Sri V. R. Srinivasan*, known popularly among his wide circle of friends as '*VRS*,' was a faithful devotee of Sri Bhagavan. It was his good fortune to be posted as the Station Master of the Railways in and near about Tiruvannamalai for the past several years. This made it possible for him and his equally dedicated wife to go round their beloved Arunachala Hill as often as they wanted. His two sons are also staunch devotees of Sri Bhagavan. His own great devotion also attracted a number of people to Sri Ramanasramam.

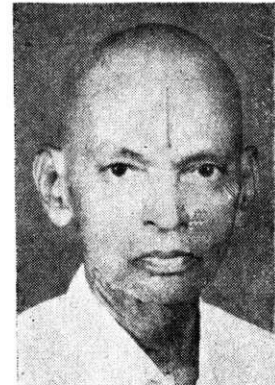


*Sri V. R. Srinivasan*

Sri Srinivasan, along with his brother-in-law, *Sri Ramamurthy*, (who was also a Station Master) died in a train accident. Our condolences go to their bereaved families.

#### SRI G. SANTHANAM IYENGAR

The devotees of Sri Bhagavan, particularly the inmates of the Ashram, have always been happy to associate themselves with *Sri G. Santhanam Iyengar*<sup>1</sup> who was eager to share his spiritual experiences with earnest seekers. A school-teacher by profession he led a pure life of a *mumukshu*, always spending his spare time in reading religious works, or chanting God's Name or meditating as per instructions of Sri Bhagavan.



*Sri G. Santhanam Iyengar*

After retirement, he stayed for good at the Ashram and was in charge of the Ashram cash and accounts. Only for the last few years, due to old age, he was relieved of his responsibilities and he was spending the whole time in contemplation. Though he was suffering from some illness or other in the last months, the end was peaceful. His remains were cremated at the foot of Arunachala Hill. He was 85 years old.

<sup>1</sup> His '*How I Came to Sri Bhagavan*', appeared on p. 155 of July '73.

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 Saluru Rajeswara Rao, Madras.  
 K. Arumugam Pillai, Tiruvannamalai.  
 R. N. Arunachalam, Vellore.  
 R. N. Sabhapathi, Vellore.  
 Balambal Narayana Iyer, Vellore.  
 S. Seetha Raman, Coimbatore.  
 S. D. Dogra, New Delhi.  
 Sikha Mukherjee, Calcutta.  
 T. S. Sundaramurthy, Bombay.  
 Smt. Lalitha Raman, Madras.  
 Sri V. Mahadevan, Bombay.  
 Sri D. Nagaraja, Bangalore.  
 Sri B. Chinniah, Secunderabad.  
 Mrs. B. Butchiah, Kavali.  
 Dr. Ghanshyam Singh Pathor, Jodhpur.  
 Sri R. Krishnamoorthy, Tiruvannamalai.  
 Sri Hamsa de Reede, Tiruvannamalai.  
 Sri Janjivandas K. Patel, Surat.

## Sri Ramanasramam

### Life Members—Foreign

#### ADDITIONS SINCE JULY 1979

- Dr. P. J. Saher, West Germany.  
 Sri Subhash Pandit Kher, U.S.A.  
 Sri R. Madhavan, Malaysia.  
 Sri L. H. Ewels, London.  
 Sri L. Rayner, England.
- Sri Chandra Singh Heyer, Kenya.  
 Sri Luis Alberto Fritzman, Argentina.  
 Miss Saly Marlin, U.S.A.  
 Sri Harry Boys, England.  
 Sri T. K. Roumbania, U.S.A.

# **SRI RAMANA DIARY - 1980**

A Birth Centenary Offering to the  
Lotus Feet of

**BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI**



A useful DIARY, bearing seven coloured pictures and six black & white pictures of Sri Bhagavan. The added attraction is Sri Bhagavan's sayings having been printed for each day!

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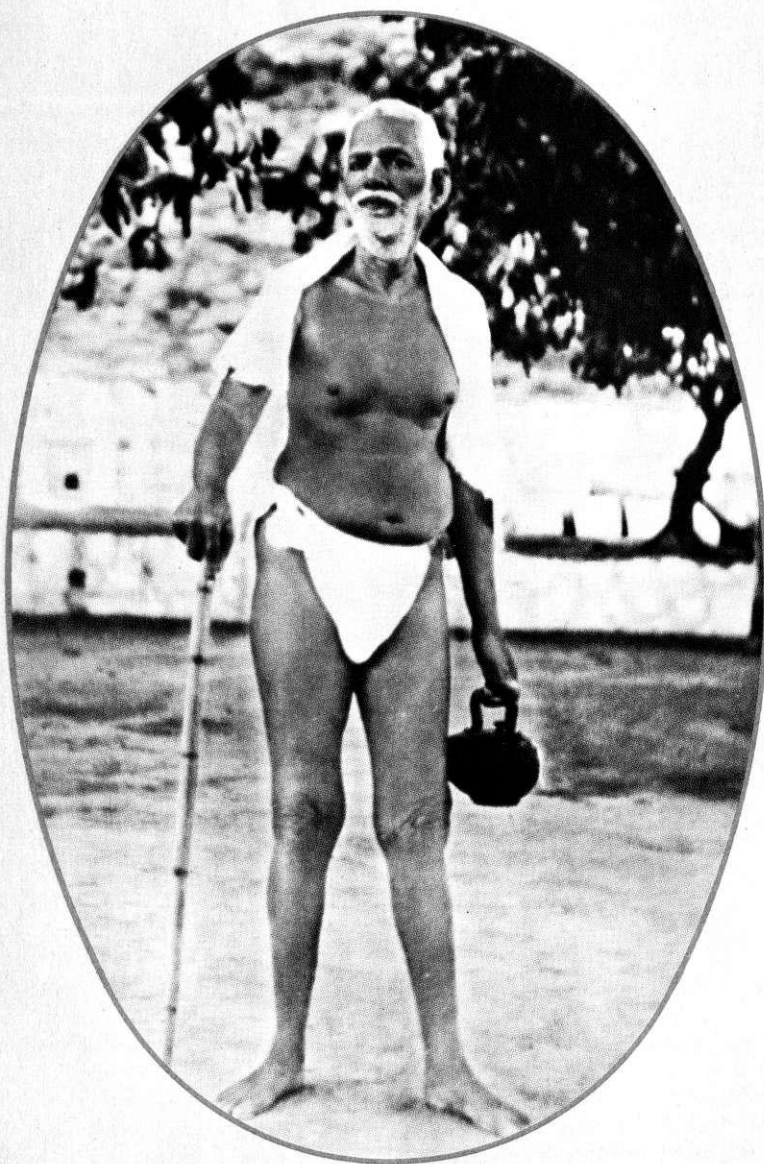
SRI RAMANASRAMAM, P.O.,

TIRUVANNAMALAI - 606 603, South India.



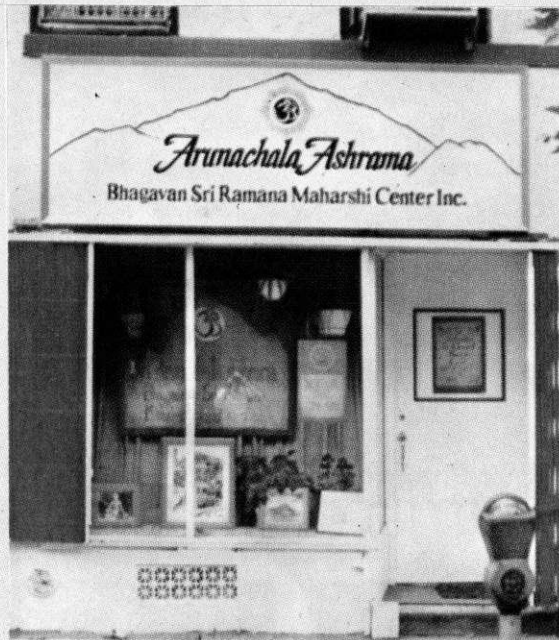
# THE VOICE OF RAMANA

IN EUROPE, CANADA, U.S.A.



*"Your Grace it was  
I stumbled to your feet,  
Your love that raised me up  
and made me yours,  
Chosen to serve,  
though not for service meet,  
Untutored save by Grace  
that from you pours."*

*"Ramananjali"—Ramana Movement*



The entrance to the New York City Ashrama: the Grace and Presence of Sri Bhagavan flow from every member of this 'little' Ashrama.

### **"A RAMANASRAMAM" AT NEW YORK CITY**

The entire **Ramananjali** group owes its convenient stay, food and every other comfort during their stay in U.S.A. and Canada, particularly at New York City, to the untiring, cheerful and constant attention and care bestowed by every member of the **Arunachala Ashrama**. Paul, Eugene and Amar helped us around. Margo would have dinner ready and waiting when we returned tired to the Ashrama late at night. And Sandra and Arthur were there, always helping and ever ready to help. Philip kept our spirits high even when we were tired with his ready wit. We had, of course, invaded Evelyn's apartment and she even enjoyed our untidiness and noisiness. Dennis, after a sleepless night would still declare energetically in the morning that he was ready for the day! With such indulgent care and affection did our dear friends of the **Arunachala Ashrama** look after us. The overflowing generosity of Mr. Robin Lagemann, an unparalleled devotee of Sri Bhagavan from Boston, contributed in many ways to make the tour a success. Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata, though always remaining in the back-

ground, was primarily responsible for such hospitality, the excellent arrangements and for the tour's success in the States and Canada. Smt. Padmini Ramachandran and her able assistant, Raja, helped us in solving the accommodation problem, with the aid of many sincere friends. And, Dr. Vishwanath arranged for televising a short programme by the group.

Mr. & Mrs. Gul Hira, staunch devotees of Sri Bhagavan settled in America, deserve credit for organising the two programmes of 'Ramana Music', both at Scarsdale Public Library and at the Columbia University School of International Affairs. In addition to these, they were most hospitable in giving food and other needed help to the group.

After the performances, Dennis said in his usual quiet manner, but with touching sincerity: "I wanted very much to come to Sri Ramanasramam for Sri Bhagavan's 100th Jayanthi Celebration in January, 1980. But I did not express this impossible wish. Now it seems as if the celebrations have come to me, as if Sri Ramanasramam itself has come to me! All the time I am involved in some activity with all of you, I feel as if I am moving about in Sri Ramanasramam!"

On 9th June, the tour came to an end. As we left J.F. Kennedy Airport there were tears in our eyes. Tears of joy at having met so many, so dedicated to our Master. Tears of sorrow at having to leave behind their tender care and loving company. They too were in tears; Evelyn, Dennis, Bhagavat, Mr. & Mrs. Gul Hira and other loving friends.

### **"THE 25th TRAVELLER"**

On the 12th June, we were back in Mother India. As we came out of the airport at Bombay to meet our eager friends, we counted ourselves to see if all had arrived safely. And everyone could not have counted wrong! But surely there were 25 of us now instead of 24. Yes, the 25th traveller was our beloved Ramana! We knew now that during the entire tour, miraculously completed, He had been with us all along!!

"Kinder thou art than one's own mother", sings Sri Bhagavan about Holy Arunachala. Everyone in the group felt that it equally applied to beloved Ramana. How else could we explain the joy and harmony which prevailed throughout?!

### SPECIAL TRIBUTE

By V. Ganesan

We owe the organisers of the 'Ramana Music' concerts at the various centres abroad our gratitude and thanks for their excellent arrangements.

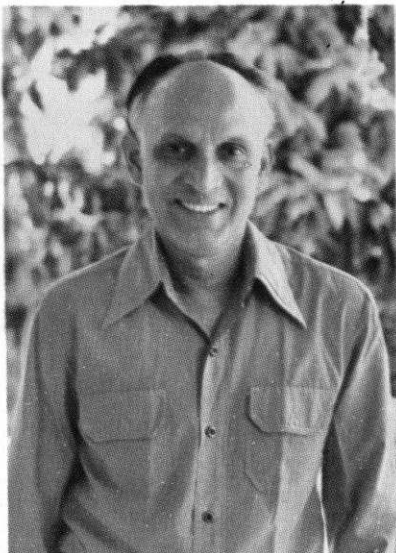
Special tribute has to be paid to each artist who had given their very best to make all thirteen concerts a wonderful experience. Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Sri H.K. Narayana, Sri S. Rajeswara Rao, Sri Keshav Kumar, Kumari Sarada and Kumari Ambika, sang melodiously with the special ingredient of inspired devotion, thrilling the listeners where they sang.

Sri A.R. Natarajan, Secretary, Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee, has spared no efforts to make the World Tour project a reality. During the World Tour he managed the whole group of 24 persons<sup>1</sup> by paying personal attention to every individual's needs and wants. He gave a sparkling speech at Geneva, on the message of Sri Maharshi. He has been a friend, philosopher and guide, in their truest sense, to the members of the **Ramananjali** group.

Members of the **Ramananjali** group of the World Tour:—

Sri A.R. Natarajan (Leader)  
Sri V. Ganesan (Ashram Representative)  
Smt. Sulochana Natarajan (Lead-singer)  
Kumari Sarada (singer)  
Kumari Ambika (singer)  
Sri H.K. Narayana (Male lead)  
Sri S. Rajeswara Rao (Guest Artiste)  
Sri Keshav Kumar (singer)  
Sri T.S. Bhanu  
Smt. Lakshmi Bhanu (singer)  
Smt. A. Kalpagam (singer)  
Smt. Hema Srinivasan (singer)  
Sri Someswar Raju (Music Conductor)  
Sri David Devaraj (Sitar)  
Sri Prapancham Sitaram (Flute)  
Smt. Girija Sitaram (Tambura)  
Smt. E.P. Alamelu (Veena)  
Sri B.R. Srinivasan (Violin)  
Sri Chandrasekhar (Violin)  
Sri Mani (Tabla)  
Sri Obul Rao (Guitar)  
Sri Murthy (Tabla)  
Sri Venkatesh (Special Effects)  
Sri Nagendra (Clarinet)

Sri A.R. Natarajan



# WORLD OF RAMANA MUSIC

BY  
'RAMANĀNJALI'  
GROUP



A BIRTH CENTENARY OFFERING

The above paper-poster was liked by everyone abroad

A Special Supplement to The Mountain Path

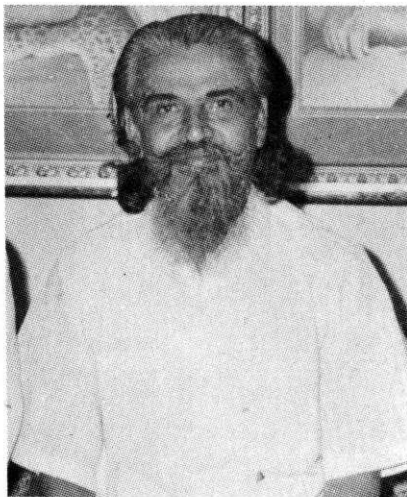
## A FEAST OF 'RAMANA MUSIC'

A VIVID RESUME

by  
Kumari SARADA

One of the most memorable among the many unforgettable items of the last of the three-day Sri Bhagavan's **Aradhana** Celebrations in May, 1980, was the music concert of the **Ramanajali** group. As the voice of the singers rose in full-throated joy in the rendering of **Aksharamanamalai**, it seemed as if the very wind which was blowing stormily outside stopped to listen to the song! It set the tone for the tour of the 24-strong **Ramananjali** Group which took off jauntily on May 15 from Bombay on a tour of places in Europe, Canada and the United States of America, from where invitations had come for presentation of "Ramana Music"

Perhaps, the **Ramananjali** group is the single largest musical group to give concerts of devotional music at any time in Europe and North America. It was an audacious venture for a little-known group made possible only by the total unquestioning faith in Sri Ramana.



Sri T.N. Venkataraman

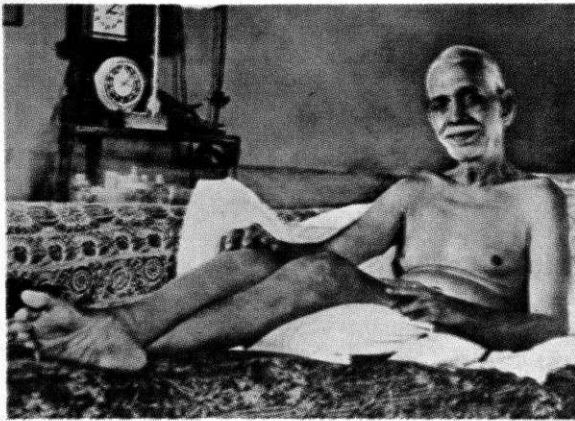


Kumari Sarada

The very history of the **Ramananjali** group is a story of Sri Bhagavan's Grace. It was His Grace which inspired Smt. Sulochana Natarajan to set to music both Bhagavan's own compositions and the hundreds of verses composed by Sri Muruganar, Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni, Satyamangalam Venkataramaier and other eminent poet-devotees, in praise of Sri Bhagavan. It was Bhagavan's grace that infused her with tireless energy to teach this music to earnest devotees and to record along with the rest of the group the vast volume of 'Ramana Music' in cassettes and Long Playing Records. In addition to these, she successfully led the **Ramananjali** group of singers in conducting 'Ramana Music' concerts on important occasions at the Ashram and in Bangalore.

## "THE WORLD TOUR" – A STORY OF GRACE

This flood of 'Ramana Music' elicited eagerness in devotees abroad to make the **Ramananjali** group undertake a global tour. The pinnacle of Sri Bhagavan's grace was most clearly witnessed in this 'impossible' tour. Every 'impossibility' turned into a 'possibility' as our Bhagavan went ahead of us making all arrangements, clearing all obstacles.

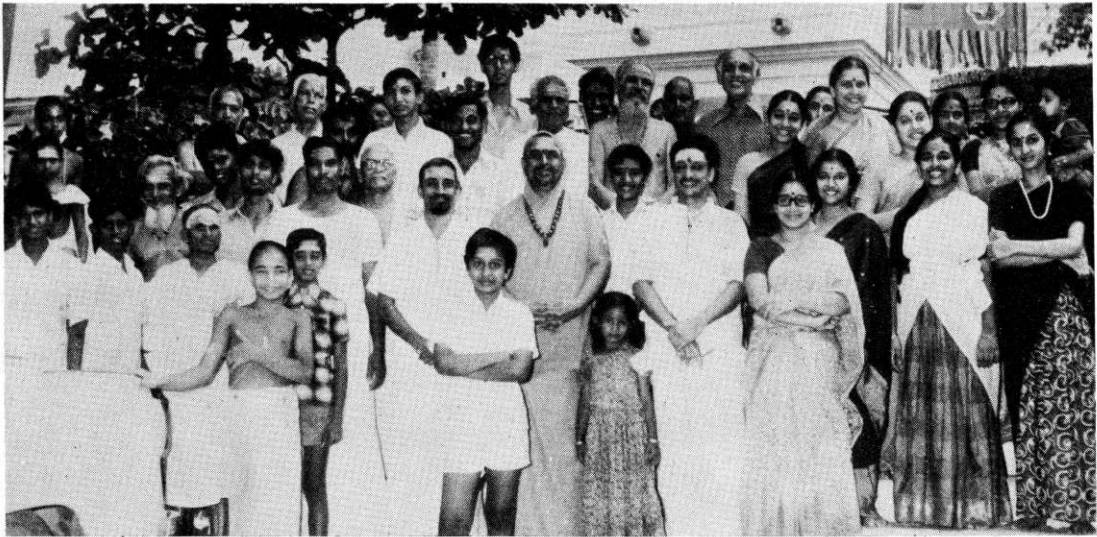


Our minds were filled with doubts. Would it be possible to meet the enormous expenses? Where were we to get sponsorship for the U.S. visit, that too in record time? Would the Government of India support this important project? Our worries were only a reflection of our human weaknesses. In fact we shouldn't have worried. With Bhagavan at the helm of affairs, we ought to have realised that everything would be taken care of and that too perfectly.

The President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramana-sramam, Sri T.N. Venkataraman, gave us every encouragement. From the word, 'Go', he was for the project, wholeheartedly appreciating its usefulness for the 'Ramana Movement.' Other Trustees, Sri Tandavarayan, late Muthiah Chettiar, and Sri Vaikuntavasar also gave enthusiastic support. The Govt. of India too, through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, and the Department of Tourism and Civil Aviation gave a helping hand. Swami Dayananda, of the Chinmaya Mission, readily gave the necessary sponsorship through Sandeepani West. Joan and Mathew gave invaluable advice and kept our enthusiasm alive. Willingly and readily the devotees from all over the world contributed the necessary funds. The American Consulate of Madras gave the Visas for all the 24 persons in a day, something which we were told is utterly impossible.



Smt. Sulochana Natarajan: Sri Bhagavan's Grace flowed through her melodious voice as 'Ramana Music'.



### **"WE ARE OFF"**

On the night of 15th May, the rehearsal in Bombay was on in full swing, a few devotees and friends participated enthusiastically, despite the late hour. At 3 a.m. we were off to the airport. All our hearts were filled with joy and excitement that we had got this unique opportunity of singing and spreading our Master's glory. We were waved off by equally joyous friend-devotees, the momentous tour had begun!

### **A FITTING START – GENEVA**

At Geneva, the first halt in Europe, Dr. Prasad, President of the **Indian Association**, and its members, gave us a cheerful welcome. For the first time, the Association had been able to get the beautiful ILO Auditorium, in the most picturesque setting. Dr. Prasad exclaimed: "It is purely Bhagavan's Grace"! The two-hour programme on 17th May in the packed hall made a fitting beginning for this 'musical offering' to Sri Ramana. Sri A.R. Natarajan in the introductory speech, emphasised the uniqueness of Bhagavan's teachings. Devotees had come even from great distances, and it was a thrilling experience for us to see so many faces known to us, beaming with smiles and fulfilment!

Though the weather at Geneva was chilly, we were kept warm, by the affection of our hosts and friends. As we left, we carried with us, in particular, fond memories of the affection of the Narayanan's and the enthusiasm of Sarvasri Khosla, Thapiyal, Sethuraman, Verma, Menon and Mani.

May 13th morning: The world tour begins from the hearty entrance to Sri Ramanasramam. Devotees give a send-off to the 'Ramananjali' group.

From: Hugo Maier,  
Switzerland.

**"Ramananjali – group performed well at Geneva. It was their first experience on a western stage and they did quite well."**

## PREDICTION COME TRUE

By Kumari Ambika



The tour is over but a great movement has gathered momentum, the 'Ramana Movement'!

We remember, as if it were yesterday, the day on which the tour was predicted. We were seated in Bangalore wondering whether such a tour was possible. At that very moment someone came with a much belated 'Pongal' greetings; and on the greeting card was written: "Let us fly around the world, singing Lord Subrahmanya's praise"!

Now, we recollect, the prediction has come true, we have indeed flown around the world singing the praise of our Lord Ramana, who is both Lord Subrahmanya and His Father, Lord Arunachala!

### "INSPIRED PERFORMANCE" – PARIS

The next halt was Paris and there, **Le Centre de Relations Culturelles Franco-Indien**, headed by Sri Mahesh and Madame Bernard, along with Lalith Rao and Shobini Rao, had made excellent arrangements. As a labour of love, Shobini Rao had, for the first time in her life, undertaken to cook for 24 people. She dispelled her doubts thinking it was Bhagavan's work and it was His responsibility to see that it was done. The food thus cooked with love and dedication to Bhagavan was indeed nectar to all.

The concert on 19th May at Salle Adyar was a memorable one and received enthusiastic applause, inducing the artists to more and more joyous and lively renderings. For the largely French audience, their lack of understanding the language and style proved no bar to appreciating the inspired music.

After the concert, a towering Frenchman (who turned out to be a famous film character actor) approached all the members of the group congratulating them. Then coming to V. Ganesan he asked with earnest admiration: "This music is really wonderful. There is something special about it, but I cannot place it." Ganesan's face lit up: "Yes, you are right; this element is called 'devotion', it's very special to this group!"

'Tiffin' supplied considerably by the Thiru family, filled our hearts with thankfulness for the warmth with which it was given. Sri Khadar, Sri Asari and Sri Ramthirth were all extremely helpful during our stay at Paris.

### "WELCOME RAMANANJALI" – LONDON

Our next stop was London. We had not been able to obtain entry permits to U.K. in Bombay due to shortage of time. Anxious well-wishers had warned us that we would most probably be bundled off in the next flight from London and would not be allowed to enter the country. Even as we landed at Heathrow airport, the loudspeaker was announcing a welcome to the **Ramananjali** group. Sri N.V. Raman, First Secretary to the Indian High Commissioner, was himself waiting to take us in. Yet another 'impossibility' made possible by Bhagavan for us!

Sri C.J. Barai, a devotee, had toiled night and day to make the visit a success. Attending to his work from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. he would spend all the remaining time in arranging for the visit. Many were the sleepless nights spent by him in planning for the trip. His son, Dilip Barai, was also very kind and helpful, even taking time off from work to help us find our way around London.

The first performance of the group at the 'India House' was presided over by Dr. Singh, the High Commissioner, who praised the teachings of Sri Bhagavan in the highest terms. Every minute of the programme was enjoyed by all. Mr. Singh exclaimed: "It was excellent"! Then, seeing the look of surprise on our faces, added, with firm sincerity: "I mean it"

The next two programmes were at the Kenneth Black Memorial Hall, Wimbledon (here, after the concert, puja was performed to Bhagavan) and at the lovely Polka Children's Theatre, Wimbledon.



The ever-smiling devotee, Mr. Robert Gill, had kindly given this hall for the 'Ramana Music' concert. The highlight of the U.K. programmes was the one given on the evening of the 25th at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Auditorium in West Kennington,

London. Sri Mathoor Krishnamoorthy, the dynamic Registrar of the London Centre of the Bhavan, gave a big helping hand. Many earnest devotees of Sri Bhagavan attended these concerts, giving the group encouragement and support.



'Arunachala Ashrama' waiting to welcome the Ramananjali group Sri Ganesan is all smiles at the JFK airport (Arthur, Bhakta Bhagavat and Evelyn).

### "MEETING OF HEARTS" – TORONTO

After landing in J.F. Kennedy Airport, New York on the 26th May, a huge banner with the letters ARUNACHAL ASHRAM greeted our eyes, and an enthusiastic voice cheering repeatedly "**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Ki Jai!**" could be heard, followed by a hearty chorus, which we happily joined. From that moment on, **Arunachala Ashram**, New York & Nova Scotia, took charge of all the arrangements. In particular, Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata, Dennis Hartel, Evelyn Kaselow and Darlene Delisi took maternal care.

**From: Dr. Ram Desai,  
Professor, Dept. of Econ. & Pol. Sci.,  
State University of Buffalo, U.S.A.**

"About two weeks ago I had the utmost pleasure in having the **Ramananjali** group, along with Sri Ganesan, at my house for a dinner. We had a wonderful time together. Mrs. Sulochana Natarajan and Mr. H.K. Narayana sang a couple of songs dedicated to Bhagavan. I murmured to myself: 'How marvellous and great it would have been to write this in a letter to tell Bhagavan that the family from the Ashram had visited me!' I am grateful for the two cassettes: **Ramana Bhajans** and **Ramana Amudam**; quite often in the evening I listen to the tapes."

The 27th of May found us at Toronto. Mr. & Mrs. Devaraj, Mr. James Hartel (brother of Dennis Hartel) and Mrs. Fran Hartel were a fountain of love, care and attention. Our rehearsal that afternoon was to be televised, but the technician having some problem had to call the producer. It turned out that the producer was Mr. Chandrasekar, a good family friend. Seeing the uniqueness of our programme he felt that it must be televised in the best possible manner, at the Studio itself!

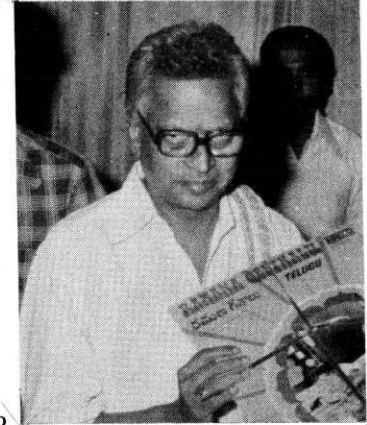
Sri K. Venkataraman helped in arranging the evening's programme. The audience was very moved and in particular, Dr. Ram Desai (Professor, Dept. of Econ. & Pol. Sci., State University of Buffalo) was in tears throughout the concert. In a voice choked with emotion he told us about his visits to Sri Ramanasramam from 1945 onwards. In 1950, having obtained a scholarship in the States he told Bhagavan about it and asked for permission to accept it. When Bhagavan gave permission, Mr. Desai expressed sorrow at having to leave Bhagavan's presence. Bhagavan's ready answer was: "Bhagavan is in America also". Relating this incident, Mr. Desai said: "Only today I have realised what Bhagavan meant, so tangibly having experienced His presence this evening." The golden opportunity we had of meeting such sincere and loving devotees and bringing happiness to them, filled us with joy and made every moment of this wonderful tour worthwhile. Visiting Niagara Falls, the following day, we witnessed this awesome force

of Nature which was in itself a thrilling experience. It actually made us aware of the tremendous power of the Lord. When such force and the entire Universe is controlled with a smile by Ramana, the miracles of this tour, the impossibilities which turned into actualities, are but child's play for Him!

We were delighted to be at the house of Dennis Hartel's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Hartel, who with great love served us lunch. That night's dinner was at Dr. Ram Desai's house and he himself had lovingly prepared 'Uppuma' for us.

That evening the title song of the **Ramananjali** group was composed. At Sri Ganesan's suggestion the words were composed and the tune was set by Sri Rajeswara Rao — thus the title song was born! The entire group working together enthusiastically, giving suggestions, in the atmosphere of a devotee's house was in itself a thrilling experience! Returning

from Niagara, the shooting of our TV programme began at 12.30 a.m. in Toronto and it went well. That night it was difficult to say whether we were more tired or more happy!



Sri S. Rajeswara Rao



'Ramana Music' concert at Toronto

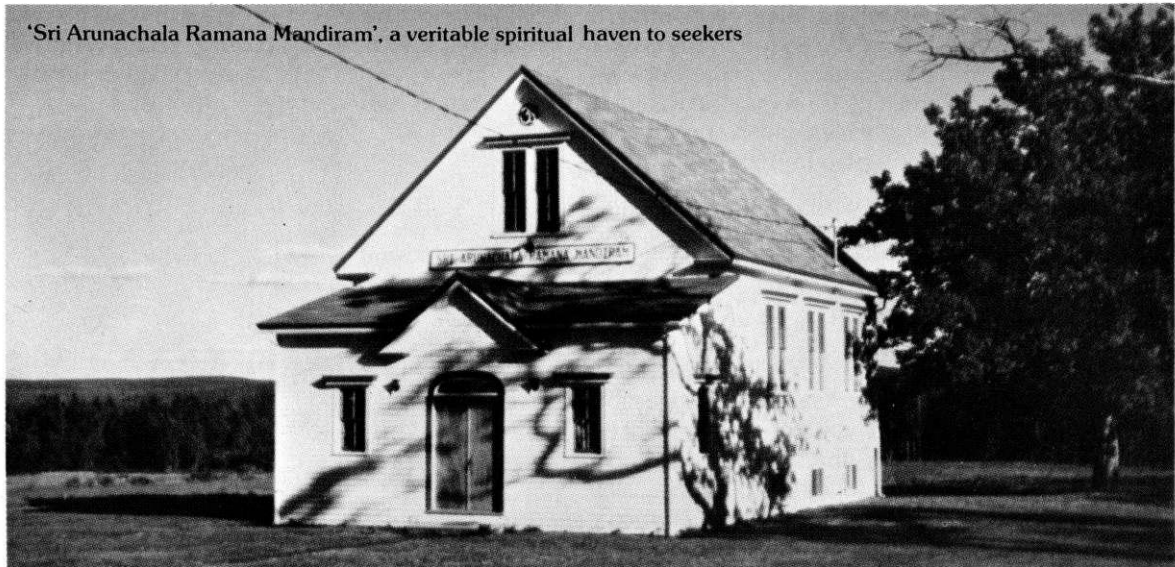
### "MEMORABLE" — MONCTON

As an introduction to that evening's performance, as soon as we arrived in Moncton, (Canada), Sri V. Ganesan spoke with feeling and authority, both on Canada Radio and TV, about the purpose and content of 'Ramana Music'. Also that morning, at the special request of our host, Dr. Lakshminarayanan we sang Telugu songs. As Sri Bhagavan's name filled the house, our hosts sat immersed, listening with tears in their eyes.

In many ways, the performance of the 29th, in a beautiful auditorium in Moncton, was among the best. A full house gave a standing ovation lasting for several minutes at the end of the 'Ramana Music'. With enthusiastic excitement they plied everyone of us with questions and congratulations. Dr. Lakshminarayanan and his wife, Smt. Seetha, who were in charge of the whole arrangements, were thrilled with the success of the programme.

They assured us that it would not have been possible but for Sri Bhagavan's grace. The entire programme of over two hours was telecast by cable TV. Not only was the evening's programme a memorable one. Also was the whole stay at Moncton under the constant care of Mr. & Mrs. Lakshminarayanan.

Very memorable indeed was the night drive from Moncton to Nova Scotia. With just a few winks of sleep the whole night, Sri Eugene, Sri Dennis and Dr. Lakshminarayanan drove us to Nova Scotia Ashram through the clear moonlit night, with dark pine trees shining gracefully on either side of the road. In the early hours of the morning we saw the beautiful sunrise over the sea and thought how this trip was likewise a brilliant dawn to the 'Ramana Movement'. Then, seeing the long mountain ranges, Dr. Lakshminarayanan commented with love and pride: "See how long Arunachala is here!" and lo! we were **home** again, at Arunachala Ashram!



'Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram', a veritable spiritual haven to seekers

### "HOME" – BRIDGETOWN NOVA SCOTIA

That day at **Arunachala Ashram**, Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, was indeed a unique day and a very fulfilling day in our tour. In the presence of the 'long' and 'very green' Arunachala and Lakshmi & Saraswathi, the Ashram cows, grazing peacefully in the meadows, was 'Arunachala Ramana Mandiram'. There, in the shrine, our programme was arranged from 11 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and many devotees, from as far as 450 miles had flocked to this Ashram to hear Ramana's Name and Glory. In that atmosphere which inspired all, we could not but help singing with the fullness of our being and with tears in our eyes. So moved were all the devotees that after lunch they requested us to sing some more. Even those artists who were extremely tired came voluntarily and with joy and there was another programme



The Shrine dedicated to Sri Bhagavan and to Sri Chakra; regular worship is offered here. Devotees so dedicatedly absorbed in their devotion to Sri Bhagavan.

for two more hours! We did not just sing — the music seemed to pour forth spontaneously from us. In the evening, there was **ashtotara** puja to Sri Bhagavan, at the Altar, done by Sri Ganesan and then another music session till late in the night, when Smt. Sulochana Natarajan and Sri H.K. Narayana's voices were at their inspired best. The next morning we left this 'home of ours', its meadows and swallows. We left 'Arunachala' for the second time during the tour with heavy hearts, yet with a sense of fulfilment.

From: **Yashwant Rau,**  
Dartmouth, Canada.

"May I take this opportunity to convey to you and through you to all those connected with organizing the **Ramanajali** Music Concert World Tour, our deep appreciation and heartfelt thanks for a rare opportunity to listen to the soul-stirring music and **bhajans** sung at the very feet of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi at the **Arunachala Ashram** in Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, Canada. To be truthful I had never seen the like of it in my life either in India or abroad. The concert was attended by over 300 devotees, some of whom had travelled over a few hundred miles to participate in this once-in-life opportunity. How do we thank you for making this possible for the benefit of us all settled in the far-flung corners of the world?"



Outpouring of devotional music at the Bridgetown Ashrama.

### – U.S.A.

There were three 'Ramana Music' performances in New York — in the Hindu Temple of North America on 1st June, at Scarsdale Public Library on 6th June and in Columbia University School of International affairs on 7th June. Keshava Kumar, one of the lead singers, excelled himself at the Columbia performance. Each performance was well received and beautiful in its own way.

### "A UNIQUE CONCERT" – CHICAGO

In between, the **Ramananjali** group was very happy to make a lovely train journey to Chicago on the 4th June at the invitation of Sri Swami Bhashyananda, President of the Vivekananda Vedanta

### THE BHAKTI MARGA

By V. Ganesan

I have no hesitation in saying that during the sixties, Sri Bhagavan chose Sri Arthur Osborne to shoulder the responsibility of spreading His message of Self-Knowledge — **Atma Vidya** — through the organ of intellectual medium **The Mountain Path**. Thereby the **Jnana**-aspect of Sri Bhagavan's teachings was strongly established throughout the world.

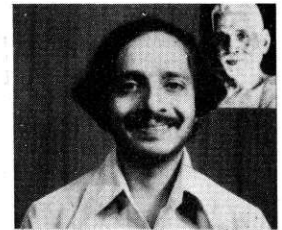
In His Birth Centenary year, Sri Bhagavan has blessed Smt. Sulochana Natarajan to take up the tremendous task of spreading the **Bhakti**-aspect of His teachings through melodious music, which she so successfully accomplished through 'Ramana Music' during this global tour.

I deem it my great good fortune that I could earnestly associate myself with both these movements. Hail Sri Ramana!

Society. The 'Ramana Music' programme conducted in the presence of the Swamiji and in the Auditorium in front of the shrine of Sri Ramakrishna, was really an inspired one.



H.K. Narayana



Keshava Kumar

Sri V. Ganesan, who spoke on the occasion, referred to the close association that existed between the Ramakrishna Mission and Sri Ramanasramam even from the days of Sri Maharshi. He said that Sri Ramana Maharshi was moved to tears even by the very mention of the name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. In fact, he added, Sri Bhagavan was revered in those days as the 'Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa of South India'. He choked with emotion when he said it was historic that the place where Swami Vivekananda commenced his unique spiritual mission, which actually laid the strong foundation for the founding of Ramakrishna Mission itself, the message of the Maharshi should be propounded through 'Ramana Music'.



Sri Ganesan